

Egypt's Endless State of Emergency
The "War on Terror" during the Reign of Husni Mubarak (1981-2011)

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Abstrakt

Seit dem Attentat auf Präsident Anwar al-Sadat im Jahr 1981 wurde Ägypten unter Ausnahmezustand regiert. Diese außergewöhnliche Maßnahme, die als eine provisorische Maßnahme präsentiert worden war, wurde zur Norm. Der Ausnahmezustand war eine zentrale Stütze der autoritären Herrschaft Mubaraks (1981-2011). Diese Dissertation fragt daher, wie der Ausnahmezustand zu einer permanenten Bedingung der soziopolitischen Realität in Ägypten geworden ist und in welchem Zusammenhang seine Permanenz mit der Resilienz der autoritären Herrschaft steht.

Der Ausnahmezustand wurde mit der terroristischen Bedrohung gerechtfertigt. Deshalb ist diese Dissertation im Feld der Theorie der Versicherunglichung situiert. Bezogen wird sich dabei sowohl auf die Paris- als auch auf die Kopenhagen-Schule der Versicherunglichung-Theorie. Um die Versicherunglichung als Teil von Governance-Prozessen verstehen und analysieren zu können, wird der Forschungsansatz mit Michel Foucaults Ideen zur Gouvernementalität und biopolitischen Optimierung sowie Giorgio Agambens Ideen zum Ausnahmezustand erweitert. Diese theoretische Kopplung bildet ein innovatives konzeptionelles *Truth-Exception-Resistance-Modell* (T-E-R-Modell).

In dieser Dissertation wird die Versicherunglichung als eine politische Strategie verstanden, die dazu dient, gesellschaftliche Kontrolle zu behaupten, indem das biopolitische Spektrum akzeptabler/inakzeptabler Formen des Lebens (re-)konfiguriert wird. Versicherunglichungsprozesse legitimierten damit nicht nur exzeptionelle Maßnahmen gegen vermeintliche Terroristen, sondern wenden sich auch gegen weitere Individuen, etwa ägyptische Oppositionelle oder *No-Name*-Bürger, die nicht in die (re)-definierte Kategorie des optimierten Kollektivs passen. Es gibt zudem eine sich gegenseitig verstärkende Beziehung zwischen exzeptionellen Maßnahmen und aktiven Akteuren der Sicherheitsdurchsetzung. Die Stärkung der Sicherheitsoffiziellen, die durch die exzeptionellen Maßnahmen genähert wird, ist quasi unumkehrbar. Die Stärkung motiviert die Akteure des Sicherheitsfeldes, den Status Quo zu erhalten. Widerstand oder dessen Absenz berührt die Stabilität einer Versicherunglichung, was auch die ägyptische Anti-Terror-Kampagne betrifft. Versicherunglichung kann aufrechterhalten werden, solange sie nicht entschieden angegangen wird. Daher ist öffentliche Zustimmung keine notwendige Vorbedingung für das Fortdauern von Versicherunglichung.

Die Dissertation basiert auf einer Inhaltsanalyse arabischer Zeitungsartikel der Zeitung *al-Ahram* und Essays aus dem Polizeimagazin *Magallat amn al-'am*, die sich der Themen Terrorismus, Sicherheit und Ausnahmezustand widmeten. Zusätzlich werden auch Menschenrechtsberichte von ägyptischen und internationalen Organisationen analysiert. Die empirische Forschung wurde durch mehrere Forschungsaufenthalte vor Ort (2010, 2011) und Interviews mit prominenten ägyptischen Aktivisten (2013) vertieft.

Abstract

After the assassination of Anwar al-Sadat in 1981, Egypt was ruled under the state of emergency. The exceptional policy, initially introduced as a temporary measure, became the norm and a central pillar that underpinned the resilience of Mubarak's authoritarian rule (1981-2011). This thesis thus asks: how did the state of emergency become a permanent condition of the Egyptian sociopolitical reality and how is its perpetuation related to resilience of the authoritarian Egyptian regime?

The state of emergency was justified on the grounds of a threat of terrorism which grounds the research conducted in this thesis in the field of securitization theory. The research, particularly, draws from two schools of securitization theory: Copenhagen and Paris. To address and analyze the securitization process as a part of wider processes of governance the research adds Michel Foucault's thoughts on governmentality and biopolitical optimization as well as Giorgio Agamben's conceptualization of the state of exception. The theoretical synthesis produces an innovative conceptual truth-exception-resistance model, the T-E-R model.

This thesis views securitization as a political strategy to maintain societal control by (re)configuring the biopolitical bandwidth of (un)acceptable forms of life. Hence securitization not only legitimizes the exceptional treatment of perceived terrorists, but it also addresses and disqualifies individuals, including the Egyptian opposition and "no name" citizens, who do not fit into the (re)defined category of an optimized collective. There is also a mutually reinforcing relationship between the exceptional measures and the active actors in security enforcement. The empowerment of security officials, fostered through the exceptional measures such as the state of emergency, is hardly reversible. It motivates actors and institutions in the security field to uphold the existing securitization status quo. Resistance and/or lack thereof affects the persistence and perpetuation of a securitization process including Egypt's counterterrorism campaign, too. Securitization can be sustained as long as it is not decisively contested. Thus, for securitization to persist, public approval is not a necessary precondition.

The research is based on a content analysis of Arabic newspaper articles (*al-Ahram*) and essays from a police magazine (*Magallat amn al-'am*) dedicated to the topic of terrorism, security, and the state of emergency. In addition, human rights reports of Egyptian and international organizations that address torture, ill-treatment, and extra-judicial killings, are also analyzed. The empirical research was further supported by several field trips (2010, 2011) and interviews with leading Egyptian activists (2013).

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Egypt's endless state of emergency

1. The endless state of emergency

“They beat him [Mahmoud Gabr] in Sayyeda Zeinab police station.. they beat him in his neck, in his private parts and his anus.. he was bleeding from behind and from his mouth.. when he was soaked in his blood they took him down to the inmates to clean him and change his clothes.. he did not do anything.. if he had done anything they should have taken him to court.. there is a law in this country.. there are courts and judges.. how could they do that to him.. this what they do all the time.. police officers walk into any street and just squash whoever they want.. like an insect.. they believe they are God and that nobody can stop them.. who can protect people like us..[...]” (a witness to Mahmoud Gabr’s death quoted in al-Nadeem, 2006: 8).

Mahmoud Gabr was a young man who was tortured to death while in police custody in the Cairan district of Sayyida Zeinab in October 2003. His death was inexplicable to those around him at the time, as there was no obvious reason for it.

“The strange thing is that Mahmoud didn’t do anything. Even if he did do anything or has to do time in prison, the country has a law and courts and judges. How did they have the heart to do that, they have no feelings? Even those sentenced to death are granted their last wish before they execute them.” (neighbors of Mahmoud Gabr quoted in al-Nadeem, 2006: 7).

Gabr’s case is by far neither an exceptional nor a rare example of police brutality. The state of emergency, which was an imperative of the entire Husni Mubarak reign (1981-2011), rendered the ordeal of Mahmoud Gabr and thousands of others ordinary and possible. It established a culture in which torture as along with many other human rights violations were the norm rather than the exception of the everyday life of Egyptians (Shehat and Zarei, 2001: 14). It sanctioned the emergence of spaces of unlimited impunity, in which the Egyptian security officials were *above* the law.

Throughout three decades of Mubarak’s reign during which the state of emergency was in place, the Egyptian government justified its existence on the grounds of a threat of terrorism. While at times the government also mentioned the threat posed by drugs as an additional justification for the continuity of the state emergency, the state of emergency served as a central pillar of the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign. It empowered the Egyptian security forces to adopt measures such as arrest and detention of suspects without court orders, which would have been otherwise not possible – even in the authoritarian context of the Egyptian state. The state of emergency as a primary pillar of the counterterrorism efforts also facilitated the emergence of gray zones of tolerated, yet formally illegal, extra-judicial security practices.

While arbitrary arrests, indefinite detentions, emergency courts, or military tribunals were located in the gray area of legal practices formally sanctioned by the state of emergency, torture and extra-judicial killing of suspects were among the illegal but tolerated practices of the Egyptian security forces. As for the security apparatus, which

was empowered through the state of emergency, it was virtually granted impunity for the extra-judicial treatment of anyone associated with the terrorist threat (e.g. HRW, 2007DEC; HRW, 2011JANa).

The Egyptian government rigorously maintained that the state of emergency was a necessary provision restricted solely to the counterterrorism efforts, and at times to the campaign against drugs. No one else but the terrorists would have suffered from the consequences of the exceptional policies. The account of Mahmoud Gabr shows, however, this was not the case. On the contrary, the abundant empirical evidence clearly shows that the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign embraced more than alleged terrorists. The provisions of the state of emergency, as well as the gray zone of extra-judicial counterterrorism practices, were used not only against Mubarak's opposition critical of the existing sociopolitical and economic status quo, but also against large numbers of ordinary citizens. In the last decade of Mubarak's reign in particular, the state of emergency and related security practices became a central tool of societal control employed to ensure discipline of "ordinary" Egyptians.

1.1. Sociopolitical and economic structure of Mubarak's Egypt

Located at the crossroads of two continents, in the heart of the Middle East, and in controlling of the Suez Canal that connects the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal, Egypt has always played an important role in the regional affairs. As the most populous Arab country and the host of the authoritative center of Islamic jurisprudence, al-Azhar university, Egypt has cultivated aspirations to become the leader in the of the Arab world since its independence in 1952. A short-lived union with Syria and Yemen, the United Arab Republic (1958-1961), which was politically dominated by Egypt, and lost wars with Israel (1967, 1973) have, however, undermined Egypt's position. Its vision of pan-Arab leadership vision has since shrunk to a mere rhetorical level since. The strong nationalist sentiment nurtured by the ambitious regional politics pioneered by the Egyptian President, Gamal abd al-Nasser (1954-1970) has prevailed to this day. On the domestic front, the costly nationalistic projects, generous welfare programs, and a lack of structural reforms left Egypt laid the foundations of the current poor economic situation and lack of democratic governance.

Unlike to other Arab countries in the region, the idea of modern Egyptian state bound to a strong nationalist sentiment emerged in the late 19th century and evolved over seventy years as a result of the British supremacy over Egypt (1882-1952) (Farah, 2009: 64; el-Shakry, 2005; Cleveland, 2000: 102f). The 1919 revolution led against the British rule peeked the emergence of a strong nationalist, self-consciousness anti-British movement. The initial success notwithstanding, Egypt eventually gained only a nominal independence in 1922; and the United Kingdom maintained its control for next three decades until the 1952 revolution (Little, 1958: 134-141). Failure to gain independence

as well as the post-WWI developments, particularly, the establishment of a secular Turkish state and the 1924 abolishment of the caliphate, also highlighted the existing ideological cleavage within the nationalist movement between the modernists and conservatives (Little, 1958: 151f) that has pervaded the Egyptian political discourse until now.

The modernist current of the nationalist movement, led by al-Wafd, “believed in the evolution of Egypt along Western lines” (Little, 1958: 152). Accordingly, it promoted the idea of a secular (Western) nation-state which was and continues to be supported by the Egyptian educated middle and upper-class. The conservative nationalists mobilized mainly the lower and rural classes of the Egyptian society. Based on the teachings of Muslim reformists such as Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, the conservative nationalists led by the Muslim Brotherhood, a group established in 1928, opposed the Western-style nation-state (Jung, 2006: 11f). They understood a nation in terms of the Islamic *umma* wherein a caliphate is a relevant form of a state to unite the *umma* (Little, 1958: 151ff; Farah, 2009: 70). United by the struggle against the common enemy, the British administration, the supporters of two contesting concepts of the state organization – secular nation-state and the Islamic caliphate – did not confront each other head-on until the British withdrawal from Egypt in the aftermath of the 1952 revolution. The new Egyptian leadership increasingly dominated by Gamal abd al-Nasser, a major figure in the 1952 revolution, opted for the secular vision of nation-state and to suppress the alternative – the Islamic caliphate – and its supporters. Shortly after the 1952 revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood was outlawed and remained illegal until 2011.

The conflict between the modernist and conservative nationalist visions has not faded and has decisively shaped the Egyptian political and societal landscape. Parts of the traditional nationalist movement radicalized in their views. Both of al-Nasser’s successors, Anwar al-Sadat and Husni Mubarak, faced militant Islamist forces that took up arms to enforce their vision of the Islamic state. The 1990s was an especially dark period for Egypt. Al-Jihad and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, two major Egyptian Islamist militant groups, led an open insurgency against the Egyptian state. During this period, hundreds of Egyptians died and thousands were injured in numerous terrorist attacks. Egypt’s economy, largely dependent on the revenues from tourism, suffered. At the peak of counterterrorism campaign, the need for political liberalization and human rights standards were sidelined. As I will illustrate in this thesis, Mubarak’s leadership heavily relied on repression as a major strategy to counter the armed as well as peaceful Islamist opposition. As the most recent developments in Egypt have shown, this pattern has not changed much after the 2011 revolution.

When Husni Mubarak took power in 1981, Egypt experienced difficulties on many levels. Domestic and regional resentment sprouted as a result of the signing of the 1979

peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Arab countries cut off their diplomatic ties and crucial financial support of Egypt in solidarity with the Palestinians. Egypt became dependent on the financial and military aid of the United States. Driven by strong pan-Arab nationalist sentiment, the domestic opposition, including both the leftist and Islamist currents, mobilized against Egypt's leadership. Some Islamist groups, including al-Sadat's assassins, turned militant. The Egyptian armed forces were not fond of the peace with Israel either. The assassination showed there was a legitimate concern that militant Islamists had infiltrated the military.

Mubarak's leadership also faced poor economic conditions. Al-Sadat's policy of *infitah* that introduced liberalization of centrally planned economy to address the immense state's debt deepened structural problems such as poverty and corruption (Ayubi, 1991: 3-89). Yet, due to prevalent clientelism and corruption, only a small fraction of Egyptians profited from the economic liberalization. The rest suffered. In the early 1980s, almost one fifth of the Egyptian population (18.2 percent of urban and 16.1 percent of rural population at that time), lived below the poverty line and were thus unable to meet a given standard of living (World Bank, 2002: 8).¹ Moreover, the state largely abandoned its role as the welfare provider (Farah, 2009). Some of the state's tasks were thus assumed by non-state actors; specifically, Islamist actors dominated the key fields of public health and education.

1.2. Why study the state of emergency in Egypt?

The state of emergency was enacted as a response to the assassination of the Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat and an attempted coup in 1981 by Islamist² terrorists. The state of emergency was regularly renewed by the Egyptian parliament by presidential decree throughout the entire reign of al-Sadat's successor, Husni Mubarak (1981-2011). Mubarak's state of emergency was central to the fight against violent extremists and to empower the authoritarian rulers. In this regard, Mubarak continued the legacy of his predecessors. In 1967, Gamal abd al-Nasser (1952-1970) introduced the state of emergency as a temporary measure to address an immediate political crisis, the 1967 loss in the war against Israel. When al-Sadat assumed power in 1970, the state of emergency was, however, upheld and used to counter the Egyptian communists, then perceived as a major threat. Although the state of emergency was lifted by al-Sadat in 1980, the period without of the state of emergency lasted only few months until his assassination.

The 1981 declaration of a state of emergency continued the legacy of abd al-Nasser and al-Sadat. The state of emergency became a central means to counter the Islamist threat

¹ The stated data follow the analysis of el-Laithy and Osman quoted in the World Bank report.

² For purposes of my thesis and in order to avoid misunderstanding I define an Islamist as an activist who advocates, either peacefully or violently, the reordering of government and society in accordance with his or his movement's interpretation of Islam.

and to empower Mubarak's leadership. The declaration was once again claimed to be an interim measure.³ Yet, over time it became a fundamental component of the Egyptian sociopolitical and economic status-quo. Thus, while it can be argued that the declaration of the state of emergency was, in the beginning, primarily driven by a major disruption in the Egyptian political landscape and the efforts to punish the terrorist group behind it, this reason could hardly sustain an argument for renewing the state of emergency and thus upholding the system of oppressive security mechanisms for such a long period of time.

In my thesis, I therefore ask: how did the state of emergency as an exceptional, temporal policy become a permanent condition of the Egyptian sociopolitical reality? Guided by this inquiry I seek to understand, in particular, what underlying knowledge and practices sustained the state of emergency for more than three decades of Mubarak's reign. This leads me to explore how the underlying knowledge and practices which sustained the state of emergency related, on the one hand, to the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign, and the oppression of the government's opposition, on the other hand. With regard to the lengthy period during which the state of emergency was in effect and its detrimental effect on the life of Egyptians I also pay attention to dissenters in Egypt and their role in challenging the status quo. Specifically, I ask how the state of emergency was upheld despite an existing dissent and what role the 2011 revolution played in disrupting the position of the state of emergency.

1.3. How to study the state of emergency in Egypt

In order to make sense of the permanency of state of emergency and its sociopolitical implications, I ground my research in a constructivist approach to security, combined with post-structuralist insights into modern statecraft and the art of governance. In particular, I regard the state of emergency as a product of a process of securitization of the terrorist threat in Egypt. In this thesis I develop an innovative theoretical and conceptual framework that combines the positions of the Copenhagen and Paris schools of security studies with Michel Foucault's governmentality and Giorgio Agamben's conceptualization of the state of exception.

The regular renewals of the state of emergency were, soon after al-Sadat's assassination, justified by the Egyptian government on the grounds of a perceived threat of terrorism. Without the terrorist threat, as Egyptian officials regularly reiterated⁴ there would have not been a reason to further maintain the exceptional framework. Although it is undeniable that there were several groups, such as al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya or al-Jihad, which fall under the common-sense definition of terrorist groups, Mubarak's government employed an unsettling broad definition of terrorism. In this regard, it is

³ *al-Ahram*, 23. 10. 1981, p. 1.

⁴ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 3. 3. 2000, p. 17.

important to inquire how terrorism was framed in Egypt. Securitization theory offers an analytical framework to do so. It places the process of constructing an issue as a threat and the adoption of extraordinary measures to tackle the threat at the center. Thus, it allows to expose the notion of terrorism as a constituting imperative of the state of emergency in Egypt by exploring of the framing of the terrorist threat and its relation to the adoption and regular renewals of the state of emergency.

Based on my assumption, which is supported by the empirical evidence (see e.g. HRW, 2011JANa), that the state of emergency was also a means to silence the Egyptian political opposition, I am particularly interested how the framing of the terrorist threat informed and upheld exceptional security practices such as arbitrary arrests, torture, or extra-judicial killings and how these security practices related to the ongoing process of framing the terrorist threat. The securitization theory, however, does not offer tools to relate the oppression of the Egyptian opposition, a process through which terrorism was constructed as an existential threat to the Egyptian population, and the exceptional security practice of the Egyptian security apparatus. In order to examine such sociopolitical ramifications I deepen the securitization framework with post-structuralist insights offered by Michel Foucault's governmentality and biopolitical optimization and Giorgio Agamben's exception. Supported by Michel Foucault's and Giorgio Agamben's concepts, I enrich the securitization theory by theories of society which enable to account for a wider sociopolitical context of the securitization process.

I understand governmentality as an analytical perspective for the study of practices and processes of governance of a modern state that stresses the importance of biopolitical optimization of the governed society. Specifically, this model embeds the process of framing the terrorist threat into a broader setting of Egyptian political and societal ordering. Thereby it facilitates a link between the framing of the terrorist threat and the security practices of the Egyptian security apparatus. Agamben's exception offers conceptual tools to trace the sociopolitical ramifications of the state of emergency as an exceptional security measure. In particular, it enables a reconstruction of the oppression of Egyptians as an effect of the state of emergency in a manner that elucidates the emerging culture of violence. Based on this theoretical synthesis, I introduce an innovative conceptual framework to study securitization processes that integrate exceptional measures. Truth, exception, and resistance are three major conceptual topics and fields of analysis that emerge from the theoretical combination of the securitization theory and the post-structuralist concepts. Accordingly, I refer to the conceptual framework based on these tenets as the T-E-R model.

1.4. The state of the art

Despite the dramatic impact of the state of emergency on the everyday life of Egyptians for more than three decades, there are only a few scholars who have engaged with the

topic. The majority of those who engaged the topic concentrate on the societal impact of the state of emergency. The restrictions on personal freedoms and civil liberties facilitated by the state of emergency are their major concern. The societal implications of the state of emergency are discussed by diverse societal sectors, such as NGOs and the civil society (Atia, 2011; Kienle, 2001), the judiciary (Brown, 1997; Moustafa, 2008), and the political opposition (Kienle, 2001; Reza, 2007). In a nutshell, the state of emergency is seen as a major obstacle for the development of respective areas in focus and the plurality of the Egyptian political arena in general (Gohar, 2008).

Another strand of scholarship takes a historical approach. These scholars concentrate on the genealogy of the state of emergency in Egypt, tracing it as far back as the British rule in Egypt in the early 20th century (see Brown, 1997; Reza, 2007). This perspective is usually combined with a legal interpretation of the Emergency Law of 1958, which is the legal underpinning for the adoption of the state of emergency and related security practices (Moustafa, 2008; Reza, 2007). There are also few texts that come up with a more recent legal genealogy of the state of emergency. One of the best examples of such an account is an extensive study by al-Sawy (2005), who discusses the regular parliamentary debates on the renewals of the state of emergency.

Scholarly accounts of human rights practitioners (el-Dawla, 2009; Adli, 2007; Sherry, 1993; Rabia, 2011) and bibliographic contributions of former security officers⁵ (al-Afifi, 2008) make up the third component of the scholarly work on this topic. This strand of literature deals with the routinized exceptional security practices of the security apparatus. Thus, it addresses, on the one hand, the role of the Egyptian security apparatus in enforcing the exceptional security policies. On the other hand, it concentrates on torture and other extra-judicial security practices as a major epitome of the state of emergency in Egypt. Despite the sheer number of human rights abuses facilitated by the state of emergency, the Egyptian security apparatus and its routinized security practices are, however, rarely addressed in a comprehensive manner by authors (e.g. Sirrs, 2010; Allam, 2015) outside the circle of human rights practitioners. Even though the state of emergency in Egypt was regularly renewed and legitimized with the reference to the perceived terrorism threat, the scholarly discussion does not cover this link. Instead, the existing debate on terrorism in Egypt tackles terrorism as a separate analytical issue, in which the analysis of the terrorist groups is at the heart of the researcher's interests (Musallam, 2005).

Despite the abundance of scholarly work on terrorism and “wars on terrorism”, which has skyrocketed since 9/11, there is still a deficit in scholarship that comprehensively addresses the Egyptian “war on terrorism” under Husni Mubarak. When the Egyptian “war on terror” is studied, then it is mostly related to the global “war on terror” after

⁵ Accounts of former security officers were distributed informally and due to their content, which was highly critical of the Egyptian security apparatus and its practices, the distribution of the texts was constrained by the Egyptian authorities.

2001. Egypt is, in this respect, usually mentioned along with other Arab states as an important US-ally in the fight of terrorism in the region. The research focus has been accordingly directed at the Egyptian response to the US-led global “war on terror” (e.g. el-Khawwas, 2007) and at Egypt’s active involvement in the global “war on terror” through its participation in the US-program of extra-ordinary renditions of suspected terrorists (see e.g. HRW, 2005MAY).

The domestic dimension of terrorism in Egypt has, however, been covered more thoroughly. A slew of articles and books offer a detailed account of one or more Egyptian terrorist groups, their historical evolution, violent/subversive activities, and their ideological motivation to use violence. There are two basic sets of positions: violence is justified by either internal or external factors. In the former, in which the explanation of violence is located in the internal factors, e.g. in the structure, ideology of the studied group or individual (Stein, 2010; Sagiv, 1995). In the latter, the explanation of violence is found in the external factors, e.g. in poverty, a lack of democracy (Starrett, 1998; Kaye, et al., 2008; Sagiv, 1995). The scholarly work on terrorism in Egypt, however, usually does not address the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign or the context of the lasting state of emergency. The counterterrorism policies are usually mentioned in a reference to the governmental campaign to fight the Islamist terrorism (Abdalla, 1993; Zuhur, 2007), but are rarely analyzed in depth or associated with the oppression of wide spectrum of the Egyptian society.

This should by no means imply that oppression of the Egyptian society is an overlooked aspect of studies on Mubarak’s authoritarian rule. On the contrary: there are exhaustive studies that address the topic as a logical outcome of the authoritarian art of governance prevalent in Egypt. The bulk of literature focuses explicitly on the analysis of the Egyptian political dissent and its oppression – be it the Islamist groups (most notably the Muslim Brotherhood), non-Islamist political parties, human rights communities, or individual activists (e.g. Albrecht, 2005; Atia, 2011; Kienle, 2001; McQueen, 2008; Wickham, 2002; Rutherford, 2008; Abdelrahman, 2007; Allal and Kohstall, 2010; Gohar, 2008). In this scholarly debate, the interest in the active unruliness of scrutinized political groups and individuals is, however, with few exceptions (Oweidat et al., 2008; Beinin, 2009; el-Mahdi, 2009; Hibbard and Layton, 2010 [2011]; Shehata, 2010), rather sidelined. Though more recent literature has moved away from the elitist perspective on the general public and concentrated on the oppression of the ordinary Egyptian citizens, so-called “no-names” and their everyday lives as well as their defiance in their encounters with representatives of the state (Ismail, 2006, 2011; Bayat, 2013).

Despite the explicit empirical link between the state of emergency, terrorism, and the oppression of Egyptians, the existing research largely treats the three areas as separated topics of analysis, which are rarely addressed together as interrelated issues. Thus, it neglects the pertinence of the state of emergency to both the counterterrorism strategies

and the oppression of a wide spectrum of Egyptians. The state of emergency as a pillar of the Egyptian counterterrorism strategies and a constitutive framework for the governmental oppressive mechanisms remains thus largely under-explored.

1.5. Objectives of the thesis

With regard to the previous, this thesis has three underlying objectives. The first aim is to explore an empirically under-explored topic and to fill the gap in the knowledge on the state of emergency in Egypt during the reign of Husni Mubarak. By doing so, I offer a perspective on how to make sense of exceptional policies and security practices, which are rationalized on the grounds of a perceived threat in authoritarian political systems. In this regard, this thesis contributes to the debate on exceptional policies and their role in the legitimization and delegitimization of securitizing governments.

The second goal of this thesis is a conceptual one. The thesis outlines a conceptual framework that addresses less researched questions of perpetuation, exception, and resistance in securitization processes located beyond the West/liberal democracies. By doing so, the thesis offers conceptual tools to examine the security – exception – resistance nexus in political contexts that lack democratic principles. On these grounds, the thesis seeks to contribute to the growing, yet still marginal, body of securitization scholarship, which applies the securitization theory beyond the Western/European context.

The last objective is closely related to the prior goals. This thesis aims to contribute to the securitization scholarship by offering a theoretical and conceptual framework that addresses the sociopolitical ramifications of a securitization process. By enriching the securitization theory by theories of society offered in the works of Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben I outline an innovative T-E-R model that allows the examination and understanding of a wider sociopolitical context of a securitization process.

1.6. Note on methodology

In order to inquire into the process of constructing the terrorist threat, the empirical research in this thesis is built on an extensive content analysis of Arabic written media sources which cover the entire reign of Husni Mubarak (1981-2011). Since only a few Egyptian newspapers are archived and available abroad I visited several Egyptian archives during the autumn of 2010 and in November 2011. However, due to diverse restrictions, the research in the local institutions turned out to be highly unproductive. Therefore, I eventually combined data from the widely distributed governmental daily, *al-Ahram*, which is available at the Berlin State Library; the limited editions of the police magazine, *Majalla amn al-am*, acquired through a private person; and Arabic and

English written human rights reports of Egyptian and international organizations that addressed torture, ill-treatment, and extra-judicial killings.

The changing political landscape continuously intervened in the course of my field research. In particular, in summer 2013 I was forced to reschedule my planned research stay at the last minute. The 2013 coup and following violent clashes between supporters of deposed president Muhammad Mursi and the security forces did not aid in conducting research. Although I was able to do my field research a few months later, in November 2013, the wide crackdown on the political opposition drastically reduced the numbers of my presumed interviewees. While I was able to interview leading Egyptian activists, the tense sociopolitical situation did not allow me to reach out to and interview representatives of the Islamists including the Muslim Brothers nor representatives of the security forces. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews – due to their limited number – were rendered a complementary method of data collection in this thesis.

1.7. Note on transliteration

In this thesis, in order not to confuse readers unfamiliar with Arabic and for the sake of simplicity I omit the diacritical marks and do not assimilate the preceding definite article. The letters *'ayn* and *hamza*, which are often confused in the transliteration, share an identical sign '. *Hamza* is not transliterated at the beginning of words which begin with a definite article, e.g. *al-amr*. Arabic words and terms are italicized unless they refer to names of persons and geographical locations. With regard to Egyptianized words and terms, I follow a transliteration style that attempts to capture the closest local pronunciation. For instance, I write Gamal instead of Jamal, or *ahwa* instead of *qahwa*. For those words, which have become widely used in English, I use the English plural ending -s, if necessary. For example, I write fatwas instead of the Arabic correct plural *fatawa*. I also do not accurately transcribe names of persons if there is an existing form of the name in English written texts. For instance, I use Muhammad el-Baradei instead Muhammad al-Barada'i.

1.8. The structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six additional chapters.

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical and conceptual framework of my research and outlines the innovative T-E-R model. Based on the review of the main tenets of securitization theory I, first, suggest a combination of securitization models offered by Copenhagen and Paris schools of security studies. Then, I outline a novel conceptual framework based on the integration of Michel Foucault's concepts of governmentality and biopolitical optimization of a society, and Giorgio Agamben's conceptualization of exception into the securitization framework. In particular, I introduce the T-E-R model

and the three interrelated dimensions of knowledge/truth, exception, and resistance that reflect my theoretical arguments and guide my empirical inquiry into the lengthy state of emergency in Egypt. Finally, the chapter elaborates on the methods used for my research objectives and reviews empirical data collected and used for this research.

Chapter 3 addresses truth, the first dimension of the T-E-R model. By doing so, it contextualizes the securitization of the terrorist threat in Egypt into a wider sociopolitical framework. In particular, this chapter explores the framing of the terrorism threat and the role of individual actors in constructing Egypt's security regime throughout the three decades of Husni Mubarak's reign. With regard to the latter, I pay special attention to security targets, a novel unit of security analysis introduced in my conceptual framework. Specifically, I show that the framing of the security targets is closely intertwined with the optimization of the self, the Egyptian society in case of my research, that has to be protected. In this regard, I demonstrate that the securitization process does not only define the enemy, the security target whose life is conceived unworthy. But it also (re)configures the ideal self, the biopolitically optimized citizen, whose life is deemed to be protected.

After establishing the knowledge foundations of the Egyptian securitization process, **chapter 4** focuses on the second edge of the T-E-R model, the exception. The state of emergency and related practices of the Egyptian security apparatus are addressed here in detail. Specifically, the chapter explores the meaning and implications of the extraordinary security measures for those who were deemed a security threat to the Egyptian society and thus fall into the category of security targets. It elaborates on the security practices of the Egyptian security forces, most notably torture, and links it closely to questions such as the proliferation of fear and relative absence of resistance to the existing sociopolitical order. In this chapter I also address the diffusion of the norm of exception among individual security officials, petty sovereigns, and their immense empowerment in the securitization context as unaccountable gatekeepers of the Agambenian zones of indistinction.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to resistance, the third component of the T-E-R model. Based on my theoretical assumption that a lack of resistance in the context of the securitization process is a minimal prerequisite of a successful securitization, this chapter explores whether resistance emerged, who questioned and challenged the securitization process, and how and why the effects of resistance failed to challenge the continuity of the state of emergency. Specifically, it maps the government strategies to reduce possibility of resistance as well as the strategies of the Egyptian dissent to challenge the existence of the state of emergency. I show that the elaboration of resistance adds an important angle to the sociopolitical ramifications of the securitization process. On the one hand, it allows for a reconstruction of the immense empowerment of securitizing actors and security professionals guaranteed by the securitization process. On the other hand, it

emphasizes the constrained possibilities individuals have, especially in authoritarian contexts, to challenge a dominant securitization discourse.

Recent political developments that have unfolded since the 2011 revolution are a testimony to the relevance of this thesis. The re-emergence of the securitization of the terrorist threat in the aftermath of Muhammad Mursi's removal in 2013 is addressed in the **chapter 6**.

Chapter 7 outlines the underlying scholarly contributions made by this thesis to the field of research dedicated to modern Egypt as well as to securitization scholarship and suggests points for further scholarly exploration.

2. Securitization theory meets Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben

This chapter introduces the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological underpinnings of my research. A solid foundation is necessary to explore the sustained state of emergency, its relation to the threat of terrorism, and the oppression of large segments of the Egyptian society during the reign of Husni Mubarak (1981-2011). As outlined in the introduction, I regard the state of emergency in Egypt as both an exceptional policy measure to address a perceived threat of terrorism and a political strategy to delegitimize and potentially suppress political opposition, which can be best understood and analyzed as a securitization process (Buzan, et al., 1998).

Grounded in the social-constructivist tradition of security studies, securitization theory offers insights into the processes of constructing (in)security and their relationship to exceptional security measures. In order to address the central question of this thesis: *how the state of emergency as an exceptional, temporal security policy became a permanent condition of the Egyptian sociopolitical reality*, I view securitization as an ongoing process, allowing for a perpetual exception.

To frame my research theoretically, I outline a combination of Copenhagen and Paris schools of security studies. Specifically, I demonstrate that the Copenhagen school's emphasis on exception as a result of successful securitization can be effectively complemented by Paris school's focus on the security practices of professionals in the security field (see also Bourbeau, 2014). Yet, in order to make sense of the link between security and perpetual exception, I suggest that the social-constructivist approach to security has to be deepened by post-structuralist insights into modern statecraft and exceptionalism. In particular, I employ Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality and Giorgio Agamben's conceptualization of exception to illuminate how the securitization of terrorism was embedded into the Egyptian political order as well as how the securitization process specifically related to mechanisms of exclusion on behalf of security.

Based on this theoretical framework, this chapter goes on to outline the three major arguments that guide the empirically oriented chapters of this thesis. First, I maintain that in order to analyze the Egyptian securitization and its perpetuation, it is crucial to first account for the framing of the threat through both spoken and written forms as well as security practices. The framing of the terrorist threat informs the everyday enforcement of the exceptional security measures. In return, the everyday conduct of security professionals participating in the counterterrorism campaign confirms the urgency of the threat and validates knowledge produced about the threat as a true representation of the social reality.

Second, I argue that the securitization process can be viewed as a process which allows for government intervention in the life of the governed society. Securitization in

particular, if re-articulated as a biopolitical process of optimization, (re)defines worthy and unworthy lives by classifying some lives as dangerous. Using protection of the worthy forms of life as a justification, it renders the exceptional treatment of those deemed unworthy possible. Accordingly, it makes the existence and evolution of legal black holes, such as secret detention cells of the Egyptian secret services, feasible.

Third, I maintain that in order to make sense of perpetual securitization, which is expressed in Egypt in the lengthy period of the state of emergency, it is necessary to concentrate on resistance or, in this case, the lack thereof. Based on my premise that as long as securitization is not resisted it can be perpetuated, the absence of resistance to securitization emerges as a central element of a perpetual securitization. In particular, I argue that the lack of resistance might be viewed as a direct effect of securitization, especially in the contexts of authoritarian governance. The exceptional security measures, which are introduced through securitization process, are used not only to counter the threat, but might be also employed to silence the opposition to the securitization process.

The chapter proceeds in three parts. First, it outlines the theoretical tenets of securitization theory and suggests combining of Copenhagen and Paris school's models of securitization theory complemented by Michel Foucault's governmentality and Giorgio Agamben's exception. In the second step, the chapter develops a conceptual framework, which concentrates on the dynamics of perpetual securitization. Drawing on Foucault's post-structuralist insights into modern statecraft and the art of governance as well as Agamben's conceptualization of exception, I introduce the truth-exception-resistance model as a promising conceptual tool for exploring the sociopolitical ramifications of a securitization process. Uniquely, this instrument can be used to examine lengthy securitization cases. In the concluding section, the chapter outlines the methodological approach of this work and introduces the empirical material, its collection, and analysis in greater detail.

2.1. Studying security

Twenty years after the formulation of securitization by Ole Wæver (1995) and its further development by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde in *Security. A New Framework for Analysis* (1998), securitization theory now forms one of the most dynamic and contested fields of security studies (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 212). Securitization theory attracts a number of scholars interested in studying security as a process through which certain issues are constructed as problems and threats to the majority society (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 3). Although Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, widely referred to as Copenhagen school of security studies (CS), were not the first to link socially constructed problems to matters of security (see e.g. Michel Foucault's *Society must be defended*), they were the first ones to offer a comprehensive

analytical toolbox to examine discursive framing of security. In particular, the securitization framework has proven very handy to study processes through which a variety of issues, for instance, combustion of fossil fuels, swine flu, or immigration, are framed and treated as security issues (Balzacq, et al., 2014; Taureck, 2006: 55).

The large body of empirical studies inspired by the securitization framework is a testimony to the popularity of the concept. The bulk of empirical research has been in one of the following themes: migration (e.g. Bigo, 2002, 2007, 2008b; Huysmans, 2000; Walters, 2008; Bourbeau, 2014), global health (e.g. Sjöstedt, 2011), and environmental issues and conflict (Trombetta, 2011; Christou and Adamides, 2013; Diez, et al., 2016; Stetter, et al., 2011). Each entertain diverse scholarly debates (see Balzacq, et al., 2015: 14-21).

Although I draw from valuable insights offered by empirically oriented securitization studies, the focus on the securitization of the terrorism threat in Egypt takes me out of the mainstream securitization scholarship for two reasons. First, 9/11 and the “global war on terror” contributed to a significant rise of terrorism-related securitization studies (e.g. Abrahamsen, 2005; Aradau and van Munster, 2008; Salter, 2008). Yet, terrorism as a subject of securitization theory has not been addressed in relation to the oppression of political dissent through the counterterrorism policies. Second, although securitization scholarship more recently has started to include contexts beyond Europe and the Western world (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 14; cf. Wilkinson, 2007), securitization’s practical application outside the scope of Western/liberal democracies is still sparse (see e.g. Vuori on China, 2011; Julius on Nigeria, 2014; see also Bilgin, 2011). By scrutinizing securitization outside the Western/liberal democracies, this thesis aspires to enrich the securitization scholarship.

2.1. Plurality of securitizations

Based in International Relations (IR) studies, the CS reflections on security and security processes combine elements of the English school (Buzan) and post-structuralism (Wæver) and this combination “creates a complex and dynamic, yet also vulnerable, theoretical position” (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 452). As a result, securitization theory has fostered an intense debate since the 1990s. The discussion has produced different, and often opposite, sets of arguments, views, and positions on how to explain the mechanisms of securitization and how to improve the explanatory capacities of the securitization concept as such (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 215-217). In some cases, the variety of epistemological and ontological positions has even led scholars to completely opposite conclusions on the same empirical cases (Balzacq, et al., 2014: 3).

As there is no prevailing consensus about what securitization *is*, some prefer to speak rather of “various theories *of* securitization” (Balzacq, et al., 2014: 8). Accordingly,

there are numerous ways to classify the securitization research. While some define securitization/security research by individual “schools of thought” such as Copenhagen, Paris, and Aberystwyth/Welsh (Wæver, 2004), others (e.g. Salter and Mutlu, 2013) prefer to focus on respective approaches to the security analysis and distinguish between discursive analytical approach faithful to the CS initial model and a Bourdieusian-inspired political sociology approach. These categorizations are, of course, only points of orientation. By no means should they be understood as neat, rigid categories or unitary schools of thought (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 4-5; see also c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 444; Wæver, 2004).

The variety of definitions notwithstanding, I follow the classification of the securitizing scholarship according to individual schools. In particular, I draw from the CS model of securitization, which is based on the logic of exception (Buzan, et al., 1998), and combine it with the emphasis on routinized practices of political and security professionals addressed by the Paris school (e.g. Bigo, 2002, 2007). While the CS model allows me to examine a securitization process located beyond the realm of normality, the PS approach to securitization adds the analytically important emphasis on security practices and security professionals. By combining the two, I can examine security practices in the realm of exception and its relevance for the persistence of a securitization process.

2.1.1 Securitization as an exception

According to the CS, securitization is a process in which a securitizing actor, such as the Egyptian government, presents something, such as terrorism, through a (series of) speech-act(s) as an existential threat. On behalf of a threatened referent object, the securitizing actor then claims urgency “to tackle this problem” because otherwise “everything else will be irrelevant (because we will not be here or will not be free to deal with it in our own way)” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24). He therefore claims the necessity to act extraordinarily and adopt measures beyond “the normal political rules of game” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24). This can be, for instance, levying conscription (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24), a forced eviction of indigenous inhabitants of Diego Garcia, an island in the Indian ocean, to make way for a US military base (Salter and Mutlu, 2013), launching a military operation in Iraq (e.g. O’Reilly, 2008; Roe, 2008), or a declaration of the state of emergency as was the case in Egypt in 1981.

In contrast to the state-centered realist views on security, which reduce security to military and national security matters and put the state as the main referent object, the Copenhagen school’s analysis of security builds upon the intersubjectivity of the security process (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 3).⁶ An issue becomes securitized “only if and

⁶ The intersubjectivity of security is an important element of securitization theory, which was added by the CS to the original formulation of securitization by Ole Wæver (1995) in his essay *Securitization and desecuritization*.

when the audience accepts it as such” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 25). The approval by an audience, which does not have to necessarily emerge out of “civilized, dominance-free discussion” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 25), is then a crucial condition for a successful securitization. Without it, security is reduced to a self-referential practice centered on the speech acts of securitizing actors. Hence, whether something is considered a security issue is not an objective matter nor based solely on claims of securitizing actors. Security is “dependent on its successful construction in discourse” (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 213), which necessitates an approval of an audience. In result, securitization makes an issue “a security issue—not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such as a threat” and accepted as such (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24).

The urgency of the threat is constructed in a way that an adequate response does not bear waiting nor can it be located within the sphere of normal procedures. Instead the threat must “be dealt with decisively by top leaders prior to other issues” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 29). The policies and measures to address the threat are thus often marked by their speedy adoption void of political deliberation which “suspends the possibilities of judicial review or other modalities of public influence upon bureaucratic or executive decisions” (Aradau, 2004: 392; see also Buzan, et al., 1998: 25). The exigency to act requires quick and decisive decisions which contest not only “the viability of deliberation”, but also “support[s] strengthening executive-centred government, and suppress[es] dissent” (Huysmans, 2004: 332).

In reference to Carl Schmitt’s position on exception and politics, the CS views security as a realm of exception (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 3; Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 213). When an issue is successfully securitized it is moved from normal politics to the realm of security, where exceptional steps are rendered possible. For the CS, securitization thus reinforces the binary distinction between the normal, ordinary issues of the political agenda and the security issues which need to be addressed by means that suspend the normal rules (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24-25). In this sense, if securitization is successful, i.e., the existential threat is identified and the audience is persuaded of the threat’s pertinence, the existing rules are broken to address the threat (Buzan, et al., 1998: 26; Taureck, 2006: 55). Hence, the process of securitization implies a significant disruption of the sociopolitical reality because it allows for policies and measures that suspend existing rules.

The CS model links securitization to an extremity, a disruption, and an illiberal excess. As such, it has explanatory powers to make sense of a disruptive political conduct which evokes extreme solutions as a necessary answer to a perceived threat. Specifically, the underlying logic of exception provides, on the one hand, valuable insights into the processes of securitization, which unfold after major discursive events, such as terrorist attacks or environmental catastrophes (see Buzan and Wæver, 2009:

267). On the other hand, although the CS mode of exception is not necessarily suitable for all securitization cases, it has particularly strong explanatory powers for securitization processes, such as the Egyptian securitization of terrorism, which are, empirically speaking, clearly located in the realm of exception.

2.1.2. Securitization as a routinized practice

Securitization as a routinized practice is associated with the Paris school of security studies (PS). Contrary to the CS, the PS roots its approach to security not in IR debates but in political theory and sociology (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 446). In particular, it draws heavily from Michel Foucault's analytic of government combined with the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 3-4, 11-12; Bourbeau, 2014: 190) and streams its focus to "security professionals, the governmental rationality of security, and the political structuring effects of security technology and knowledge" (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 448-449). Didier Bigo, whose scholarly work is central to the Paris school and was originally accessible only in French (Bourbeau, 2014: 190),⁷ was among the first ones to view securitization as a product of routinized practices of professionals in the field of security.⁸

In contrast to the CS, Bigo (2002, 2007) argues that securitization is more than a discursive framing of the threat through speech-acts. Although, the discursive framing of security is important, Bigo maintains that the transformation of security happens rather through the mundane and routinized bureaucratic practices of security professionals (Bigo, 2008b). In this view, securitization develops through unspectacular channels that involve daily routines, range of bureaucratic practices, and everyday governmental security technologies, such as surveillance, risk management, or prevention (Williams, 2003: 524; Huysmans, 2011: 375; Abrahamsen, 2005; Aradau, et al., 2008).

Accordingly, unlike the CS, the PS does not view security as a realm of exception. The analytical focus on practices, daily routine, and security technologies leads the PS scholars to argue that security is not about exception or survival (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008: 5; Bigo, 2008a: 113). Nor is security for the PS another realm of politics or politics beyond the normal rules as the CS argues (Bigo, 2002: 72; Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008: 5). According to the PS, the sharp distinction between politics and exception as maintained by the CS cannot account for security processes, such as global warming, which do not necessarily attain the immediate notion of exception or ever reach it (Abrahamsen, 2005: 61, 71). Instead, in reference to routinized practices of security

⁷ Much of the PS work had been initially done and published in French. Hence, the language barrier slowed down the initial distribution of the PS thoughts within the international field of security studies. See c.a.s.e. collective (2006: 449).

⁸ There are, of course, also other scholars, such as Jeff Huysmans, Anastassia Tsoukala, or Phillippe Bonditti who study securitization through the prism of routinized practices of security professionals.

professionals (e.g. Bigo, 2008b) or assemblage of practices (e.g. Balzacq, 2011a: 3) which are prioritized in the PS scholarly work, the PS views securitization as a part of a field of (in)security (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 457; Bigo, 2008b), where the internal/external divisions of politics/security “are constantly redefined by those involved in this field” (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 12). Securitization is then less about a sudden, disruptive adoption of exceptional measures than about the continuous actions of the cogs in the wheel. In the PS view, securitization emerges rather as a result of routinized, mundane, everyday practices of bureaucracies and institutions which create a sense of insecurity and of a constant risk (see e.g. Abrahamsen, 2005; Bigo, 2002, 2007; Balzacq, et al., 2015: 12; Olesker, 2014).

It is obvious that the PS logic of routine and its focus on the everyday practices is particularly helpful to examine processes of securitization which empirically do not display normality/exception dichotomies (Aradau, et al., 2008: 149), as they do not necessarily integrate the disruption and exceptional overriding of the existing rules as the CS model assumes (see e.g. Lupovici, 2014; Abrahamsen, 2005; Bigo, 2002). Yet, along with the most recent security studies which have shown integration of both routinized security practices and exceptionalist security discourses (Bourbeau, 2014: 202; Bourbeau and Vuori, 2015), I regard the PS emphasis on the security practices of security professionals as also highly relevant for securitizations which are located in the realm of exception. Moreover, I maintain that the focus on the practices of everyday routines of bureaucracies and institutions, such as profiling, risk assessment, data collection and so forth, is particularly helpful to understand how securitizations are perpetuated over time as the inquiry into the everyday practices allows investigators “to understand how discourses work in practice” (Bigo, 2002: 73).

2.1.2. Between exception and routine

Even though the approaches of the Copenhagen and Paris schools occupy different positions on matters of exception and routine, the securitization models do not necessarily exclude each other (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 12; Bourbeau, 2014) nor are they methodologically incompatible (Julius, 2014). The empirically oriented studies (see e.g. Abrahamsen, 2005; Mavelli, 2013; Julius, 2014) frequently integrate insights from both approaches “in order to best tackle specific empirical puzzles” (Balzacq, et al. 2015: 14). My approach towards the securitization of the terrorism threat in Egypt is not different. In line with Bourbeau’s position who advocates “the coexistence and complementarity of the two logics” (2014: 188) in order to address the matter of securitization continuity and change (2014: 191), I combine theoretical and analytical elements of both schools on exception and routine, which I view as necessary to address the lengthy securitization process under scrutiny. To develop the combination of both perspectives on perpetual securitization both theoretically and conceptually, I further

draw on Michel Foucault's governmentality and biopolitical mode of governance as well as Giorgio Agamben's conceptualization of exception.

2.1.3. From Copenhagen to Paris

In this thesis I maintain that the conceptualization of securitization through the discourses of exceptionality and danger as proposed by the CS reflects the social reality of the empirical case under scrutiny. The assassination of president Anwar al-Sadat in 1981 was a major disruption to the Egyptian political order and created a sense of urgency to address the terrorist threat and to apprehend the assassins. Immediately after the assassination, the Egyptian authorities declared the state of emergency. From its outset in the early 1980s, securitization of terrorism moved the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign "beyond the established rules of the game" (Buzan, et al., 1998: 23). As the short lapse of time between al-Sadat's assassination and the declaration of state of emergency indicates, the assassination created a situation, "in which case an issue is no longer debated as a political question, but dealt with at an accelerated pace and in ways that may violate normal and social rules" (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 214). The logic *if we don't act now, it will be too late* strengthened the sense atmosphere of urgency; the security claims of the Egyptian government utilized this to implement extraordinary measures. For instance, the initial security claims involved powerful references to the Iranian Islamic revolution as a worst-case scenario and a powerful deterrence. Although later the content of the security claims changed, the message remained the same: the violence associated with Egyptian Islamist groups was framed as an extraordinary threat which was to be treated "either as a special kind of politics or as above politics" (Buzan et al., 1998: 23).

The urgency, which catalyzed the securitization process in the beginning, did not, however, disappear over the time as the PS routine logic of securitization would suggest. Instead, it was maintained throughout the following three decades, in which the Egyptian government's mode of operation was different than it would have been otherwise. Accordingly, as Buzan and Hansen (2009: 214) point out, in these kinds of securitization contexts political discussions associated with the processes of politizations, in which the issue is a part of public policy and is as such discussed, are sidelined and invalidated.

In Egypt, fighting terrorism was depicted as a matter of survival and national duty (*al-darura al-wataniyya*) and classified as a topic beyond any political discussion. Alternative views were sanctioned as disloyal, betraying the nation, and their advocates were often persecuted. The perceived necessity to act without delay in order to save the Egyptian population from the immediate threat of terrorism became an underlying imperative of the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign. Although the drama associated with the framing of the terrorism threat decreased over time, the process of

securitization and the security measures to counter the threat continued to be situated within the realm of exception (Buzan, et al., 1998: 28). Hence contrary to the position of the Paris school, which locates securitization processes in the field of insecurity and below extremity, I adhere to the CS position on exception and maintain that the Egyptian securitization of terrorism is a case of securitization located in the realm of exception.

The CS explanatory powers notwithstanding, the distinction between normal politics and the realm of exception the CS does not offer much theoretical insights into the dynamics of cases of perpetual securitization (Bourbeau, 2014: 191). In particular, the intersubjectively communicated persistence of the threat is the only factor the CS mentions with regard to the sustained processes of securitization (Buzan, et al., 1998: 27-28; Adamides, 2012: 43f). Although the framing of the threat is a valid aspect to be considered in relation to perpetual securitization – especially with regard to vaguely defined threats such as terrorism –, it is not sufficient to explain the sustainment of securitization and related exceptional policies for more than three decades. In other words, the discursive framing of the terrorist threat was clearly important to the perpetuation of the securitization process in Egypt, though the Egyptian securitization could have been hardly sustained and legitimized only through securitizing speech-acts of the Egyptian government.

Here, the Paris school's engagement with everyday security and bureaucratic rationalities of the political and security professionals offers promising theoretical and analytical tools to explore the persistence of securitization discourses (Bigo, 2002, 2007; see also Buzan and Wæver, 2009: 267; Bourbeau, 2014: 191). With respect to perpetuation of the security process, the analysis of the everyday counterterrorism practices of the Egyptian security apparatus offers especially valuable hints to “why the discourses of securitization continue to be so powerful even when alternatives discourses are well known” (Bigo, 2002: 65).

2.1.4. Paris and beyond

To integrate the routinized practices of security professionals into the securitization framework, I follow scholars of the Paris school (see e.g. Bigo, 2002; Aradau and van Munster, 2008; Balzacq, 2011a) and, like the PS scholars, I draw from Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality. Foucault's governmentality allows me, in particular, to address the security practices as a part of processes and practices through which a society is governed and optimized. Thus, it also enables me to elaborate on the security practices of the Egyptian security apparatus in relation to perpetuation of the securitization process.

Governmentality is here primarily understood as “a research perspective”⁹ (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 15) which challenges the understanding of the state as “an assumed entity and identity” through “[t]he decentering or decomposition of the state into the processes that constitute and stabilize it” (Saar, 2011: 39). Its theoretical and analytical focus goes beyond mere *government* and the institutional framework of governance. It investigates the statecraft through governmental practices (Saar, 2011: 39; Foucault, 2009: 108-109) and biopolitical operations centered on bettering and normalization of life (Fassin, 2011: 186f). In this sense, governmentality as “a toolbox for contemporary criticism of the state” (Saar, 2011: 35) can account for practices and processes of governance, including the everyday practices, decisions, and procedures of security and political professionals, as well as power relations within these processes (Sending and Neumann, 2006: 652, 655). In this sense, governmentality can include the analytical dimension of both texts as well as practices (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 24).

Governmentality links securitization to “a more encompassing rationalization of conduct which includes rules of judgment, legitimate goals, and elaborate procedures for reaching these goals” (Opitz, 2011: 104). Since governmentality “goes beyond a narrow focus on the direct exercise of state power” (Joseph, 2010: 225), it allows for the exploration of the everydayness of state’s intervention in individuals’ lives. It thus facilitates the examination of how security practices, such as surveillance, arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial decisions, or torture of suspected terrorists, emerge, function, and are rendered meaningful in a respective discursive context (Foucault, 2009: 277; Joseph, 2010: 223; Larsen, 2011: 204-205; Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 11; Balzacq, et al., 2015: 4, 12). When zoomed in on security matters, governmentality enables the theorization and analysis of security technologies, such as check-points, statistics, wire-taps, CCTVs, body scanners, or laws (Opitz, 2011: 104), which underpin the everyday practices of security and political professionals, embody their mindset, and “organise the interactions among members of the field of insecurity” (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 13).

Moreover, as Bigo (2008a) suggests in his work, and this thesis pursues further, if governmentality is also understood as a form of governance (see Stetter and Busse, 2014), it also provides valuable insights into processes of societal inclusion/exclusion, which are highly relevant in securitization contexts. In particular, governmentality integrates the notion of an interventionist biopolitical concern for life of the governed population and its betterment through optimization techniques and strategies (see Lemke, 2011; Krasmann, 2011; Larsen, 2011). The bettering of the life of the governed society then revolves around questions of how to keep certain societal phenomena, such as mortality, criminality, environmental damage, and others “within socially and economically acceptable limits and around an average”, which can “be considered as optimal for a given social functioning” (Foucault, 2009: 5). Based on “constituting

⁹ Foucault’s governmentality can be also interpreted and understood as a historiographic project, see Saar (2011), Stetter and Busse (2014).

statistical regularity and classifying procedures which distribute events into particular categories” (Bigo, 2008a: 105), the governmentalized state relies on the identification of abnormality which threatens the betterment of societal life. The governing is not based on “a binary division between the permitted and the prohibited” (Foucault, 2009: 5). Instead, it relies on the continuous (re)establishment of what is optimal, i.e. what falls within “a bandwidth of the acceptable that must not be exceeded” (Foucault, 2009: 6).

Governmentality is thus not just a research perspective to address processes and practices through which society is governed. As a specific form of governance, it also addresses questions about what forms of life are optimal and admissible and what forms of life are not (see Bigo, 2008b). The Egyptian securitization of the terrorism threat, for instance, (re)produced the notion of an optimized citizen as an acceptable and protected form of life, while it designated diverse groups of people, such as Islamists, human rights activists, political dissenters, and others, as unacceptable threats to the optimized Egyptian life whose life was thus not worthy of the protection (see chapter 3).

2.2. The conceptual framework

Based on the theoretical pillars outlined above I will, in the following pages, introduce a conceptual framework tailored to the empirical case under scrutiny. Since I am interested in how *the state of emergency became a permanent condition of the Egyptian sociopolitical reality*, I will, in the conceptual part of this thesis, address the matter of perpetual securitization. Specifically, I will outline my T-E-R conceptual model that is based on following three dimensions: the dimension of truth; the dimension of exception; and the dimension of resistance, wherein I locate and identify factors pertinent for the perpetuation of securitization.

2.2.1. The truth

Many securitization studies intensely engage with securitizing actors. This often leads them to analytically focus on the effect of the threat’s framing, i.e., something is framed as a threat, and less on the process itself, i.e., how is something framed as a threat. I, however, maintain that the examination of how an issue is constructed as a threat is needed to map asymmetric power/knowledge relations (re)produced by securitization.

With regard to the question of perpetual securitization, I argue that the knowledge produced through the framing of a threat becomes embedded into existing regimes of truth. Once embedded, it becomes a part of the “general politics” of truth that shape the meanings of security embodied in the discourse, influence our way of understanding of and talking about security (Jørgensen and Philips, 2002: 1; Bigo, 2002: 69f), and suggests who does or does not have the authority to decide on security matters (Bevir, 1999: 66). The regimes of truth “enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the

means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Foucault, 2002: 131) by setting the “rules according to which true and false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true” (Foucault, 2002: 132). Hence the regimes of truth give us a sense of what normality in a respective social context is. They, for instance, inform us about which forms of conduct and who are perceived as acceptable and normal and who are not (Tagma, 2009: 409f; see also Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 12-13). Knowledge, which is (re)produced by securitization and codified as “true” into regimes of truth, influences the rules for true and false in the discourse on security. It (re)configures the true false dichotomy for which security risks, conduct, forms of life or security measures are acceptable and which are not and thus informs our everyday conduct, guiding the everyday decisions, processes, and societal interactions.

The codification of securitization knowledge into regimes of truth bears a major implication for the persistence of securitization. Although we do not have to be necessarily convinced of the danger linked to a perceived threat, regimes of truth nevertheless inform our thinking, structure our behavior, and shape our understanding of social reality in such a way that our everyday conduct likely reinforces the existing securitization process (see Bigo, 2002). Knowledge produced by securitization and codified as “truth” in the discourse becomes part of the “everyday explanation of the political and social world” (Bigo, 2002: 69).

This is valid for all actors involved in the securitization process. Although securitizing actors themselves must not necessarily believe the framing of the threat which they (re)produce in their securitizing claims (Bigo, 2002), the regimes of truth inform their conduct and underpin their political struggles. In Egypt, for instance, knowledge produced by the securitization of terrorism, which linked terrorism and Islamists, is so deeply rooted in the discourse as a “true” representation of social reality that it made it difficult if not impossible to question the re-emerged securitization of terrorism under al-Sisi leadership (see chapter 6).

The emergence of knowledge and its codification into regimes of truth is central to securitization, though it is not an inherent feature of all securitization attempts. Not all security statements are circulated and replicated within the discourse with the same intensity. The inequality in their distribution and emergence as security “truths” reflects structural modes of dominance, which locate subjects in diverse positions within the discourse (Buzan, et al., 1998: 31-33). In this regard, the inequality is manifested through divergence in social capital and an access to the discourse granted to individual subjects or groups of subjects (Abrahamsen, 2005: 58). Some individuals are in privileged positions to utter and circulate their security statements within the discourse while others are not.

This does not, however, imply that an individual or a group of individuals can control the security meaning in the discourse (Bigo, 2002, 2007). Securitization is an intersubjective process (Buzan, et al., 1998: 30) and as such cannot be effectively controlled by a single actor or a group of actors. Securitization exceeds the capacities of actors to be fully managed, since the securitizing actors have limited control over the perlocutionary effect of their security utterances (Huysmans, 2007: 55f). The meaning of security is ultimately not bound to subjects, but it rests within and between them (Buzan, et al, 1998: 31). It is constructed through interactions between various actors and their subjective interpretations, which encounter each other in different fields of human interactions (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 58; Huysmans, 2007: 55f).

2.2.1.1. Optimizing a worthy us and an unworthy them

Securitization produces depictions of the threat which are then proliferated in the discourse. Thereby it also (re)produces fundamental biopolitical dichotomies between the life that deserves protection, i.e. the referent object, and the life which threatens the referent object, i.e., the security targets; securitization necessarily involves the position “us against them” (Abrahamsen, 2005: 60). In this sense, the framing of the threat frequently involves stereotyping and reductionist arguments which overlook the complexity of the issue at stake (Bigo, 2002: 80). *Them* is framed as a threat and classified as a dangerous figure, whilst *us* is idealized and celebrated as the normative flip-side (Bigo, 2002: 70). The hostile *other* reproduces the identity of self on the basis of its difference from the *other* (Mavelli, 2013: 163; Campbell, 1998). In times of crises, furthermore, the appeal on the imagined unity and social cohesiveness of *us* against *them* resonates within the society and downplays dissenting voices as a betrayal (Huysmans, 2004: 333; see also Vuori, 2011: 197f). Most importantly, however, the framing of the threat (re)establishes the binary divisions between *us*, i.e., what must be protected, and *them*, i.e., what can be excluded (Holm, 2003: 277ff; Mavelli, 2013: 180; see also Buzan and Wæver 2009: 262-263). Securitization thus (re)produces knowledge which re-configures regimes of truth and related rules of what forms of life are worthy of governmental protection and who is dangerous and/or unworthy of governmental protection.

In this regard, securitization can be understood also as a process of inclusion and exclusion through which the life of the governed population is optimized. As in a governmentalized state, the life of the governed society and its well-being arise as an ultimate goal of governmental techniques and strategies (Foucault, 2009: 105; Lemke, 2011: 165-166; Larsen, 2011: 204-205), those who are evaluated as dangerous to the societal well-being are addressed by means of exceptional security measures. The end of government is, in this sense, “not just to govern, but to improve the condition of the population, to increase its wealth, its longevity, and its health” (Foucault, 2009: 105). The referent object in this thesis is the Egyptian society; the populace is not merely an

object to be protected. It is also a subject to governmental intervention as it is optimized and reconfigured through the securitization process. In particular, I argue that securitization provides a justification for a government intervention in the life of the referent object (see also Bigo, 2008b), as it allows for the redefinition of which lives are worthy or not of protection, which forms of conduct are or are not acceptable, and, critically, which forms of conduct are classified as dangerous. As I will show in detail in the following chapter, the framing of the terrorist *other* involved also constructing the ideal *us*.

This argument also points out at the analytical significance of the dangerous other. The threat, i.e. the dangerous other, renders the protection and optimization of the referent object meaningful. Notwithstanding its analytical pertinence to the securitization analysis, securitization scholarship tends to overlook the dangerous other as an analytical category (Vuori, 2011). Therefore, in extension to Vuori's work (2011), in which he elaborated on the significance of Falungong as the Chinese dangerous other, I add the dangerous other to the analytical framework of this thesis. Coined as security targets I view the inquiry into the dangerous other as a promising addition to the securitization analysis which can answer "towards whom and with what consequences" securitization is aimed at (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008: 5).

In reference to the referent object, security targets are framed as unacceptable threats to the optimized life of the governmentalized society. The targets are constructed as beyond the bandwidth of acceptability. Through this framing they are excluded from the society. This way, their life becomes devoid of any value to the optimized society (see Tagma, 2009; Agamben, 1998) and might, if the securitization is successful, i.e., if the extraordinary security measures are adopted, be subjected to exceptional security measures, such as arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detentions, ill-treatment, torture, and extra-judicial killings (see chapter 4). Like the referent objects, security targets are subjected to governmental intervention (see also Abrahamsen, 2005: 71).

2.2.1.2. (Re)producing knowledge in the securitization context

The process of constructing a threat is irreducible to a discursive enunciation of securitizing actors (e.g. Hansen, 2000, 2011; Williams, 2003; Mavelli, 2013; Wilkinson, 2007; c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 459; Sjöstedt, 2011). It involves a mobilization of the power-knowledge nexus (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 457), which links the preexisting truths, such as the deep legacy of mutual hostilities between the state and Islamists groups in Egypt, expressed in past experiences and narratives, to current threats (Mavelli, 2013: 180; see also Bourbeau, 2014: 188). Thus, although speech acts of securitizing actors still play a certain role in creating "a scene in which actors and things are brought into a relation that challenges a given way of doing things" (Huysmans, 2011: 372-373), the mobilization of political discourses exceeds the enunciations of

securitizing actors (McDonald, 2008: 564; Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008: 4; Bigo, 2002; Mavelli, 2013: 171; Balzacq, 2005: 172ff).

The integration of the security practices into the securitization framework, pioneered by the Paris school, is crucial as it opens promising analytical horizons to study securitization. In particular, the securitization analysis becomes more comprehensive since it can account for “multiple actors, multiple audiences and multiple transnational encounters in different discursive locales” (Stritzel, 2011: 350). While the securitizing actors remain significant with regard to their role in producing and mobilizing of the security knowledge and related practices anchored in the discourse (Bigo, 2002; Balzacq, 2011a: 3; Huysmans, 2002: 58), they are not the sole actors actively (re)producing the security knowledge in the discourse. For instance, as the record of the PS scholarship demonstrates, security professionals, a unit otherwise overlooked by the CS’s narrow view on the speech-act as a security enunciation, is a category of paramount importance to (re)production of specific security knowledge in the discourse and construction of regimes of truth (Bigo, 2002: 76; Bigo, 2008b; c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 457-458; Mavelli, 2013: 174; see also Aradau, 2004: 395).

The security professionals, such as the police, military, and *mukhabarat* (intelligence services), through their daily practice and expert knowledge, overlay and invest “the terms that political actors use to label and frame the issues” (Bigo, 2008b: 26). Moreover, their everyday struggles with security targets, be it terrorists, drug dealers, or immigrants, legitimizes the security professionals to speak about risk and security (Bigo, 2002; 2008b) and thus to shape the security priorities of the state (Berling, 2011: 386f). Their exclusive access to “a knowledge beyond the grasp” of security amateurs (Bigo, 2002: 74) is secured through their institutional embodiment in the official security structures. As such, it then also strengthens “the belief that they know what “we” (nonprofessionals, security amateurs) do not know” (Bigo, 2002: 74). Empowered with “the authority of statistics” based on their surveillance technologies, such as wire-taps, computerized databases, CCTVs, population’s registers and others, their security expertise is then easily validated as a “true” account of social reality (Bigo, 2002: 75; Bigo, 2008b: 12; see also Berling, 2011).

The security professionals are thereby in position to produce authoritative knowledge about security through which they “determine what is and what is not a threat or a risk (Bigo, 2002: 74).” Thus, they are in position to designate specific groups as a risk, “even before they have done anything, simply by categorizing them, anticipating profiles of risk from previous trends, and projecting them by generalization upon the potential behavior of each individual pertaining to the risk category” (Bigo, 2002: 81; see also Aradau and van Munster, 2008: 30f; Hansen, 2004). Though, their security expertise is likely embedded in the discourse and validated as “truth”, it does not necessarily imply that it is a veracious account of social reality.

Besides the security professionals, there are, of course, further actors who actively (re)produce security knowledge in the discourse (Bourbeau, 2014: 192). As the Egyptian case shows, the persistence of the Egyptian securitization of the terrorism threat, which integrated discourses on Islam, would have been hardly possible without the involvement of key religious authorities, such as al-Azhar, and the proliferation of the security knowledge in the public discourses through Egyptian media (see chapter 3). The CS deems these actors to be functional: “Without being the referent object or the actor calling for security on the behalf of the referent object,” the functional actors intervene in the securitization process in a way that they “significantly influence[s] decisions in the field of security” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 36). Like the security professionals, functional actors have capacity to co-shape and legitimize the security knowledge in the discourse, yet lack the institutional capacity to enforce security.

2.2.1.3. Confirming the meaningfulness of security professionals

The matter of securitization’s persistence also deserves to inquire into rationales which lead actors to securitize and (re)produce specific security claims in the discourse. As far as a securitization process is not an innocent process, it bears significant political and societal implications, including the oppression of the political opposition, as it was the case in Egypt (Abrahamsen, 2005: 57, 68).

For the CS, the initiation of a securitization process is bound to securitizing actors and their speech-acts (Buzan, et al., 1998: 40-41). The motivation of securitizing actors to securitize is explained by two externally defined factors, i.e., by the need to protect the referent object and the relevance of the threat, which is intersubjectively negotiated. As far as the personal interests of securitizing actors to securitize concerns, the CS suggests that the securitizing actors might securitize in order “to defend their own survival” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 40).

Bigo expands on this proposal and claims that the will to securitize, and thus also to (re)produce specific power/knowledge relations, can be driven by fears of securitizing actors to lose their own meaningfulness in the field of the professionals of politics (2002: 65; 2007: 224). The will of political professionals to securitize relates to their desire to reconfirm their function as managers of the governed society who are able to detect security risks and take decisive steps to protect the society (Bigo, 2002: 65). Securitization thus reestablishes their meaningfulness as it allows, especially in non-democratic contexts, to reaffirm the legitimacy of political elite as “the savior and guarantor of the nation” (Vuori, 2011: 197).

In an extension to Bigo’s argument, I maintain that securitization might be also a political strategy to mask failure or incapacity of the political professionals as managers of the governed society in fields such as education, health care, housing development

etc., which are deemed as *less* important in a securitization context.¹⁰ As it will be shown in the following chapter, the Egyptian government, for instance, resorted quite frequently to the notion *security first* in order to justify its idleness in diverse fields, from the development of the country, increase in wages, improving work conditions, political pluralism, to the adoption of a democratic system of governance.

Besides the political professionals, the securitization process also explicitly reconfirms the meaningfulness of security professionals as those who are in position to protect the society from threats and security risks (Bigo, 2007: 224). Without security threats, their function, i.e., to ensure security and address threats, becomes devoid of meaning and the security professionals become irrelevant (Bigo, 2007: 224). The fear of security professionals to lose their meaningfulness is far from abstract. Chapter 4 will discuss how fear is often closely related to “personal, political, and institutional interests” (Bigo, 2008b: 24) which involve the competition over budgets, promotion, relocation, and retirement benefits in detail (see Bigo, 2002: 64; Bigo, 2008b: 12).

The will of security professionals to (re)produce security knowledge and to sustain the securitization process relates also to the empowerment they achieve through a securitization process (Bigo, 2002: 65). The extraordinary security measures, such as the state of emergency or anti-terror legislation, significantly boost the authority, rights, and position of security professionals in the respective sociopolitical context. The empowerment of the Egyptian security apparatus was, for instance, so extensive that the Egyptian officials were virtually granted a status of being *above the law* (see chapter 4). In this regard, it was in the interest of the Egyptian security professionals to uphold the securitization process in order to maintain their empowered status and thereby also to avoid accountability for widespread ill-treatment, torture, and extra-judicial killings of thousands of Egyptians.

2.2.3. The exception

The exceptional framework is an integral part of a successful securitization process. Arguing that the existing order does not provide a sufficient framework to tackle the threat, the securitizing actors pursue the adoption of exceptional steps that breach the existing rules (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24). As in the CS view, the adoption of extraordinary measures signifies a failure to deal with and address the threat within the boundaries of normality (Buzan, et al., 1998: 29), i.e., within the boundaries of liberal democratic principles (Aradau, 2004: 392; Huysmans, 2004: 325; Tjalve, 2011). Whereas such a view is valid in the liberal democratic contexts, it is hardly sustainable in the non-democratic ones where the default settings of normality are not based on democratic principles (Vuori, 2008: 68-69). In order to avoid the normative burden implied in the

¹⁰ For a similar argument in the context of the securitization of the African development under the New Labor of Tony Blair, see Abrahamsen (2005: 74).

definition of normality as a liberal democratic order and exception as its negative inversion, which is analytically useless in the Egyptian authoritarian context, I draw from Giorgio Agamben's conceptualization of exception. I define the exceptional framework as an expression of sovereign power to kill, which is reintroduced into the governmentalized society through the securitization process.

Even though the optimized society is formed and reproduced on the biopolitical notion of fostering life, it does not rule out extraordinary forms of violence towards those classified as a threat to the life and well-being of the governed society (Foucault, 1978: 136-137). In other words, securitization links the biopolitical care for life with the sovereign logics of taking something away (Opitz, 2008; see also Tagma, 2009; Genel, 2006). As a governmental mechanism to macro-manage and optimize, the governed population securitization is not only a process through which unacceptable, threatening individuals or groups are constructed and identified. But it also allows to the securitizing actors to subject designated threats, such as terrorists, homosexuals, immigrants, or infected people, to exceptional forms of violence including ill-treatment in detention, torture during interrogation, or extra-judicial killing.

2.2.3.1. Giorgio Agamben's exception

Similar to the CS, Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer*, draws on Carl Schmitt's work on exception and distinguishes between two normative orders. In line with Schmitt's argumentation, the state of exception is for Agamben (1998: 20-21) the threshold between a normal situation and chaos. It is a situation in which the law is suspended, yet there are still rules that exist and govern life in the exception (see Schmitt, 1979 [1934]: 18-19). Thus, although the ordinary law is suspended, chaos does not prevail (Ojakangas, 2005: 7ff).

The paradigm of a concentration camp is central to Agamben's conceptualization of exception. For Agamben, the camp is a place of a radical form of exception where the law is completely suspended (Agamben, 1998: 120). Whoever is inside the camp, be it the confined individuals or the guards, enter "a zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer made any sense" (Agamben, 1998: 170). The camp is situated outside the normal situation, normal legality, whatever the *normality* refers to in the given societal context. It functions as a zone of indistinction which exists outside the lived normality, yet it is part of the political calculations (Agamben, 1998: 120ff) and optimization strategies of the government.

As I will discuss in detail in chapter 4, the informal detention cells, special interrogation rooms, military bases, where the Egyptian security targets were held, interrogated, and frequently tortured also all function in a zone of indistinction. Although the

securitization of terrorism made their existence as zones of indistinction possible, where exceptional forms of violence were rendered possible, it did not integrate them into the existing legal framework. In line with Agamben's argumentation, the exception is neither inside nor outside the legal realm. Instead, it is a zone in which sovereign power operates through "para-legal detachment from the law" (Opitz, 2011: 106). Security practices, such as torture or extra-judicial killing, legally unfeasible even in authoritarian contexts, are thereby made possible. As such, the exception in form of a zone of indistinction invites security practices for which the law is no longer a prime point of reference. Accordingly, the life of those who are moved to the zone of indistinction is rendered a bare life of *homo sacer*¹¹, stripped of worthiness (Agamben, 1998: 137f).

There are two fundamental facets of the bare life of *homines sacri* in the zones of indistinction, which are essential to address to make sense of the Egyptian exception. First, the bare life of a *homo sacer* can be ended without committing homicide, because killing a bare life constitutes either a special form of crime (e.g. an assassination) or is considered as less than a homicide (Agamben, 1998: 81f). The Egyptian case clearly shows that Egyptian security officials *could* have killed persons in their custody without committing a homicide, i.e., without facing criminal charges for such an act.¹² Second and closely related to prior, the bare life is not a subject to ordinary laws (Agamben, 1998: 102f). This observation is particularly important for the examination of the security practices of the Egyptian security officials, such as unauthorized surveillance, torture, or extrajudicial killings of the alleged terrorists (see chapter 4) and their illegality in Egypt. Both aspects of the life of a *homo sacer* clearly hint at an immense empowerment of those who enter the zones of indistinction as guards. Since the law is invalidated there, the impunity of the guards, in this case of the Egyptian security professionals, is ensured. That said, Agamben's exception can account for legal black holes of securitization processes which integrate security practices justified on the grounds of an existential threat that are illegal and would be under other circumstances unthinkable.

Although the law is rendered an empty signifier within the zones of indistinction, it maintains an important role as a constitutive element of the zones of exceptionality and *homines sacri*. The sovereign decision on exception is not an ad hoc decision nor a whim of a political leader through which law is suspended and exceptional security measures are adopted (Aradau, 2004: 394). The sovereign decision on exception is grounded in the existing juridical order (Agamben, 1998: 15) which offers the government a range of possible steps, including the declaration of the state of

¹¹ *Homo sacer*, a sacred man, is a figure mentioned in the archaic Roman law. According to Agamben's interpretation, the *homo sacer* is a person whose life is located outside both human and divine laws. For a detailed account, see Agamben (1998).

¹² For a detailed account of the impunity culture among the Egyptian security personnel, see e.g. HRW (2011JANa), MEW/HRW (1992JUL), or the testimony written by a former police officer Omar al-Afifi (2008).

emergency, to counter the threat. The adoption of exceptional security measures is thus legitimized with a reference to (expert) knowledge which constructs the image of the threat (Aradau, 2004: 394), as well as with a reference to the existing juridical order which allows to undertake such a step.

2.2.3.2. A note on Agamben's exception

Although I adopt Agamben's conceptualization to examine the Egyptian exceptional framework, I do not subscribe to Agamben's reading of biopolitics. In particular, the priority which Agamben assigns to the sovereign power leads him to argue that "biopower is nothing other than deployment of the structure of sovereignty in the form of the crisis" (Genel, 2006: 58). In this sense, Agamben views *homines sacri* and the zones of indistinction as products of the sovereign exceptionality (Agamben, 1998: 142f, 181).

Along with Tagma (2009: 410) I maintain that the Agambenian zones of indistinction and "dangerous others" are not formed in vacuum. Nor are the exceptional practices of security given by nature or by a transcendent sovereign decision (Bigo, 2002: 68; Bigo, 2008a: 96, 100, 105; Neal, 2010: 144). "The dangerous others" are products of biopolitical optimization processes which have been always underpinned by the regimes of truth shaped by diverse political, cultural, and historical settings. Bare life and zones of indistinction are thus not a given natural fact, but "a juridico-political construction" (Genel, 2006: 60). Accordingly, exceptional practices of security are not apolitical normative constructs, but "are the outcome of political acts by politicians and specialists on threat management" (Bigo, 2002: 68).

Thus, contrary to Agamben's conclusion (1998: 124, 140), I do not suggest that all forms of life in the contemporary world are bare lives exposed to the possibility of being killed any time (Tagma, 2009: 428). Only some forms of life, such as those of terrorists, immigrants, infected persons, and others designated through the biopolitical optimization processes as unworthy or even as a threat to life, might be transformed into bare lives and moved to the spaces of exceptional security practices (Tagma, 2009: 428). Thus, although securitization develops an insecurity of the masses, it eventually targets only the margins (Bigo, 2008a: 105).

The empirical accounts support such a modified reading of Agamben's exception. It is, for instance, commonplace that the special laws and exceptional powers, such as anti-terror legislation, do not simply appear to "suspend every law" (Bigo, 2008b: 33). Instead, "they just derogate from normalized legislation" (Bigo, 2008b: 33) and are likely to be limited in their scope of application to the targeted groups (Gross and

Aoláin, 2006: 171-243; Huysmans, 2004: 329-330).¹³ The societal approval of the exceptional framework is then also likely higher as long as “they [the exceptional practices] are not perceived as detrimental to fundamental liberties because the majority of citizens does not recognize themselves in these marginal groups” targeted by the exceptional practices (Bigo, 2008a: 104-105). The case of Egypt was no different. While the Egyptian security targets were, for instance, subjected to the exceptional courts under the Emergency Law provisions, other criminal acts continued to be dealt with by the regular judiciary within the regular legal framework (Brown, 1997: 112ff; Moustafa, 2008: 151-153).

Clearly not all processes of societal optimization necessarily transform individuals designated as undesirable into *homines sacri* who are expelled into the zones of sovereign exceptionality. Individuals designated as unacceptable might experience various forms of social exclusion and rejections, such as job discrimination, xenophobic expressions, a constrained access to education, and so forth (Debrix and Barder, 2012: 10; Dean, 2010: 143). The biopolitically informed processes of inclusion and exclusion do not automatically imply that the life of targeted persons would be automatically transformed into a bare life that can be exposed to sovereign violence anytime. This transformation, I maintain, occurs only through a successful process of securitization that introduces and makes possible the operation of the zones of indistinction, such as secret detention facilities, or torture chambers, as domains of sovereign violence.

Although, the destructive effect of sovereign power might embody the ultimate form of disallowance of life, death, I assert, and the empirical accounts confirm, that this is an exception rather than a rule (see chapter 4). Specifically, I view the zone of indistinction as a domain of the sovereign power operation which is nevertheless permeated by biopolitical concern for life. As Foucault (2003: 241) puts it:

“I wouldn’t say exactly that sovereignty’s old right—to take life or let live—was replaced, but it came to be complemented by a new right which does not erase the old right but which does penetrate it, permeate it. This is the right, or precisely the opposite right. It is the power to “make” live and “let” die.”

Accordingly, the *modus operandi* of the sovereign power is updated and gains new forms and modalities (see Tagma, 2009: 416). Following this line of argument, I argue that the sovereign right to take life is no longer primarily associated with the physical death of a subject, but rather linked to a form of societal death, which disturbs one’s *bios*. The physical life per se is thus not necessarily killed, but its politico-societal quality expressed in *bios* is disturbed and thereby also the individual capacity to resist (see Bevir, 1999: 73). Not the physical life but the quality of the life, which Foucault (1978: 145) associates with “[t]he “right” to life, to one’s body, to health, to happiness,

¹³ This should, however, not suggest that the boundaries of the designated target group are clear-cut and cannot change over time. This thesis as well as the detailed study of Gross and Aoláin (2006: 220-227) show that it is quite common that the scope of application of the emergency provisions extends over the time and include more target groups.

to the satisfaction of needs, and beyond all the oppressions or “alienations,” the “right” to rediscover what one is and all that one can be”, is exposed to the techniques of sovereign power in the zones of indistinction.

2.2.4. The resistance

The last dimension I focus on is the realm of resistance. My inquiry into the field of resistance is based on the premise that as long as the securitization process is uncontested, it will be upheld. In line with this premise, I concentrate on resistance to the securitization process as an important factor to inquire into a perpetual securitization case.

In the CS securitization model, an issue cannot be successfully securitized without the consent of the others, i.e., an audience (Buzan, et al., 1998: 25; 31). This claim renders the audience an inseparable, fundamental part of any securitization process, as it is the audience that decides whether an issue is or is not a security issue and thus whether the exceptional measures can be adopted or not. Yet, due to the lack of analytical clarity, the audience is a contested category in terms of its definition as well as the empirical identification of the moment when it approves the securitization move (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011; Stritzel, 2007; Balzacq, 2011a; Salter, 2008). As the CS provides no specific hints about how to locate a relevant audience and identify its approval (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011: 58f; McDonald, 2008: 572) the notion of audience gets complicated, particularly on the analytical and empirical levels of securitization studies (see e.g. Balzacq, et al., 2014: 12).

Numerous scholars addressed the problem of the under-theorized audience, an issue acknowledged by the CS itself (Balzacq, 2015: 6), and offered diverse remedies. O'Reilly (2008), for instance, focuses on a critical mass, which he defines as a necessary amount of people to be convinced that an issue should be handled as a security issue, as a criterion of a successful securitization. Another more established current of the securitization scholarship concentrates on whose consent is essential to proceed with the securitization and offers thus differentiated categories of empowered and formal audiences (see e.g. Balzacq, 2011a; Roe, 2008; Salter and Mutlu, 2013). The heterogeneity of definitions of an audience notwithstanding, the existing conceptualizations share one underlying assumption: the (dis)approval of a securitization process is as a voluntary activity (Stritzel, 2007: 362).

2.2.4.1. Resistance as an analytical flip-side

Due to the strong embodiment of securitization studies in the Western context and the fact that majority of empirically oriented securitization studies analyze situations in more or less democratic contexts (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 42), the public inactivity or

apathy to a securitization process is implicitly interpreted as a legitimizing approval of the securitization (Vuori, 2008: 70). This is, of course, partly a valid point. In every society, there are individuals who are either genuinely uninterested in securitization processes or approve of securitization without actively articulating their support. Yet this view does not account for contexts or factors in which, as the CS in more recent works admits, “the possibility of free speech and political structures that guarantee individuals protection against random as well as systematic violence” (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 216) may not be developed (Wilkinson, 2007: 12; see also Stritzel, 2007: 362; Vuori, 2011: 188). Nor does the analytical focus on the audience’s approval cover the silence of those who, due to lacking possibilities to participate in political processes, a limited access to traditional forums, such as print media, or simply out of fear of possible repercussions do not articulate their security concerns and oppose to the securitization processes (Wilkinson, 2007: 12; Hansen, 2000).

In this thesis, I maintain that it is important to address the governed society as an audience whose position is a significant (de)legitimizing factor of the securitization process, which likely influences the persistence of securitization processes. Contrary to those who work with the audience’s approval as outlined above (see e.g. Balzacq, 2011a; O’Reilly, 2008; Roe, 2008), I view the absence of resistance to securitization as a minimal form of securitization’s approval. In particular, I argue that as long as the governed society acts as if it accepts the securitization regardless the motivation, which might range from real support over apathy to disinterest or fear not to do so, the society approves the securitization process. Accordingly, I maintain that it is analytically beneficial to concentrate on resistance to securitization as an analytical flip-side to the audience’s approval for three reasons.

First, the inquiry into the resistance hints not only at processes of resistance, but also elucidates the reasons for the absence. This thereby allows me to detect factors, such as the spread of fear or cooptation, which might significantly constrain the emergence of alternative views on security (see chapter 5). Second, the focus on resistance to securitization brings the public, a field under-theorized in the securitization scholarship, to the forefront (Salter and Mutlu, 2013; Tjalve, 2011: 443). Thus, it overcomes securitization’s fixation on elites (see Vuori, 2011: 186; Wæver, 1995: 54; McDonald, 2008: 574; Huysmans, 2011: 375) as well as on professionals in security field (c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 459), which is also explicit in the research on the Middle East (Stetter, 2008: 71f). Third, methodologically speaking, the inquiry into resistance also seems to be more promising for empirical studies in non-democratic contexts (e.g. Holm on Algeria, 2003, Vuori on China, 2008). Holm (2003: 273). For instance, Holm (2003) shows in her study of securitization of the Algerian state-regime in the 1990s that the analytical focus on the audience’s consent is particularly unfruitful in contexts in which the common data to detect public approval with the ongoing securitization process, such

as opinion polls, surveys, or even elections, are often not available or are significantly flawed (see also Vuori, 2008: 70; Abulof, 2014: 403).

2.2.4.2. Resistance as an effect of power

The conceptual emphasis I attach to the resistance to securitization processes necessitates a modified approach to the audience. It is empirically obvious that acts of resistance which might be expressed in diverse forms such as: riots, demonstrations, or through a lack of electoral participation; or through individual disobedience, such as blogging; or by organizing clandestine events, are scattered across analytical levels. They also appear at different moments of securitization and attain varied levels of intensity and epistemological importance. Accordingly, the distinct audience categories dissolve into a heterogeneous conglomerate of diverse individuals, collective actors, authorities, potentially including individuals and groups within analytical categories of securitizing actors, security professionals, functional actors, and designated security targets.

In order to overcome the perspective on resistance prevalent in the securitization scholarship, which is reduced to acts of counter-securitization associated primarily with the security targets (see Vuori, 2011; Stritzel and Chang, 2015), I view the audience as heterogeneous, context-dependent unit, which, empirically speaking, does not exist a priori. The audience is “constituted in discourse” (Hansen, 2011: 360). It is a product of resistance which is a possible, but not an automatic, power effect of a securitization process. Thus, it cannot be conceptually predefined.

To examine resistance to securitization as an effect of power, I move away from power perceived as a fixed category of material or ideological capacity thus implying a zero-sum game – if one actor *loses* power; it is *gained* by another actor (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 8). Instead, in the line with Foucault’s understanding of relationality of power, power is, in this thesis, understood as a link or a process between things (Foucault, 2009: 2-4; see also Bigo, 2002: 68; Bigo, 2007: 226). Power is thus both the product (effect) of a relationship and its cause (Foucault, 2009: 2). This is to say, mechanisms of power/resistance alter, disturb, stabilize, or solidify the existing relationships, such as sexual, family, work-related relationships or, taken to the securitization context, relations between individual securitization actors. There are no relationships in which the mechanisms of power are not intrinsic part (Foucault, 2009: 2).

Like other processes (Karskens, 2009: 127; Wilson, 2009: 31; Stetter, 2008: 75), securitization establishes and (re)produces webs of power relations between securitization’s actors, knowledge produced by securitization, and practices approved by securitization. The power networks are closely bound to miscellaneous corpora of knowledge and regimes of truth, which induce diverse power effects through which

security practices such as arbitrary arrests, indefinite detentions, or torture are established, but also forms of resistance emerge (Foucault, 1980: 52). Like any other web of power relations, securitization always embraces the possibility of resistance, which might occur at any level of agency (individual, group, or societal level), at any moment of securitization, with a varying intensity and uncertain results (see Vuori, 2011: 190). Resistance is, however, a productive force which is not inherently a negative or positive (Foucault, 2002: 452). It is also not an antithesis of power, a force opposing power, nor an external element to it (Rouse, 2005: 12).

Depending on the context and configuration of power relations vested in the securitization process, resistance as a productive power effect has the potential to modify existing mechanisms of power (Karskens, 2009: 128; Wilson, 2009: 31f; Lazzarato, 2006: 17). The acts of resistance such as demonstrations, elections campaigns, insurgency, but also blog entries, television programs and others, might successfully disrupt established regimes of truth and thereby also the existing mechanisms of power which underpin securitization (see Milchman and Rosenberg, 2009: 71). The acts of resistance, however, can also reinforce the very power relations they challenge. For instance, the revolt of some of Egyptian judges in the 1990s who acquitted high-profiled Islamists on the grounds of testimonies enforced through torture, strengthened the web of power relations which underpinned the Egyptian securitization of terrorism. After the judges' revolt the political cases became to be increasingly transferred to more "reliable" military tribunals presided with the military personnel which secured "smooth" proceedings (see chapter 5).

In this respect, it matters *how* resistance emerges and is constituted. As Bigo (2002: 72) notes, the discourses critical of securitization processes often fall into the trap of challenging the security process through "the basic presuppositions of the discourses they criticize". The critique is based on "a contest of ideas and norms" (Bigo, 2002: 64), but fails to examine and question "the conditions under which the authority is given to a discourse to create the immigrant as an 'outsider, inside the State'" (Bigo, 2002: 66). In other words, contesting the regime of truth that underpins the securitization processes, does not question its formative substance, i.e., how the security knowledge has emerged and has been constituted as truth in the discourse (cf. Aradau, 2004: 396). This argument is particularly important in the context of the Egyptian securitization process. As I will show in detail in chapters 5 and 6, the Egyptian resistance was largely reduced to the critique of the state of emergency as an unnecessary measure, which allowed for a wide scope of oppression. Yet, the Egyptian dissent, with exception of some of the security targets, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood, did not question the core of the regime of the truth, which depicted an Islamist as a "terrorist threat" and played a central role in sustaining the state of emergency and related exceptional security practices.

Although resistance as an effect of power is integral to any securitization process, its

form and intensity (if any resistance arises at all) is context-dependent and reflects the structure of existing power relations. Securitization, like any process invested with the biopolitical mechanisms of power, is based on a calculation of desired effects and possible costs (Foucault, 1982: 792; 2009: 6). The deliberate cost-effect calculation requires the securitizing actors to take “the economic cost of the means brought into operation or the cost in terms of reaction constituted by the resistance which is encountered” into account (Foucault, 1982: 792). The optimization of the field of individual’s action, which aims at individual’s docility, is then an essential part of the cost-effect calculation (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 5f, 13). It can come in form of diverse strategies that *conduct the conduct* of individuals through the law or by delegitimizing narratives, to name just two examples. The strategies to reduce resistance to securitization might also be associated with “positive incentives to act in a certain way” (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 13). In such a case, the will and capacity to resist and question the securitization process, as the Egyptian case testifies, is often numbed by cooptation into the clientelist system of material and societal benefits, including the boost of one’s social capital.

2.3. Methodological framework

There is no standard methodological approach for studying securitization processes. The core of securitization research is based on qualitative methodological approaches. Yet, the particular methods for data analysis vary according to the theoretical framework, the aim, and the scope of the specific research task in question. Commonly applied methods include discourse analysis, content analysis, process-tracking analysis, narrative analysis, and ethnomethodology (Balzacq, 2001b: 31; Balzacq, et al. 2015: 26).

To empirically reconstruct and examine the process of constructing a terrorist threat, I adopt a qualitative research approach. Specifically, I employ directed content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis allows me to carry out a targeted, conceptually rigorous analysis that integrates the preconceived theoretical assumptions mentioned above and reflects my preexisting knowledge of the Egyptian political landscape. Directed content analysis offers me tools to systematically examine a variety of diverse empirical data in large volumes while keeping context-sensitivity a high priority. All of these factors are highly relevant for the securitization case under scrutiny which involves a large volume of data spanning more than three decades.

2.3.1. Data collection

The theoretical assumptions of this thesis, which have placed the securitization process within the broader context of the securitization discourse, put the examination of the Egyptian securitization discourse at the center of my empirical inquiry.

Discourse as such is a contested issue within securitization scholarship. The major fault line, generally speaking, runs between the CS minimalist understanding of discourse, which focuses on the textual analysis of speech acts (Balzacq, 2011b: 21), and the PS inclusion of practices as a part of the discourse (see e.g. Balzacq, 2011b: 23). In this thesis, I adopt a broader understanding of discourse which includes both spoken and written utterances as well as practices. I understand discourse as both: resources in form of text, which stand not only for textual records, but also for a variety of audio/visual symbols; and practices through which the resources are substantiated. The discourse is then “a vehicle of meaning, a meaning which is rarely self-evident but has to be charted by the analyst” (Balzacq, 2011b: 39).

To explore the Egyptian securitization discourse, I broke down its analysis into three discourse planes which are, in this thesis, comprehended as social locations from which “speaking” about the terrorist threat in Egypt occurred. They include media, security experts, and human rights discourse planes. The decision to include these three discourse locations was a pragmatic move. It was assumed that their examination would guarantee a diversity of data and contradictory positions, which is a necessary research prerequisite to avoid uncritical reproducing of one-side narratives. While I acknowledge the existence of other pertinent discourse planes such as pop-culture, academia, or Islamist discourse, the focus is limited to the three named discourse planes, as they provide adequate data that meet the theoretical demands of my research. Concerning the latter, the Islamist discourse plane was an original part of my analytical framework. The massive crackdown on Islamists since the deposition of President Muhammad Mursi in July 2013, which continued during my field research in November 2013, rendered it impossible to collect data and interview representatives of this current. Although I did not specifically include the Islamist discourse plane, its positions are represented in the discourse plane of human rights.

Because the Egyptian press, and the state-run newspaper *al-Ahram* in particular, served as a mouthpiece for the ruling establishment (Hamada, 2013) from which the securitizing actors emerged, I assumed that the Egyptian media discourse plane was likely to (re)produce and circulate the security knowledge about the terrorist threat dominant in the security discourse. In contrast, the expert security plane, represented by a police magazine *Majalla amn al-am*, granted me an access to expert security knowledge, which were meant only to a limited audience of security professionals, i.e., the Egyptian police officers. Therefore, I anticipated that these texts would offer a diverse viewpoint on the security meaning in the discourse, which might be more related to the actual security practice. I chose to include human rights discourse plane because I expected that it would be in direct opposition to the two other planes and thus offer points of contest with regarding diverse meanings of security.

On a more practical level, over three decades of diverse forms of topical recorded communication from all three discourse planes form the object of my empirical analysis. The text data, which was gathered to broaden the selection and analysis, were collected in print, electronic, and verbal forms. Their genres cover a variety of text forms (press articles, expert essays, human rights reports, and interview notices).

2.3.1.1 Practicalities of data collection in Egypt and beyond

This thesis relies on a large amount of Arabic written texts dating back as far as 1981. The availability of such data outside Egypt is, however, considerably limited. If the files exist, they do not usually cover the whole time-period under scrutiny, i.e., from 1981 until 2011. The two field-trips to Cairo (November 2011, November 2013) during which I visited the archive of al-Ahram Publishing House, the national archive Dar al-Kutub, and the Archive of the National Center for Social and Criminologist Research showed that the acquisition of the archival data is not an easy undertaking. Even though I was eventually granted limited access to all three archives, I encountered cautious reactions from the staff, the absence of a computerized database (in al-Ahram and Center for Social and Criminologist Research's archives), bureaucratic obstructions, such as a limit on the number of pages that I was allowed to copy or take pictures of (in al-Ahram archives). Moreover, diverse petty-bureaucrats randomly decided not to grant me access to the desired material (in al-Ahram archives, Dar al-Kutub).

The obstacles, I encountered, I attribute in part also to the nature of my research, which addresses topics, such as national security, terrorism, and Islamists/Muslim Brotherhood, which are regarded as sensitive in Egypt. During my visits in the archives, I felt as being viewed with a certain suspicion about "real" intentions of my research.¹⁴ Some staffer I met during my visits to the archives, also told me that there was no reason to conduct research on this topic.

Overall, a sustained research of the archival materials located in Egypt was rendered very difficult. I therefore readjusted my theoretical arguments to reflect the availability of desired empirical material for the analysis. I eventually opted for a combination of resources available at the Newspaper Archive Department of the State Library in Berlin, a private archive of an Egyptian contact, and material available online.

2.3.2. Data selection

In order to capture the complexity of the securitization process under scrutiny, the collected empirical data, as suggested by Balzacq (2011b: 43), contains various text genres which appeared at different points in time and distinct contexts. The collected

¹⁴ To access the archives of Al-Ahram I had to undergo an extensive security check-up that took approximately two hours and visiting of six petty-bureaucrats who questioned my academic background and research intentions.

text data was organized into two major categories, documents, and semi-structured interviews. While the former I collected in a written or electronic form, the latter I produced as a text in form of notes taken during my interviews with the interview partners. I used a key-word system and timeframe criterion in order to narrow down the data and to identify relevant content for a further analysis. Both of which are explained in detail in relation to texts located in each discourse plane in the following section.

2.3.2.1. Documents

Media discourse plane

The media discourse plane is covered in this thesis by the content of the Egyptian daily periodical *al-Ahram*, published in Arabic. During Mubarak's era, as Hani Shukrallah (2013b), a former editor-in-chief of the *Al-Ahram Weekly* and later of *Ahram Online*, stated in an interview, the newspaper was de facto controlled by the Egyptian government. The government owned a controlling share of the stock of the al-Ahram Publishing House and exercised the right to appoint editors. Given *al-Ahram's* close connection to the government, my interview partners considered the newspaper a mouthpiece of Mubarak's ruling establishment. Accordingly, I assessed the newspaper content as a reproduction of the official positions of the government rather than a critical reflection of the existing political reality in the country.

Due to the extensive length of the time under scrutiny (1981-2011), the relevant texts for the analysis were selected according two variables (see the table no. 1).

Table No. 1

Variable 1: timeframe	Variable 2: keywords
14 two-month periods between 1981 and 2011; the two-month periods covered the month before and after the regular renewal of the state of emergency	<i>irhabi/yyun</i> (terrorist/s), <i>al-irhab</i> (terrorism), <i>mutatarrif/yyun</i> (extremist/s), <i>amn</i> (security), <i>tahdid</i> (threat), <i>al-tawara'</i> (emergency), <i>hala al-tawara'</i> (the state of emergency), <i>qanun al-tawara'</i> (the Emergency Law), <i>ta'dhib</i> (torture)

The first variable limits the selection of texts to specific time-periods, which I had anticipated to contain larger numbers of relevant texts to the topic. The chosen time-periods follow the periodical renewals of the state of emergency by the Egyptian parliament. Although, the regular extension of the state of emergency was a merely formal step, as the parliament was controlled by the NDP, the governmental party, I approached the regular extensions as specific moments during which the securitization of terrorism was formally upheld and the urgency to deal with the terrorist threat highlighted. I also assumed that the regular renewals of the state of emergency were

likely moments in which an intense process of (re)producing of knowledge directly related to the justification and rationalization of the securitization's continuity took place.

Accordingly, in the analysis I covered texts that were published in the month before and after the regular renewal of the emergency rule. I chose the two-months periods so that I could map both: (i) the assumed mobilization of the power/knowledge nexus in favor of the continuous securitization and related exceptional framework that likely preceded the parliamentary session to renew the state of emergency; and (ii) the (re)production of knowledge about the dangerousness of terrorism threat in order to justify and rationalize the ongoing securitization process, which likely ensued the parliamentary extension of the state of emergency. The second variable relates to the thematic relevance of the texts.

I analyzed entire editions of the newspaper in the selected time-periods and accordingly sifted through their content. The informative character of headlines usually complemented by lengthy subheadings (see the illustration no. 1) were indicative enough of the article's main theme. On these grounds, the articles, or more precisely their headlines and subheadings, were searched through for following keywords: *irhabi/yyun* (terrorist/s), *irhab* (terrorism), *mutatarrif/yyun* (extremist/s), *amn* (security), *al-tawara'* (emergency), *hala al-tawara'* (the state of emergency), *qanun al-tawara'* (the Emergency Law).



Illustration No. 1: *al-Ahram*, 1. 5. 2006, p. 1

Expert security discourse plane

The police quarterly magazine *Majalla amn al-am*, published by the Egyptian Ministry of Interior provides the data for this discourse plane. The scrutinized issues contained expert essays and opinion-pieces written by police, military, and governmental representatives on diverse aspects of security in Egypt and abroad. Moreover, since the magazine was distributed only among Egyptians officers I regard its content a source of Egyptian expert security knowledge. I do not, however, assess the security knowledge, represented in the magazine's texts as an independent form of expert opinion. Instead, I regard it as strongly interwoven and influenced by the securitizing rhetorics of the Egyptian political professionals.

The highly-restricted availability of the magazine rendered the collection of its articles for the period between 1981 and 2011 incomplete. My research showed that *Majalla amn al-am* has not been subscribed to any relevant library institution outside Egypt. The only institution that appears to archive its issues is Dar al-Kutub in Cairo. However, even after repetitive visits, the Dar al-Kutub did not grant me access to the material during my field work in November 2013. The material used in this thesis thus comes from a private archive of an Egyptian contact who was able to provide me with the issues of *Majalla amn al-am* from 1981 to 2002.

As in the case of *al-Ahram*, the analysis consists of texts, which were thematically relevant for my research (see Table No. 2). The articles were thematically searched in a very similar manner to the newspaper content. Essays, of which titles contained any of the following keywords: *irhabi/yyun* (terrorist/s), *irhab* (terrorism), *mutatarrif/yyun* (extremist/s), *amn* (security), *al-tawara'* (emergency), *hala al-tawara'* (the state of emergency), *qanun al-tawara'* (the Emergency Law) were selected and subjected to a further analysis.

Table No. 2

Variable 1: timeframe	Variable 2: keywords
Quarterly issues from 1981 to 2002	<i>irhabi/yyun</i> (terrorist/s), <i>al-irhab</i> (terrorism), <i>mutatarrif/yyun</i> (extremist/s), <i>amn</i> (security), <i>tahdid</i> (threat), <i>al-tawara'</i> (emergency), <i>hala al-tawara'</i> (the state of emergency), <i>qanun al-tawara'</i> (the Emergency Law), <i>ta'dhib</i> (torture)

Human rights discourse plane

The last category contains texts written and published by human rights organizations. The texts primarily include human rights reports and press releases written in Arabic or English, often published online. As the human rights community was among the most active dissenters to the securitization process, texts located in the human rights plane were assessed as data that likely challenged the prevailing articulations of security and pointed out at the friction areas within the power/knowledge nexus dominating the securitization process.

I sought out websites of diverse Egyptian and international human rights organizations for key reports, statements, and press releases concerning the state of emergency and related exceptional security practices. The key-word system, which was established for the media and expert discourses, was adjusted to the context of the human rights discourse. Specifically, I tested the materials for their empirical pertinence beyond the title of the texts (see Table No. 3), as in many cases the human rights reports bear titles,

such as *The right for bodily integrity*, that did not necessarily suggest a linkage to the securitization of terrorism.

Contrary to the original intent of my research, which was to concentrate solely on the material produced by the Egyptian human rights community, I included a number of reports published by international human rights organizations, the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in particular, because reports produced by the local human rights organizations concentrated predominantly the legal aspect of the exceptional framework, such as illegality of arbitrary arrests, torture, or military tribunals for civilians. Thus, with the exception of the reports published by al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture, the Egyptian reports mostly interpreted and narrated the state of emergency and related security practices as a series of violations of the Egyptian law.

To map and address the exceptional security practices beyond the discussion or their legality, I drew from reports provided by the international human rights organizations. Due to the emphasis on the advocacy work, their reports offered abundant material that incorporated individual experience and emotional testimonies of Egyptians who were subjected to ill-treatment, torture, or extra-judicial killings under the provisions of the state of emergency. Therefore, their analysis allowed me to examine the security practices of the Egyptian security apparatus and its effects in more detail.

The selected texts cover the period between the early 1990s until 2011. The reason for this time-restraint is double-fold. On one hand, the availability of human rights texts, which cover Egypt, relates to the Internet development and an understandable lack of online data prior to the early 1990s. On the other hand, it reflects the formative period of Egyptian human rights organizations, which took off in the early 1990s.

Table No. 3

Variable 1: timeframe	Variable 2: organizations	Variable 3: keywords (both in Arabic and English)
1990 to 2011	Diverse Egyptian human rights organizations Amnesty International Human Rights Watch	<i>irhabi/yyun</i> (terrorist/s), <i>al-irhab</i> (terrorism), <i>amn</i> (security), <i>tahdid</i> (threat), <i>al-tawara'</i> (emergency), <i>hala al-tawara'</i> (the state of emergency), <i>qanun al-tawara'</i> (the Emergency Law), <i>ta'dhib</i> (torture)

2.3.2.2. Semi-structured interviews

The data collection through interviews is used as a complementary method of data collection, which provides insights important for comprehending the social context of the documents. The primary concern was, thus, not to generate data that allowed for an exact comparability of the testimonies of interviewees, but rather to fill the blank spots left by the analysis of text documents.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for a thematically focused, but still flexible, two-way communication that effectively facilitated discussion about politically and personally sensitive issues. Yet, the questions and their wording had to be carefully considered, reflecting the tense political situation prevailing in Egypt during my field work in November 2013, four months after a military coup and just two months after the Egyptian security forces killed more than 800 pro-Mursi protesters in Cairo's squares of al-Raba'a al-Adawiyya and al-Nahda (HRW, 2014AUG). A wrongly chosen term or a phrase could have led to a disruption of the interviewee's trust with negative consequences for the rest of the interview. The questions related to personal experience with, for instance, torture and intimidation practices of the security apparatus were asked only when a level of trust between me and the interviewee had been established and there was a tangible chance to get such questions answered.

The sensitivity of the research topic also restricted the availability of desired interview partners. At the time of my field research, the political situation was not favorable to approach and contact interviewees from among the Islamist political opposition nor from the ranks of security officials. The former group was either in prison or in the underground. Establishing a contact with the latter group posed a tangible risk to compromise my research and interviewees from the human rights community. Moreover, the increasingly restrictive political situation did not allow me to conduct another field-trip in a later phase of the research. The post-2013 situation in Egypt marked an increased hostility of the Egyptian authorities towards non-Egyptian journalists, PhD students, university professors, and others who have critically questioned the political, societal, and economic status quo in Egypt (Mada Masr, 2016b). There have been known cases of deportation, detention, as well as harassment by Egyptian embassies abroad. In fact, as the murder of the Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni in early 2016 suggests, field research related to political issues has become dangerous undertaking.¹⁵

¹⁵ The body of Giulio Regeni was found outside Cairo on the desert highway and bore signs of torture. Although the Egyptian government denies any involvement in his death, the witnesses accounts suggest that Regeni was apprehended by the security forces. The Egyptian human rights organizations assume that his death bears fingerprints of the security apparatus. Regeni's PhD research was focused on informal labor movements in Egypt. For more see Fahim, et al. (2016)

I conducted 10 interviews¹⁶ with human rights activists, lawyers, academics, and a journalist.¹⁷ The vast majority of interviews were conducted in English. Only one interview was in Arabic with a translator. In all cases, I took notes during the conversation. Immediately afterward I used the notes to reconstruct the content and details of the conversation as accurately as possible. All of interviewees were open in sharing their personal experiences and answered all of my questions. The majority of them are leading and well-established personalities in the Egyptian human rights scene, academia, and journalism. With one exception, the interviewees were born in the 1960s and early 1970s, so they belong to the generation that consciously experienced the entire era of Mubarak's reign. Thus, the content of the interviews covers the entire period between 1981 and 2011.

2.3.3. Data analysis

To analyze the selected data, I developed a coding system by which I identified themes and patterns relevant to the securitization of terrorism in Egypt. The coding structure, which I developed to analyze the texts, is primarily deductive and is directed by the theoretical framework of this thesis (see Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1281).

The categories in the coding structure of this thesis are primarily based on “prior formulated, theoretical derived aspects of analysis” which are brought in connection with the text (Mayring, 2000), as well as on my preexisting knowledge of the Egyptian political landscape (see Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1281; Elo and Kyngäs, 2007: 111f). For instance, to explore how the terrorist threat was framed in Egypt, I defined two key categories deduced from my theoretical framework: biopolitical unacceptability of an excluded security target and biopolitical acceptability of an included optimized referent object. Yet, to better detect patterns as well as possible irregularities, which would have been overlooked by a rigor adherence to categories deduced on the grounds of my theoretical framework (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1283), I combined the deductive category application with an inductive development of subcategories. Thus, based on the analysis of the empirical data, I included inductive subcategories such as patriotism, moderate religious upbringing, and others under the category of biopolitical acceptability. The detailed description of the coding structure, including the deductive and inductive categories, can be seen in the attachment of this thesis.

¹⁶ The interviews took place in Cairo in November 2013 except for one which was conducted in Berlin in December 2013. See the list of interviewees in the appendix of this thesis.

¹⁷ The interviewees acquire, as a general rule, more roles. The usual combination of roles is that of human rights activists and lawyers, or human rights activists and members of academia.

3. The truth

Processes of (re)producing and shaping the knowledge about the terrorism threat in the Egyptian discourse during Husni Mubarak's reign (1981-2011) are central to this chapter. Guided by theoretical insights into processes of constructing a threat, which were outlined in the previous chapter, I will address securitization as a process, which produces a corpus of security knowledge about a threat. My focus on the production and dissemination of knowledge about the terrorist threat in the Egyptian security discourse also leads me to inquire into the relationship between existing regimes of truth and power relations. In particular, I will examine how the knowledge about the terrorist threat (re)configured and consolidated the existing regimes of truth and webs of power relations.

On the following pages, I will first engage with the production of the securitization knowledge and its emergence as a part of the regimes of truth in the discourse. In this regard, I will address actors who actively produced and distributed knowledge about the terrorist threat in the Egyptian security discourse. My analytical emphasis is on the securitizing actors and security professionals specifically. The latter, an analytical unit introduced by the Paris school, will be addressed as a highly relevant analytical category in the Egyptian securitization context. With regard to the central research inquiry of this thesis, i.e., the perpetuation of securitization, I will also discuss the actor-process relation. Particularly, I will demonstrate that the securitizing political elite and the security apparatus emerged from the securitization process significantly empowered. Accordingly, these actors were especially eager to maintain the status quo wherein the perpetual securitization was an underlying pillar.

Then, I will move on to analyze the framing of the terrorism threat. As outlined in the prior chapter, I view the process of constructing a threat as a process of biopolitical optimization of the Egyptian society. In this respect, I will emphasize the optimization of the Egyptian society in my analysis of the framing process. My focus will turn first to the Egyptian society, i.e., the referent object that was framed as threatened and in need of protection. Yet, as I argued in the previous chapter and empirically document on the following pages, the detailed scrutiny of the referent object shows that the securitization transforms the referent object into an object of governmental intervention. The securitization process (re)configures the optimized citizen, whose life is worthy of protection. Moreover, detailed inquiry into the framing of the security targets will show that the optimized self is an inverted image of the threatening *other*, i.e., the terrorist enemy. I will show that the framing of both the terrorist threat and the optimized self was centered on the national and religious collective identities, which facilitated an inclusion of a large array of Egyptian political opposition groups and members into the category of security targets.

The empirical findings of this chapter are based on an extensive content analysis of Arabic language articles dedicated to the theme of terrorism in the Egyptian daily *al-Ahram* and the police magazine *Majalla amn al-am* between the period 1981 and 2011, up to 2001 respectively.

3.1. “I have killed the Pharaoh”

On October 6, 1981, Egypt commemorated the 1973 war against Israel. An annual open-air military parade was held in Cairo. Anwar al-Sadat, the Egyptian president since 1970, accompanied by vice-president Husni Mubarak, watched the parade from the grandstand. Shortly after the military jets flew over, an assassination squad emerged from one of the military trucks, opened fire killing the president and several other guests.¹⁸ Husni Mubarak escaped lightly hurt, but considerably shaken. Lieutenant Khalid al-Islambuli cried out “I have killed the pharaoh”¹⁹ shortly after the incident. The Lieutenant was the leader of the assassin group and a member of Tanzim al-Jihad, known also as al-Jihad, which was held responsible for the assassination (Kepel, 1995: 233).

The incident, which was followed by a failed attempt by al-Islambuli accomplices to take over Upper Egypt (Kepel, 1995: 229-233), significantly shook the Egyptian political establishment and laid the groundwork for securitization of Islamist terrorism over the next three decades. There was an immediate sense of urgency to toughen the existing security policies towards militant Islamist²⁰ groups, which materialized in the declaration of the state of emergency only few hours after the incident (MacManus, 2010 [1981]) and massive waves of arrests (Kepel, 1995: 233f). The prompt decision by the Egyptian authorities to enact the state of emergency significantly reduced the period of time the leadership had to securitize the terrorist threat and make securitizing speech-acts. In this respect, the danger posed by the militant Islamists, its link to the threat of terrorism, as well as the argued need to address the threat through exceptional measures, were established *ex post*, i.e. after the state of emergency was declared.

The assassination of the state leader and the attempted coup were without doubt a major catalyst to securitize terrorism. This was a kind of major discursive event that according to Buzan and Wæver, (2009: 267) “trigger[s] vivid imagery and built-in narratives that do not have to be unfolded”. In this sense, in the early stage of the securitization, the terrorist threat was obvious. Accordingly, the securitizing claims of the Egyptian leadership did not focus on constructing the terrorist threat, but rather on the rationalization of the re-introduction of the state of emergency as a necessary measure

¹⁸ For more about the assassination and its execution see Heikal (1983: 242-255) and Beattie (2000: 275-277).

¹⁹ Author’s translation from German.

²⁰ For purposes of my thesis and in order to avoid misunderstanding I define an Islamist as an activist who advocates, either peacefully or violently, the reordering of government and society in accordance with his or her movement’s interpretation of Islam.

to deal with the extraordinary situation. For instance, in a speech to the People's Assembly, Husni Mubarak, the new Egyptian leader, defended the state of emergency as imperative for Egypt's future:

“And it was your decision, dear sisters and brothers, members of the People's Assembly, to announce the emergency rule in order to protect Egypt from crimes that threaten democracy, freedom, and the state of law. [...] And your decision was *necessary* in that moment.”²¹

A few days later, in an interview with *the New York Times*, which was republished in *al-Ahram*²², Mubarak continued to reiterate harsh measures as necessary to address the militants. The securitizing arguments in the early stage of the securitization process also incorporated direct references to the threat posed by the assassins to the state, its stability and security. Yet, the image of the threat, which was originally associated with the assassins and Tanzim al-Jihad, grew increasingly loose and vague. Soon, it was vaguely defined Islamist militancy as a synonym to terrorism. Islamist militancy became a code for an existential danger to Egypt's prosperity and stability; the emergency rule was framed as the only possible framework to address the threat of terrorism. As Mubarak stated, two weeks after the assassination, the emergency rule was necessary to confront terrorism and that it would be lifted only if the normal situation would be ensured again.²³

Although the assassination functioned, on the one hand, as an underlying reference for the securitization of the terrorist threat, on the other hand, the incident resonated “with already- existing discursive sedimentations” (Mavelli, 2013: 180) produced by securitization processes in Egypt's past. In particular, the securitization of the terrorist threat built on and related to the already existing power/knowledge nexus about the danger posed by Islamists was rooted deeply in the Egyptian security discourse. The Islamist militancy was nothing new in Egypt in 1981. The long-lasting conflict between the state and diverse Islamists groups had soured the country for several decades. During the presidency of Gamal Abd al-Nasser (1954-1970) there was an antagonistic relationship between the secular-nationalist leadership and Islamist groups, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood. Accordingly, the Islamists were framed and treated as an existential security threat (Reza, 2007: 535f). Similarly, as under Mubarak's leadership, the framing of Islamists as a threat in al-Nasser's era facilitated the adoption of exceptional security precautions including the state of emergency and the incarnation of thousands of Islamists into concentration camps with hard labor punishments (Reza, 2007: 535f; Kepel, 1995: 26).²⁴ While the way the Islamists were framed as a threat in the 1950s was not identical to the framing in the 1980s, the negative depiction of

²¹ *al-Ahram*, 15. 10. 1981, p. 6, italics by the author.

²² *al-Ahram*, 21. 10. 1981, p. 6. The original interview was published in *the New York Times*, 19. 10. 1981.

²³ *al-Ahram*, 23. 10. 1981, p. 1.

²⁴ At the time of writing, defendants in politically motivated cases continue to be punished with imprisonment with hard labor. However, hard labor no longer refers to actual labor. Instead, it implies imprisonment with additional constraints such as e.g. restrictions on family visits (Seif, 2013).

Islamists remained deeply rooted in the discourse throughout this time period. The 1981 assassination led by Islamist extremists thus reconfirmed the already-existing truth about the Islamist danger.

In its initial stage, the securitization of terrorism was also strengthened by regional developments, namely the rise of armed Islamist movements and their claims on state power. Iranian and Saudi Islamist uprisings of 1979 particularly resonated throughout the Middle East and shattered the regional authoritarian establishments (Kramer, 1996). First, the Iranian Islamic revolution led by the exiled Aiatollah Khomeini ousted the pro-Western regime of Shah Pehlevi²⁵ and transformed Iran into a theocratic republic (Ayubi, 1991: 234). Then, few months later, a group of Saudi insurgents inspired by the success of the Iranian revolution attempted to overthrow the House of Saud. With the aim to reestablish “pure and original” Islam in the country, the group seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca – the holiest place in Islam – and took several hundreds of *hajj* pilgrims hostage. The clearance of the mosque after two-week siege left dozens of hostages, security forces, and insurgents dead, and shook the legitimacy of the House of Saud.²⁶

Referring to the Iranian case as a deterrent, the Egyptian leadership added a powerful reference to strengthen its securitizing claims about the Islamist terrorist threat.²⁷ Regardless of the assassins’ Sunni background and motives, they were framed as sympathizers of the Iranian revolution, which was guided by *Shi'i* principles. Mubarak, for instance, stated that:

“these people [the assassins] are just trying to imitate something like what happened in Iran. Our position here in Egypt differs completely from Iran. The character of the people, our nature, differ completely from Iran. They planned to assassinate the President, maybe the whole leadership, at the celebration of the sixth of October and then to declare something like the so-called Islamic revolution.” (The New York Times, 1981)

The association of the assassins with the Iranian revolution became so strong that the assassination was portrayed as an attempt to carry out “Khomeini’s revolution” (*al-thawra al-khomeiniyya*).

The major perceived threat to Egypt’s stability and prosperity shifted in the early 1980s from Nasserists, i.e. leftist, communist Egyptians, to Islamists. During al-Sadat’s era, Nasserists were transformed into a prime security target, whereas the Islamist threat – a major threat during al-Nasser – was sidelined (Ayubi, 1991: 195; Beattie, 2000: 258;

²⁵ The Shah and his family accepted the Egyptian exile offered by al-Sadat in March 1980.

²⁶ The Iranian Islamic revolution also inspired the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood to openly revolt against the ruling regime of Hafiz al-Asad in 1982. The rebellion was suppressed by the Hama massacre, in which the Syrian army effectively ended the insurgency and killed several thousand people, see Kramer (1996).

²⁷ *al-Ahram*, 23. 10. 1981, p. 1, 5.

Sassoon, 2016: 142).²⁸ In fact, al-Sadat's leadership adopted a moderate approach towards Islamists in order to counterbalance and encircle the leftist threat (Ayubi, 1991: 223, 233; Abdalla, 1993: 29; Tadros, 2012: 6; Brown and Shanin, 2010: 206; Brown and Hamzawy, 2010: 15; Osman, 2011: 90). Although towards the end of 1970s the Islamist groups grew stronger and their societal role increased, in a way the Islamists began to contest al-Sadat's government, al-Sadat's leadership did not reconsider its security policies and undervalued the threat posed by the Islamists (Heikal, 1983: 114ff, 128).

Al-Sadat's leadership also underestimated the popular resentment to peace with Israel in 1979, especially among Islamists and leftist intelligentsia (Ayubi, 1991: 84; Mubarak, 1996: 40; Heikal, 1983: 201-224). A month before his assassination, al-Sadat ordered apprehension of fifteen hundred of key public figures in Egypt including party presidents, Islamists, prominent lawyers, journalists, preachers including the Coptic pope Shenuda III in an attempt to silence the growing resentment related to al-Sadat's Israeli politics. Such a security step was unprecedented; this further antagonized large segments of the Egyptian population, including Khalid al-Islambuli, a brother of a detained Islamist and al-Sadat's assassin (Heikal, 1983: 247, 256-257; Kepel, 1995: 229; Ayubi, 1991: 84; Beattie, 2000: 273f).²⁹

3.2. (Re)producing the power/knowledge nexus

The power/knowledge nexus, which (re)produced the vision of an Islamist as a terrorist threat to the Egypt's stability and prosperity, did not perish in 1981. It persisted, was continuously updated, and mobilized throughout the entire reign of Husni Mubarak. Although the intensity of the securitization process varied according to current circumstances, such as the need to regularly extend the state of emergency or the need of a response to a terrorist attack, the sense of urgency to counter the terrorism threat was maintained.

The Egyptian political leadership regularly highlighted the need to fight terrorism. Over the three decades, regardless the actual security circumstances which prevailed in Egypt, terrorism was depicted as a threat which was distinct, special, and lasting, and as such it could not have been faced by ordinary measures. The only framework which was promoted as sufficient to address the terrorist threat was the state of emergency. As *al-Ahram* reported on the parliamentary discussion about the renewal of the state emergency in 2006: "The traditional procedures do not suffice to combat the terrorist crimes [...] the application of the Emergency Law allows the security apparatus to adopt necessary measures to block and face [terrorism]."³⁰

²⁸ For more about "communists" as security targets see 3.3.2.1.

²⁹ There was, in fact, a personal connection between Khalid al-Islambuli and the siege of the Mecca in 1979. His later-detained brother, who had been in Mecca during the siege, likely handed Khalid a copy of "Seven Letters", the fundamentalist booklet written by the leader of the uprising, which the insurgents distributed among the people. For more, see Heikal (1983: 247).

³⁰ *al-Ahram*, 1. 5. 2006, p. 1.

Yet, the Egyptian political professionals did not act alone in the (re)production of the corpus of knowledge about the terrorist threat in the country. As I outlined in the prior chapter, the narrow view of security as a result of discursive framing, as maintained by the CS, is not sufficient to understand the complexity of the processes of constructing a threat (e.g. Hansen, 2000, 2011; Williams, 2003; Mavelli, 2013; Wilkinson, 2007; c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 459; Sjöstedt, 2011). The (re)production of knowledge about the terrorist threat and the emergence of the knowledge as a part of regimes of truth is a process irreducible to speech-acts of the leading Egyptian officials. The (re)production of the knowledge about the terrorist threat and the related mobilization of the power/knowledge relations thus involves more actors located “in different discursive locales” (Stritzel, 2011: 350). In this thesis, I focus on categories of actors introduced by Bigo (2002), namely on the security professionals and security amateurs³¹.

In the Egyptian context, the Egyptian security apparatus and al-Azhar, an authoritative Islamic institution, played central roles in (re)producing the knowledge about the terrorist threat and solidifying it as a representation of “truth” in the Egyptian security discourse. The Egyptian security apparatus consolidated the knowledge about the terrorist threat through its everyday counterterrorism activities such as surveillance, arbitrary search and arrest (*ishtibah wa tahari*)³², interrogations, and produced evidence. This reasserted the terrorist threat and rationalized the exigency of the state of emergency as a preventive measure to address the threat. Al-Azhar built upon its authority as an established religious institution and discredited Islamists’ religious views as extremist.

To proceed systematically, on the following pages I will first concentrate on Egyptian political leadership as a major securitizing actor. Then, I will address the field of the Egyptian security professionals. Finally, my attention will turn to al-Azhar, an important security amateur.

3.2.1. The Egyptian political professionals

The Egyptian political professionals, including high ranking state representatives such as the President, Prime Ministers, speakers of both parliamentary chambers, Ministers of Interior, and diverse members of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), regularly (re)produced and dispersed securitizing claims about the terrorist threat and the need for the exceptional framework to tackle the threat.³³ The affirmative stances of

³¹ Bigo (2002) utilizes the term “amateurs of the security process” to refer to, for instance, churches, ad hoc spokesmen or persons not involved in the decision-making process.

³² *Ishtibah wa tahari* – literally meaning suspicion and investigation – was a security practice commonly used by the Egyptian security officials against Egyptians who appeared suspicious in the public spaces. The practice consisted of stopping a targeted person (*istiqaf*), his brief interrogation (*tahari*), followed by an arrest (*dabt*). For more, see Ismail (2011: 849).

³³ However, the securitizing actor with the most exposure on the Egyptian media was clearly the respective Minister of Interior.

diverse Egyptian politicians filled the pages of *al-Ahram* as well as other governmental dailies. They were regularly aired on the state TV channels and radio stations.

Although, the Egyptian political professionals appeared as individual securitizing actors, and it might be thus tempting to treat them that way, such a perspective would overlook and neglect “the collectivities for which individuals are designated authoritative representatives (e.g. parties, states, or pressure groups)” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 41). Even though securitizing speech-acts can be traced to concrete individuals, such as, for instance, Habib al-Adli, the Minister of Interior (1997-2011), the disintegration of the collective into sub-units is not epistemologically beneficial, “because much of social life is understandable only when collectivities are seen as more than the sum of their “members” and are treated as social realities (methodological collectivism)” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 40). To securitize an issue is not a matter of an individual actor, insofar as no individual can master the discourse (Bigo 2002, 2007).

In this thesis, I refer to the collective unit, which primarily securitized terrorism as a threat, as the Egyptian political leadership and I empirically define it as a privileged class within the Egyptian public sector. In line with Ouaisa’s definition of the state-class (2005)³⁴, the Egyptian political leadership could not be defined by the governmental structures nor by the division between three branches of government. Rather, it was a heterogeneous network of individuals and cliques that occupied diverse positions in the leading political institutions such as the presidential office, important ministries (e.g. Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense), province administration, the bureaucratic apparatus, media, businessmen circles, as well as within military ranks. The membership in the ruling National Democratic Party³⁵ was its common denominator as well as a threshold to enter the clientelist network and so to reach a share on the state’s rent (Albrecht, 2005: 380, 384).³⁶

Due to the NDP’s dominance on the Egyptian political scene, its members controlled and managed the state’s capital (Gohar, 2008: 172f; Wickham, 2002: 89; Springborg, 1989: 189). This secured status the Egyptian political leadership as a Ouaisian state-class with overwhelming political and societal domination. In particular, the distribution of the state rent – also in form of societal, cultural, and symbolic capital in the Bourdieuan sense (Ouaisa, 2005: 47) – beyond the NDP members to diverse institutions and individuals, such as army generals, *'ulama'*, journalists, as well as to the officially acknowledged political opposition, guaranteed the loyalty of key actors and solidified the dominant position of the Egyptian political leadership in the field of

³⁴ The theoretical concept of *Staatsklasse* was introduced by Hans Elsenhans. Ouaisa, however, significantly extended the original formulation of the concept. See Ouaisa (2005, esp. chapter 1).

³⁵ NDP was a “government party” formed by Sadat in 1978. Its establishment was a part of the effort to create a regulated multi-party system (Beattie, 2000: 237).

³⁶ It is noteworthy that the police and military officials were banned to join any political parties, including the governmental NDP. Only those who retired were permitted to enter the political scene officially as political party members.

Egyptian political professionals. In result, the NDP became to be frequently referred to as “a shell organisation – a network of appointed agents and officials”, which maintained “complex relations of patronage which reach[ed] from the president down to the village level” (Marfleet, 2009: 25).

The absence of genuine political pluralism was a central pre-condition of the NDP's dominance in the Egyptian political landscape (Gohar, 2008: 172f). Although, during Mubarak's reign, there were political parties other than the NDP represented in the parliament, these parties assumed the role of a tolerated but impotent opposition (Albrecht, 2005: 383f). Due to rigged elections, diverse legal and extra-legal obstacles, and massive cooptation (see Albrecht, 2005: 384; chapter 5), the officially acknowledged opposition parties and other political associations, including the independent members of parliament, never reached the capacity to shape the way how the Egyptian society was governed (Shehata, 2010: 51-82). Their main function shrank into ensuring the facade of political pluralism (see Albrecht, 2005: 379). Even though the participation in the parliamentary life in Egypt provided the opposition parties with an opportunity to embarrass the government and to disagree with the periodical extensions of the state of emergency³⁷, they had “little chance of making serious inroads at the government's expense” (Springborg, 1989: 192).

Since the NDP secured a comfortable majority in the parliament throughout the entire Mubarak era (el-Mahdi, 2009: 89), the Egyptian NDP-led cabinet was also able to secure smooth authorizations for extensions of the state of emergency, which were regularly reviewed and approved by the parliament. On some occasions, the NDP took advantage of its dominant position and scheduled the parliamentary sessions to review the extension of the state of emergency without prior notice. Thus, it prevented the opposition parliamentarians from preparing counter-arguments or mobilizing the Egyptian public. In result, the structural domination of the NDP and oppressive mechanisms sanctioned by the state of emergency in combination with massive cooptation reduced the role of the official opposition to keeping the illusion of a healthy political debate and political pluralism (Albrecht, 2005: 379, 384; el-Mahdi and Marfleet, 2009: 1).

The privileged access to the media granted the Egyptian political elite a monopoly on information and its mass distribution in the discourse. For instance, *al-Ahram*, a governmental daily, which I scrutinized in detail, provided a space for the Egyptian leadership to circulate their security concerns related to the terrorist threat in the public discourse.³⁸ In fact the pages which *al-Ahram* lent out to the Egyptian leadership and its positions not only on security, reached such a volume that, according to Hamada (2013),

³⁷ For a record of the dissenting expressions of the Egyptian parliamentarians related to the extension of the Emergency Law between 1981 and 2003, see al-Sawy (2005).

³⁸ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 15. 10. 1981, p. 1, 4, 5; *al-Ahram*, 2. 9. 1983 p. 15; *al-Ahram*, 30. 9. 1984, p. 6; *al-Ahram*, 5. 2. 1997, p. 3; *al-Ahram*. 1. 5. 2006, p. 7.

the quantity of such texts outweighed the amount of news articles appearing regularly in al-Ahram.

Through the distribution of benefits, privileges or their denial the Egyptian leadership coopted most important chief-editors, media managers, prominent journalists, as well as tycoon owners of private press and TV stations. Thus, although, according to Hamada (2013), there was not direct censorship during Mubarak's reign, self-censorship was a firm part of journalistic practice (see also Doha Center for Media Freedom, 2012). The media ownership and its ideological leanings notwithstanding, there was hardly any content produced which did not follow the unspoken red-line. These were, as Hamada (2013) recalled in an interview, criticisms of the president, the Egyptian government, the Ministry of Interior, and/or of the national security. Accordingly, to produce a content critical of the counterterrorism campaign and/or the state of emergency meant to overstep the red line and to face possible consequences.

In the *al-Ahram's* editions included in this investigation, there were barely any articles critical of the counterterrorism and/or the larger context of the state emergency. Rather, *al-Ahram* produced content supportive of the securitization of the terrorist threat. It rationalized the state of emergency as a policy that was, despite its negative impact on Egyptian civil liberties, necessary and reasonable to address the threat. At the same time, *al-Ahram* downplayed and ridiculed any voices critical of the governmental security policies. This is illustrated, for instance, in an editorial which defended the renewal of the state of emergency:

“[the exceptional laws] are in the end a threat that threatens individual political freedom...and societal freedom... it threatens the government as well as the opposition. [...] We all are united in the need for democracy and its defense, and the absence of the exceptional laws. It is absolutely true that the instructions of the president Mubarak, which focused on the implementation of the emergency law, were restricted solely to the confrontation of terrorism and extremism and that they aimed at protecting the society and democracy from the violent activities of some extremist elements.”³⁹

As shown in the illuminating excerpt above, the media was a central actor in the consolidation of the dominance of the securitizing claims of the Egyptian leadership. Media sources proliferated the corpus of knowledge about the terrorist threat to the Egyptian public, while they downplayed and ridiculed alternative views on security. Securitizing actors regularly highlighted the importance of the media. Moreover, the media was hailed as being responsible for bringing about the “truth” about terrorism in Egypt. In this regard, the Egyptian media was instrumental in the (re)production of the corpus of knowledge about the terrorist threat as a dominant vision of security in the country.

³⁹ *al-Ahram*, 16. 9. 1983, p. 3.

The Egyptian political leadership occupied a structurally privileged position in which they could not only define and frame security threats, but also adopt the exceptional measures to tackle the threats. In this respect, the Egyptian political leadership mobilized the power/knowledge relations in support of the securitization of terrorism and thus acted as a securitizing actor. However, it also assumed the role of an empowered audience, ala Balzacq (2011a: 8-9), as the political leadership was, due its structurally privileged position, in a role to adopt the state of emergency and approve its renewals throughout the three decades. Not only did the political leadership dominate the process of (re)producing the knowledge about the terrorist threat, but it also played a central role in sustaining the state of emergency.

3.2.2. Security professionals

Securitization also develops through unspectacular channels that involve daily routines and a range of bureaucratic practices in the field of security (see e.g. Bigo, 2002, 2007; Williams, 2003: 524; Huysmans, 2011: 375; Abrahamsen, 2005). Security professionals and their everyday practices, both of which the Paris School brought to the spotlight of securitization scholarship, are an essential part of a securitization analysis. I will discuss in further detail on the following pages how the Egyptian security professionals substantially contributed to (re)producing and shaping knowledge about the terrorist threat in the Egyptian discourse.

3.2.2.1. Struggles of the Egyptian security professionals

Similar to Bigo's description of European security professionals (Bigo, 2007), the field of security professionals in Egypt was heterogeneous and ingrained with persistent struggles between and within individual centers of power (see also, Sassoon, 2016: 117). Under Husni Mubarak, there were several centers of power which competed with each other to define security and threats in the country. The major fault line ran between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense, especially when it came to the securitization of the terrorist threat. By Presidential Decree No. 4 of 1982, Husni Mubarak authorized the Minister of Interior to enact measures as stipulated in the Emergency Law of 1958 (art. 3).

In practice, this virtually moved the responsibility for the adoption of exceptional security measures to the Minister of Interior, his aides, and subordinate institutions (see EOHR, 2008a, 2008b). In words of al-Nadeem (2006: 11), a leading Egyptian human rights organization:

“The eternal emergency state has turned the ministry of interior into the highest authority in the country. Not only does it control the lives of Egyptian citizens, but the prosecution as well.”

While the Ministry of Interior, and especially its subordinates the State Security Investigations Service (SSIS)⁴⁰, the domestic intelligence, and the paramilitary Central Security Forces (CSF) took the lead in the counterterrorism campaign, the Ministry of Defense, along with its intelligence body, the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID), and the army were sidelined.⁴¹ Although the MID cooperated with the SSIS to hunt down al-Sadat's assassins (Sirrs, 2010: 151) and the military officers presided over the military tribunals with Islamist militants, Islamist moderates, as well as with non-Islamist dissidents (Reza, 2007: 543-544), the counterterrorism campaign was clearly run by the Ministry of Interior.⁴²

The endowment of power to the Ministry of Interior, which was secured by the state of emergency and the status of an institution leading the counterterrorism campaign, was more than a mere outcome of the securitization process. It was also a product of the wider contextual circumstances combined with the paranoia of Egyptian leaders, who did not want just one center of security professionals to dominate (Sassoon, 2016: 117). In particular, al-Sadat's assassination by military officers severely impaired the trust between the Egyptian political professionals and the army. The political leadership feared that the military had been infiltrated by Islamists and thus could not be trusted. Al-Sadat's decision to make peace with Israel in 1979 further burdened the strained relationship. Peace, which was hailed internationally, was, however, largely unpopular in Egypt; the decision antagonized Egyptian masses, including the military.⁴³ The peace treaty voided the Egyptian army's key mission, which was based on the permanent vision of a potential conflict with Israel, overnight. It turned 700,000 active soldiers, who were trained to combat Israel, into unsettling idleness (Burgrova, 2013). Mubarak's decision to preserve the 1979 peace treaty did not improve the relations with the military either.

In this respect, the prioritization of the Ministry of Interior over the Ministry of Defense was one of the strategies of Mubarak's leadership to counter-balance the discontented military ranks. The securitization of the terrorist threat offered a means to reconfigure budget allocations and responsibilities of individual Egyptian security institutions.

⁴⁰ The SSIS was tasked with monitoring and addressing those who were perceived as security risk to the political order and earned a negative reputation for its heavy-handed brutal policies (Sirrs, 2010: 163f). For the overview of the structure of the Egyptian domestic security apparatus see Allam (2015: 68). In Arabic, it was known as *Gihaz Mabahith Amn al-Dawla* or also *Amn al-Dawla*.

⁴¹ This is in a striking contrast to the 2013 counterterrorism campaign launched after the military coup. The field of homeland security has been increasingly taken over by the military. For more, see chapter 6.

⁴² The third pillar of the Egyptian intelligence system, the Egyptian General Intelligence Service (EGIS, al-Mukhabarat al-Amma), which answered directly to the president, was involved in counterterrorism activities abroad. Since the 1990s, the EGIS, under the leadership of Omar Suleiman, a close ally of Hosni Mubarak, boosted its cooperation with the CIA. Among other undertakings, it has actively participated in the extra-legal extradition of terrorist suspects and their torture (Sirrs, 2010: 170ff).

⁴³ The peace with Israel united the entire spectrum of the Egyptian opposition including the Nasserists, Islamists, intelligentsia. The peace with Israel continues to be a contested issue, with large segments of the Egyptian population disapproving.

Accordingly, the political leadership in the early 1980s relied on the paramilitary CSF supervised by the Ministry of Interior as a counter-balance to the Egyptian military. In this era, the CSF grew significantly.⁴⁴ Yet, the CSF's capacity to counterbalance the army was questionable. Conscripts to the CSF were subjected to poor conditions and maltreatment during their compulsory service; as a result, their discipline and loyalty was a major issue (Sirrs, 2010: 162; see also Allam, 2015: 62; Adam and Carr, 2012). The CSF mutiny in 1986, which was suppressed only by the intervention of the military, brought this issue to the forefront (Springborg, 1989: 101f; Sirrs, 2010: 162).

Although the 1986 mutiny strained the governmental strategy to counter-weight the military, the configuration of power relations within the field of security professionals was maintained. The Ministry of Interior preserved the underlying role in the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign. The army withdrew and its direct intervention in politics remained a remote possibility (Ayubi, 1991: 244). The army did not engage in counterterrorism activities nor other domestic security issues until the 2011 revolution (Allam, 2015: 63f).⁴⁵ To secure loyalty, the political leadership coopted the army generals and officers through a massive redistribution of the state rent. As a result, the military managed to build a large economic empire ranging from food production companies, oil stations, water facilities, and construction firms to sea-side hotel resorts and beyond (Stier, 2011).⁴⁶ Thus, although the Egyptian military virtually withdrew from the Egyptian political scene, it became increasingly intermingled in people's daily lives through its economic activities (Sayigh, 2012; Linn, 2016).

Despite, or perhaps exactly because of, the army's absence in the securitization of terrorism, the Egyptian military was able to build its public image as a supporter and protector of the interests of the Egyptian society. Unlike the Ministry of Interior, the army was not burdened with the negative image of human rights abuses, which were related to the counterterrorism campaign (Burgrova, 2013). Instead, it enhanced its image among Egyptians through its economic activities (Allam, 2015: 63). It is therefore unsurprising that the 2011 revolution manifested the firm bond between the Egyptian people and the army, which had been built over decades of intense military-led civilian economic projects and military's comparative lack of involvement in human rights abuses. The infamous chant of the Tahrir crowds "the army and the folk are united" (*al-sha'b wa al-gaysh yad wahda*) underscored the military's popularity and

⁴⁴ Between 1981 and 1992, the CSF ranks tripled from 100,000 to 300,000 men. For more, see MEW/HRW (1992JUL, 31).

⁴⁵ Allam (2015: 63) argues that the Egyptian government spared military commanders from police work because they were afraid the military might align with the opposition forces through their work in domestic security.

⁴⁶ Estimates of the might of the military economic empire vary greatly; diverse sources place the military's economic might at anywhere from 8 to 40 percent of the Egyptian GDP (Abul-Magd 2011; Stier 2011; Sennot 2012). The wide scope of the estimates is based on the fact that military incomes and budget are not a subject to any civilian oversight. The prevailing secrecy around the military issues implies that the Egyptian public knew a little about the size and scope of its commercial activities. See Tadros (2012: 25), Linn (2016).

contrasted with the overt hatred the protesters turned against the Ministry of Interior (for more, see chapter 5).

3.2.2.2. The expert security knowledge

The State Security Investigation Service (SSIS), was a main intelligence department of the Ministry of Interior for domestic security matters. It was the SSIS that was the spearhead of the counterterrorism campaign. In particular, under the stipulation of the Emergency Law of 1958 (art. 3) and provided a written or oral authorization by the President or the Minister of Interior the SSIS officials were entitled to set:

“restrictions on individual’s freedom of meeting, traveling, residence, and traffic in specific places or at defined times, and seizing the suspect among them, as well as authorizing the inspection of persons and places without being restricted by the provisions of the criminal procedure law, and charging any person to perform any type of work. Ordering the control of correspondence [...] the control of papers, publications, printed materials, written documents, drawings, and all means of expression, publicity, and advertisement before their publication, and impounding, confiscating, and inactivating them besides closing down their publishing places.[...] Impounding any movable or realty [sic] and imposing the sequestration on companies and establishments, as well as postponing the settlement of debts and liabilities that are due, or becoming due on what is being impounded or sequestered [...]” (the Emergency Law of 1958, art. 3).

The enumeration of exceptional rights demonstrates the extent to which the broad field of Egyptian security professionals could act unrestricted in their efforts to fight terrorism. In practice, the SSIS made use of these extensive rights and habitually exercised them. For example, the SSIS officers routinely exercised their right to apprehend individuals whom they deemed dangerous to public security and order – even on the basis of a mere suspicion – without the need to require warrants for search and seizure (Reza, 2007: 537ff). The SSIS daily encounters with assumed terrorists, which was supported by pervasive surveillance of thousands of individuals, produced, on the one hand, “tangible” evidence about the existence of the terrorist threat, which was necessary to uphold the securitizing process.⁴⁷ On the other hand, it also placed the SSIS specifically and the Ministry of Interior generally in an advantaged position to shape and (re)produce knowledge about the terrorism threat in the Egyptian discourse.

The unlimited authority to infringe and monitor people’s lives, which was facilitated by the absent need for a judicial authorization (Sirrs, 2010: 164), allowed the security

⁴⁷ For an illustrative example see the HRW report (2007DEC) on the so-called Victorious Sect, an alleged terrorist group, which was believed to be a case wholly fabricated by the security officials to produce a media attractive case evidencing the counterterrorism successes of the Egyptian security apparatus.

professionals to gather an enormous amount of data – a cornerstone of the counterterrorism campaign (see also Sassoon, 2016: 145ff):

“The collection of information is the first defense line to constrain the terrorist organizations. [...] All information is important, even if it is a small piece of information or it appears unimportant, when the pieces of information are put together their analysis can lead to uncover very dangerous plans or a terrorist organization.”⁴⁸

Consequently, the SSIS officers employed diverse, unrestricted methods of surveillance, which ranged from eavesdropping on phone conversations, reading personal correspondence, and the recruitment of informants from a suspect's neighborhood, to the interrogation and torture of suspected individuals and/or his relatives (Seif, 2013, Abu Seada, 2013; MEW/HRW, 1992JUL). The data collection would have been, however, unthinkable without two major pillars of the nationwide surveillance network: plainclothes SSIS detectives (*murshidin*); and civilian informers (*mukhbirin*) such as doormen, taxi drivers, or unemployed young men who informed on monitored individuals (MEW/HRW, 1992JUL; Sirrs, 2010: 164; Seif, 2013; Abu Seada 2013; Sherry, 1993). The immensity of the informant network is underscored by its sheer size. At the end of the 2000s there were about 700,000 informants on the Ministry of Interior payroll (Sassoon, 2016: 118f). Accordingly, the SSIS “came to control almost every aspect of Egypt's public life” (Tadros, 2012: 22). Its extensive and systematic surveillance techniques were so pervasive that privacy became “almost meaningless to this quintessentially Machiavellian organization [SSIS]” (Ghonim, 2012: 2; see also Allam, 2015: 56-58).

Although the minute focus on individual Egyptians, their life, families, jobs, and societal networks underlined the individualizing effect of biopolitical power operation, the Egyptian society could only be optimized through transformation of the micro-data into an abstract security (see Foucault, 1982: 782-785; see also Tagma, 2009: 411). In particular, the data collected was translated into the statistics and transformed into generalized statements about the terrorism threat. Due to the lack of information about the internal workings of the SSIS, precisely how surveillance data was systematized remains unclear.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, *al-Ahram* articles repeatedly emphasized that the security officials were proud to have their surveillance data scientifically systematized, as the following excerpt illustrates:

“the security apparatus was able to monitor and chase movement and activities of terrorist groups and it acquired pieces of information about the map of terrorism through a scientific method (*manhaj 'ilmi*) far from haphazardness.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 125, p. 64-65.

⁴⁹ The files stored in the SSIS offices and headquarters were systematically shredded in the few weeks after the 2011 revolution. There were only few remaining documents, which were taken by activists who stormed the SSIS departments. These files were circulated widely online. See e.g. blog Gel Nasr (2011).

⁵⁰ See *al-Ahram*, 2. 2. 2000, p. 1.

The content of *Majalla amn al-am* similarly documents that the information collected by the security officials in their everyday work was transformed into generalized expert knowledge about the terrorist threat. Generalized descriptions of terrorists were presented in the *Majalla amn al-am*, for instance, wherein the assumed socioeconomic background, personality, dispositions, as well as physical appearance of a terrorist were described in detail.⁵¹

The expert knowledge, which the Egyptian security officials produced about the terrorist threat in the country, was a factor of paramount importance to the securitization's sustainment. The security expertise of the Egyptian security apparatus reinforced the relationship between security, Islamists, terrorism, and the state of emergency (*hala al-tuwara'*) as the only means sufficient to face the terrorist threat constructed and constantly reiterated by the Egyptian political leadership.⁵² Thus, it solidified the existing power/knowledge relations and significantly contributed to the preservation of the securitization status quo.

3.2.2.3. Reinforcement of the Egyptian security professionals

The securitization of the terrorist threat strengthened the SSIS position as the lead security institution in the Egyptian field of security professionals. Backed by the Emergency Law of 1958 and later by the Law No. 97 of 1992, known as Anti-Terror Law, the SSIS operated in a mode without many restrictions and was thus susceptible to committing abuse (see e.g. AI, 2007APR: 8). In a 2013 interview, Zarei articulates that the extensive rights anchored in the Emergency Law and Anti-Terror Law combined with vague definitions of terrorism and national security produced a fertile soil for abusive conduct of the security officials.

The reinforcement of the SSIS, which was a direct effect of the securitization process, bolstered both the position of the SSIS as a central institution in the field of Egyptian security professionals as well as the position of individual security officials who became petty sovereigns. The booklet *Ashan ma tandarbesh 'ala ifak... [So you won't get beaten on your neck...]* written by former officer Omar al-Afifi (2008) describes the gravity of the SSIS reinforcement and their officials at stake in detail. Al-Afifi mentions, for instance, the routine abuse of detention orders issued under the provisions of the Emergency Law of 1958 which were used to arbitrarily arrest whomever a security official deemed necessary. The common practice, as human rights activists Ahmad Seif (2013), Hafiz Abu Seada (2013), Ayman Okail (2013a) described me in detail, was for SSIS officials to be given blank detention orders signed by the Minister of Interior (see also al-Afifi, 2008). Thus, it was up to the SSIS and individual officers to fill in a name

⁵¹ See e.g. *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 139, p. 9-20; *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 126, p. 19-20; *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 129, p. 38-41.

⁵² See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 17. 2. 1997, p. 13; for the latter see especially e.g. *al-Ahram*, 1. 3. 2003, p. 20; *al-Ahram*, 7. 5. 1991, p. 1.

of a wanted person. Thereby, the SSIS officials were in position to detain whomever they wished and place him in the SSIS secret detention cells, often despite an obvious lack of any substantial evidence, where his life became devoid of any juridical value.

Similarly, information gathered through pervasive surveillance significantly bolstered the dominant position of the Egyptian security professionals in general and of the SSIS in particular. The SSIS gathered immense volumes of data on thousands of Egyptians, their private lives, contacts, and families. A comment from former SSIS head Fuad Allam, who led various counterterrorism campaigns under several Egyptian governments underscores the agency's meticulous focus on data collection bordering with an obsession:

“if someone passed by me and simply said “al-salam ‘alaykum” I would write a memo and file it. This is the correct method to safeguard our future.” (Allam quoted in Sassoon, 2016: 146)

The data gathered by the SSIS was preserved in personal files and where the information could be updated or used by the SSIS against a monitored individual (Hamada, 2013; Ghonim, 2012: 2).⁵³ The few documents from the SSIS archives that survived the hasty shredding in the early aftermath of the 2011 revolution clearly suggest that there was an extensive corpus of detailed data about thousands of Egyptians, including high-ranking representatives of the political elite. The documents found in the SSIS offices included, for instance, lists of informants, judges who rigged the elections, transcripts of private conversations between spouses, photos from private parties, and detailed surveillance accounts on activists. Moreover, they also included detailed files on people from the inner circles of the political elites including the Egyptian Grand Mufti⁵⁴ (Stack and MacFarquhar, 2011; Ghonim, 2012: 2f; Sassoon, 2016: 145).

The securitization of the terrorist threat and related exceptional security policies considerably reinforced the sociopolitical position of Egyptian security professionals. In fact, the state of emergency and related anti-terror legislation placed the security professionals in general and the SSIS in particular virtually *above* the law. This is demonstrated in both the extensive exceptional rights and vast impunity of the security officials. In this regard, it was in interest of the Egyptian security professionals to maintain the securitization status quo and thus also the exceptional security policies, i.e. the basis of their empowerment.

⁵³ There were many possible ways the collected information could have been instrumentalized. The security officials, for instance, were authorized to issue a personal security report, which was a necessary precondition of any state employee (Seif, 2013; Hamada, 2013).

⁵⁴ The Grand Mufti is the highest official of religious legal figure in Egypt, who is the head of Dar al-Ifta' – a state-run institution issuing *fatwas*.

3.2.3. Security amateurs

Religion and its *correct* interpretation formed one of the central fault lines between the idealized Egyptian self and the terrorist other. Accordingly, Islam and its interpretation constituted an important field of contestation. In this context, the religious authorities shape the bandwidth of acceptable religiosity. Al-Azhar – an authoritative Sunni institution – assumed a role of a significant sociopolitical actor in the securitization of the terrorist threat (Osman, 2011: 112; Amin, 2011: 121f). Al-Azhar as a securitization amateur⁵⁵ (Bigo, 2002) used its expert knowledge of religion to endorse the securitization process that was primarily framed as a fight against Islamist terrorism.

In Egypt, where the system of belief and religious practice shapes the daily life of the society⁵⁶, the religious authorities such as al-Azhar are important points of sociopolitical references to the Egyptian Muslim majority (Brown and Shanin, 2010: 218f). Despite deflation of al-Azhar's status in the last decades, the institution maintains its position as an authoritative center of Islamic learning and jurisprudence. Thereby it is in a prime position to influence public understanding of Islam (Skovgaard-Petersen, 1997: 225). Through issuance of *fatwas*, i.e. religious rulings, al-Azhar interprets and (de)legitimizes certain forms of behavior such as governmental policies.⁵⁷ Although al-Azhar's *fatwas* are not legally binding, their moral appeal to the Egyptian *umma* (Muslim community) is undeniable. Thus, as the history of modern Egypt shows, it was in the interest of the Egyptian government to secure al-Azhar's support in their key political decisions. For instance, al-Azhar legitimized both Nasserist socialist policies and al-Sadat's accusations of leftist circles for inciting of the bread riots in 1977 (Beattie, 2000: 225; Heikal, 1983: 216). Likewise, Mubarak's government resorted to the time-tested practice and sought for al-Azhar's support to legitimize the counterterrorism campaign from its very beginning in the early 1980s (Osman, 2011: 112).

In this respect, al-Azhar was already an experienced securitization amateur. As in the past, during Mubarak's reign, al-Azhar capitalized on its religious authority and denounced the Islamist groups as misled from the right path (*al-sirat al-mustaqim*). Besides *fatwas*, Azharite '*ulama*' also regularly discredited Islamists and their views on Islam in Egyptian newspapers. For instance, in an article published by *al-Ahram* shortly after al-Sadat's assassination, an Azharite representative expressed the concern over the militant's *fanatic* and *extremist* interpretations of Islam and urged the government to address this issue before it was too late.⁵⁸ '*Ulama*' also brought their religious expertise to the courts, where they testified against members of diverse Islamist groups. In the

⁵⁵ Bigo (2002) utilizes the term "amateurs of the security process" to refer to, for instance, churches, ad hoc spokesmen, or persons not involved in the decision-making process.

⁵⁶ This was not always so. Religion played a comparably less significant role in the public discourse in the 20th century up to 1970s. See e.g. Amin (2011: 122f).

⁵⁷ al-Azhar is not the only body issuing *fatwas* in Egypt. Besides al-Azhar, there is Dar al-Ifta'. For an excellent and extensive overview of this institution, see Skovgaard-Petersen (1997).

⁵⁸ *al-Ahram*, 21. 10. 1981, p. 3.

early 1980s, al-Azhar also participated in a government-backed project “prisoners in a dialog”, in which the aim was to “correct” the thinking of Islamist prisoners through a conversation with prominent al-Azhar’s *shaykhs* and *'ulama'* in nationally televised “dialogues”.⁵⁹ The dialog program, however, failed. Prisoners either rejected or mocked it and the program was thus soon abandoned (Moustafa, 2000: 11).

As the fiasco with the “prisoners in dialogues” project highlighted, al-Azhar’s extensive institutional subordination to the state⁶⁰ undermined the securitization process. Although the government secured al-Azhar’s support for the counterterrorism campaign, al-Azhar’s subordinate status further undermined its legitimacy as an independent religious authority and, by implication, the credibility of its securitization endorsement. Al-Azhar’s subordination to the state was also a major point which radical Islamists took up to challenge al-Azhar’s legitimacy.⁶¹ As it was clear that al-Azhar’s subordination to the state harmed the interests of the securitizing political leadership to counter-balance the growing militant threat (Moustafa, 2000: 11; see also Osman, 2011: 113f), Mubarak’s government reevaluated its approach to al-Azhar. To ideologically counter Islamist militants, whose appeal among Egyptians rose towards the late 1980s, the government readjusted al-Azhar’s subordinate position and strengthened al-Azhar’s self-government in matters of Islam interpretation (Barraclough, 1998; Zeghal, 1999; Moustafa, 2000).

During the 1980s and early 1990s, in return for al-Azhar’s greater credibility in the field of countering radical Islamists views, al-Azhar assumed an increasingly important sociopolitical role. al-Azhar increasingly intruded on the everyday lives of Egyptians as the institution expanded its influence within judiciary, state-run media, as well as in the educational institutions (Zeghal, 1999: 391; Osman, 2011: 114). For example, al-Azhar was granted a virtual monopoly on the interpretation of religion in the entire country: only Azharites were allowed to preach in the Egyptian mosques.⁶² Al-Azhar also

⁵⁹ The dialog was also intensively followed on the pages of *al-Ahram*. See the series of seven articles published in *al-Ahram*’s Friday editions between 4. 6. and 16. 7. 1982.

⁶⁰ al-Azhar’s subordination to the state is by large a result of the major state intervention in al-Azhar’s mode of operation through the 1961 reform. The 1961 reform brought al-Azhar’s financing under the control of the executive. The religious men (*rijal al-din*) became salaried state employees. The university expanded to include secular faculties, of which government-loyal staff was to counterbalance the representatives of the traditional religious faculties. The president also gained the right to appoint the highest representative of al-Azhar, i.e. *shaykh* of al-Azhar (Zeghal, 1999: 373-376; Brown, 2011: 6f).

⁶¹ Takfir wa-l-Hijra and al-Jihad were among the radical groups which criticized al-Azhar’s relationship with the state. Shukri Mustafa, a leader of Takfir wa-l-Hijra, took advantage of the publicity during his trial to attack the traditional role of al-Azhar and *'ulama'* (Skovsgaard-Petersen, 1997: 218). al-Jihad’s internal pamphlet “The neglected duty” (al-Farida al-Gha'iba) written by Muhammad Farag similarly criticized the *'ulama'* for misguiding the Muslims and questioned al-Azhar’s role (Moustafa, 2000: 10; Skovsgaard-Petersen, 1997: 219).

⁶² In practice, al-Azhar’s ability to incorporate a large number of private mosques (*ahli*) was significantly hampered by a shortage of manpower and resources. For instance, in 1992, the Ministry of Endowments and al-Azhar Affairs needed 40,000 new imams. To fill the vacant positions, it hired 5,000 Azharite graduates. Yet, only 3,000 showed up for the work. See Wickham (2002: 97-108).

became a rigorous cultural censor. It was granted the right to censor audiovisual material which concerned topics relevant for Islam (EOHR, 1994; Arigita, 2004: 47; Barraclough, 1998: 242).

Al-Azhar's empowerment, however, soon backfired on the political leadership. Al-Azhar began to test margins of the field of its action and did not hesitate to challenge the government on issues other than the counterterrorism campaign (Brown, 2011). Al-Azhar, for instance, successfully contested government's position on issues such as birth control (the question of abortion) or sexuality (the question of female circumcision) (Barraclough, 1998: 245). Furthermore, al-Azhar's religious conservatism, which increasingly came to the fore, pointed also at the convergence of multiple viewpoints between al-Azhar and radical Islamists (Wickham, 2002: 211; Albrecht, 2005: 385f).⁶³ According to Wickham (2002: 212), in the early 1990s, the difference al-Azhar and militant Islamist group was not so much an ideological one, but rather the fact that the former did not seek a political change.

Al-Azhar's emancipation turned from a desirable means to strengthen the power/knowledge relations (re)produced by the securitization process to a factor challenging them. In this regard, the death of al-Azhar's *shaykh* in 1996 became a suitable moment for the securitizing political leadership to intervene and reconfigure the al-Azhar's field of action. The new *shaykh* Muhammad Sayyid Tantawy (1996-2010), then Grand Mufti (1986-1996), was a predictable leader known for his loyalty to the government and willingness to actively engage in countering Islamist extremism (Skovgaard-Petersen, 1997: 252f; Kienle, 2001: 114). Already as Grand Mufti, Tantawi's loyalty to Mubarak's leadership came to the forefront when he contradicted al-Azhar's *fatwas* on several occasions. Under Tantawy's leadership, al-Azhar's relationship with the state became normalized. The institution continued to be a security amateur and, with reference to its religious expertise, it supported the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign whenever needed (Arigita, 2004). It strongly denounced, for instance, the 1997 terrorist attack on foreign tourists in Luxor and the 9/11 attacks. al-Azhar also remedied its controversial positions in other areas, such as the issues of female circumcision and approved organ donation (Barraclough, 1998: 248-249).

Al-Azhar was clearly an important security amateur whose expertise was central to ideologically discredit Islamists. Although Mubarak's leadership was in a structurally favored position to secure al-Azhar's support for the securitization of the terrorist threat relatively easily, the asymmetric power relations proved not to be an ultimate guarantee of a smooth securitization process. The at times complicated relationship with the state notwithstanding, al-Azhar's supportive stance on the counterterrorism campaign was both immense and crucial to the continuity of the securitization. Although al-Azhar did

⁶³ For instance, al-Azhar's *fatwa* on Farag Foda, a prominent secular intellectual and critic of the Islamists, which accused Fawda of blasphemy, inspired al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya to assassinate Fawda in 1992.

not necessarily (re)produce the securitizing claims voiced by the securitizing actors, its religiously grounded arguments, which nourished the distinction between the “true” and “false” Islam, between an acceptable Muslim and an unacceptable fanatic and terrorist, added new layers to the corpus of knowledge about the terrorist threat in the Egyptian security discourse.

3.3. Framing the terrorist threat

As I argued in previous chapter, the securitization process can be viewed as a biopolitical mechanism to optimize the governed society through the exclusion of unacceptable, undesirable forms of life. In this regard, the inquiry into the corpus of knowledge about the terrorist threat, which was (re)produced through the securitization, is of paramount importance to deconstruct what life was rendered worthy of protection, i.e. became a referent object, and what life was deemed threat to the Egyptian society, i.e. security targets.

3.3.1. Framing and optimizing of the protected self

The Copenhagen school defines referent objects as “things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival” (Buzan, et al. 1998: 36). A referent object is thus something construed as jeopardized by the perceived threat. The alleged danger urges securitizing actors to take an action and call for extraordinary moves on behalf of security and protection of the referent object. The necessity to protect the referent object, then, authorizes the securitizing actors to take action in favor of the jeopardized referent object (Buzan, et al., 1998: 35ff).

Yet, since I argue that securitization can be understood as a biopolitical mechanism to optimize the governed society, I view the referent object to be more than a mere subject of the government’s protection. It is also a subject of biopolitical optimization based on inclusion/exclusion, which are legitimized on behalf of the protection of the governed population. The objective of government is, in this sense, “not just to govern, but to improve the condition of the population, to increase its wealth, its longevity, and its health” (Foucault, 2009: 105).

Accordingly, although the Egyptian society, its well-being, and development was a central referent object framed as endangered by the terrorist threat, the society was more than an object to be protected from terrorism. It was also an object which was subjected to biopolitical optimization driven by the securitization process. Securitization of the terrorist threat framed and constructed acceptable, desirable forms of life, i.e. the self worthy of government’s protection. Thus, the bandwidth of the optimized Egyptian society was (re)established, insofar as the securitization process allowed for a biopolitical intervention to (re)configure the self through the idealized figure of the

acceptable citizen and the other through the demonized figure of the terrorist enemy (see also Opitz 2008: 207; see Holm, 2003: 277ff).

In particular, the securitization of the terrorist threat produced an archetype of an honorable, cooperative, and religious citizen as a very specific yet idealized image of the optimized self. The archetype of the optimized citizen was not thus only indicative of who was considered to be a part of the Egyptian society, i.e., the endangered collective in need of the government's protection, but it also informed forms of acceptable conduct. Specifically, there were three major features, namely honorable conduct, cooperative stance, and moderate religiosity, which defined the optimized Egyptian citizen and were, not surprisingly, constructed as the inverse image of the terrorist enemy.

Honorable conduct

Frequently, the securitization process portrayed Egyptians as victims to the ill-intentions of terrorists. The innocence and irreproachability of the honorable, innocent citizens was usually framed in a direct contrast to the ill-intentions of the terrorist enemy.⁶⁴ As such, it reconfirmed the urgent need to act, address the terrorist threat, and thus protect the entire society of respectable innocent citizens. For instance, the Minister of Interior, Hasan al-Alfi stated:

“Terrorism (*al-irhab*) trades with blood of their victims, - honorable innocent citizens.”⁶⁵

The innocence was also reinforced by the labeling of terrorist attack victims as martyrs (*shuhada*).⁶⁶ Regardless of the sectarian affiliation, both Muslim and Christian victims to terrorist attacks were addressed as martyrs. *Al-Ahram's* editorial summarized the numbers of martyred Egyptians:

“The number of Christians who were martyred [*istashahadu*] in a number of terrorist attacks in recent years until the most recent incidents [1997 massacre of Christians in Abu Qerqas] reached 110. The number of Muslim martyrs reached 1040 martyrs.”⁶⁷

Martyrdom increasingly became a common code to integrate the Egyptian security professionals in the picture of innocent respectable citizens. The security officials who were killed while on duty were frequently depicted as heroes who did not hesitate to sacrifice their life for the sake of the societal well-being and to become martyrs (Starrett, 1998: 201f). The series of *al-Ahram* articles that addressed the death of a policemen on duty during a counterterrorism operation are illustrative of this trend.⁶⁸ The deceased policeman was portrayed as a committed Egyptian who “gave up his life

⁶⁴ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 22. 4. 1994, p. 7; *al-Ahram*, 2. 5. 2006, p. 12.

⁶⁵ *al-Ahram*, 4. 4. 1994, p. 1.

⁶⁶ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 22. 2. 1997, p. 1.

⁶⁷ *al-Ahram*, 22. 2. 1997, p. 1.

⁶⁸ See a series of articles depicting policemen, who were killed on duty by the alleged terrorists, as martyrs. *al-Ahram*, 2. 5. 2006, p. 20; 3. 5. 2006, p. 7; 6. 5. 2006, p. 20.

to redeem the nation”⁶⁹ and whose love for the nation, his dreams, and his family life were interrupted by “bullets of enemies of life from among the bats of darkness.”⁷⁰ His readiness to become a martyr, aptly summarized in a headline a few days later: “The hero officer went to die to let us live!”⁷¹, highlighted the officer’s martyrdom as an honorable, yet due to his profession expected, act to protect the Egyptian society threatened by terrorism. At the same time, the deceased policeman was, however, portrayed in a strong reference to his family also as one of innocent Egyptians who lost his life to the terrorist enemy.⁷²

Cooperative stance

The optimized citizen was also qualified by his readiness to actively support the securitization of the terrorism threat. The support was framed primarily as willingness to cooperate with the security apparatus and to actively participate in the counterterrorism campaign (see also Starrett, 1998: 204-206).⁷³ The cartoon published in *al-Ahram* (see illustration 2) shortly after al-Sadat’s assassination aptly points to cooperation as a desired form of conduct of the optimized citizen. In the illustration the small men, who stands for the Egyptian people (*al-sha'b*), is invited to take revenge upon the terrorist organizations that are portrayed as the big balloon. The cartoon clearly suggests that the balloon of terrorism could easily be burst through the action of the Egyptian society as a collective. A cartoon published in *al-Ahram* almost three decades later promotes identical thought (see illustration 3).



Illustration No. 2: *al-Ahram*,
12.10.1981



Illustration No. 3: *al-Ahram*, 30.5.2008

⁶⁹ *al-Ahram*, 3. 5. 2006, p. 7.

⁷⁰ *al-Ahram*, 3. 5. 2006, p. 7.

⁷¹ *al-Ahram*, 5. 5. 2006, p. 19.

⁷² See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 3. 5. 2006, p. 7; *al-Ahram*, 6. 5. 2006, p. 20. For a similar narrative see also *al-Ahram*, 1. 4. 1994, p. 3.

⁷³ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 23. 10. 1981, p. 5.

The needle in the man's hand embodied the desired form of cooperation, which was centered on information and vigilance of ordinary Egyptians. The emphasis on information, which was provided by Egyptians, was reiterated a cornerstone of the counterterrorism efforts throughout the three decades. As, for instance, *al-Ahram's* editorial stated:

“There must be the vigilant eyes to protect our country and our stability any time from the bloody violence.”⁷⁴

An optimized Egyptian was constructed as an extension of the surveillance body that vigilantly monitored his environment and reported any suspicious individual or activity in his surroundings.⁷⁵ The appeal to Egyptians for their vigilance intensified in the 1990s during the peak of the open battle between the government and armed Islamists. The success of the counterterrorism campaign was portrayed as being hinged on the active cooperation of Egyptians with the security apparatus. As, for instance, it was depicted in *al-Ahram's* article dedicated to the poor security situation in Upper Egypt in 1994:

“[t]here is a need for a united stance especially with regard to the citizens in those villages which became safe havens for extremist movements and we praise chant *people in police's service [al-sha'b fi khidma al-shurta]*...”⁷⁶

Later, the individual vigilance became increasingly combined with the emphasis of collective responsibility. As, for instance, it was argued in *al-Ahram's* article:

“This nation needs organizations and even simple masses [*al-jumhur al-basta*], general youth to be aware and remember that terrorism is a threat to life for everyone in this society [...] and this terrorism needs to be combated by us, not just by the official or governmental bodies.”⁷⁷

A similar line of argument appeared in another *al-Ahram's* article:

“[t]he responsibility to combat this cancer [i.e. terrorism] is no longer a responsibility limited to the security apparatus, but it has become the responsibility of the whole society and every each of its member. [...] Everyone in this society has the duty to fight this fanatic thinking and protect others from it.”⁷⁸

The collective responsibility was often framed as a key factor for the success or failure of the counterterrorism campaign. Yet, it was rarely defined in terms of a specific action which was required from individual Egyptians.⁷⁹

Moderate religiosity

Religiosity was painted as a positive and integral feature of the Egyptian optimized citizen. Accordingly, the ideal Egyptian was religiously pious but not extremist or fanatic in his belief, insofar as fanaticism (*al-ta'ssub*), extremism (*al-tatarruf*) were

⁷⁴ *al-Ahram*, 16. 9. 1983, p. 3.

⁷⁵ See e.g. *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 159, p. 100-109.

⁷⁶ *al-Ahram*, 31. 3. 1994, p. 3.

⁷⁷ *al-Ahram*, 2. 5. 2006, p. 12.

⁷⁸ *al-Ahram*, 1. 4. 1994, p. 3.

⁷⁹ For a more elaborate account see *al-Ahram*, 1. 4. 1994, p. 3.

features of the terrorist enemy's religiosity. This distinction is illustrated in the following *al-Ahram*'s excerpt:

“We have to discern between religiosity and extremism and terrorism [...] the religiosity is a basic element in construing of the Egyptian personality and of the capable healthy society on the development and the progress, it is the society hold by the value of religion and its ethics tolerant and far away from the violence and terrorism. [...] [The Egyptian people] do not know intolerance nor extremism.”⁸⁰

The acceptable, optimized form of religiosity was also delineated by following the straight path (*al-sirat al-mustaqim*) which pleases God. To follow the straight path was depicted as being in direct contrast with the terrorist enemy led astray from the path, as an evidence of strong faith not to yield to *da'wa* (a call to God) of intolerant extremism.⁸¹ Besides following the right path, a good Muslim was also depicted as someone who:

“is not satisfied with the position of a bystander following the events and developments, but considers himself as well as the community to be in position to fight the battle [against the religious extremism and fanaticism] with the entirety of his knowledge, experience, vision, and foresight.”

In reference to this cooperative stance, Egyptians were thus also expected to actively spread the acceptable and optimized moderate form of religiosity and Islamic thought in order to eliminate the terrorism threat and counter-weight the spread of extremist *da'wa*.⁸²

The examination of the framing of the referent subject, in this case, the honorable, cooperative and religious Egyptian citizen, provides valuable insights about who was constructed as acceptable and worthy of the government's protection. It also gives useful, if indirect, clues about the framing of the unacceptable individuals, i.e. security targets, insofar as through othering processes the optimized, acceptable citizen were inverted pictures of the terrorist threat. Thus, when we explore the optimized self of the Egyptian society, we necessarily also learn about the unacceptability of those who were portrayed as the unacceptable other. The three aspects associated with the optimized Egyptian citizen also clearly show that the Egyptian society was more than a mere reference for the political leadership to securitize the terrorist threat. The Egyptian society was also an object to optimization processes through which the imagined foundations of the Egyptian self were (re)configured and (re)produced.

3.3.2. The dangerous other

Although terrorism is globally acknowledged as a threat, its meaning and definitions vary significantly in individual politico-societal contexts. That said, in the Egyptian

⁸⁰ *al-Ahram*, 12. 4. 1994, p. 7.

⁸¹ See e.g. *al-Ahram* 5. 2. 1997, p. 3.

⁸² See *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 120, p. 42.

context, the classification of the militant Islamist organizations, such as al-Jihad and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya – especially at the peak of their violent campaign against the government during the 1990s – as terrorist organizations was widely accepted. Yet, as my empirical analysis of the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign has shown, the category of security targets, i.e., terrorists, vastly exceeded militant Islamists, members of the above-named groups, who openly advocated violence (e.g. Reza, 2007). The empirical accounts in particular show that there were numbers of Egyptians who could have been hardly associated with militancy or violence, such as members of the political, non-violent opposition including the Muslim Brotherhood, journalists, or human rights activists, who were classified as security targets.

In order to access such a disparity on the side of security targets, the following pages will concentrate on the corpus of knowledge through which the dangerousness and unacceptability of the terrorist as a central security target was constructed. This, as I will show, provides useful hints to deconstruct the meaning of terrorism in the Egyptian securitization context and to make sense of the securitization process as a stabilizing factor of the existing power relations between the Egyptian securitizing political leadership and the political opposition qualified as a security target. First, however, I will shortly address the communist and the drug dealer, who emerged as secondary security targets, and their relevance for the securitization process at the stake.

3.3.2.1. The communist and drugs

Although terrorism (*al-irhab*) was portrayed as an existential threat to the well-being and prosperity of the Egyptian society and the terrorist (*al-irhabi*) became a personified equivalent of the threat, terrorism was not a sole threat which rationalized the existence of the state of emergency. Besides the terrorist as the central security target, there were two more security targets: communists and drug dealers. Although their framing was not as a consistent and sustained over the time when compared to the terrorist, it played a distinct role in the overall securitization dynamics.

The former, the communist, appeared as a remnant of al-Sadat's legacy, when al-Sadat's leadership persecuted leftist groups and securitized the threat of communism (Beattie, 2000: 160, 213; Sassoon, 2016: 142; see also Ayubi, 1991: 233).⁸³ In the early 1980s the communist was thus still being portrayed as a security target.⁸⁴ The depiction of communists as the dangerous other to the Egyptian society, however, lost quickly its intensity as it was known in al-Sadat era. Eventually, towards the end of 1980s, the

⁸³ Shortly after al-Sadat assumed his office in 1970, he launched the Corrective Revolution, which aimed at the de-Nasserization of the state. This included also rendering Nasserists a security threat and target for extensive repressions (Beattie, 2000: 258). For more information about the Corrective Revolution see Ansari (1986, esp. chapters 6 and 7).

⁸⁴ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 2. 9. 1983, p. 1.; *al-Ahram*, 16. 9. 1983, p. 1, 3.

communist as a security target completely ceased to appear in relation to the securitization process.

The latter security target, the drug dealer (*al-tijar al-mukhaddarat*), vaguely referred to individuals involved in drugs dealership. Unlike the communist, the drug dealer appeared as a secondary security target to the terrorist, irregularly but throughout the entire Mubarak's era. Drugs were framed as a major threat to the health and upbringing of the Egyptian youth. In this sense, drugs were constructed as a major threat, which, accordingly, necessitated the exceptional policies enabled by the state of emergency. As early as 1986 the Egyptian Minister of Interior, Zaki Badr, securitized drugs and emphasized the necessity to address drugs with exceptional measures embodied in the Emergency Law:

“At the moment the magnitude of the threat [drug smuggling] exceeds the potential to confront it. We cannot resolve this crucial conflict for the good of the country and the citizen with the ordinary laws [*al-qawanin al-'adi*]. We are then forced to use the Emergency Law.”⁸⁵

Since then, drugs appeared in consistent, yet irregular manner as a vital threat to the Egyptian society⁸⁶, which was integrated into the securitization of the terrorism threat (Skovgaard-Petersen, 1997: 205; Shehata, 2010: 80; Shehat, 2008: 87).

The depiction of the drug dealer in *al-Ahram* and *Majalla amn al-am*, which frequently linked drugs to terrorism, also suggests that the drug issue was portrayed as a dangerous ramification of the underlying threat, i.e. terrorism, rather than an autonomous security problem. The framing of the drug issue as a viable threat to the Egyptian society notwithstanding, the empirical accounts suggest that the drug dealer was constructed as a supportive security target to legitimize the perpetuation of the counterterrorism process. This assumption underlines a claim raised independently in interviews by both Zarei (2013) and Abu Seada (2013), who contended that the drug issue was portrayed as a vital security threat in order to facilitate parliament's renewals of the state of emergency. According to Zarei (2013), there was no genuine need to make the drug issue a subject of the Emergency Law provisions, insofar as the ordinary law, in particular, the Criminal Law, was sufficient enough. Moreover, to knowledge of Abu Seada (2013) the exceptional courts did not deal with any drug related charges. In this light, it appears that the framing of drugs as a threat to the Egyptian society was intended to underpin the magnitude of terrorist threats faced by the Egyptian society. Yet, this framing did not necessarily reflect the existing social reality.

⁸⁵ *al-Ahram*, 20. 4. 1986, p. 14. It was this *al-Ahram's* article, in which I detected the drug smuggler as a security target for the first time.

⁸⁶ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 1. 5. 2006, p. 3.; *al-Ahram*, 14. 5. 2010, p. 1, 5.

3.3.2.2. The otherness of the terrorist

The Egyptian securitization process produced the terrorist as a central threat to the Egyptian society and its well-being. In a dialectical relation to the self, the terrorist was depicted as a dangerous, unacceptable other to the Egyptian ideal self. The dangerousness and unacceptability of the security targets was defined and construed as a deviation from the optimum of the governed society. Based on their depicted dangerousness and unacceptability, the security targets were disapproved as a part of the optimized, protected society and become other to the protected self. Their dangerousness and unacceptability was constructed as a denial of two central identities associated with the Egyptian optimized self, the national and religious identities. Thus, albeit the overwhelming majority of security targets were both Egyptian and Muslim, the terrorist was framed as someone who did not meet the criteria for being Egyptian and/or Muslim.

Egyptianess

Terrorism was rationalized as a phenomenon strange to the Egyptian nation. Accordingly, the terrorist – the Egyptian citizenship of the targeted individuals notwithstanding – was “de-Egyptianized”. The de-Egyptianizing process, as a general rule, followed two major lines of argumentation. The terrorist’s character, behavior, and lifestyle was portrayed either as a completely strange, external element to the Egyptian nation, which denied the Egyptian origins of both the security targets and terrorism as a phenomenon; or the terrorist was “de-nationalized” by being portrayed as a deviation from the idealized Egyptian national identity, which implicitly admitted, unlike the other line of argumentation, the Egyptian origins of the terrorist.

Both strands of the de-Egyptianizing process are illustrated by *al-Ahram*’s article, which documented the parliamentary discussion to extend the state of emergency in 1997. Terrorism is, here, portrayed as odd, implicitly barbaric, and unnatural to the Egyptian identity, which is its ideal antithesis. There is no indication that would suggest terrorism is a phenomenon intimately interwoven with the Egyptian sociopolitical reality. At first, terrorism was portrayed as a foreign phenomenon strange to the Egyptian identity:

“Terrorism is an unnatural phenomenon and it is odd to the Egyptian society, because Egypt enjoys unique civilization and culture and Egyptian personality is capable to accommodate all races and anyone who comes to Egypt to become an Egyptian [...] The terrorists/terrorism is a strange satanic body and it is an attempt to defeat and subvert the Egyptian nature [*al-tabi'a al-misriyya*].”⁸⁷

Only few lines further, terrorism was, however, equaled to an act of national treason (*khiyana wataniyya*).⁸⁸ The terrorist was thus, in this case, framed as an Egyptian who, however, betrayed his Egyptian identity, insofar as treason is by its definition an act of betrayal and subversion on one’s own nation.

⁸⁷ *al-Ahram*, 18. 2. 1997, p. 13.

⁸⁸ *al-Ahram*, 18. 2. 1997, p. 13.

Despite the prevalence of the former argumentation line in the analyzed content, there was an observable, if implicit, acknowledgment that the security targets were of Egyptian origin. To construct them as other to the Egyptian nation their national identity was a subject of delegitimizing framing. In this respect, it was the image of treason and betrayal which was frequently evoked as a powerful symbol to exclude the security targets from the optimized Egyptian nation. The depiction of the ideological base, funds, or strategical planning as being done abroad became a common reference through which the bond of the security targets to the nation was doubted⁸⁹ and their activities were problematized as acts of betrayal on the nation.⁹⁰ In result, the security targets, although being mostly Egyptian citizens, were construed as the other to the Egyptian nation.⁹¹

Religiosity

As I have shown above, moderate religiosity was depicted as a crucial part of the Egyptian identity and an underlying basis of the optimized Egyptian society. Similar to the national identity, the religious identity of the terrorist was constructed as a deviation from the Egyptian *umma*. The terrorist was, particularly, frequently framed as a Muslim led astray, who, based on severity of his indoctrination, was yet to be saved or redeemed forever.⁹² The terrorist was commonly depicted an extremist (*al-mutatarrif*) and fanatic (*al-muta'ssib*) who left the direct path of Islam (*al-sirat al-mustaqim*). He, thus, deviated (*al-munharif*) and followed the “wrong”, unacceptable form of Islam. As it was stated in *al-Ahram's* article in 1997:

“Those who deviated to fanaticism and extremism and who tried to impose on the entire society terrorist ideology and behavior, do not have any relation to the religion of our fathers...”⁹³

To underpin the gravity of the terrorist's deviation from the Egyptian *umma*, the terrorist's wrongdoing was tinged with several powerful Islamic connotations, such as *khawarij*⁹⁴, *fitna* (civil strife) or *jahiliyya* (the age of ignorance). For instance, *khawarij* is a term which referred originally to a group of Muslims that rejected the leadership of the caliph Ali and in their radical approach to *takfir* (the practice of excommunication) declared all other Muslims unbelievers and unworthy of being called Muslims (Kenney, 2006). Based on these religious-historical connotations, *khawarij* was used in the securitization context as a common code for a religious extremist and fanatic. It framed the terrorist as someone who rebelled the righteous Muslim ruler, i.e. Husni Mubarak's government, and who followed and promoted a “false” concept of Islam (see Kenney,

⁸⁹ *al-Ahram*, 27. 2. 2000, p. 3.

⁹⁰ We can observe a similar pattern of delegitimization by the government vis-a-vis the human rights organizations. For more see Abdelrahman (2007) and chapter 5.

⁹¹ For an interesting account of the de-egyptianizing of the Muslim Brotherhood after the 2011 revolution, see Soliman (2014b).

⁹² See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 5. 2. 1997, p. 1, 3.

⁹³ *al-Ahram*, 5. 2. 1997, p. 1.

⁹⁴ In the English scholarship, we can also encounter a synonymous term *kharijites*.

2006: 3f; see also Skovgaard-Petersen, 1997: 218; Starrett, 1998: 243).⁹⁵ Such a depiction forms, for instance, the core of an extensive essay in *Majalla amn al-am*, which argued terrorism to be a modern expression of the *khawarij* movement.⁹⁶ The terrorists were likened to a modern era version of the historical *khawarij* movement. They are, in particular, described as a modern phenomenon of religious fanatics, who abandoned the right path of Islam, despised order, and looked to ignite chaos (*al-fawda*) and bloodshed.

Similarly, *fitna* – historically associated with Muslim *umma*'s early schism against the backdrop of the emergence of *khawarij* and in al-Qu'ran (2:191) classified as “worse than killing” – was another religiously loaded association, which underlined the terrorist's deviation from the Egyptian *umma*. Alike the *khawarij* label, *fitna* was constructed as an underlying objective of the terrorist. In the Egyptian securitization context, *fitna* primarily referred to societal polarization (*al-fitna*) between the Egyptian Muslim majority and the Christian/Coptic minority, which impaired the fragile national unity (*al-wahda al-wataniyya*). *Al-Ahram*'s editorial – written in reaction to a massacre of Christians by Islamist militants in Abu Qerqas in 1997 – underlines the interconnection between *fitna*, terrorism, and national unity.

“The terrorists wanted to harm the nation in its most precious sanctity – its national unity [*al-wahda al-wataniyya*]. [...] By the focus of the terrorists on the Christian brothers [...] they wanted to send a message to the world that the sectarian strife [*al-fitna al-ta'ifiyya*] has roots in Egypt.”⁹⁷

Regardless of the irregular appearance of the adjective “sectarian” (*ta'ifi*), *fitna* usually appeared as a signifier for a societal strife based on the religious delineation of the Egyptian society, whereas the national unity and its preservation was a code for peaceful coexistence of Egyptian Muslims and Christians in the absence of *fitna*.⁹⁸

In contrast to both *khawarij* and *fitna*, *jahiliyya* delegitimized the personality of the terrorist in a very complex manner. Historically, *jahiliyya* stands for the age of ignorance prior to the revelation of Islam to the Prophet Muhammad and the state of ignorance, which characterizes one's behavior (Esposito, et al., 2009: 224-226). Constructing the terrorist as a *jahiliyya* person thus indicated that the security target was not able to comprehend and adopt the “real and true” Islam. There were, as the *Majalla amn al-am* article listed in detail, four negative qualities associated with a *jahiliyya* person.⁹⁹ First, a *jahiliyya* person was a tribal person. His loyalty was with the tribe and

⁹⁵ In the Sunni tradition, the obedience to authority is limited. According to another myth, the ruler must follow, protect and apply the law of God. For more, see Kenney (2006).

⁹⁶ *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 120, p. 26-42.

⁹⁷ *al-Ahram*, 22. 2. 1997, p. 1.

⁹⁸ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 9. 5. 1991, p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 120, p. 26-42. The modern concept of *jahiliyya* developed by Sayyid Qutb diametrically differs from this understanding of *jahiliyya*. Qutb's concept of *jahiliyya* refers to any society under a political system that devalues and delegitimizes the power of God (Esposito, et al., 2009: 225).

shaykh, not with the nation and the government. Second, a *jahiliyya* individual was associated with a fanatic, who did not know the middle way and compromises. Third, although the *jahiliyya* character in times prior to Islam was often courageous and brave, based on its later combination with tribalism, the original courage was interpreted as a conflict-seeking feature of one's character. Fourth, the *jahiliyya* personality was associated with the emergence of the *khawarij* phenomena.¹⁰⁰

The use of such religiously connotated terms underlined the unacceptability and incompatibility of the constructed religious identity of the terrorist in comparison to that of the Egyptian *umma*. As the *jahiliyya* label underscores, the terrorist was excluded in a two-fold manner from both the *umma* and the nation. On the one hand, he was qualified as unacceptable to the Muslim community, the *umma*, which transcended *jahiliyya* and refused *khawarij* and *fitna*. On the other hand, he was expelled from the Egyptian nation, which had overcome the tribal bond and praises the non-violent character of its members.

3.3.2.3. Who was the terrorist?

The religious deviation of the security targets clearly occupied a prominent role in the framing of the threat. A religious (Islamic) dimension was often an implicit, but nevertheless underlying association with the terrorism threat. This is captured, for instance, in an excerpt from *al-Ahram*, in which the Minister of Interior, Hasan al-Alfi, commented on terrorism:

“Each drop of blood that falls on their [terrorists] hands, each shot from their guns, [...] their confessions combined with evidence, confirms that they [terrorists] do not defend religion [*al-din*] and they are not keen about the faith.”¹⁰¹

As such, the securitization process (re)established and (re)strengthened the existing linkage between terrorism and religion, which referred exclusively to Islam in the Egyptian context, in a way that terrorism was equaled to Islamist militancy and the terrorist became a synonym to an Islamist.

The visualization of the terrorist, which appeared regularly along *al-Ahram* articles and in *al-Ahram* cartoons (see the illustrations 4 and 5), clearly corroborates religion/Islam as an integral element of the terrorist threat in Egypt and portrays the terrorist as an Islamist. The fearsome appearance of the terrorist was communicated through stereotyped and negatively connoted outer symbols of one's religiosity and devoutness such as the gown (*galabiyya*)¹⁰², the hat (*kufi*), and the beard without mustache.

¹⁰⁰ *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 120, p. 33.

¹⁰¹ *al-Ahram*, 4. 4. 1994, p. 1.

¹⁰² In Egypt, *galabiyya* is also a traditional garment worn by Sa'idi farmers and villagers, and by people of poorer origins living in the urban areas. In contrast to the traditional *galabiyya*, the religiously connotated *galabiyya* is, usually, shorter and does not reach the ankle height.



Illustration No. 4: *al-Ahram*,
10.9.1981



Illustration No. 5: *al-Ahram*, 21.3.1994, p. 17

Such visual rhetoric, which painted the terrorist as an Islamist, were widely proliferated in the Egyptian public discourse. Among others, it frequently appeared in the Egyptian pop-culture. For instance, in the early 1990s, two popular movies *al-Irhab wa-l-Kebab* (The terrorism and kebab, 1992) and *al-Irhabi* (The terrorist, 1992) depicted terrorism as an issue of Islamist militancy (see the illustration 5). In both movies, the main character was a terrorist who bore characteristics of an Islamist. This was expressed, on the one hand, through his outer appearance, such as wearing a *galabiyya*, a beard, and a hat. On the other hand, the characteristics of an Islamist was underlined through his personality: he was portrayed as a selfish, egoistic person with his own agenda, who cared about his (false) interpretation of religion, and who resorted to violence.

In this regard, it is clear that the terrorist enemy, who was produced by the securitization process, primarily referred to an Islamist. Empirically speaking, there was a great variety of opposition groups and movements that promoted often radical, but not necessarily violent interpretations of Islam, which fall under the category of Islamists in the Egyptian context. Islamist organizations, such as al-Jihad or al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, which openly endorsed and used violence to achieve a sociopolitical change, were labeled and by large conceived as terrorists.¹⁰³ The category of Islamists, however, also referred to non-violent Islamist groups, most prominently the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), the biggest organized opposition movement in Egypt.

The case of the MB exemplified the flexibility of the Islamist label as a code for the terrorist. Whereas the MB was tolerated as a counter-weight to the militant Islamists groups in the 1980s and thus left out of the securitization discourse, from the 1990s onwards the situation changed against the backdrop of rising MB's popularity. Even though the MB repeatedly proclaimed a non-violent approach towards the desired social change (Shehata, 2010: 56), they were increasingly framed as an unlawful organization

¹⁰³ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 15. 5. 1991, p. 1; *al-Ahram*, 22. 5. 1991, p. 1; *al-Ahram*, 17. 2. 1997, p. 13; *al-Ahram*, 2. 2. 2000, p. 1.

(*al-tanzim al-mahzur*) and a terrorist group¹⁰⁴ (Wickham, 2002: 201; Anderson, 2013). The Brotherhood came to be linked with the established militant groups as a political proxy of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (Kienle, 2001: 89), for example. In an interview, Mubarak put the group on par with the militant groups:

“They [the MB] assassinated two prime ministers and a finance minister before the [1952] revolution. Then they pretended to back the late President Jamal Abd al-Nasser but attempted to assassinate him in Alexandria. President Sadat did not act against them early in his tenure, having been preoccupied with restoring the occupied territories, and so they killed him. The Muslim Brothers, the Jihad, the Islamic Groups, and the rest of them are all the same.” (Interview with Husni Mubarak in *Le Monde*, November 17, 1995 as quoted in Rutherford, 2008: 86-87)

Political show-case processes of the late 1990s with leading Muslim Brothers underscored MB's alleged alignment with terrorist forces (see e.g. Wickham, 2002: 215). The MB became a part of security targets, who were treated with exceptional security methods (see chapter 4; see also e.g. Atia, 2011: 9-11; Brown, 1997: 115-116).

The Islamist was a dominant epitome of the terrorism threat, yet he was not the sole security target. In addition to Islamists, large numbers of non-Islamist political opposition were turned into security targets, too. Similar to Islamists, the non-Islamist dissenters were subjected to the exceptional security methods in the Egyptian zones of indistinction (Shehata, 2010: 63-64, 80; see also el-Dawla, 2009: 130-131; for more see chapter 4). Although, as far as my analysis shows, the non-Islamist political opposition was rarely explicitly linked with terrorism (see e.g. Moorehead, 2005: 34-35), their unacceptability and dangerousness was framed in reference to their alleged betrayal of the national identity. In particular, their repulsion from the optimized Egyptian society was based on their contestation of the sociopolitical status quo, which the securitization of terrorism threat and related state of emergency consolidated and strengthened. In other words, the defiance of the existing securitizing mode of government was depicted as a betrayal on the nation in times of crisis and an act, which strengthened the terrorists (see chapter 5).

As the MB and non-Islamist opposition cases document, it is evident that violence was not a determining factor to frame someone unacceptable and dangerous and to render him a security target. Instead, as I will discuss in the following chapters in greater detail, the transformation from an optimized citizen to a security target was related closely to one's defiance of the sociopolitical order, which was (re)produced and stabilized by the securitization process. The securitization clearly strengthened the dominant position of the securitizing political leadership including the position of security professionals; it consolidated and further enhanced the asymmetric power relations between the Mubarak's leadership and the political opposition in favor of the former.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 5. 2. 2000, p. 14.

3.4. Conclusion

The preceding elaborations clearly demonstrated that securitizing an issue is a complex process. Such a multifaceted endeavor cannot be reduced to the speech-acts of securitizing actors; instead, it involves diverse actors and integrate multiple security positions and claims. The extensive examination of the threat's framing clearly underlines the importance of security knowledge, which was produced by the securitization process, to the perpetuation of the process itself.

Specifically, I have shown that the knowledge (re)produced through the securitization of terrorism threat consolidated and further deepened the already asymmetric character of power relations in favor of the political leadership acting as a securitizing actor and the Egyptian security professionals. The securitizing leadership, as well as the Egyptian security apparatus, emerged significantly strengthened as an effect of the securitizing process. The exceptional framework, i.e. the state of emergency, granted both agencies extensive rights, whereas it constrained the variety of rights on the side of the security targets, i.e. the political opposition (see Reza, 2007: 543-544; chapter 5). The power imbalance in favor of the securitizing leadership and security professionals became so extensive that the securitization of terrorism, which was initially focused on the militant Islamists, became an equivalent to the repression of the political opposition regardless of its non-violent approach and, as I will address in detail in chapter 4, increasingly also of the ordinary, politically inactive Egyptians. The reinforcement of both the securitizing leadership and security professionals was directly bound to the securitizing process and its perpetuation. In this regard, the reinforcement stimulated both actors to preserve the pillar of their empowerment, i.e. the state of emergency, and the securitization of the terrorism threat as its legitimizing basis. The securitization of the terrorist threat can be thus understood as a political strategy to preserve the political and societal status quo by legitimizing the repression of the political opposition.

I have also shown that the process of constructing the terrorist enemy also reconfigured the bandwidth of the optimized Egyptian society. In particular, it allowed the securitizing actors to intervene in the societal body and identify and construct the worthy, acceptable forms of life which were in need of protection and those unworthy, dangerous ones which could have been excluded from the protected majority. Moreover, the detailed examination of the referent object highlighted at the dialectical relationship between the security target and referent object. The Egyptian society, the referent object, was (re)produced as the idealized self to the dangerous other represented by the security targets. The Egyptian society was not just an object of protection, but became also an object which was optimized along the image of the idealized Egyptian self. In this sense, the process of securitizing an issue is thus more than a mere identification of a threat. It involves governmental interventions in the bandwidth of societal optimum, which allow for the exclusion of the security targets as the constructed other who can be dealt with in an exceptional manner. The (re)configuration of the societal optimum,

however, had, as I will discuss in detail in the next chapter, profound effects also on those who did not comply with the image of an optimized citizen for their defiance of the sociopolitical ordering. Therefore, although the Islamist was the central epitome of the terrorist threat who was designated unacceptable to the well-being of the Egyptian society, he was not the only one who was excluded from the optimized society and subjected to exceptional measures in the Egyptian zones of indistinction.

The dangerous and unacceptable other was constructed as a deviation from the idealized self. Centered on the national and religious/Muslim identities the de-Egyptianization and stray religiosity formed the basis of estrangement and exclusion of the terrorist from the optimized Egyptian society. Although the constructing of stray religiosity was central to disqualify the Islamist opposition as security targets from the protected Egyptian society, the de-Egyptianization played an important role in delegitimizing the non-Islamist opposition and rendering it into security targets. In this regard, the detailed examination of the framing of the threat exposed the dimension of security knowledge that enabled the designation of the non-Islamist political opposition along with the Islamist militants as unacceptable, dangerous security targets.

The chapter also emphasized the analytical importance of security professionals and security targets for the securitization research in general, and for the inquiry into the framing of the threat, in particular. The inclusion of both units in the analysis provided important insights into the process of constructing a threat and codification of the produced knowledge as a part of truth politics. In this respect, I will continue my engagement with both the security professionals and security targets in the following chapter. Specifically, I will address the exceptional order as a phase of a successful securitization process, to which the exceptional security practice exercised by the security professionals is of paramount importance. Accordingly, I will focus on the interplay between the security professionals and security targets in detail, which involved massive violations of basic human rights.

4. The exception

This chapter concentrates on the exceptional order, which is introduced through a successful securitization process, i.e. the adoption of extraordinary security measures to address an exceptional threat. As outlined in chapter 2, the exceptional order will be assessed as both a phase in which the successful adoption of exceptional security measures unfolds, such as the declaration of the state of emergency, and as an exercise of extraordinary security practice which would not have been possible otherwise. Like in the prior chapter, the perpetuation of the securitization process is also the guiding interest of this chapter. Specifically, based on my examination of the Egyptian exceptional order, I will show that the exceptional security practice – made possible by the securitization process and routinized over time – erected a barrier of fear which significantly constrained any acts of resistance to the securitization process.

To explore and investigate the exceptional order and how it relates to the perpetuation of the securitization process, I will first elaborate on the Egyptian state of emergency as an epitome of Agambenian state of exception in greater detail. I will address the SSIS detention facilities and individuals incarnated within as the Egyptian epitome of zones of indistinction and *homines sacri*, respectively. Then, I will move on to embed the exceptional order into the wider context of the securitization process. Here, I will additionally build on Foucault's power analytics – the biopolitical care for life and the sovereign power over life – to examine the exceptional security practice, such as torture and massive ill-treatment of the individuals incarcerated in the Egyptian zones of indistinction. In particular, I will explore the biopolitical permeation of the zones of indistinction underlined by sophisticated forms of torture, which stripped the tortured individual of *bios*, the dignified form of life. The analysis of torture as a central exceptional security practice will also show that, although the body of an incarcerated individual was the major terrain of sovereign intervention, the mind was the desired end as a source of information and a place to break one's spirit and plant fear. With regard to the latter, I will show that the experience of the tortured individuals induced fear within the Egyptian society to follow a similar fate, i.e. to become *homo sacer* imprisoned by the Egyptian security apparatus and subjected to torture and ill-treatment. As such, this scenario deterred Egyptians from defying the existing order. Accordingly, fear fed by the contingency of possible oppression formed an important pillar of the perpetuated securitization, insofar as it became the most effective instrument of societal control.

In the last part of this chapter, I will address the empirical accounts that clearly pointed to progressive expansion in terms of the numbers of individuals who were classified as security targets, the continuous official refusal to apply the exceptional measures only to terrorists notwithstanding. I will specifically elaborate on the integration of wide ranks of Egyptians into the category of security targets and claim that this process directly relates to the empowerment of the Egyptian security practitioners in their role of petty sovereigns and unaccountable gatekeepers of the Egyptian zones of indistinction. I will

show that the securitization empowered the Egyptian security officials to decide on exception in their everyday encounters with Egyptians. As petty sovereigns, they were in position to decide whether an individual would be incarcerated and possibly tortured or not. Their impunity further reinforced their impunity, based on the essential feature of Agambenian zones of indistinction which qualifies the zones of indistinction as spaces, where the law is suspended. I will also point out at that although the security practitioners controlled the zones of indistinction, a space of sovereign power operation, the productive side of biopolitical operation guided their conduct. Namely, the improvement of their performance in terms of quantitative outcomes – which did not necessarily imply a form of qualitative improvement – was one of the central references in their everyday vocational struggle. Moreover, it was a prerequisite for individual advantages, such as promotion, pension, or relocation. In this respect, I will show that the spread of exceptional security practice beyond the designated security targets and zones of exceptionality can be explained as a combination of the prevalent impunity and the desire of individual security officials to reach individual ends.

The empirical findings of this chapter draw from the content analysis of the texts extracted from *al-Ahram* and *Majalla amn al-am*. Due to the sensitivity of topics related to the exceptional order in the Egyptian context, such as torture or security institutions, the material relevant to this subject was limited in both sources. Thus, in order to explore and map the Egyptian exceptional order, this chapter draws on human rights reports of Egyptian human rights organizations; extensive accounts of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch¹⁰⁵, which include a number of detailed testimonies of torture victims; and on the interviews conducted with several prominent Egyptian human rights activists.

4.1. The exceptional order

Securitization is a process which, if successful, leads to the adoption of security measures which would have been hardly thinkable otherwise (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24). Depending on the character of the securitization and the threat it confronts, unrestricted surveillance, arrests without warrants, indefinite detention, “enhanced” interrogation methods, “extra-ordinary renditions” (see Hilbrand, 2015), or extra-judicial killings might be rendered a possible means to address the threat and to protect the jeopardized life of the population. A successful securitization introduces an exceptional order into the existing *ordinary* mode of governing. The idiom of exception is an integral, yet rather underexplored facet of the securitization process (see chapter 2). To examine and make sense of the Egyptian exceptional order, I build on Giorgio Agamben’s concepts

¹⁰⁵ The Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch provide extensive and continuous accounts of human rights abuses in Egypt. Throughout their active involvement in recording the abuses since the early 1980s, respectively since the 1990s, they have proven to be one of the most reliable, impartial sources on human rights abuses. Despite its supranational/international character, the methods of their work put a high emphasis on the local investigation, cooperation with the leading local human rights organizations and activists, and extensive interviews with involved individuals.

of the zone of indistinction and *homo sacer*, which complement my reformulation of securitization concept as a biopolitically informed process through which the sovereign power over death is activated.

Drawing on Carl Schmitt's work on exceptionality, Agamben (1998: 20-21) conceptualizes the state of exception as a threshold between a normal situation and chaos, in which the rules still exist, but the law is suspended (see Schmitt, 1979 [1934]: 18-19). The exception is epitomized in the so-called zone of indistinction which is a place where the law is turned into an empty reference. Whoever who is situated inside the zone of indistinction – be it the confined individuals or the guards – is in “a zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit” (Agamben, 1998: 170). Yet, this does not imply that chaos and anarchy would prevail in the zone. The things, processes, and relations within the zone are ordered by specific rules (Ojakangas, 2005: 77ff), to which, however, “the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer made any sense” (Agamben, 1998: 170). The zone of indistinction is thus “neither inside nor outside the legal realm”. It is situated in a realm in which sovereign power operates through “para-legal detachment from the law” (Opitz, 2011: 106). Thereby it invites security practices, such as torture, shoot-to-kill policies, for which the law is no longer a prime point of reference.

4.1.1. The legal black holes of exceptionality

The SSIS detention facilities, CSF military camps, police stations and special sections in the prisons¹⁰⁶ across the country were the Egyptian zones of indistinction, where law was suspended, and Egyptians were turned into *homines sacri*. It was the SSIS-run unrecorded, unauthorized, unacknowledged detention and interrogation facilities that formed the foundation of the Egyptian zones of indistinction (MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 9-11; Shehat, 2008: 164).¹⁰⁷ These facilities were the places where security targets – ranging from Islamists to non-Islamist dissenters and later on ordinary Egyptians – were placed and subjected to sovereign violence. As a former SSIS detainee and a Muslim Brotherhood member Nasr al-Sayed Hassan Nasr recalled:

“On the eighth day, the interrogations began. The officer, who said his name was Shawkat, told me, ‘This is the biggest citadel in the Middle East for extracting information. You are 35 meters below the ground in a place that nobody except the minister of interior knows about.’ He started by giving me a lecture, saying, ‘Our role is to protect the country from filth like you. You

¹⁰⁶ The MEW/HRW (1993FEB) documented, for instance, that in Tora Liman, a frequented prison to incarnate political detainees and prisoners, was a special section dedicated to political prisoners. Interviewed political prisoners nicknamed it “The Hospital” and was improvised punishment wing of the prison, which was distinguished by exceptional conditions when compared to the rest of criminal prisoners. See MEW/HRW (1993FEB: xiv, 83-84).

¹⁰⁷ The human rights reports document that torture usually occurred during the SSIS interrogation phase prior to the transfer of the detainee to the prison or during his stay in a prison when he was secretly transferred to SSIS sites to be tortured. See e.g. MEW/HRW (1992MAR), al-Nadeem (2006).

and the Christians are working against the regime.’ They tortured me for seven days before asking me a question; the interrogations began on the eighth day and lasted for around 23 days accompanied by torture. They would interrogate me for up to three sessions in one day and the torture escalated during the interrogation.” (Nasr al-Sayed Hassan Nasr quoted in HRW2011JANa, 22-23).

As Nasr’s testimony hints, unlike the police stations or recognized prisons, the SSIS detention cells or SSIS makeshift cells at CSF camps were illegal under the Egyptian law and officially did not exist (HRW, 2011JANa: 4; Stork, 2012: 466).

“[The SSIS facilities] have become to be known as those mysterious places where people disappear for days or weeks or months, totally isolated from the outside world, totally isolated from their family, friends and lawyers. In those horror dens citizens are subjected [sic] to the most criminal forms of torture to confess on themselves or others, to accept working as informers or just to intimidate them and teach them a lesson and show them who is in charge in this country.” (al-Nadeem, 2006: 27)

The SSIS facilities were legal black holes existing “neither inside nor outside the legal realm,” to borrow Opitz’s words (2011: 106) and as such allowed for para-legal security practices. Most notably, torture was a routinized imperative of SSIS daily operation and underlined the character of the SSIS compounds as legal black holes and Agambenian zones of indistinction.

“If you’re sent to a [SSIS] facility, that’s more serious. [...] It doesn’t mean, necessarily, that you will be tortured in every case. But it means you can expect to be tortured. Maybe not every single person is tortured, but many are, so you can expect it. You’re in *a place that is outside the law*.” (Muhammad Zarei quoted in HRW, 2011JANa: 65; italics by the author)

The SSIS facilities were located in the Agambenian exception “between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit” (Agamben, 1998: 170). The lack of societal, political, and juridical acknowledgment for victims of torture and ill-treatment was further underscored by the location of the SSIS facilities outside the realm of normality. For instance, despite the right to file a complaint about being tortured and thus to institute a legal proceeding, the state did not provide an effective remedy to torture victims. Based on societal stigma attached to torture victims most torture cases did not reach court (see also AI, 2002NOV: 4; Allam, 2015: 59): the system was plagued by “an inadequate legal framework, police intimidation of victims who then withdraw complaints, and ineffective and delayed investigations” (HRW, 2011JANa: 2). Thus, despite an extensive record of torture cases over three decades of Mubarak’s reign, no SSIS officer was ever convicted of torture charges (HRW, 2011JANb).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ The legal definition of torture in the article 126 of the Egyptian Penal Code is problematic and creates a wide sense of impunity. The act of torture is reduced only to such practices which are used for extraction of information. Thus, if the confession is not targeted, the abuse is not classified as torture (el-Dawla, 2009: 129). The Penal Code also foresees mild punishments for torture related charges. Similarly, an unintentional killing – a frequent result of excessive torture – is punished by an imprisonment between one week and three years (Abu Seada, 2013).

4.1.2. *Homines sacri* in the SSIS custody

As the accounts of the former SSIS detainees evidence, the life of individuals confined by the SSIS became the life of *homo sacer*. They were abandoned by the ordinary law valid outside the incarceration facilities. Their life was reduced to a biological bare life, *zoë*, which was devoid of juridical value and deprived of a dignified meaning valid outside the zone of indistinction (Agamben, 1998: 138-139). The dignified life, *bios*, lost its meaning in the Egyptian zones of indistinction. The inadequate confinement conditions were one of the imperatives behind reducing the life incarcerated individuals to their *zoë*:

“All of them were in another cell. I know the room they were held in; I saw it. It is about three by five meters, with no window, no fan, no air, one bathroom. The ceiling is low: you stand up and the ceiling is exactly where your head is. The 25 of them were all stacked together in that one room, very crowded, hot, no air, and of course they would each have to use the toilet in front of the others. Can you imagine, with 25 people? By the time the 25th person is finished with the toilet, the first person has to use it again.” (HRW, 2007DEC: 38)

The SSIS detainees were degraded to their body in purely biological terms. The fact that they were subjected to massive ill-treatment and torture while in the SSIS custody only underlined the process of dehumanization of the incarcerated individuals (e.g. HRW, 2011JANa; Seif, 2013; Abu Seada, 2013). Being exposed to torture techniques, which ranged from blindfolding, beating, suspension from bound wrists (*al-ta'liq*), electrocuting (*al-sa'q bi-l-kahraba*) in sensitive parts, up to sexual abuse or a threat of sexual abuse (see e.g. MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 14ff; al-Afifi, 2008; Shehat and Zarei, 2001: 55ff), the Egyptian *homines sacri* were reduced to a physical being as a pure body composition, “an expendable raw material”, whose worthiness and meaningfulness was, as Geertsema (2008: 348) would put it, rendered as “without value and thereby redundant” (Geertsema, 2008: 348). The individuals in the SSIS custody experienced a similar status as those incarnated in the camp described by Agamben. To borrow Agamben’s words (1998: 159), the SSIS detainees “were lacking almost all the rights and expectations that we customarily attribute to human existence, and yet were still biologically alive, they came to be situated in a limit zone between life and death, inside and outside, in which they were no longer anything but bare life.”

The lack of any juridical value attached to the life of *homines sacri* further underscored the fact that the period of the stay at the SSIS facilities was not officially recorded, since the detention at SSIS facilities was unauthorized by the Egyptian law. The individuals in the SSIS custody virtually disappeared. They ceased to exist as Egyptian citizens usually for a period of up to two or three months (HRW, 2011JANa: 21). During that time, the authorities refused to disclose any information about whereabouts of disappeared individuals (HRW, 2011JANa: 11). In practice, the information about the whereabouts of disappeared individuals thus often spread informally or when the person left the zone of indistinction. This meant, in the most cases, his transfer to a prison,

where a written record of his arrival and case was made, or, less frequently in case of a release from the SSIS custody (MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 46, 66; Sherry, 1993).

4.1.3. The life unworthy to be lived

The life of Egyptian *homines sacri* was not only bare in as much as it was reduced to *zoë*, but also because it was subjected to contingency of physical death. As the life of *homines sacri* so their death was devoid any higher meaning. *Homo sacer* may be killed but not sacrificed (Agamben 1998: 71f, 102f; see also Tagma, 2009: 408f, 418f). Since his life is located beyond both human and divine laws, the killing of *homo sacer* does not constitute a homicide nor a sacrifice (Agamben, 1998: 81ff).

Physical death was a possible contingency to anyone who were brought to the Egyptian zone of indistinction.

“He [a SSIS officer at Laghzouli SSIS headquarters interrogating Dr. Mandour] also emphasized in his speech that I am here under his complete control and *there is no authority in Egypt that can interfere with what may happen to me*, particularly since a notification had been sent out that I had escaped during my arrest and they had covered themselves with an arrest warrant notifying police stations, police lookouts, ports and airports... Therefore if I became stubborn – and I will not be able to – *it is possible that I will be killed here and my body taken away in a closed police car that no one will stop on the way.*” (MEW/HRW, 1991DEC: 3; italics by the author)

Mandour’s testimony clearly emphasizes the contingency of death to which the Egyptian *homines sacri* were exposed. Moreover, it points out at the devaluation of life of *homines sacri* to the point that terminating their life was considered to be a conceivable option. The life of Egyptian *homo sacer* was a “life unworthy of being lived” (Agamben, 1998: 139). Hence its killing was not appropriated any significance.

Although the incidences of death – despite the amount of SSIS detainees numbering thousands over the time – were relatively low (al-Afifi, 2008: 218ff), such incidents did happen. As the documented cases clearly point out, to kill a *homo sacer* was not considered a serious crime necessitating a proper investigation and/or an adequate punishment (see e.g. HRW, 2004FEB: 6ff; Rabia, 2011: 122). Accordingly, the incidents of death in the SSIS and police custody were usually rationalized by a variety of explanations which ranged from “resisting arrest, fighting with cell mates, committing suicide, having fatal accidents, and succumbing to pre-existing health conditions” (HRW, 2011JANa: 31). For instance, the death of Abd al-Harith Madani, a prominent young lawyer whose defendants included Islamists, was attributed to an asthma attack. Despite profound doubts about the circumstances of his death, the authorities refused a request for a second autopsy by independent pathologists. Madani’s body was buried in a sealed coffin under the supervision of security officials (HRW, 2011JANa: 69).

Should the case of death while in the SSIS custody be investigated and brought to court, the common practice was to give a mild, if any, punishment; in fact, the defendants were usually acquitted (al-Nadeem, 2006: 97ff). There were only a few cases where the accused security officials were actually convicted and imprisoned (see e.g. HRW, 2011JANa). Instead of punishment, as the al-Nadeem study suggests, acquitted security officials might have even received a career promotion (see also Sassoon, 2016: 136). For instance, Hazem Hammadi, the chief intelligence officer at Madina Nasr in Cairo, who was acquitted on charges of torturing and killing two Egyptians, was shortly thereafter promoted to the presidential guard (al-Nadeem, 2006: 97f).

4.1.4. The contested decision on the worthiness of one's life

In Agamben's view, the decision on the value or non-value of one's life is a signifier of modernity, in which life becomes a part of political and strategic calculations (1998: 137; 121f). This leads him to claim that bare life in fact "now dwells in the biological body of every living being" (Agamben, 1998: 140). This does not mean that we all would have been transformed into *homines sacri* who can be killed but not sacrificed. Instead, Agamben points at the ever-present contingency of becoming *homo sacer* that concerns every one of us. "Every society [...] decides who its "sacred men" will be" (Agamben, 1998: 139), yet there is no certainty about who might become *homo sacer*. The delineation between worthy and unworthy life is liquid and volatile. Thus, whether our life will be deemed unworthy at a certain point in future is an uncertain matter. In Egypt, clearly, not everyone was designated a security target and moved to the SSIS detention cells where his existence was reduced to a precarious naked life. Thus, even though the life of the Egyptians was at the center of the political and strategic calculations (Agamben, 1998: 121f), the production of bare life was limited to biopolitically excluded individuals (Tagma, 2009: 427). In result, although virtually *anyone* could have been turned *homo sacer*, not *everyone* was.

At this point, I part ways with Agamben's claim that the sovereign power "decides on the exception, which creates the biopolitical body" (Tagma, 2009: 412), and thus also produces *homines sacri* as an effect of its power operation (Agamben, 1998: 83). This approach, as the Egyptian securitization case suggests, overlooks the biopolitical process of optimizing the society (see Tagma, 2009: 409f; Genel, 2006: 50f; Ojakangas, 2005: 7ff), insofar as it "ignores how this [bare] life only exists and takes on political form through various socioeconomic, technological, scientific, legal, and other mediations" (Huysmans, 2008: 177). As Tagma (2009: 427) puts it, the sovereign decision on the (un)worthiness of one's life is not reached in a contextual vacuum of Schmittian exceptionalism (see also Krasmann, 2012: 383). Sovereign decisions about life and death or inclusion and exclusion of specific individuals from the optimized society occur "through biopolitical and disciplinary practices delineating normal,

desirable, or optimal forms of life from those forms of life viewed as risky, abnormal, undesirable, and suboptimal” (Nadesan, 2008: 191).

In this respect, the Egyptian zones of indistinction, as well as the existence of *homines sacri*, were both a result of and subject to broader societal and political contexts. The sovereign decisions to move some Egyptians designated as security targets to the SSIS detention cells were embedded in wider cultural, historical, societal, and political setting and related to particular regimes of truth. The knowledge produced by the securitization process about the terrorist threat guided the security officials in their everyday conduct and informed their individual petty sovereign decisions. Similarly, as the last chapter showed, the sovereign decision to adopt and regularly renew the state of emergency cannot be isolated from the practices and knowledge from which it had emerged. The sovereign decision of the Egyptian political leadership to declare and thereafter regularly renew the state of emergency was informed by the biopolitical process of constructing the terrorist threat (see Tagma, 2009: 409f, 421f). The sovereign decision on exception thus cannot be viewed as a context-less step, which produces the zone of indistinction and transforms the life within into bare life. The emergence of the zone of indistinction and *homines sacri* is an effect of sovereign power operation, which is, however, guided by the biopolitical operation aiming at the optimization of the governed society.

4.2. Biopolitical saturation of the zone of indistinction

The biopolitical permeation of the zone of indistinction – a domain of sovereign power – induces new modalities and forms of the sovereign right to take life (Tagma, 2009: 416; Foucault, 2003: 241). The operation of sovereign power is more sophisticated and shows “a tendency to align itself with the exigencies of a life-administering power and to define itself accordingly” (Foucault, 1978: 136). Extending Foucault’s argument Nadesan (2008: 191) views the biopolitical modification of the sovereign power to be centered “in the capacity to let die as distinguished from the capacity to kill.” The sovereign power operation is no longer about the sovereign right to kill but the capacity to let die. The biopolitical concern for life redirects the focus of sovereign power operation to *bios*, the qualified form of life. Thus, the physical death is no more a prime objective of the sovereign power operation. As already mentioned, despite high numbers of SSIS detainees and rough conditions of their confinement, the incidences of death in the detention and prison facilities were relatively low (al-Afifi, 2008: 218ff). *Zoë*, the physical life of incarcerated Egyptians *per se* was not to be necessarily killed. Instead, the life’s quality, *bios*, defined by Foucault (1978: 145) as “[t]he “right” to life, to one’s body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs, and beyond all the oppressions or “alienations,” the “right” to rediscover what one is and all that one can be”, was a target of sovereign power operation in the Egyptian zones of indistinction.

To reach out at something as elusive as one's spirit, the Egyptian security officials relied on sophisticated forms of torture. Instead of simple fierce attacks on the flesh of *homines sacri* – associated with the sovereign right to kill – the Egyptian security officials performed a modern form of clinical, scientific, elaborate violence. As a former security official commented:

“Of course the methodology is no where documented. Still the methodology is there. It has basics and rules that form its foundation. You should never believe that torture is the result of individuals breaches by officers of public authority, even if widespread.” (Qotri quoted in al-Nadeem, 2006: 90)

Alike Rejali's findings (1994) about modern torture in Iran, torture in the Egyptian zones of indistinction was elaborate, sophisticated, and systematized. It integrated knowledge, methods, and instruments derived from fields such as medicine, psychology, and engineering which exposed the physical body to an elaborate scientific scrutiny (see also Rejali, 1994: 13, 14, 72).

The use of scientific knowledge allowed perpetrators to bring tortured individuals to the verge of death without killing them (see Rejali, 1994: 72). Some torture sessions were, for instance, attended by a doctor, whose task alternated from determining individual's endurance, selecting torture methods, and resuscitation up to providing a medical treatment after the torture session (al-Nadeem, 2005: 4; Adli, 2007: 27). This is not to say that the Egyptian security officials genuinely *cared* for the life of incarnated persons. Their life was unworthy, but not necessarily designated to be physically terminated. Instead, as argued above, it was one's spirit, something which Rejali (1994: 14) identifies as “a point slightly beyond the body [...] a finer, more diffuse object, a human life”, that through an elaborate focus on the physical body was rendered a terrain of sovereign power operation.

The objective to target and possibly break one's spirit also underlines the fact that the security officers resorted to forms of clean torture, which caused physical and/or mental pain but preferably left no visible traces (see e.g. AI, 1991OCT: 9f).¹⁰⁹ Blindfolding, stripping off to underwear, using personal insults, and language offensive to religious Muslims combined with sleep deprivation and tape-recorded screams formed the basics of clean torture which, in one way or other, was experienced by the overwhelming majority of Egyptian *homines sacri* (e.g. Sherry, 1993; Sirrs, 2010: 165; MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 15). This was often accompanied by diverse threats, among which humiliation, torture, and sexual abuse of the targeted person or female family members (*tahdid bi-l-ightsab*) were the most powerful (al-Afifi, 2008: 220; Adli, 2007: 25; Sirrs, 2010: 165). A former SSIS detainee and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood recalled:

“They threatened to hurt the most important thing in my life. The officer would call the guards and say, “By four o'clock I want you to bring Nasr's wife and

¹⁰⁹ For an extensive elaboration on clean torture see Hilbrand (2015).

daughters here and strip them in front of him.”” (Nasr al-Sayed Hassan Nasr quoted in HRW, 2011JANa: 29)

There were, however, also physical forms of clean torture. The suspension by arms on the half-opened door (*ta'aliq*) was one of the most common methods of clean physical torture in Egypt. The suspension caused lot of pain, as the arms carried the entire body weight, and so, according to the former police officer, no one was able to take it (al-Afifi, 2008: 219). Despite the pain, the suspension left no visible marks (Adli, 2007: 24). Another frequent torture method, which was regarded by one SSIS detainee as “a must” (HRW, 2007DEC: 4), was electrocution (*al-kahraba'*). Electrocution was particularly difficult to be clinically diagnosed since the electrical wires left small burnt areas. Moreover, according to al-Nadeem, the security officers capitalized on this knowledge and chose to electrocute parts of body such as the genitals and the spaces between fingers and toes, where the later medical detection of torture traces was difficult due to the skins different color and character (al-Nadeem, 2005: 51; Adli, 2007: 24; AI1991OCT: 8; al-Afifi, 2008: 219).¹¹⁰

As al-Afifi's enumeration documents, the Egyptian security officers were deeply concerned about visibility of torture marks. For that reason, for instance, beating a person with a Sudanese whip (*al-gild*) was abandoned, as it left profound traces on the body of a tortured person (al-Afifi, 2008: 219).¹¹¹ Marks of torture, such as beating ones feet (*falaka*), were often medically treated¹¹² (el-Dawla, 2013; al-Afifi, 2008: 219). A following testimony of a SSIS detainee, who was held incommunicado and tortured first at the SSIS office in Asyut and later at the CSF military camp outside the city, illustratively documents the former practice.

“They beat the top part of my feet. [...] Then they let me down. My legs were really swollen. They told me to jump because it would make the swelling go down. I couldn't jump. They brought the electricity to make me jump. I couldn't stand up at all. They started to shock me, randomly, all over my body.” (MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 82)

However, after a week, the feet remained to be swollen and raised concern on the side of the officers, who decided to take precautionary measures:

“[...] the soldiers massaged my legs [...]. The next day a policeman brought hot oil and made the soldiers massage it into my legs. The third day, they brought doctors. There were three doctors at the camp. One doctor said there was no problem but another doctor decided to work on my leg. They took me outside the car and the doctor used crude procedures to lance my leg and remove the pus.” (MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 83)

¹¹⁰ This account of torture methods commonly performed by the Egyptian security personnel is not exhaustive. For more, see e.g. al-Afifi (2008), al-Nadeem (2006), Shehat and Zarei (2001).

¹¹¹ Contrary to al-Afifi's claim, Shehat and Zarei (2001: 57) document a continuous incidence of beating by *al-gild*.

¹¹² The individuals were often forced to jump on their feet on a wet ground to remove the swollen and red traces after the beating. For more, see Adli (2007: 23-24).

Besides the medical treatment, there were further techniques the officers developed to mask the visible traces of ill-treatment and torture and rationalize them possibly as old injuries (Seif, 2013). A common strategy was to keep at least three weeks between the last torture session and first medical examination before the detainee was sent to a public prosecutor (Seif, 2013). The lapse of time provided enough time to heal the immediate injuries, which could have been than proclaimed to be old injuries. A further technique to cover up the ill-treatment was also, for instance, the institutionalization of an appeal at the court without the presence of the defendant (and thus also without a possibility to directly present the torture marks), which was made possible in the late 1980s (Seif, 2013).

The use of torture methods that left no traces, on the one hand, clearly points to the efforts of security officials to mask torture evidence, which could have possibly caused problems to its perpetrators outside the zones of exceptionality. This argument also supports the fact that most torture victims did not know the identity of their tormentors because of the constant blindfold and the officers using false names (Moorehead, 2005: 35). Thus, although the existence of the SSIS illegal detention and torture cells and the sovereign violence within was common knowledge security officials, as well as those prosecutors and state forensic experts who were complicit in covering the sovereign violence, acted as if these zones of exceptionality did not exist in order to uphold the patina of legality and a law state (Seif, 2013; el-Dawla, 2013).

On the other hand, the variety of clean torture to which Egyptian *homines sacri* were exposed also clearly shows that “[t]he objective was not to scar the flesh with marks of infamy, but to locate, isolate, and cripple the prisoner’s ‘soul’” (Rejali, 1994: 14). The medical accounts of al-Nadeem (2005) provide supporting evidence. In addition to the physical trauma, the torture victims frequently suffered from diverse psychological disorders which paralyzed their everyday life (al-Nadeem, 2005: 42f). Their body of *homo sacer* was not to be physically killed. It was instead a gateway to their spirit, which was to be reached and disturbed in order to glean information and to break it with fear. Although these two objectives did not necessarily always occur simultaneously¹¹³, they are of high relevance to make sense of the perpetuated securitization case and will addressed in detail below.

¹¹³ Not every torture incident was guided by the objective to acquire information. There were cases of torture that were led to intimidation only (see e.g. MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 71f). Intimidation was often used as a mechanism of power to threaten and re-optimize unruly conduct of politically active Egyptians. For instance, Abd al-Halim Qandil, a prominent leader of Kefaya and editor-in-chief of the opposition Naserist newspaper *al-'Arabi*, criticized in his article the expected power transition from Husni Mubarak to his son Gamal as well as the existing state of emergency. Within few hours he was kidnapped, stripped naked, beaten and dumped in a desert outside Cairo. See Oweidat, et al. (2008: 28).

4.2.1. Hollowing out the mind of targeted individuals

Any information deemed important to the counterterrorism campaign was to be hollowed from the mind of the security target. Torture was a means to dig in to one's mind and to produce such information. Accordingly, the SSIS officer "doesn't kill but he squeezes the individual until he brings out what is inside him [the tortured person]" (MEW/HRW, 1991DEC: 7). This was done in a way that:

"[w]hen you are being tortured, you reach a state that you've said all the facts, basically, but the torture doesn't stop so you reach the conclusion that he [the State Security officer] wants you to say what the interrogator wants to hear, so you start saying what the interrogator wants to hear. So you fall actually into that trap. And sometimes you even elaborate even more than the guy wants to hear. So this extra information that you gave him, this means that he will torture you more to get even more extra information and will torture the others in order to complete the new plot now." (HRW, 2007DEC: 45, note 67).

The content quality or veracity notwithstanding, the information gained from security targets was a desired commodity to the Egyptian security professionals. It was produced in diverse forms, which ranged from coerced confessions, testimonies, anecdotal pieces of information on relatives, colleagues, neighbors, collection of information on a crime, evidence for courts, or securing of a constant flow of information on certain people by recruiting the interrogated person as an informer (*murshid*) (Seif, 2013; Abu Seada, 2013; Okail, 2013a; Shehat and Zarei, 2001: 16). The extracted information, upon which people's real or assumed names, networks, activities, criminal involvement and so forth were mapped and reconstructed, created a basis upon which the truth about the menace linked to the terrorist threat in the Egyptian securitization context was (re)produced and further dispersed in the discourse.

The case of the Victorious Sect (*al-Tai'fa al-Mansura*), an alleged terrorist group, illustrates the importance of information extracted in the zones of indistinction to both the legitimization of the counterterrorism campaign and the meaningfulness of the security apparatus as a protective guardian of the Egyptian society. In early 2006, the arrest of twenty-two men, alleged members of the Victorious Sect and their accusation of preparing a terrorist plot, was intensely followed by the Egyptian media. The case was presented to the Egyptian public as evidence of terrorist activities in Egypt and the unflagging security risk related to terrorism. In view of the Ministry of Interior, the arrest highlighted the SSIS counterterrorism efforts:

"to abort any move to form terror organizations, proven over the past period to be posing lethal threats, stemming from their spontaneity and randomness—based on deviant extremist ideas which have nothing to do with the true Islam, and in response to the fallout from international and regional events." (A statement of the Egyptian Ministry of Interior quoted in HRW, 2007DEC: 15)

Accordingly, media coverage hailed the security apparatus for its vigilance in the fight against terrorism. Moreover, it also disclosed defendant's personal data along with their

photographs taken of them while in custody which, according to one of defendants, visually framed them as prototypes of terrorists:

“We were tortured daily until a photographer came and took pictures of us that were broadcast on Egyptian television on April 19, 2006. Of course, our beards were long and our hair looked like Mongols’—we truly looked like terrorists...” (HRW, 2007DEC: 44)

Although the case of the Victorious Sect was presented as a great success of counterterrorism prevention, the extensive HRW (2007DEC) report asserts that “it appears that SSI may have fabricated the allegations made against at least some and possibly all of them [alleged members of the Victorious Sect] (HRW, 2007DEC: 2).” In particular, the report suggests that the Victorious Sect plot was merely the result of coerced testimonies of the involved suspects. As one of the former detainees who was held together with the group recounted:

“The guys would say they’d be tortured so bad, they’d be screaming, “Tell me what you want me to say! Tell us what to say and we’ll say it!” They’d agree to confirm anything State Security wanted.” (HRW, 2007DEC: 4)

The release orders assigned by the State Security prosecutors only few months after the big public disclosure implicitly point at the lack of any conceivable evidence to prosecute the case. As Muhammad Zarei, a lawyer acquainted with the case summarized:

“The prosecutor could easily have referred the case for prosecution. If they had the smallest suspicion— 1/1000th of a suspicion—that these guys were actually guilty of anything, or dangerous, they would have referred the case to court or to a military tribunal. Just by the fact that they did not take legal action against these detainees, this shows that the case is fabricated...” (Muhammad Zarei quoted in HRW, 2007DEC: 51)

The information extracted from the suspects – regardless its validity – (re)produced the truth about the immanence of the terrorist threat. Supported by the visual portraits of the suspects widely distributed through the Egyptian media, the produced knowledge provided tangible evidence about the omnipresence of the terrorist threat. Thus, it enhanced the securitization process of the terrorist threat and its continuity. At the same time, it also reconfirmed the meaningfulness of the security apparatus since it highlighted the *effective* performance of security forces in the counterterrorism campaign.

4.2.2. Breaking spirit of the targeted individual

One’s spirit was not only considered a source of information, but also a bottom-line of one’s *bios*, i.e. the dignified form of life. As Rejali (1994: 76) observes, desolating one’s spirit is an elaborate effect of modern torture which alters targeted individuals “into asocial, apolitical, and dependent individuals if it does not deliver a personality in shreds”. The Egyptian torture practice followed a similar pattern:

“Despite the fact that the ways of bodily torture leave great mental wounds in the victim’s soul, this does not suffice for the perpetrators. They thus use other means directed primarily at destroying one’s mental defenses and humanity (*al-insaniyya*).” (Adli, 2007: 25)

The bodily harm was not enough. The aimed goal was to break the spirit of the targeted individual and thus also his capacity to act and resist (see Bevir, 1999: 73). The mental breakdown of Ahmed, an alleged member of the Victorious Sect and torture victim illustrates this objective essential to the SSIS security practice. Ahmed’s inmate and a former SSIS detainee recounted the story as following:

“Ahmed said that at that time [after months of torture by the SSIS], he was in ‘a weird state.’ The officer brought him a cup of tea and talked to him, but he couldn’t focus at all on what he was saying and what he was doing then. He said he was just looking at his feet, and pouring the tea on his toes and just playing with his toes, and he didn’t know why he was doing this. This was his mental state at the end.” (A former SSIS detainee quoted in HRW, 2007DEC: 50)

Although it might appear that *the destruction of one’s humanity* emerged as a by-product of extracting information from the targeted individuals, the staff of al-Nadeem Aida Seif el-Dawla and Basma Mohammad (2013) proved contrary. Based on their experience in dealing with torture victims, el-Dawla and Mohammad claimed that there were abundant torture cases carried out by security officers *just* to terrorize and break spirit of the targeted individuals without having any objective to acquire data from their victims. This was, for instance, a common practice to which Muslim Brotherhood members were subjected. They were frequently apprehended, tortured (usually beaten), and terrorized without any attempt to interrogate them or obtain information from them (el-Dawla, 2013).

“The government, for example, knows the active leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. But when the Brotherhood splits from the government line, as it did on the Madrid peace conference, some of its members are taken in and tortured. There are no investigative purposes for this torture.” (An Egyptian lawyer quoted in MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 72)

Torture to threaten (Abu Seada, 2013) and to punish (Zarei, 2013) usually came into play when the targeted individual had resisted biopolitical optimization and was thus classified as beyond the tolerable bandwidth. His potentially disobedient and defying spirit was to be rendered harmless through the sovereign power operation in the zone of indistinction. In this respect, torture became a central instrument to define “the limits of acceptable political activity” (MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 72).

Fear was essential to break the spirit of the targeted individual and torture was the central instrument of deterrence. Specifically, fear emerged as an immediate effect of the sovereign violence to which a person was exposed. Yet, it often transformed into a long-term condition; victims were overcome with “fear and terror to be exposed to that

painful experience again” (al-Nadeem, 2005: 42).¹¹⁴ The experience of torture victims often transformed into feelings of anxiety, attacks of panic, shame, and guilt commonly registered with the torture victims, which paralyzed the life of the majority of torture victims *after torture* (Mohammad, 2013; Adli, 2007: 32-33). There was, on the one hand, fear as an immediate emotion and a direct effect of physical and mental violence. The immediate condition of fear resulted usually in surrendering of the targeted person to the will of the security officers. Fear to be tortured further or fear of repercussions on relatives, mediated, for instance, through threats of sexual abuse of the female relatives (see e.g. Shehat and Zarei, 2001: 3, 58), devastated the capacity of the targeted person to resist and made him to yield to the SSIS pressure (see e.g. HRW, 2011JANa: 75). On the other hand, the sovereign violence also induced fear as a long-term condition which stemmed from “[the] pain that gripped the ‘consciousness’”(Rejali, 1994: 14) and lasted long after the targeted individual left the SSIS custody (al-Nadeem, 2005: 43f).

Chronic fear was commonly featured as fear of the security officers and their retribution (al-Ghumri, 1999: 22; Allam, 2015: 71; Sassoon, 2016: 132). This form of fear was usually nurtured by a continuous ostracization combined with intense, pervasive intimidation practices of the security officials (see Sassoon, 2016: 132). Among others it involved direct threats, such as an officer’s visit to one’s home or a direct talk in the street. The threats were, however, also often communicated through a third person, such as a neighbor, a friend, or a colleague, or delivered through anonymous phone calls (Mohammad, 2013). As the HRW report (2011JANa: 54) aptly summarizes:

“One reason why intimidation effectively scares off complainants is because they know how easy it is for officers to detain them on trumped-up charges. They also know how painful detention will be, even if it is only for a few days, because of the likelihood of torture. This is particularly the case when detainees are expected to report a complaint of torture whilst still in the custody of law enforcement officers.”

In result, out of fear of possible retaliation the torture victims often refused to take any action against the perpetrators which in turn strengthened the aura of impunity of the security apparatus (see e.g. al-Nadeem, 2006: 4; HRW, 2011JANa: 40, 55; Shehat and Zarei, 2001: 39; HRW, 1995JAN; AI, 1991OCT: 11). The majority torture victims decided to keep silent and did not file legal complains (see al-Nadeem, 2005; Shehat and Zarei, 2001; AI, 2002NOV: 18). This corresponds with the scheme of self-restrained conduct shaped by justified fears to be targeted the security officials again (see e.g. AI, 2002NOV: 16ff; HRW, 2011JANa: 54f).

In addition to fear of retaliation by the security officers, the silence of the torture victims was also the result of the daunt of social stigmatization the victims preferred to avoid or to mitigate at least. According to Mohammad (2013), the torture victims often

¹¹⁴ The strategy to terrorize people by subjecting them to torture was according to el-Dawla (2013) only partially successful. Some people kept quiet and withdrew from their previous activities, while others were re-strengthened in their resistance and became determined to revenge.

encountered condemning societal reactions from their relatives, neighbors, colleagues ascribing them responsibility for what had happened to them: *if you would have not gone to the demonstration, it would not have happened to you*. There was widely accepted knowledge that the exceptional security practice was limited to those individuals who were politically active:

“We knew about police brutality, but I think we were hoping that they were doing it for the best of the people and the country. For example, I could understand why they were putting political prisoners in jail.” (An anonymous respondent quoted in Salem, 2014: 30)

As el-Dawla (2013) recounted, when politically active persons were tortured it was in a certain way “clear” why that happened to them. However, for those who were not involved in any kind of political activities, it was more difficult to make sense of torture for themselves as well as for their surroundings. Therefore, they were often confronted with distrust from their family and/or neighbors who, in efforts to rationalize the abuse, thought “they must have done something” wrong, such as drugs or prostitution related issues.¹¹⁵ Through the social stigmatization, which blamed the torture victim for his grievance, the victim re-experienced his trauma, which was by many perceived worse than the torture itself (Mohammad, 2013). Moreover, the label of such an unspecified social deviance was a powerful instrument in hands of the Egyptian authorities, as it was virtually impossible to clean one’s name vis-a-vis the official accusation (Anderson, 2013). In this regard, the social stigma was another aspect that produced fear and accordingly affected the capacity of the individual to resist – to fill a complaint, to make the case public, or to simply share the trauma with close ones – and thus to restore own spirit.

4.2.3. Proliferating fear

Fear produced and proliferated through sovereign techniques of violence bore wider ramifications, which went beyond the matter whether to take or not to take a legal action against the torture perpetrators. Fear of becoming a *homo sacer*, which was proliferated through the exceptional security practice, significantly influenced the will of the governed society to question and defy the existing societal and political order. As Sassoon (2016: 137) observed, “[f]ear was critical to keeping the masses acquiescent under the shadow of despotism.” Fear, particularly, induced a form of self-constrained conduct as it bore the awareness that virtually *anyone* could be labeled as disobedient *for any activity* and thus rendered *homo sacer* in one of the SSIS detention dens (see e.g. Ghonim, 2012: 3). Especially in the last decade of Mubarak’s reign, fear of being subjected to the sovereign decisions of the Egyptian security officials reached such an

¹¹⁵ This was especially valid for those who were sexually abused. As sexual abuse is culturally unacceptable and regardless the victim-perpetrator positions it ruins indefinitely victim’s image and social status. Therefore, despite the existence of many cases of sexual abuses by the security personnel, none of the victims was willing to publish the story because of justified fear it would ruin them in public (Mohammad, 2013).

extent that a mere presence of security officials in the street made some to change their direction in order to avoid a confrontation (Salem, 2014: 31).

As argued in chapter two, fear of being transformed into a *homo sacer* emerged as a powerful effect, structuring and optimizing the conduct of the governed society and weakening its capacity and will to resist. Fear was clearly a powerful factor that paralyzed the emergence of resistance to the state of emergency in particular and the existing political order in general. In this sense, torture became a central mechanism to (re)produce fear insofar as it was “a systematic and organized tool to terrorize citizens and to ensure complete submission of the people to the policies of those authorities” (EAAT 2003 quoted in el-Dawla, 2009: 134).

Fear of being subjected to sovereign violence was clearly not a condition which would have been limited to those who had been tortured in the SSIS custody. The fate of a person who was transformed *homo sacer* was deterring to his immediate surroundings. This, for instance, illustrates the refusal of several people who witnessed the fatal beating of Khalid Said – who later became a symbol of the human rights abuses in Egypt – to testify.

“I [one of the key witnesses, Haitham Misbah] spent days trying to convince people to go and testify, but everyone was too scared. Especially because after the incident, officers from Sidi Gaber police station came to our area and indirectly threatened people not to cause trouble. *Everyone was scared that the same thing could happen to them if they reported what had happened.*” (A key witness to the murder of Khalid Said quoted in HRW, 2011JANa: 53; italics by the author)

Even though something as abstract as fear is empirically difficult to trace, the reports by human rights organizations point out at a significant level of anxiety of the security apparatus and its practices. It can be maintained that through encounters with security personnel (Ismail, 2006: 129-160) – be it directly as a torture victim, or indirectly as a person close to a torture victim, a target of police and SSIS intimidation and surveillance, or a witness of an abusive conduct – combined with the informal hearsays fear to be targeted by the security apparatus was proliferated among Egyptians (Allam, 2015: 70f; Salem, 2014: 30f). There was a common knowledge – especially in the last decade of Mubarak’s reign – that “[e]verybody constituted a possible target” (Salem, 2014: 30). Accordingly, fear constrained the capacity of Egyptians to question the existing political ordering:

“All people see how male and female protesters are dealt with, how whole cities are isolated, their inhabitants disciplined, thousands of their sons detained... and this is the result desired by the decision-makers... formation of general public awareness that every citizen is a potential victim of torture or an arrest... [...] The authorities succeeded in terrorizing (*irhab*) everyone... Again and again, a sword that does not know any mercy was used. They succeeded in *plundering*

citizens' souls and planting fear in their hearts and indifference to the country, its fate and future." (Adli, 2007: 22, italics by the author)

The fear of the security apparatus and its security practices – enhanced significantly through the existing state of emergency – also undermined the societal life and restrained Egyptians to express their discontent (see also Ghonim, 2012: 3):

"We all hear and see the general level of discontent, which boils in the pots without being formed in a pressing force to pursue change. Why does the public participate in the general elections? Why do the unions (syndicates) become the real force rather than the force of the civic society? For sure, there are many factors [...] but there is also a basic reason and that is the *fear of torture, arrest, and curse of the authorities (al-khaw min al-ta'dhib wa-l-i'taqal wa 'anat al-sultat)*." (Adli, 2007: 90; italics by the author)

The security apparatus and the SSIS in particular, became an institution which, in the words of Rabia (2011: 113) "scared Egyptians and planted fear in their hearts and minds"; and which used fear to achieve docility of the governed society. As a former Egyptian officer recounted:

"The best way to preserve security was during El-Adly's era [1997-2011], when everyone was afraid of interacting with the police. By that time, a general policy of deterrence was applied on the whole society, which is missing today, and so, it is hard to address security deficiencies since 2011." (A former officer quoted in Allam, 2015: 71)

In sum, the fear of the security apparatus was part of the "biopolitics of fear" and as such "has been made "beneficial" to society" (Debrix and Barder, 2009: 400). At the individual level, fear of the security apparatus disciplined Egyptians, as the Egyptian proverb says, 'to walk along the wall' (*timshi ganb 'ala al-khait*), to mind their own business and focus on own livelihood (Ghonim, 2012: 3). At the societal level, it contributed to the optimization of the population in its entirety since fear proliferation was necessary to (re)confirm the government's control over the Egyptian society (Debrix and Barder, 2009: 400). Needless to mention, fear of becoming *homo sacer* disturbed many Egyptians' capacity to resist; but, it did not neutralize *everyone* (el-Dawla, 2013). There were Egyptians, such as Khalid Said's family, who overcame fear of the security authorities and a daunt of social stigma and turned their son's death into one of the largest Egyptian happenings against torture and human rights abuses by the security apparatus (see Clarke, 2013: 207f). There were also Egyptians who overcame fear and continued or began to challenge the existing sociopolitical order despite the risk of being subjected to sovereign violence. Thus, although the effects of power nurtured by the operation of the Egyptian security apparatus constrained the field of conduct of Egyptians, they did not paralyze the capacity to resist completely (see chapter 5).

4.3. Proliferation of the sovereign decision on exception

In the beginning of this chapter, it was established that the sovereign decision on the state of emergency was informed by the securitization process of the terrorist threat. The declaration and later renewals of the state of emergency would not have been possible without a sovereign decision of the Egyptian political leadership. Yet, it is obvious that the political leadership did not assess whether each individual deemed a possible security target by the security apparatus shall be transformed into a *homo sacer* and subjected to the exceptional treatment in the Egyptian zones of indistinction or not.

In practice, the exercise of sovereignty was “decentered in the practices of everyday life”, while it was at the same time centralized in the political leadership’s decision on exception (Nadesan, 2008: 186). In Foucault’s words:

“the political sovereignty penetrated into the most elementary dimension of the social body; the resources of an absolutist political power, beyond the traditional weapons of authority and submission, could be brought into play between subject and subject [...]” (Foucault, 2002: 168)

The sovereign decision on exception was proliferated through the micro-level among the officers, plainclothes detectives, and other petty security bureaucrats who were involved in the process of evaluating and accessing security risks linked to the terrorism threat. The diffusion of the norm of exception encouraged the practices and strategies of the security officials that reinforced their role as petty sovereigns. For the security officials were those who decided on individual exception (Okail, 2013a; Sayed, 2013). That is, by virtue of their position and the empowerment provided by the state of emergency, they were authorized to determine who constituted a security risk and should be treated exceptionally. It was based on their decisions that individual Egyptians were apprehended, detained in the SSIS zones of indistinction, and subjected to the sovereign violence.

As discussed in the previous chapter, there was a certain formal chain of order that ran to the lowest security ranks from the Minister of Interior and even, as it the case may be, from the President. Yet, the common practice clearly underlines the role of security officials as petty sovereigns. Moreover, the Presidential Decree No. 4 of 1982, which authorized the Minister of Interior to act in the matters of the state of emergency, enabled the Minister of Interior to issue detention orders without a judicial review. The Egyptian Ministers of Interior, however, did so without specifying the addressee of the detention order. Blanket detention orders with Minister’s signature were distributed among security officers. It was left to the officers to fill in the name (Seif, 2013; Abu Seada, 2013; Okail, 2013a). Even though the Minister of Interior was designated as a superior sovereign to decide on dangerousness or unworthiness of one’s life, the ultimate decision was decentralized and disseminated among individual security officials who emerged as an ensemble of petty sovereigns bearing the ultimate authority to decide on exception.

4.3.1. Biopolitical identification of individual dangerousness

The proliferation of the sovereign decision on exception among thousands of security officials does not mean that security targets were identified haphazardly or randomly. Petty sovereigns and their decisions on exception were informed by the biopolitical process that designated terrorism as an existential threat to the Egyptian society. The corpus of knowledge attached to the depiction of the terrorism threat in the Egyptian discourse (see chapter 3) provided a fairly detailed “identikit” of alleged terrorists. Besides an assumed physical appearance, it included abundant references to the presumed behavior and social background of the security targets. All of which guided the security professionals in their daily encounters with Egyptians to identify the potential threat and single out those who fit in the constructed image of a terrorist.

As argued in chapter 2, the Egyptian “dangerous others” were products of the securitization process as a biopolitical optimization process. Thus, the security official’s decision about who to arrest and transform into a *homo sacer* was not a given natural fact formed in vacuum nor a result of a transcendent sovereign decision, as Agamben’s position on the state of exception would suggest. Rather, it was an outcome of a sovereign decision informed by the biopolitical optimization that distinguished between worthy, acceptable and unworthy, dangerous forms of life (see also Tagma, 2009: 428). In this regard, the knowledge about the terrorist threat, which was produced and proliferated in the discourse through the securitization process, clearly permeated the sovereign decisions of the security officers and guided their everyday decisions about who to suspect, monitor, arrest, and turn into a *homo sacer* and whom not. There were three topoi of knowledge, which were produced by the process of constructing the threat and informed the security officials about one’s (un)acceptability and dangerousness to the majority Egyptian society. They included: (i) outer appearance, (ii) presence in a particular space, such as mosques or informal housing areas, and (iii) behavioral patterns.

(i) Religious appearance

As elaborated on in the previous chapter, the Islamist epitomized the terrorist and was the central security target. The terrorist was portrayed through stereotyped symbols of Islamic religiosity and devoutness, such as a specifically cut beard or conservative Islamic clothes. Such easily distinguishable features served as points of orientation for the Egyptian security officials in their everyday decisions on exception. The outer symbols of religious devoutness were often sufficient enough for the security officials to get alarmed.

“State Security regularly calls in men with beards, but not just bearded guys, but others perceived to be religious.” (a human rights researcher quoted in HRW, 2007DEC: 64)

An Islamic appearance was related with a higher risk to be monitored, apprehended, and possibly turned into a *homo sacer* as a suspected Islamist terrorist (MEW/HRW,

1992JUL: 59f; HRW, 2007DEC: 9f). In contrast, a “good” appearance (*shakl kuwayyis*), which referred to good clothes, a clean look, and absent Islamic symbols, was a factor that mattered. As Ismail (2006: 148) showed in her study of Cairan informal areas *shakl kuwayyis* could have spared the person an undesired interest of the security officials. The observations of Gamal Eid, an attorney and human rights activists, offer similar conclusions:

“First, State Security regularly conducts arrests of youth randomly; religious or not. I’ve seen this myself: you’re in a square or on a street and you’ll see the police, with State Security, randomly arresting young men. Not Islamists precisely, but general sweeps of men. Or you see the police carry out the arrests, and then they transfer some people to State Security: they take them all to the police station and conduct ID checks on them. Some are kept in the police station. Others, their record shows they’ve been detained by State Security, they are transferred to State Security... if it turns out one or two of them has a record of being arrested by State Security, or if he has *a long beard* and *looks religious*, they will transfer them to State Security. These criminal sweeps occur regularly, all the time. Second, [SSI conducts] sweeps targeting people who are *perceived to be religious*, for instance, outside a mosque or a place where religious kids hang out.” (Gamal Eid quoted in HRW, 2007DEC: 62; italics by the author)

The religious appearance was so strongly associated with an assumed terrorist threat that some Egyptian men shaved their beards as a precaution (see e.g. al-Nadeem, 2006: 37). There were, nevertheless, some who wore a beard and/or other religious symbols to express their deliberate defiance of the existing sociopolitical order (Azzam, 1986).

ii) Informal areas

Besides the religious appearance, there were further criteria according to which the security officials decided on exception. The assumed sociospatial location of alleged terrorists was among these criteria. Areas of informal housing were perceived as dangerous areas where the incidence of security targets was likely higher than in other spatial parts of Egyptian cities (Dorman, 2009: 421; Kepel, 1995: 238-240).¹¹⁶ The pathologization of informal areas as centers of fanaticism and terrorists’ safe heavens emerged, especially, in the aftermath of “the Siege of Imbaba” in the early 1990s.

In Munira Gharbiyya known also as Imbaba, a densely populated informal area of Greater Cairo, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya established and maintained a relatively strong and visible presence towards the end of the 1980s (Bayat and Denis, 2000: 185). Yet, in 1992 the Islamist stronghold in Imbaba was dispersed by tough counterterrorism maneuvers, including mass arbitrary arrests, widespread torture, and hostage-taking of family members (HRW, 1995JAN). Hostage-taking was an effective but illegal method to force wanted individuals to turn themselves in. Usually, family members including female relatives were taken hostage and held at the police stations or detention facilities.

¹¹⁶ *Majalla amn al-am*, vol. 159, p. 105.

The act often involved threats of sexual abuse to the hostage should not the wanted relative turn in. The informal areas were included into the wider securitization framework of the terrorist threat ever since. Prior the Imbaba siege, the slums had been referred to by the Egyptian media as *manatiq ashwaiyya* or shortly as *ashwaiyyat*, i.e., haphazard areas, a pejorative epitome for a social disorder. After the Imbaba siege, the *ashwaiyyat* label became increasingly problematized as a socio-spatial disorder which reinforced the unacceptability of its inhabitants (Dorman, 2009: 421, 427). The informal areas became to be viewed as places of “refuge for criminals and uncivilized rural migrants (often Upper Egyptian)” (Dorman, 2009: 427) as well as areas of “a Hobbesian locus of lawlessness and extremism, producing a ‘culture of violence’ and an ‘abnormal’ way of life” (Bayat and Denis, 2000: 185).

The securitization of *ashwaiyyat* was clearly a part of the securitization of terrorist threat. A direct relation between terrorism and the perceived security risks posed by informal areas was drawn and appeared, for instance, in the discussion over countering terrorism in the *Majalla amn al-am*. As the following excerpt illustrates the call for tougher security measures to control these areas and their inhabitants was a common result of the discussion:

“Provisions of control and surveillance on the furnished flats and the informal areas (*al-manatiq al-ashwaiyya*), firm security proceedings for *everyone* who lives in these areas, and toughening of punishment for not informing on occupants of the furnished flats.”¹¹⁷

Despite the unsuitability of the informal areas for a police operation, due to their chaotic order; the lack of street names and unpaved alleyways unsuitable for police cars (Bayat and Denis, 2000: 198), the slums were an indisputable subject of an interest of the Egyptian security officials. Ismail (2006) in her study of Cairan informal areas demonstrates the interest of the security apparatus in these areas, their inhabitants and control of their docility. Ismail, particularly, shows that the security officials accessed *ashwaiyyat* inhabitants as potential security risk on a regular basis. According to her research, the informal areas were thus exposed to “the expansion of the remit of agents of al-amn al-‘am (public security) through security patrols (*dawriyyat amniyya*), enlarged security-campaign raids (*hamalat amniyya mukabara*) in popular quarters, and campaigns aimed at *mushtabah fihum* (suspects)” (Ismail, 2006: 144).

iii) Suspicious conduct

Egyptians were also accessed and evaluated as suspicious and possible security targets based on their conduct. Out of the three criteria, the evaluation of someone’s conduct as suspicious and possibly dangerous appears to be one of the most contested topoi of knowledge through which sovereign decisions on exception were made. The emergency law entailed “wide and unchecked powers of law enforcement when dealing with suspected ‘threats to national security’” (HRW, 2011JANa: 12). Thus, security officials

¹¹⁷ *Majalla amn al-am*, vol. 159, p. 105 (italics by the author).

were in the position to evaluate virtually any activity, including the defiance of their own authority, as a threat to national security (see e.g. Ismail, 2007: 151; al-Nadeem, 2006). It was well established knowledge that political engagement which contested the established sociopolitical status quo, such as a participation in street protests and demonstrations, an attendance of specific mosques or an affiliation/membership in a political organization but the ruling NDP was beyond the edge of the optimized and acceptable conduct. Hence, any of such a conduct posed a risk for the individual to be evaluated as a threat to national security and transformed into a *homo sacer* (Adli, 2007: 22; Mohammed, 2013; AI: 2010NOV; Salem, 2014: 30).

Yet, especially from the 1990s on, the conduct which was accessed and evaluated as suspicious and posing threat to national security became increasingly irreducible to the political engagement of an individual. As the accounts of human rights activists (el-Dawla, 2013; el-Dawla, 2009; Mohammed, 2013; al-Nadeem, 2006) point out that there were thousands of Egyptians, so-called “no-names” as Dawla (2013) referred to them, who were subjected to the sovereign decisions of security officials and transformed into *homines sacri* notwithstanding their apparent abstention from any political involvement. As al-Nadeem (2006: 7) summarizes, the state of affairs by mid-2000:

“In Egypt, torture is not restricted to political dissidents. It is practiced against those suspected of committing crimes, and against many who are not suspects of anything. It is done as a compliment for those in power as a form of intimidation and ‘teaching a lesson’ to others who are [sic] of a lesser social status. It is done to hostages taken by the police in exchange for those ‘wanted’. It is used as a disciplinary policy against who [sic] neighborhoods, towns, and villages. It is also done to people who refuse to act as police informers, despite the harassment by policemen.”

The suspicious conduct became an inconsistent construct of the securitization process and hence also a subject of a wide interpretation by security officials in their everyday encounters with Egyptians, which allowed to include into the category of security targets unlimited numbers of Egyptians (see also HRW, 2011JANa: 14f; Allam, 2015: 59; Shehat, 2008: 91).

4.3.2. Biopolitical productivity of the security apparatus

The security practice of the Egyptian security officials was influenced by a biopolitical rationale in and out of the zones of indistinction. Moreover, as outlined previously, the everyday security practice, i.e., the identification and exclusion of security targets, contributed to the biopolitical optimization of the Egyptian society. Also, the day-to-day conduct of security officials was a subject to biopolitical optimization based on the appraisal, classification, and evaluation of their conduct. That said, their performance mattered and statistics was an underlying tool to document their effectiveness in the

counterterrorism campaign and optimize their conduct to become more successful in their combat of terrorism (see Hasso, 2011: 28; Pickett, 1996: 457f).

The content of *al-Ahram* and *Majalla amn al-am* suggest that the Egyptian security officials were expected to deliver tangible results in the counterterrorism campaign.¹¹⁸ The insights of former security officials, however, point out that instead of a reasonable expectation there was a considerable pressure to “produce” cases and thereby to strengthen the securitization narrative about the terrorist threat necessary to uphold the state of emergency as well as the exceptional rights granted to the security apparatus. The speed, quantity, as well as media attractiveness of delivered cases were the key criteria which determined the effectiveness of an individual security official, of a department, of an institution, and to enlarge the meaningfulness and irreplaceability of the entire security apparatus.

“It is assumed that those who achieve positive results in their work, must have made greater efforts to achieve that success and therefore achieve a higher score in evaluation. The positive results as far as an intelligence officer is concerned is the processing of *more cases* and exposing crimes *at a required speed*. Accordingly officers are expected to achieve certain statistics that can be used with the media to celebrate the performance of the ministry, in order to make the impression that, despite the increase in the rate of crime, the ministry is still in charge and that everything is under control. [...] the officer who reports the most cases is an excellent officer... the one who reports them fast is the best because he probably exerted a lot of effort... he therefore enjoys the admiration of his seniors and his status improves and he might enjoy promotion...” (a former security official Qotri quoted in al-Nadeem, 2006: 91-92)

Accordingly, as Qotri further observes, there was pressure on security officials to deliver cases and thus to “produce” evidence about the existence of considerable security threats in Egypt. The pressure was usually subtle, making use of indirect incentives and threats. It often involved questions of personal status, financial benefits, as well as an intoxicating sense of power (Sassoon, 2016: 126).

“An intelligence officer in any police center is required to report increasing numbers of weapons for example if it is in his mandate to confiscate unlicensed possessions of weapons. So if he did confiscate thirty pieces of weaponry last year, he is expected to do the same, if not more, the following years or else he might be accused of redundancy in his efforts and will receive the consequent punishment, such as transfer to remote areas... So the officer has to bring in new cases to save his professional position and status. [...] The threat of dismissal of transfer by the ministry is a constant threat to the officer. [...] it is a struggle over interests and livelihoods.” (Qotri quoted in al-Nadeem, 2006: 91-92).

¹¹⁸ See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 1. 5. 2006, p. 7; *al-Ahram*, 1. 3. 2003, p. 20; *al-Ahram*, 18. 2. 1997, p. 13; *Majalla amn al-am*, Vol. 159, p. 104.

A testimony of a former prosecutor confirms Qotri's observations.

“The mabahith (Criminal Investigations) are under huge pressure to produce results. Their promotion relies on the number of cases they manage to resolve so they are constantly focused on how to get cases [solved].” (a former prosecutor quoted in HRW, 2011JANa: 18)

Although the many of the cases where torture and ill-treatment played an overwhelmingly significant role were eventually dismissed by prosecutors and thus never made it to the Egyptian courts (HRW, 2011JANa: 12), for the sake of internal reports they mattered greatly:

“since they reflect what is commonly called ‘the effort.’ This concept reflects the performance rates of each directorate and department in the interior ministry, and thus the amount of activities undertaken by each director or department head. Because of this ‘effort’, most of officers are required to increase their activity to meet or increase their previous records, in order to please their superiors, who in turn seek to please their respective superiors. Based on this effort, the interior ministry's effectiveness reports are built, regardless of the solidness of the reported cases and whether they are transferred to court or disregarded by prosecutors. Therefore, the real interest of officers is directed to these fake performance reports and not to substantially preserving security.” (Allam, 2015: 71-72)

The biopolitical emphasis on the productivity of the security apparatus intersected with the empowered status of the Egyptian security officials ensured by the state of emergency. Torture was one of the major results of this intersection. As Qotri's account shows:

“the officer is always busy: he is expected to act fast, at the same time he did not learn anything, so it is always easier to torture the suspects to force them into a confession. This scenario takes place in all sections of intelligence police, be they criminal police, drug and narcotic police, conduct police or otherwise.” (Qotri quoted in al-Nadeem, 2006: 92)

Torture was an efficient mechanism to interrogate and produce cases (Okail, 2013a; HRW, 2011JANa: 18) as it constituted one of the most efficient mechanisms to maintain and possibly increase the performance of the security apparatus. The role of torture as a central factor behind the “improving” of the security statistics is documented a testimony of an officer who maintained that:

“[w]hen we stopped the beatings, the rate of solved cases dramatically dropped” (quoted in Allam, 2015: 70).

The securitization of the terrorist threat created conditions to increase “the productivity” rate of the Egyptian security professionals and thus to reconfirm their meaningfulness while disregarding the means how they reached their outcomes and productivity. The exception, originally introduced as a security measure to address militant Islamists,

developed over time into an extensive mode of security operation which became characteristic for the entire security apparatus. Analytically speaking, there were three directions of exception's expansion. These included: (i) the already mentioned broadening of the security targets as well as (ii) the involvement of security institutions other than the SSIS. Especially, in the last decade of Mubarak's reign, it also involved (iii) a spatial expansion of the exception beyond the enclosed security compounds. All three dimensions will be addressed in a greater detail below.

4.3.3. The expansion of exception

In the initial phase of the securitization process, in the 1980s, the exception as an extraordinary security measure was used by the SSIS as the lead counterterrorism institution to address militant Islamists, such as al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, al-Jihad, or Takfir wa-l-Hijra, the central security targets (see e.g. AI, 1991OCT: 1-2; MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 5-6; HRW2011JANa: 12; el-Dawla, 2009: 121-123). From the end of 1980s onward, the exception, however, increasingly embraced other political opposition from militant Islamists as well as politically inactive Egyptians (el-Dawla, 2009: 122). Mass arrests of Egyptians who protested against the first Gulf war in 1991 indicated the changing trend. Taking advantage of arbitrary arrests, a measure facilitated by the state of emergency, the security officials started to apprehend and often torture lawyers, human rights activists, journalists, students, as well as "no-names" Egyptians en masse. The case of the Muslim Brotherhood is in many respects illustrative of the trend.

For much of the 1980s, the Egyptian government tolerated the movement and security forces ignored its members in the context of the counterterrorism campaign. As the Egyptian government was preoccupied fighting militant Islamists for much of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Brotherhood took advantage of such favorable conditions. It strengthened its organizational base, developed charitable activities, and significantly boosted its popularity. Scoring several electoral successes, the group took also control over most of the politically engaged professional syndicates.¹¹⁹ Building upon its success and increasing popularity, the movement grew bolder and began to openly contest the government. When it mobilized Egyptians to demonstrate against the first Gulf war, specifically against the Western military presence, it also criticized the perceived failure of the government to protect Egyptians expatriate working in Kuwait and Iraq (Zahid, 2010: 116ff; Fahmy, 1998). In 1992 when an earthquake hit Cairo and left more than 50,000 people homeless, the Muslim Brotherhood exposed the government's inability to secure the livelihoods of Egyptians. The Brotherhood's charitable network proved to be more effective to provide humanitarian relief than the official structures (Zahid, 2010: 119; Rutherford, 2008: 86).

¹¹⁹ See Fahmy (1998) for a critical analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood's performance within the syndicates.

Against the background of these developments, the government's approach to the Brotherhood radically changed. The Brotherhood's ascendant popularity concerned Mubarak's leadership (Zahid, 2010: 117). The movement became to be in subjected a security campaign and increasing numbers of Muslim Brothers were apprehended, tortured, and imprisoned. The mass arrests and persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood skyrocketed starting in 1992 when the Law No. 97 of 1992, a part of the new firmer counterterrorism strategy, was adopted. The law defined an act of terrorism as "any threat or intimidation" which was used to "disturb peace or jeopardize the safety and security of society" and thus according to human rights activists invited for "repressing freedom of thought and expression as well as peaceful political activities" (FIDH, 2010: 13). The law provided a legal basis to criminalize activities of the peaceful political opposition, including the Muslim Brotherhood as well as non-Islamist political dissent and to qualify them as terrorism-related crimes (AI, 2000SEP: 13ff; HRW, 2004FEB: 1).¹²⁰

The exception was a *modus operandi* of the SSIS in the context of the counterterrorism campaign. Yet, over time, it spread to other institutional parts of the security apparatus and become a norm for increasing numbers of ordinary police including informers in other areas of security enforcing activities, most notably in criminal investigations (al-Nadeem, 2006: 6ff; HRW, 2011JANa: 1).¹²¹ The impunity which put the Egyptian security officials virtually above the law and nullified their accountability was a main driving force behind the institutional spread of exception. As Qotri underlines, the exception as a security practice became a norm:

"they [the abusive conduct of the security officials] are the outcome of norms and conducts that accumulated over long years and have become solid rules that control the mentality of the police officer... they enjoy rational justification from the viewpoint of the profession..." (Qotri quoted in al-Nadeem, 2006: 92)

As the accounts of human rights organizations document the security officials increasingly concentrated on ordinary, "no-names" citizens¹²² who were poor, socially marginalized and lacked contacts (*wasta*) that would have "protected" them from the exposure to the abusive conduct (el-Dawla, 2013; el-Dawla, 2009: 121; see also Hibbard and Layton, 2010 [2011]: 203). Hence, for the security officials – boosted by the institutionalized impunity – the "no-names" Egyptians represented easy targets to be subjected to sovereign violence and achieve thus immediate results, i.e., linking a crime to a specific individual regardless lack of relevant evidence (AI, 2007APR: 6).

¹²⁰ See e.g. a list of Egyptian journalists, who were tried in front of exceptional courts, compiled by the HMLC (Shehat, 2008: 158-160).

¹²¹ The political dissent was continued to be addressed predominantly by the SSIS. See e.g. AI (2002NOV: 11).

¹²² Based on the everyday encounters with torture victims, el-Dawla (2013) and Mohammad (2013) asserted that the bulk of the Egyptian *homines sacri* was formed by such "no-names" individuals (see also e.g. el-Dawla, 2009: 121f; AI, 2001FEB: 15; AI, 2002NOV: 1; Abu Seada, 2013)

This trend is illustrated by, for instance, a case of a bus driver from Alexandria who was arrested and tortured until he confessed to have killed his missing daughter. Torture of the driver continued despite the fact that his daughter reappeared. Only two years later he was acquitted of charges of manslaughter by a criminal court (AI, 2001FEB:1-2). The implausibility of coerced testimonies and confessions, and the failure of the security apparatus in other, i.e., legal, methods of investigation, notwithstanding, torture became over the time the most effective and successful method of criminal investigation (Zarei, 2013; see also HRW, 2011JANa: 18; AI, 2002NOV: 1; Stork, 2012: 467).

“In the investigations in Egypt, we extract truth through torture; the investigative officer has no other tool to investigate the truth. [...] The only way is to beat the suspect until he confesses or confesses about any other suspect. And unfortunately, in so many cases, some suspects would confess a crime they have never done just to escape the torture.” (A former officer quoted in Allam, 2015: 70)

It would be, however, erroneous to relate the exception to the counterterrorism campaign and criminal investigations only. Numbers of Egyptians were subjected to the sovereign violence also without an intention to investigate, to extract information, and/or to coerce a confession (e.g. AI, 2002NOV: 10). As discussed in prior parts of this chapter, sovereign violence was a bottom-line for the security officials to intimidate and revenge on ordinary Egyptians and thus to strengthen their own status as petty sovereigns who could have decided about the worthiness and unworthiness of one's life at any point. Given their position, the Egyptian security professionals thus enjoyed an immense feeling of power from vetting and vetoing life of others. Often, the security officials interpreted seemingly harmless moves, such as asking a security official to show his ID (al-Nadeem, 2006: 11), requesting him to return a package of his own cigarettes (al-Nadeem, 2006: 11), or calming down an argument between an officer and a civilian, as acts which contested their authority and necessitated subjecting the individual to sovereign violence. Seif (2013), in this regard, remarked that if a targeted person appeared as if he did not fear a security officer, the security officer might have wanted to prove his complete control over the fate of the person in a way that he could do *anything* to the targeted person.

There was also a spatial expansion of the exception. Especially in the last decade of Mubarak's reign the zones of indistinction were not anymore limited to enclosed SSIS compounds and other security facilities including police stations.¹²³ The sovereign violence spread beyond the walls of security buildings. Egyptians were beaten and tortured in public, in the streets, in their neighborhoods, in front of eyes of their relatives, neighbors, and passer-byers (e.g. al-Nadeem, 2006; el-Dawla, 2013). The

¹²³ This should not imply that the transformation of an individual into a *homo sacer* outside the police and SSIS sites had not happened prior. Yet, it did not occur in such a pervasive manner.

exception became fluid and transient. Wherever a security official appeared, there the exception could be temporarily erected.

“Wherever there is an uncensored police power there is torture. Wherever there are poor citizens who lack strong connections with important people who might save them from police brutality, there is torture. Wherever there are citizens who cherish their pride and dignity, there is torture. Wherever there is political opposition, there is torture.” (al-Nadeem, 2006: 7)

In fact, in the last decade there was no spatial limitation for the exception or for the sovereign violence (el-Dawla, 2013).¹²⁴ The al-Nadeem Report (2006) documents this trend is well. The report (al-Nadeem, 2006: 13), for instance, documented the case of a man who, because he failed to show at the police station during his probation term, was dragged by the security officials out of his flat into a street where he was beaten, stripped naked, tied with ropes, and trailed on an asphalt road. At last he was sodomized by a stick. This act of sovereign violence occurred in public in front of the entire neighborhood of the aggrieved men. As this case illustrates the security officials were so certain of their empowered status immune from prosecution that they did not seek to mask the use of sovereign violence. Although a complaint was filled by the victim's brother, the officers were not punished and maintained their positions.

The spatial expansion of the exception reached its symbolic tipping point in June 2010 when two plainclothes officers killed a young, middle-class Khalid Said in a backstreet of Alexandria. Said's death caused a major public uproar which was further fed by an initial attempt of the authorities to cover up police culpability by false drug charges raised against Said (HRW, 2011JANa: 1, 20f; Allam, 2015: 59; Clarke, 2013: 207). In the public campaign that followed, Said's postmortem bruised face became a key visual symbol of impunity of the Egyptian security apparatus (see e.g. AI, 2010NOV: 11; Fahmy, 2012: 373). The murder of a man who was not a part of the marginalized, poor part of the society that was subjected to the sovereign violence on an everyday basis, was a warning for the Egyptian middle-class (Salem, 2014: 31-34; Clarke, 2013: 207ff).

“The death of Khaled Said made me realize that the police could do anything to you, and protection through *wasta* (connections) was no longer guaranteed. If a policeman told me to get out of my car and dance around naked, I would have to do it.” (an anonymous respondent quoted in Salem, 2014: 32).

Neither societal class nor connections served any longer as a protection from the exception and sovereign violence (Salem, 2014: 34).

*“Khaled Said was a young man just like me, and what happened to him could have happened to me. All young Egyptians had long been oppressed, enjoying no rights in our own homeland. [...] The first thing I posted on the page [Facebook page *Kullina Khalid Sa'id*] was direct and blunt. [...] ‘Today they*

¹²⁴ See al-Nadeem (2006) for further examples such as extrajudicial killing, using of extensive violence, or beating a lawyer and his client upon leaving a court house.

killed Khaled. If I don't act for his sake, tomorrow they will kill me'." (Ghonim, 2012: 60, italics added by the author)

Said's death symbolically underscored the exception's expansion and made many Egyptians realize that his fate could have encountered virtually *anyone anywhere*. Moreover, it also clearly underlined how immense the impunity of the security apparatus was, inasmuch as there were no longer means, not even *wasta*, to contest the sovereign decisions of the petty security officials (Hibbard and Layton, 2010 [2011]: 204).

4.4. Conclusion

Guided by Agamben's zone of indistinction and bare life, I have shown that the exception was a central feature of the Egyptian securitization of the terrorist threat. The securitization process introduced it to the existing mode of governing of the Egyptian society in order to optimize the Egyptian society. The exception allowed to the government to oppress those Egyptians who were constructed through the securitization process as dangerous and unacceptable and thus beyond the bandwidth of acceptable members of the optimized Egyptian society.

The exception was both an Agambenian zone of indistinction and an extraordinary security practice centered on the sovereign power operation. To both, the law was no signifier. In this sense, the exception thus referred to an operation of secret, illegal detention and interrogation spaces, which functioned as legal black holes, where the life of Egyptians was stripped of any worthiness and was subjected to horrendous forms of sovereign violence. The exception was anything but static, as it was shaped and informed by ongoing biopolitical processes of the societal optimization grounded in the securitization of the terrorist threat, the exception was fluid in its form and scope as it was. Hence, the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign was more a dynamic process than a rigid strategy with firmly defined targets. This has been particularly visible with regard to the evolution of the designated security targets which over time embraced besides the militant Islamists, also non-violent political opposition as well as ordinary Egyptians.

In this regard, this chapter highlighted the pertinence of the Egyptian security institutions to the securitization process in general and to its perpetuation in particular. The securitization process significantly empowered the Egyptian security professionals. Under the state of emergency, they were transformed into petty sovereigns with the authority to decide on exception. In result, virtually *anyone* deemed *suspicious* for whatever reason by a security official could have been turned into a *homo sacer*. Their empowerment provided also an incentive for the security professionals to maintain the securitization status quo. On the one hand, the security professionals were not in position to wish to be stripped of their impunity. On the other hand, their empowerment

allowed them to rely on sovereign violence, most notably torture, as an easy means to achieve results, produce cases, and thus to prove their meaningfulness in the fight of terrorism.

The analysis of the Egyptian zones of indistinction also showed that the exception, a domain of sovereign power, was permeated by biopolitical power operations. The dire conditions in the Egyptian zones of indistinction notwithstanding, the physical death of incarcerated Egyptians was possible, but not a primary aspiration of the security officials. Instead of a physical death, the aim was to bring targeted individuals to the verge of life and death and thus disturb something as elusive as their spirit which made their life meaningful and dignified. Even though the terrain of the sovereign violence was the body of the targeted person, the prime target hid beyond the physical composition in one's spirit. This was a gateway to information but also to individual's capacity to defy and question the authority of the security officials as well as of the existing political order.

This chapter clearly demonstrated that as such the exception cannot be overlooked when analyzing a securitization process. Its scrutiny is a prerequisite to examine the wider sociopolitical ramifications of the securitization process which, as this chapter has shown, shape the web of power relations and affect the perpetuation of the securitization process. The chapter also underlined the analytical significance of the security professionals and security targets to the securitization framework. The pertinence of security targets, as a novel category of security analysis, will be further highlighted in the following chapter which is dedicated to questions of resistance to the securitization of the terrorist threat. I will specifically engage with resistance strategies of diverse Egyptian actors and the way they dealt with fear of becoming *homines sacri*.

5. Resistance: the roadmap to the 2011 revolution

This chapter concludes the empirical study of the state of emergency in Egypt during Husni Mubarak's reign. Whereas the previous parts engaged with the process of constructing the terrorism threat and with the exception as an effect of this process, in this chapter I will discuss resistance and the lack thereof as a factor pertinent to the perpetuation of a securitization process. In particular, I will inquire into whether and how the web of power/knowledge relations, which were (re)produced by the securitization of the terrorist threat, were contested. Given the lengthy period over which the state of emergency was kept in effect, I will concentrate on the rationales behind the lack of (decisive) resistance which would have questioned the underlying knowledge as well as security practices legitimized by the securitization process.

Based on my conceptualization of resistance, which draws from Foucault's power analytic, I view resistance as an effect of power and a key factor that defines success/failure of a securitization process at any moment of the process. In particular, along with the argument made in chapter 2, I will show that a successful securitization does not automatically imply an articulated consent of the governed society. Rather, as the Egyptian case demonstrates, a securitization process might be considered successful as long as it is not decisively resisted. Thus, instead of identifying the audience's consent, as promoted by the CS scholarship, I will concentrate on resistance as a conceptually and empirically promising field to make sense of the lengthy securitization process under scrutiny.

Based on my conceptualization of resistance centered on Foucault's analytics of power, I will, first, address resistance as an effect of power which might – but does not necessarily so – irritate and alter the power/knowledge relations (re)produced by the securitization process. Resistance is thus viewed as an always possible effect of any securitization process. For the purposes of analytical applicability of Foucault's inspired resistance, I will refine the concept using insights from Scott (1985) and Heller (1996) which lead me to specify the definition of resistance as an intended act and non-subjective process.

The second part of this chapter will map and analyze resistance that emerged throughout the three decades of the securitization process. As the displays of public support of the counterterrorism campaign (or their lack) must be considered in the larger context of the systematic governmental suppression of alternatives views I will engage with the authoritarian context of the Egyptian governance as well as hegemonic configuration of power relations that were (re)produced by the securitization process. I will contextualize the governmental strategies to forestall and possibly control resistance through shaping the margin of Egyptian freedom, i.e., possibilities provided to Egyptians by the existing configuration of power relations to contest and resist the securitization process.

The attention will also be paid to resistance as such. I will show that resistance as an effect of power rose at any level of societal reaction, at any point and varied in its form. Along with my theoretical assumptions, it will be shown that acts of resistance can irritate the existing configuration of the power/knowledge relations. Yet, this does not necessarily imply that the irritation would undermine them. In fact, some acts of resistance, such as violent attacks carried out by militant Islamist groups in the 1990s, backfired as they reinforced the securitization narrative about the terrorism threat and thus contributed to the upholding of the state of emergency and the exception (see also Albrecht, 2005: 389, 393). In this regard, the 2011 revolution will be addressed as a failure of the governmental strategies to reduce and control resistance. Yet, I will argue that the irritation of the power/knowledge relations caused by the revolution was not sufficient to reconfigure the relations.

The chapter draws from an extensive review of secondary literature sources which is combined with interviews conducted during the field-research in November 2013, an analysis of human rights reports and hints at acts of resistance embedded into *al-Ahram's* articles.

5.1. Resistance/power

As I established in previous parts securitization is a process that (re)produces a specific web of power/knowledge relations. Resistance which might, but does not necessarily, emerge as an effect of a power relation and itself constitutes a form of power is thus an ultimate part of any securitization. As a possible effect of power, resistance can arise anytime and as such might alter the hegemonic configuration of the existing power/knowledge relations (Foucault, 1982: 780f). Resistance cannot be predefined for it does not arise prior the power relation which it opposes (Foucault, 1990: 122-123). Instead, it coexists with power/knowledge it opposes and undermines and alludes the power/knowledge relation. No power/knowledge relations are immune to resistance as no individual or group can ever control all mechanisms of power:

“neither the caste which governs, nor the groups which control the state apparatus, nor those who make the most important economic decisions direct the entire network of power that functions in a society (and makes *it* function).” (Foucault, 1978: 95, italics in original; see also Adib-Moghaddam, 2014: 99, 106)

Thus, no matter how dominant or hegemonic the power/knowledge relations are, there are always some mechanisms of power accessible for group(s) or individuals to contest and challenge their configuration (Heller, 1996: 101). According to Foucault (1990: 123), resistance is thus always possible and there is no limit to it (cf. Pickett, 1996: 447). Thus, it can emerge at any moment, at any form and oppose the power/knowledge

(Foucault, 1990: 123). Moreover, anyone, as long as he is free¹²⁵, has capacity to act and thus also to resist, the asymmetrically configured of power/knowledge relations notwithstanding.

“Even when the power relation is completely out of balance, when it can truly be claimed that one side has ‘total power’ over the other, a power can be exercised over the other only insofar as the other still has the option of killing himself, of leaping out the window, or of killing the other person. This means that in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because of there were no possibility of resistance [...] there would be no power relations.” (Foucault, 2000: 292; see also Foucault, 1982: 790)

To contest and resist the hegemonic power/knowledge relations is not an easy choice. In Egypt, the state of emergency solidified hegemonic power/knowledge relations. Through its provisions as well as facilitation of the exception, it clearly affected the possibilities of Egyptians to contest the securitization status-quo. Severe restrictions imposed on freedom of speech and freedom of assembly combined with fear of persecution were among the factors that strengthened the asymmetrically configured power/knowledge relations and numbed the capacity of many Egyptians to resist and question the existing sociopolitical order. Foucault (2000: 292) himself admits that “[i]n a great many cases, power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom.” Yet, even “an extremely limited margin of freedom” enables resistance to emerge.

When there is “an extremely limited margin of freedom”, resistance might be reduced, as Foucault (2000: 292) suggests, to fatal forms, be it suicide and/or murder. On the eve of the 2011 revolution, several Egyptians burned themselves. Inspired by the self-immolation of the Tunisian vegetable vendor, Muhammad Bouazizi, whose death sparked the Tunisian uprising, they chose this form of resistance to protest the sociopolitical situation in Egypt. Although some described their public suicides as “a primitive, childish, and ignorant form of revolt”, which could not have been compared with dying for a higher cause (al-Ahram Online, 2011), it was still the form of resistance chosen by those individuals to protest. To be sure, by no means do I suggest that resistance shall be celebrated as a heroic act of the powerless, oppressed, or marginalized (see Picket, 1996: 447). It is an act of transgression (Picket, 1996: 450f) that is not defined by a pre-existing normative character. There is a priori no *bad* or *good* resistance:

“Is one right to revolt, or not? Let us leave the question open. People do revolt; that is a fact. [...] A convict risks his life to protest unjust punishments; a madman can no longer bear being confined and humiliated; a people refuses the

¹²⁵ For Foucault (2000: 292) free subject does not connote associations related to liberal, democratic values. Nor is a free subject defined by his ability to act outside social context and thus being independent from power/knowledge regimes (Bevir, 1999: 67). A free subject is defined by having option(s) to act no matter the constraints imposed on his conduct.

regime that oppresses it. That doesn't make the first innocent, doesn't cure the second, and doesn't ensure for the third the tomorrow it was promised. Moreover, no one is obliged to support them. No one is obliged to find that these confused voices sing better than the others and speak the truth itself." (Foucault, 2002: 452)

Since "[p]ower relations are both intentional and nonsubjective" (Foucault, 1978: 94) resistance as their effect as well as a form of power embraces also intentionality and nonsubjectivity (Heller, 1996: 98f). Resistance is intentional as far as power relations "are imbued, through and through, with calculation" and thus "there is no power that is exercised without series of aims and objectives" (Foucault, 1978: 95). Thus, according to Heller (1996: 99), who addresses resistance as an ontologically correlative form of power exercise, the intentionality of resistance is in its effect, which is subversion, delegitimization, and possibly alternation of the configuration of power/knowledge relations. In this regard, although those who resist might impartially or imperfectly understand the situation, "they are gifted with intentions and values and purposefulness that condition their acts" (Scott, 1985: 38).

With regards to nonsubjectivity, the power/knowledge relations are for Foucault irreducible to those who exercise them. It is in no one's capacity to fully grasp and control the power/knowledge mechanisms because "the power-relations that sustain the mechanisms of power are so complex that one cannot even attribute 'subjective' (in the sense of 'completely determining') power to particular institutions or groups" (Heller, 1996: 86). The same logic applies to resistance. As a form of power, resistance does not guarantee that a specific outcome will be achieved – be it a release from the SSIS custody, annulment of the state of emergency, or adoption of Islamic governance. Results of resistance are uncertain. They cannot be guaranteed beforehand because they are beyond control of an individual or a group (Heller, 1996: 85ff; see also Stritzel and Chang, 2015: 553). In fact, resistance might backfire on those who resist – instead of outbalancing the configuration of power/knowledge relations resistance might reinforce the power/knowledge relations it opposes. Resistance is thus nonsubjective insofar as there is always a possibility of unintended consequences (Heller, 1996: 87).

Understanding resistance as both an effect of power and a form of power makes it obvious that agency cannot be separated from the structure. Resistance of Egyptians reflects the hegemonic diagram of power/knowledge relations that shaped structural opportunities and constraints for resistance to emerge (see Adib-Moghaddam, 2014: 8). It is also apparent that resistance is not a universal, static concept which would be applicable to any sociopolitical context and time-period. Resistance arises in diverse forms and is featured by different strategies which reflect possibilities and constraints in a given sociopolitical context. Simply said, to resist in Egypt differs from resisting in Germany just as, for instance, to resist in Egypt in the 1990s was different from

resisting a decade later. Moreover, the limitless character of resistance presumes that resistance can be exercised by any individual or a group of individuals. Thus, as such, it can be hardly shrunk into a generic concept of an audience and its legitimizing approval. Instead, it can be located with any analytical category of securitization's actors (see Stritzel and Chang, 2015: 553). Even securitizers, security professionals, or functional actors might question the power/knowledge relations (re)produced by the securitization process of the terrorist threat.

In order to keep analytical relevance of resistance to the securitization framework, I draw from an analytical distinction between “everyday” and *real* resistance suggested by Scott (1985). Although I do acknowledge the significance of “everyday”, token resistance, which can be characterized as incidental, unorganized, individual, self-indulgent, opportunistic, and which possibly implies in its meaning or intention, a compliance with the hegemonic system, I concentrate on the overt defiance labeled by Scott (1985: 292) as *real* resistance. This is not to claim that the “everyday” resistance such as disobedient behavior of Egyptians in their endless, everyday encounters with the governmental officials, the police, or plainclothes detectives as Ismail captures in her studies (2006, 2011) were less important acts of resistance. The “everyday” resistance can likewise alter the existing power relations (Bayat, 2013). Yet, due to its everydayness, covert character, “disavowal of public and symbolic goals” (Scott, 1985: 33), it lacks general publicity (ibid: 36) necessary for the acts of resistance to be recorded and analyzed in a systematic manner.¹²⁶ In contrast to “everyday” resistance, the *real* resistance, which is defined as an organized, systematic, cooperative and principled form of resistance, usually involves a more dramatic public confrontation (Scott, 1985: 33, 292). The acts of *real* resistance are thus more likely to be recorded in form of newspaper articles, human rights reports, government's documents and other materials, which allow for a retrospect analysis of resistance to the securitization process in Egypt in the last three decades.

5.2. The margin of freedom under Husni Mubarak

Repression was far from the only means used by the government to counter resistance and silence the dissent (see also Sassoon, 2016: 114). As Foucault (1982: 792) emphasizes, “the economic cost of the means brought into operation or the cost in terms of reaction constituted by the resistance which is encountered” is to be considered in relation to the effectiveness of the exercise of power. In terms of such biopolitical cost-effect calculation, it is simply too costly to rely on repression only. In governmentalized societies, the margin of freedom is rather structured through a systematized, calculated exercise of power (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 5f, 13) which is not a priori

¹²⁶ The “everyday” resistance is as such too elusive to be empirically grasped by the research design of this dissertation. Yet, the scholarly work, which employs ethnographic and anthropologist methods to collect the data, provides promising insights into the everyday resistance. See Ismail (2006, 2011) on Cairo.

violent (Bevir, 1999: 72f). The deliberate cost-effect calculation includes operation of biopower which is “creating lines of force that make certain forms of behavior more probable than others” (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 13). Biopolitical operation of power thus, as Bevir (1999: 73) points out, does not aim “to extinguish the capacity of the subject for agency” as sovereign and disciplinary power do. Instead, biopolitical power operation is based on the persuasion of individuals about rightness of certain forms of behavior (Bevir, 1999: 72f). This might include “positive incentives to act in a certain way” which make certain forms of behavior more likely than others (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke, 2011: 13). The inclusion into the clientelist system was one of central incentives that disciplined Egyptians and numbed their capacity and will to resist. The Egyptian case, however, shows that the operation of biopower might also produce negative incentives to persuade individuals to act in a certain way. Proliferation of fear to be persecuted was, for instance, a power effect that paralyzed capacity of many Egyptians to contest the sociopolitical status-quo.

During the reign of Husni Mubarak there were several means used by the government to shape the margin of freedom of Egyptians and forestall resistance to emerge. The emphasis on self-government of Egyptians based on stimulating incentives to act in a certain way were combined with clear limitations imposed on individual's conduct (see e.g. Albrecht, 2005; Brown and Shanin, 2010: 207f; Shehata, 2010: 80-82; Sassoon, 2016: 114). This included a mixture of legal constraints, delegitimizing narratives, coercion supported by fear proliferation, on the one hand, and a carrot and stick strategy combined with cooptation of parts of the dissent, on the other hand.

5.2.1. The legal constraints

The Emergency Law No. 162 of 1958, which came into effect with the declaration of the state of emergency, and related anti-terror legislation were central means through which the government controlled the possibilities of Egyptians to resist.

The Emergency Law was a pillar of the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign, but it also formed the bottom-line of government's strategies to counter any dissent in the country. It was, especially, the article 3 of the Emergency Law which accumulated legal means to fight terrorism as well as to suppress political dissent (see e.g. Kienle, 2001: 90ff; Gohar, 2008: 184). These included severe restrictions of freedom of speech and assembly. The public assemblies were criminalized and subjected to violent dispersals.¹²⁷ Communication was closely monitored and critical authors exposed to harassment and arbitrary arrests (see Shehata, 2010: 80).

¹²⁷ Gatherings in private spaces, such as on the premises of political party offices or professional syndicates, were possible, although they were not necessarily immune to the intervention of security forces. As matter of rule, such assemblies were often blocked or violently dispersed (Kienle, 2001: 90-92).

The Emergency Law was complemented by additional counterterrorism legislation over the course of the three decades. In 1992, Egypt adopted Law No. 97 of 1992, known as the Anti-Terror Law which consisted of a series of key amendments to the Penal Code and to the Law Regulating the State and Supreme State Security Courts. Also, after eleven years of the counterterrorism campaign, the term “terrorism” (*irhab*) was introduced to the Egyptian legal practice and classified as a new criminal offense for the first time (art. 86). The Anti-Terror Law defined terrorism as following:

“any use of force or violence *or any threat or intimidation* to which the perpetrator resorts in order to carry out an individual or collective criminal plan *aimed at disturbing the peace or jeopardizing the safety and security of society* and which is of such a nature as to create harm or create fear in persons or imperil their lives, freedom or security; harm the environment; damage or take possession of communications; *prevent or impede the public authorities in the performance of their work; or thwart the application of the constitution or of the laws or regulations.*” (as quoted in Atia, 2011: 10, italics by the author)

The vague definition of terrorism invited a broad interpretation of what was and was not terrorism. As many pointed out (Kienle, 2001: 94f; Atia, 2011: 9ff), the Anti-Terror law enabled the classification of virtually any activity as an act supporting terrorism. In this regard, the HRW (2001OCT) stated that the Anti-Terror law ultimately “criminalized non-violent political opposition”. Besides the vague definition of terrorism, the law also authorized the security organs to arrest people without charge up and hold them for up to three days (Rutherford, 2008: 87), which facilitated waves of massive crackdowns, “with some 47,000 detained between 1992 and 1997” (Naguib, 2009: 112).

The Anti-Terror Law of 1992 also introduced military tribunals, known for their lack of due process, to the counterterrorism campaign (Kienle, 2001: 94f). Supported by the Code of Military Justice (Law 25 of 1966), it was now possible to bring civilians to the military courts under terrorism related charges (Atia, 2011: 9ff). Members of the Muslim Brotherhood were among the most frequent defendants in the military courts. Especially in the 1990s, they were brought en mass to military tribunals. They were charged not necessarily because they would have been “accused of committing or advocating violence but simply of alleged affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood” (HRW, 2001OCT), an illegal organization alleged to support terrorist activities (Atia, 2011: 9ff). In 1995, for instance, the military tribunal heard eighty-one high-ranking Brotherhood members including professors, parliamentarians, and businessmen accused of having financially supported families of terrorists and militants active abroad (Wickham, 2002: 214f; Rutherford, 2008: 87). Convicted of nonviolent offenses, the defendants received up to five years of imprisonment (HRW, 2007FEB).

The government used military courts on a regular basis to crack-down on and weaken the movement prior to elections to the parliament, student unions, and professional

associations (Reza, 2007: 543f; Wickham, 2002: 216; Albrecht, 2005: 385-387; Rutherford, 2008: 88; HRW, 2007FEB).

The imprisonment of leading Muslim Brotherhood members had a two-fold effect in curbing the movement's capacities to challenge the government. The imprisonment disqualified former prisoners from active participation in the political life. Egyptians who were convicted of a crime were legally barred from an active political life including running in elections for several years after their release. This way, the government, neutralized some of the most charismatic Brotherhood members including Khairat al-Shatir, Brotherhood's deputy guide (Wickham, 2002: 216; HRW, 2008APR). Although the cases with Muslim Brothers constituted the bulk of cases presented to military courts, during the last decade of Mubarak's reign military courts were used also to tame emerging centers of popular discontent, such as representatives of labor movement or of the blogger scene (Stork, 2012: 468; HRW, 2010MAR).

In 2007, rationalized by the reference to the omnipresent terrorist threat, the government managed to integrate exceptional powers, which were granted to the security organs, into the Egyptian constitution. The amended article 179 of the constitution virtually denounced the articles 41, 44, 45 dedicated to the protection of personal freedom and liberties for the sake of counterterrorism. Specifically, it granted the Egyptian security organs broad sweeping search and arrest powers, including the annulment of a court order, should they be undertaking a counterterror action (Gohar, 2008: 184; see also Brown, et al., 2007). In combination with the vague definition of terrorism in the Anti-Terror law, the amended constitution permitted an unrestricted surveillance and arrests of anyone who, based on a sovereign decision of security officials, was assessed to be a threat to the public security (Rutherford, 2008: 252). Furthermore, the revision of article 5 of the constitution forbade exercising "any political activity" or establishing any political party that would have been based on religious considerations (Brown, et al., 2007: 3). Thus, it sealed off any possibility for the Muslim Brotherhood to become a legal political party.

Given the hegemonic configuration of power/knowledge relations, which were (re)produced by the securitization process, it was relatively easy for Mubarak's leadership to control the Egyptian legislation and flexibly delineate the margin of freedom of concrete actors through specific laws and their amendments. For instance, the Professional Syndicates Law No. 100 of 1993, was adopted in a direct reaction to the Muslim Brotherhood's rising control over professional syndicates. Stipulating unattainable electoral quotas to boards of syndicates, the law impaired the Muslim Brotherhood and made it impossible for them to repeat their electoral success in the syndicates elections of the 1980s (Wickham, 2002: 200; Gohar, 2008: 181f; Rutherford,

2008: 93).¹²⁸ To control, monitor, and discipline the booming Egyptian civil society, the government introduced the Association Law No. 84 of 2002¹²⁹, known as the NGO law (MacQueen, 2008: 83f). The authorities were, among others, granted wide powers to decide over NGOs registrations, dissolution, as well as their foreign funding, which was a vital source especially for the human rights and advocacy organizations (Abdelrahman, 2007: 288; Gohar, 2008: 178f; Brown and Shanin, 2010: 211f; Carapico, 2010: 100). The amendments made to the Police Law in 1998, however, also show the concern of Mubarak's leadership about resistance within its own ranks. The amendments introduced, among other details, firm punishments for security officials leaking information about their security enforcement practice. One of the first officers charged under the new Police Law was Hamdi Batran. Batran authored a book *Yawmiyyat dabit fi al-rif* (engl. *Diary of an officer in the countryside*), in which he criticized the counterterrorism practice in Upper Egypt for using excessive force, ill-treatment, and torture of ordinary Egyptians (Kienle, 2001: 108).

5.2.2. Delegitimizing narratives

Delegitimizing narratives are central to any securitization process inasmuch as the delegitimization of security targets is a prerequisite for successful securitization (see also Stritzel and Chang, 2015: 552). In Egypt, delegitimization was, however, not exclusive to the security targets only. Delegitimizing narratives also targeted the Egyptian non-Islamist dissent such as the human rights community, government-critical journalists, and politicians.

Sustained delegitimization campaigns appeared on a regular basis, especially in the pro-government media. The hostile discourse targeted most outspoken opponents of the government and its counterterrorism policies and included offending references to national and/or religious identities of the targeted groups and persons (see chapter 3). The criticisms were usually turned down as unsubstantiated and hostile to the Egyptian nation and were frequently associated with the alleged aim to tarnish the Egyptian image abroad.

Given their financial dependence on foreign funds, the Egyptian human rights organizations were, for instance, frequently discredited as national traitors labeled as “human rights boutiques”, foreign agents, tools of terrorists, and/or supporters of

¹²⁸ The law required the participation of 50 percent of all registered members in the first round of elections, and 30 percent of all registered members in the second round of elections for the election results to be considered valid. If it was not the case, the election failed and the government was authorized to assign a committee under the judiciary supervision to administer the syndicate. See Gohar (2008: 181f). For more about the political rise of the Muslim Brotherhood within the professional syndicates, see Fahmy (1998); Wickham (2002: 176-203).

¹²⁹ The original Law of Associations No. 32 of 1964 was amended by the Law No. 153 of 1999, which was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Constitutional Court in 2000 due to procedural errors. See Atia (2011: 13ff); MacQueen (2008: 83f).

terrorism (Abdelrahman, 2007; Gohar, 2008; Kienle, 2001: 96f). The acceptance of foreign funding was, in this sense, interpreted as serving foreign interest and providing intelligence to a third party (Abdelrahman, 2007: 287, 289). Accordingly, the public accounts of human rights abuses which the organizations produced were downplayed as false and serving a foreign agenda (Abdelrahman, 2007; Gohar, 2008: 187f; Kienle, 2001: 96f; see also Moorehead, 2005: 34f). All of which negatively influenced the public image of the community and the public trust in their work (Seif, 2013; Sika, 2012; Abdelrahman, 2007: 293). Similar delegitimization strategy also applied, for instance, to Kefaya, a loose opposition movement that was behind an unprecedented societal mobilization in the mid-2000s. It was slandered as a foreign and/or US platform established to subvert Egypt's stability (Oweidat, et al., 2008: 31).

There were also personified smear campaigns that targeted specific individuals. For instance, Hafiz Abu Seada and Saad al-Din Ibrahim, two prominent human rights activists, were labeled traitors, foreign spies, and agents, in reaction to their critical accounts of human rights abuses and election fraud respectively (Sika, 2012). Sometimes, the delegitimizing narratives were characterized by a more personal take. Muhammad al-Baradei, an opposition leader during the later part of Mubarak's era, faced a smear campaign that questioned the modesty and religiosity of his daughter, which by implication harmed his image as a modest Muslim leader (al-Jazeera, 2010, Mada Masr, 2013).

5.2.3. Sovereign violence and proliferation of fear

Sovereign violence was, as discussed in detail in chapter 4, a frequent means of Mubarak's leadership to counter resistance and crush the Egyptian political dissent. Sovereign violence had a two-fold effect. On the one hand, the capacity to resist of individuals who were exposed to sovereign violence was usually shattered after their encounter with the Egyptian security enforcers. On the other hand, the risk of exposure to sovereign violence deterred and discouraged others from contesting the sociopolitical status quo. The intertwined effects of sovereign violence often weakened the individual camps of the Egyptian dissent to such a level that they did not pose a substantial challenge to Mubarak's leadership.

The rapid decay of Kefaya movement, which largely resulted from an intense security campaign, illustrates this form of countering political dissent in Egypt. After an initial success in mobilizing numbers of Egyptians, the movement dissolved under fear of further repressions. Kefaya leaders were closely monitored and faced intimidation campaigns. They were, for instance, regularly threatened to have their public assemblies dispersed with the use of violence. Some prominent members were even attacked directly (Oweidat, et al., 2008: 29). In result, Kefaya supporters "became less willing to

subject themselves to state cruelty and eventually were intimidated to the point where they would no longer participate in protests” (Oweidat, et al., 2008: 30).

Fear of being subjected to sovereign violence paralyzed the capacity and will of many Egyptians to question and contest the securitization of the terrorist threat in particular and the sociopolitical status quo in general. As Ghonim (2012: 29) notes, fear associated with the wrath of the security apparatus was so immense that it outweighed fear of death. Not surprisingly fear of the security apparatus was thus viewed as one of the grounds behind the lack of political activism in the country.

“Citizens feel the presence of the state. ... Some people are not willing to sacrifice their lives; they don’t want to go to prison. In addition, there are the difficulties of daily life: to get married, you need to struggle to earn enough income, and this takes up all one’s energy and time.” (Hussein, a leader of Islamist leaning Labor Party quoted in Wickham, 2002: 74)

A similar situation dominated the field of Egyptian prosecutors. Prosecutors who contested the authority of the security officials and, for instance, investigated torture allegations, were subjected to threats and intimidation. In an interview by Ayman Okail (2013a) recalled a case of an Egyptian prosecutor whose resisting stance was tamed by intimidation of a security official. The prosecutor in question charged the officer with torturing a detained person. In reaction to the torture charges, the officer, according to Okail, instructed several criminals to burglarize the prosecutor’s flat, leaving the flat completely empty. The burglary was later addressed as a criminal case to a chief prosecutor who inquired about the harmed prosecutor, the officer, as well as the burglars about their involvement. Nobody, however, said anything. In the end, the prosecutor lifted the torture charges against the officer and his flat’s furnishings were returned.

The fear, which was associated with the security apparatus, was thus not necessarily always linked to sovereign violence in the detention cells, police stations, and prisons. For public servants, for instance, fear of the security apparatus also related to possibilities career and professional self-realization which were subject to SSIS security clearance (Fahmy, 2012: 359). A positive security report, which suggested that the person in question might have been involved in any opposition activities, meant significant career problems (Seif, 2013; Ghonim, 2012: 3). In this respect, Ahmed Seif (2013), for instance, claimed that this form of fear – that the SSIS would have used the positive security clearance – paralyzed the Egyptian judiciary to challenge illegal practices of security apparatus including torture. Seif (2013) also accounted this form of fear to the idleness of the Supreme Constitutional Court in matters of exceptional powers, including the abolishment of the contested article 3 of the Emergency Law.

5.2.4. Carrot and stick policy

The capacity of many Egyptians to resist was, however, controlled and disciplined without an immediate need to resort to violence. By offering a share of state's rent combined with a threat of repression, the Mubarak's leadership successfully made key sociopolitical actors as well as many of ordinary Egyptians docile (see Albrecht, 2005: 379).

There was a wide spectrum of benefits available for docile Egyptians. These included classical material rewards, such as higher wages, an acknowledged pension, a career promotion, or a public procurement for the own firm, to name few. As Ouaisa (2005: 47) points out, benefits, however, do not have to be necessarily material. They can include non-material rewards in form of societal, cultural, and symbolic capital in the Bourdieuan sense. In the Egyptian context, this form of benefits equaled the boosting of an individual's influence and the expansion of his social connections (*wasta, vitamin w*). The rewards were available only on the basis of the *quid pro quo* principle. Accordingly, the clients were expected *to walk along the wall* and thereby not to question the sociopolitical status quo. Otherwise, there was the risk that the carrot would be replaced with a stick.

This way, Mubarak's leadership, for instance, effectively controlled the Egyptian judiciary. The (re)distribution of financial rewards and related career politics were central instruments to reduce the appetite of Egyptian judges to contest the secret detention cells and expose security practices within as illegal (Bernard-Maugiron, 2008: 10; al-Khudayri, 2008: 47ff; Gohar, 2008: 176ff). In practice, the carrot and stick policy functioned as following: the Ministry of Justice granted appointments to important, well-paid, positions to loyal judges. For instance, secondments to international organizations and foreign governments, were among popular rewards, as such appointments were linked with considerable financial enumerations and higher living standards. To punish an indocile judge, the Ministry relocated (*naql*) him to some remote court which usually negatively affected the stability and integrity of judges' families (al-Khudayri, 2008: 50ff). The reward and punishment policy functioned also with regards to the juridical overview of Egyptian elections. Only docile, loyal judges were permitted to oversee elections, i.e., a task rewarded by 10,000 Egyptian pounds (Seif, 2013; see also al-Khudayri, 2008: 51). In result, Ahmed Seif (2013) maintained that only a few of judges confronted the illegality of the security practice and contested politically motivated cases, often linked to dubious terrorism charges, which were brought to their courts (see also Moustafa, 2008: 151ff).

Cooptation often complemented the stick and carrot approach. Selected actors, acknowledged political opposition, parts of human rights community, or the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s, were specifically targeted with the aim to contain their tendencies to contest the sociopolitical status quo. The coopted actors were subsumed

and appropriated to the official governmental structures and political processes. Thereby they became an acknowledged part of the sociopolitical order and so were their activities tolerated. Through their cooptation, however, they further solidified the asymmetric configuration of power/knowledge relations as their dependency on the political leadership increased (see Shehata, 2010: 80). This constrained their options to challenge the hegemonic power/knowledge relations since they were themselves wedded in the status quo.

Cooptation was, for instance, perceived as a significant barrier for the legal political parties to assume the role of a meaningful opposition. Mahmud Abaza, a high-ranking member of the New al-Wafd party, argued that the integration of Egyptian opposition parties into highly restrictive political processes significantly limited their options of dissent:

“The laws constrain us. For example, we can’t do political work in the universities. That is against the law; it is criminal activity and can be punished legally. This doesn’t affect the Islamists and the Communists as much because they operate underground.” (Abaza quoted in Wickham, 2002: 73).

Cooptation into formal political processes also constrained the financial autonomy of political actors. Specifically, it made the party, as well as individual party members, more dependent on the financial aid provided by the government. With regard to the latter, it was, for instance, common practice to secure the loyalty of leading party members by appointing them to the upper house (Shehata, 2010: 80).

Cooptation was, however, also a tool to fragment and weaken individual sites of dissent. Particularly, it created cleavages and fractions between the coopted actors and those who refused to be integrated in the official structures. This was especially true in the case of the Egyptian human rights community. In early the 2000s, the government introduced a new, more restrictive agenda for the Egyptian civil society, including human rights organizations. Through the provisions of the Association Law No. 84 of 2002, it successfully integrated parts of human rights movement “in the state-sanctioned pluralist order” (Shehata, 2010: 81). While parts of the community succumbed to the pressure and registered under the new law as non-governmental organizations, other defied the law and circumvented it by declaring their organizations to be business enterprises. Mubarak’s leadership also managed to coopt some of critical human rights activists, including Hafiz Abu Seada, who was labeled a traitor and heard by a military tribunal only a few years earlier, by their appointments to new governmental institutions dedicated to the matters of human rights, such as the National Council for Human Rights or the National Council for Women (Shehata, 2010: 80f; see Abdelrahman, 2007: 296f). The cooptation of parts of the community divided the community, affecting mutual cooperation and alliances negatively (see Shehata, 2010: 81). Thereby, cooptation weakened the position of the community vis-a-vis the political leadership.

As the cooptation of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s shows, it was not always a successful strategy to tame the dissent. When necessary, cooptation was readily replaced with repression. In the 1980s, the Brotherhood was integrated in the formal political life in the country. Although the movement was not legally acknowledged, the group was largely tolerated and allowed to participate, if in a limited way, in political processes (Skovgaard-Petersen, 1997: 214f; Tadros, 2012: 5ff). In return, the Brotherhood was expected to counter balance the sociopolitical influence of militant Islamist forces, such as al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and al-Jihad (Shehata, 2010: 54; Wickham, 2002: 103f; Moustafa, 2000). As the Brotherhood was able to concentrate on its political campaigns and societal activities without constant fear of repressions, over time it grew bolder in its criticism of Mubarak's leadership (Osman, 2011: 109) and started to question its role as a counter-weight to the militant Islamists (Shehata, 2010: 54; Fahmy, 1998: 551-554). When the Muslim Brotherhood repeatedly failed to condemn the emergent wave of Islamist violence in the early 1990s, their cooptation was over. It was replaced by a massive repression (Tadros, 2012: 5ff; Shehata, 2010: 54-57; Wickham, 2002: 208).

5.3. Patterns of resistance

The efforts of Mubarak's leadership to forestall and control dissent notwithstanding, there were few sites of dissent in Egypt that contested the asymmetric configuration of power/knowledge relations solidified by the securitization of the terrorist threat. The most vocal sites of Egyptian dissent included actors as diverse as human rights community, bloggers, parts of legal political opposition, the Muslim Brotherhood, and political movements of the last decade, such as Kefaya or the 6th of April Movement, as well as militant Islamist groups. As much as these actors shared a common imperative, i.e. to challenge and alter the sociopolitical status quo imbedded in and legitimized by the hegemonic configuration of power/knowledge relations, their strategies and forms of resistance differed significantly.

There was a variety of resistance forms which, to a great extent, mirrored the strategies of Mubarak's leadership to curb resistance. The law and delegitimization narratives, for instance, were among the most frequent forms of resistance. The entire repertoire of resistance strategies was, however, rarely used by any single actor. Violence, for instance, was largely limited to militant Islamist groups, such as al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and al-Jihad (el-Ghobashy, 2010: 42).

The inquiry into the forms of resistance also shows that whereas it is unproblematic to speak of resistance to the securitization process on an analytical level, on the empirical level the securitization of the terrorist threat and its sociopolitical ramifications were just one of many points on the agenda of the Egyptian dissent (Zarei, 2013). Closely related, as Bigo (2002) reminds, how power/knowledge relations (re)produced by the securitization process are resisted is also significant. The Egyptian dissent concentrated

on challenging the hegemonic configuration of power/knowledge relations. It thus critically exposed and contested primarily exceptional security practices of the security apparatus. With the exception of Islamists as the security targets, the corpus of knowledge which crucially underpinned these power relations remained largely uncontested. The failure to challenge the corpus of knowledge which facilitated and enabled the exceptional framework is an important factor that played a central role in the re-emergence of securitization of the terrorist threat in the follow-up of the military coup in 2013 (see chapter 6).

5.3.1. The law

The law was a central means for the Egyptian dissent to contest the exceptional framework. It exposed the abusive conduct of the security officials, their impunity, and the implications for the state of human rights in Egypt. Although the law as a site of dissent proved to have a rather limited public impact, court hearings or decisions were usually not subject to broader public discourse; the law mattered on the individual level. The law was an effective tool to reclaim justice and dignity for Egyptian *homines sacri* and their unlawful treatment in the legal blackholes of the SSIS detention cells.

There were a few Egyptian lawyers who often cooperated closely with human rights organizations and instrumentalized the law to challenge Mubarak's leadership and the exceptional security measures (see Albrecht, 2005: 381-383). These lawyers regularly represented Egyptian *homines sacri*, ranging from militant Islamists, non-violent Islamists, and liberal opposition, up to "no-names" victims of abuses of the security apparatus. Each such a case opened a micro-site of contestation in the exceptional framework (Abu Seada, 2008: 168-173), wherein human rights lawyers could regularly challenge the illegal dimensions of the exceptional framework. Torture was, as one of such lawyers Ahmad Seif (2013) recalled, in the spotlight.

At times, some judges joined in, especially when a case incorporated grave forms of torture. Alongside the human rights lawyers, they challenged the use of sovereign violence as an illegal interrogation form and acquitted respective defendants on procedural grounds (Sherry, 1993; see also Allam, 2015: 79). Beside the many low-profile cases with "no-names" victims of abuses, there were also a few high-profile terrorism cases with militant Islamist in the early 1990s presided by judges who exposed torture as intolerable security practice and thus contested the exceptional framework.

In one case, the court acquitted more than forty members of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya including its spiritual leader Omar Abdel Rahman. In other instance, the court dismissed a case of twenty-four Islamists charged with the assassination of the speaker of the parliament, Rifat al-Mahgoub (Sherry, 1993). Both courts justified their unexpected

rulings by declaring confessions extracted under torture and morally degrading treatment null and void (Fattah, 2008: 80-81; Moustafa, 2008: 151-153). Wahid Mahmoud, the judge who presided over the latter case, went further in his ruling's explanation. He criticized the incapacity of the security apparatus to properly interrogate. The use of torture to obtain confessions manifested "proof of the failure and incapacity of the police to discover the truth" (Mahmoud quoted in HRW, 1994).

Such unexpected court rulings publicly ridiculed Mubarak's leadership and contested counterterrorism practices of the security apparatus (Moustafa, 2008: 151-153). There were also cases, in which courts disputed the entire state of emergency. For instance, in the early 1990s, the High State Security Court in Alexandria ruled that the state of emergency was unconstitutional because it was not approved by properly elected parliamentarians (Fattah, 2008: 85).¹³⁰ Albeit several court rulings contested Mubarak's leadership on the exceptional security measures, they ultimately functioned to reinforce the exceptional framework. To avoid such uncomfortable public exposure, Mubarak's government toughened the anti-terror legislation. It adopted the above mentioned Anti-Terror Law of 1992 and started to refer high-profiled cases to the more reliable and loyal military courts (Moustafa, 2008: 151-153).

The relatively strong administrative courts¹³¹, a judiciary institution authorized to challenge legal decisions made by Egyptian authorities, was another site where the exceptional framework and its legality was contested (Rutherford, 2008: 252; Brown, 2008: 135f). The administrative courts regularly reviewed bans on traveling, decisions about confiscation of property, detention orders, revisions of electoral laws, as well as president's decisions to transfer cases to military tribunals brought up often by human rights lawyers (Fattah, 2008: 67; Moustafa, 2008: 146-151). They were also authorized to forward contested issues to the Supreme Constitutional Court's review (Brown, 2008: 136f). As Moustafa (2008: 151-153) points out, the revision requests raised by administrative courts flooded the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court (the SCC). The SCC was a relatively strong challenger of Mubarak's leadership. Twice, it ruled, for instance, that the electoral laws were unconstitutional and thus allowed for independent candidates, i.e., the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, to run in parliamentary elections. In another case, the SCC repealed the restrictive NGO law (Law 153 of 1999) (Brown 1997: 102ff; Moustafa, 2008: 146-151; Wickham, 2002: 224). Yet, the SCC dismissed most cases related to the exceptional framework.

There were two key revisions related directly to the state of emergency and forwarded to the SCC in the early 1990s. In two separate cases, the administrative courts asked the

¹³⁰ In 1988, the extension of the state of emergency was approved by some parliamentarians, who were appointed but did not win the elections.

¹³¹ See Shapiro (2008: 326-329) who discusses the political relevance of diverse courts in the authoritarian political system and argues that courts, such as administrative courts, which usually attract less of research interest, are of paramount importance to understand the political role of judiciary in a given context.

SCC to review article 3 and article 6 of the Emergency Law. The former article stipulated major constraints of personal freedoms and rights, while the latter stated that the President was authorized to refer any crime to military tribunals (Brown, 1997: 115f; Moustafa, 2008: 151-153; Seif, 2013). Although it was forwarded for review in 1993, the SCC did not review article 3 until 2013, when it repealed it (Seif, 2013). Seif (2013) attributed the delay to fear of retribution from the security apparatus. Article 6 and its wide interpretation was ruled constitutional. The President was then authorized to cherry-pick any category of crime and/or any specific crime and refer its perpetrators to military tribunals (Abu Seada, 2008: 173).

The public exposure and partial successes achieved in individual cases notwithstanding, the law as a means of resistance did not significantly alter the hegemonic configuration of the power/knowledge relations (re)produced by the securitization process. The court orders and rulings that contested the decisions of Mubarak's leadership and/or security professionals were frequently overlooked, ignored or by-passed by the Egyptian authorities (Albrecht, 2005: 381-383). Mubarak's leadership was in position to order retrials when it was unsatisfied with the rulings. This was the case al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya members, who were first acquitted before a retrial was ordered. The security officials routinely circumvented court-ordered releases by so-called successive detention orders, i.e., an immediate re-arrest of the person after his release from the detention (Abu Seada, 2008: 170; MEW/HRW, 1992JUL: 17; Seif, 2013).

5.3.2. Delegitimizing narratives

The Egyptian dissent frequently used narratives that delegitimized the counterterrorism campaign and Mubarak's leadership. Given the government's near monopoly on the spread of information, there were initially not many options for the dissenters to spread delegitimizing narratives in the public discourse. This situation, however, changed with global technological progress. An increasing availability of new communication channels, such as the internet, satellite television, and smart phones, along with a limited liberalization of the Egyptian media landscape in the late 1990s, disrupted the government's domination over the distribution of information and facilitated the proliferation of narratives exposing and delegitimizing Mubarak's leadership (see Moorehead, 2005: 35-36; Hamada, 2013).

There were many topics on which Mubarak's leadership was contested. The state of emergency and its sociopolitical implications were some of the most frequently criticized subjects and the Egyptian human rights community one of the most active actor in the production of counter-narratives. Through their clients, *homines sacri*, and/or their families, the human rights community learned about the implications of the state of emergency firsthand. Unlike the Egyptian majority society, the community was

also fully aware of the Egyptian zones of indistinction, including the exceptional security practices of the security officials.

In their reports and press releases, which delineated their findings and the experiences of their clients, the human rights organizations exposed the gravity of human rights violations and the impunity of the security apparatus justified on behalf of combating terrorism. Often, the human rights community directly disputed government's claims, such as the repeated assertion that the Emergency Law was not used to oppress peaceful political dissent or that torture was regrettable but nonetheless an issue of few isolated cases.¹³² These claims were, for instance, contested directly by one of al-Nadeem's reports:

“Despite the claims by the president of the republic that the emergency laws are not used except with terrorists and drug dealers and that the ruling party is embarking on a process of democratic reform and consideration of citizens' rights, still we have monitored and documented an increase of state violence against members of the political opposition. Thousands of peaceful demonstrators were arrested and many of them have been subjected to torture in SSI offices [sic] and police stations and prison. [...] Tens of anti-riot police trucks occupying the city center has become a common scene that is meant to terrorize citizens. Many are [sic] wondering: How much of the national budget goes to finance all those troops? Are we paying out of our own pockets so that the ministry of interior can buy more trucks and torture instruments, tear gas and water cannons? Do we pay taxes so that the government can use them to humiliate and torture us?” (al-Nadeem, 2006: 25)¹³³

Although the human rights community was one of the most forthright actors to publicly criticize the state of emergency and its sociopolitical implications, its public outreach was limited due to the government's monopoly over mass communication for most of Mubarak's time in office. The situation began to change only in the late 1990s. Technological progress opened new, relatively unrestricted sites for communication and contestation of government's policies (see Kalathil and Boas, 2003: 103-134). It also democratized the discussion and critical review of government's policies. Besides the traditional human rights community, there were new actors, such as nascent blogger community and diverse social movements, that began to contest the state of emergency and its sociopolitical implications.

The internet, specifically, became a frequented site and instrument of communication. It emerged as a parallel, largely unrestricted “public-sphere” where Egyptians could discuss, criticize, and contest government's policies (Lynch, 2007a). Websites of opposition movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Kefaya, attracted attention

¹³² See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 9. 5. 1991, p.1; *al-Ahram*, 24. 2. 1997, p. 1; *al-Ahram*, 1. 5. 2006, p. 3.; *al-Ahram*, 11.5.2010, p. 1; *al-Ahram*, 12.5.2010, p. 1, 7.

¹³³ For a similar argument see e.g. al-Ghumri (1999: 190).

of the online audience. Adhering to respective political agendas, they were sites of the dissent where Mubarak's leadership including the state of emergency were systematically contested.

The nascent Egyptian blogosphere, which reached more than 1500 bloggers by 2005¹³⁴, contested the sociopolitical status quo through an active offline engagement. There was number of political bloggers who regularly covered events and incidents, such as demonstrations, violent dispersal of protests, abuses of security officials, and more, which were given little or no attention in the mass media (Lynch, 2007a). The blogs were a valuable source of information for many Egyptians, journalists, as well as the international audience, as they provided alternative accounts to the government's official narratives (Lynch, 2007a; Radsch, 2008: 3ff).

The increasing availability of the internet¹³⁵ corresponded with a rise in online content related to human rights violations and circulated widely among the Egyptian Internet users (Salem, 2014: 28; Radsch, 2008: 4ff). Moreover, once smart phones became a product available to a large segment of the Egyptian populations, many abuses were recorded and shared online by by-standers, witnesses, victims, or even perpetrators themselves.¹³⁶ For instance, a page called *al-ta'dhib fi masr* (torture in Egypt) – affiliated loosely to al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims – aggregated diverse footage of ill-treatment and torture starting in 2006. There were, however, many more groups and individuals who undertook similar projects.¹³⁷ For instance, Wael Abbas, a prominent Egyptian blogger and journalist, regularly shared reports about the brutality of the security apparatus on his blog *al-wa'i al-masry* (Egyptian awareness) and on his YouTube account.

Human rights violations and abusive conduct of Egyptian security officials concerned a rapidly growing community of bloggers affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood (Etling, et al., 2009: 4, 19, 49; Ajemian, 2008). In particular, the blogs of younger Brotherhood members revolved around the persecution of members of the Brotherhood (Etling, et al., 2009: 4). Their blogs often narrated individual stories of arrested members and campaigned for their release. As Lynch (2007a) observes, the Brotherhood-affiliated blogs did not differ much from the blogs of non-Islamist blogosphere, insofar as they imitated “‘Free Alaa’ and ‘Free Kareem’ campaigns – including custom-made banners, link-exchanges, online petitions, personal testimonies, high resolution photos of

¹³⁴ The majority of Egyptian bloggers were part of an aggregation run by Alaa Abdal Fattah and his wife Manal Hassan, the pioneers of the Egyptian blogosphere (Radsch, 2008: 3ff).

¹³⁵ While in 2001 only less than one percent of Egyptians had an access to the Internet at home, in 2010 one third of the Egyptian population had a private access to the Internet. See Internet Live Stats and Radsch (2008: 1-2).

¹³⁶ There was a trend that security officials recorded their acts of violence (al-Nadeem, 2006). Some records leaked and went viral online. For instance, a police officer took a video of sodomization of a microbus driver to humiliate the victim by distributing the video among the community of microbus drivers. The video made it to Wael Abbas, a blogger, who posted it and sparked a large public outcry. See el-Dawla (2009: 125ff).

¹³⁷ Kefaya dedicated a part of its website to gather information about and report on abuses. See Oweidat, et al. (2008: 21).

protests, and embedded videos.” There was, for instance, an online campaign to free Hassan Malek, a second deputy chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood, after his arrest, with about forty other prominent Brotherhood members in 2007. The campaign ‘Free Hassan Malek’ run by Malek’s daughter, Khadija, featured descriptions of Malek’s suffering, along with supportive newspaper articles, interviews, and videos including pleas from Malek’s youngest daughter to release her father (Ajemian, 2008).

The Brotherhood-affiliated blogs also provided accounts of events that alternated from the official narratives. Given the fact that Brotherhood members were frequent targets of abuse and subject to military tribunals, their blogs were among the most popular; the blogs included *Ana Ikhwan* (I’m a Muslim Brother), *Ensa* (Forget), and a slew of like-minded blogs such as the *Mudunat did al-askar* (Blogs against the military)¹³⁸ criticized the impunity of the security apparatus and the lack of due processes at the military courts (Ajemian, 2008; Lynch, 2007b; see also Rutherford, 2008: 172). Although there was a deep ideological cleavage between Brotherhood-affiliated bloggers and the rest of the Egyptian political blogosphere, the exceptional framework and related abuses formed a common ground of the virtual activism of both groups. As Abdel-Moneim Mahmud, the author of *Ana Ikhwan*, summarized, “[o]ne important common point among us is that we live in an authoritarian country and we claim freedom and reform as Egyptians, and then come our intellectual affiliations” (quoted in Ben Gharbia, 2007).

The blogs sympathetic to the Brotherhood, along with Brotherhood’s official websites, were an effective tool for the group to contest the terrorist label and to proliferate counter-narratives to the government sanctioned securitization of the terrorist threat. The movement refused to be identified as a group of terrorists, collaborators of militant groups, and/or violent extremists (Atia, 2011: 6ff). It regularly emphasized its doctrine of non-violence and accordingly denounced any violent means to reach the desired sociopolitical change. These tenets, for instance, summarized an online circulated statement *min al-Ikhwan ila al-nas* (From the Brotherhood to the people) authored by Muhammad Akif, the Supreme Guide. Republished by the blog *Ana Ikhwan*, the statement unequivocally rejected violence and terrorism as means to achieve the Brotherhood’s political objectives (Ana Ikhwan, 2006).¹³⁹ The Brotherhood’s doctrine of non-violence was further reinforced by militant Islamists, who openly disapproved of the Brotherhood’s accommodating tactics and despised the movement (Stein, 2010: 43).

Unlike the Brotherhood, militant Islamists organizations resorted to a more offensive approach to contest Mubarak’s leadership and rationalize the use of violence. Using cassette-recorded sermons distributed among Egyptians the leading figures of militant Islamists, such as Omar Abdel Rahman the spiritual leader of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, denounced the Egyptian state. Supported by fatwas of leading members and referring to

¹³⁸ See the list of bloggers at the blog *Ana Ikhwan* (2007).

¹³⁹ For more about the Brotherhood and its blogging activities see Lynch (2007c).

the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyya, al-Mawdudi, and Sayid Qutb, the militant Islamists portrayed Mubarak's leadership as unfaithful to the principles of Islam. For instance, according to al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, the Egyptian state was run by infidels (*kufra*) supported by Crusaders and Jews, which did not allow for the desired revival of Islam (Stein, 2010: 41). Omar Abdel Rahman claimed:

“The Egyptian regime is fighting Islam [...] Spreading vice and immorality, and trying to eradicate Islamic values in the country.” (quoted in Hedges, 1993)

In the view of the militant Islamists, Mubarak's leadership was illegitimate per se. It failed to live up expectations the militant Islamists linked with *righteous* Muslim rulers. All of which served as an argumentation basis to justify the use of violence and legitimize it as *jihad*, i.e. the holy war for the Islamic state (Hedges, 1993; Wickham, 2002: 114; Mubarak, 1996: 40).

Next to the internet and cassette-sermons, the satellite TV stations were another significant source of information uncensored by national governments. Al-Jazeera¹⁴⁰, the first pan-Arab satellite station founded in 1996 in Qatar, became a major site for Arab dissent to criticize national governments and expose their wrongdoings (Stork, 2012: 469). Egypt was not an exception. Especially in the late 1990s, al-Jazeera hosted Egyptian militant Islamists “who have been blacklisted by the Egyptian government” (el-Nawawy and Iskander, 2003: 131). Later, al-Jazeera hosted also representatives of the non-violent Egyptian dissent, such as Iman Ramadan, Kefaya's leading member (Oweidat, et al., 2008: 13). Al-Jazeera's Egypt's coverage offered a picture of domestic developments different to the official accounts. Its coverage of the 2005 parliamentary elections, for instance, openly challenged the official accounts about the peaceful course and fairness of the elections. Its footage showed “voters with bloody faces and thugs waving machetes while police officers stood by” as well as “a news conference at which judges charged that the vote had been rigged and that police had intimidated people who wanted to vote” (Seib, 2008: 145).

In this sense, al-Jazeera, as well as other satellite channels, such as London-based al-Hiwar known for “broadcast[ing] programs featuring government critics and human rights abuse victims” (HRW, 2009JAN), created an alternative space which circumvented the censorship and restrictions imposed on the freedom of speech. Although the Egyptian government managed to impede the work of al-Jazeera and to suspend broadcasting of some satellite channels, including al-Hiwar (HRW, 2009JAN), its monopoly on information had been irretrievably breached (Seib, 2008: 188).

The border-less, largely unrestricted virtual sphere clearly opened new communication possibilities to contest government's policies. Technological progress in the field of

¹⁴⁰ Although al-Jazeera has broadcasted critical material, its broadcasting has not lived up to the standards of free media. Its editorial policy has been, for instance, traditionally severely biased against Israel. For more about al-Jazeera and its influence on regional politics see el-Nawawy and Iskander (2003).

communication technologies enabled Egyptians, among others, to discuss the counterterrorism campaign, question the efficiency and implications of the exceptional security measures, and share their views and experience not only with Egyptian peers, but also with non-Egyptian media, international advocacy groups, and national governments. At times, the virtual space created a mediated pressure on the Egyptian government to justify its exceptional security methods vis-a-vis the political dissent (Abdelrahman, 2007: 288). The crackdown on the Ibn Khaldun Center in 2000 and the arrest of Alaa abd al-Fattah, a famous Egyptian blogger, in 2006 led to major online anti-government campaigns¹⁴¹. Both events drew an international audience undesired by Mubarak's leadership (Yefet-Avshalom and Roniger, 2006; Seib, 2008: 156). Facing increasing international pressure, Egypt's government reassessed both cases and the defendants were acquitted.

5.3.3. Civil disobedience

As shown in prior sections, the securitizing political elite largely dominated the public discourse. With exception of the virtual online platforms, there were a few possibilities for Egyptians to publicly contest the sociopolitical status quo without fear of repercussions. Public gatherings, demonstrations, protests, and strikes were all criminalized under the state of emergency. The ban on public assemblies and paralyzing effects of fear to be persecuted notwithstanding, protests and larger demonstrations against the government on number of policies including the state of emergency began to appear in the early 2000s (see e.g. Tadros, 2012: 27).

Although the reasons Egyptians took to the streets to protest were diverse, the rise in civil disobedience, visible in the 2000s, also underlined a subtler process nullifying the state of emergency as an exceptional framework. Based on his experience as a human rights lawyer for more than two decades, Ahmad Seif (2013) noted that the state of emergency as a tool to deter and discipline Egyptians increasingly lost its meaning during the first decade of the 21st century. It was no longer a barrier that would forestall mass protests, demonstrations, and other forms of disobedience.

Regional political developments inspired the first mass demonstrations in Egypt in many years. Egyptians organized solidarity demonstrations in support of the second Palestinian *intifada* (2000-2005). Disapproving of the US and Israeli military engagement in regional politics and despised by Egypt's support of both actors, Egyptians protested US-intervention in Iraq (2003) as well as Israel's diverse military operations, including Israel's summer war in Lebanon in 2006 and the Cast Lead operation in Gaza in 2008 (Kienle, 2001: 90f). Activists and organizations linked to Egypt's human rights community played a key role in mobilizing Egyptians and

¹⁴¹ See, for instance, *Free Alaa!*, an online campaign designated to create an international pressure on Egypt's government to release Alaa abd al-Fattah.

organizing protests (Albrecht, 2005: 385ff). Fearing redirection of the popular outrage at domestic issues, the government tolerated the protests even though they breached the firm ban on public gatherings under the state of emergency. Habib al-Adli, the Minister of Interior, for instance, gave explicit permission for anti-US demonstrations on the eve of the US-led military operation in Iraq in 2003 emphasizing that it was an exceptional decision, not a rule.¹⁴² Although such demonstrations were increasingly tolerated by the government, individual protesters were frequently subjected to abuses including arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment, and torture (el-Dawla, 2009: 130f; Albrecht, 2005: 385ff; Moorehead, 2005: 34; HRW, 2004FEB: 1).

The demonstrations against the US and/or Israeli military involvement in the region tested the waters for staging protests and demonstrations over domestic issues. Starting in the mid-2000, Egypt was hit by hundreds of labor strikes. Although protests against the poor living conditions of Egyptian laborers were nothing new in Egypt (Kienle, 2001: 92), no wave of strikes had ever before had such numbers and intensity in over half a century (Beinin, 2009: 77). One of the largest strikes of 2006, for instance, involved 30,000 textile workers at the Spinning and Weaving Company in Mahalla, who fought to improve the working conditions and increase wages (Carapico, 2010: 105; Beinin, 2009: 79f; see also Tadros, 2012: 27). Two years later in 2008, the labor movement was a driving actor in the organization of a general strike on April 6. Coined the Egyptian *intifada*, workers and activists across the political spectrum called on Egyptians to join in and to stand up against the corrupt Mubarak's government. The text of the call read as following:

“All national forces in Egypt have agreed upon the 6th of April to be a public strike. On the 6th of April, stay home, do not go out; Don't go to work, don't go to the university, don't go to school, don't open your shop, don't open your pharmacy, don't go to the police station, don't go to the camp; We need salaries allowing us to live, we need to work, we want our children to get education, we need human transportation means, we want hospitals to get treatment, we want medicines for our children, we need just judiciary, we want security, we want freedom and dignity, we want apartments for youth; We don't want prices increase, we don't want favoritism, we don't want police in plain clothes, we don't want torture in police stations, we don't want corruption, we don't want bribes, we don't want detentions. Tell your friends not to go to work and ask them to join the strike.” (quoted in Sandmonkey, 2008)

The call points to the growing popular discontent with the sociopolitical status quo. Although economic reasons played a major role in the mobilization of the Egyptian labor, these, as the call illustrates, became more and more intertwined with demands for structural political reforms.

¹⁴² See e.g. *al-Ahram*, 26. 2. 2003; *al-Ahram* 22. 3. 2003.

The activities of the labor movement concurred with an emergence of several loose grassroots movements, such as Kefaya or 6th April Movement, that focused on the political reforms (see Beinin, 2009: 79ff). Kefaya¹⁴³, for instance, emerged in 2004 and was one of the first political forces in Egypt with an inclusive platform. The loosely organized movement integrated Egyptians across the political spectrum. Kefaya's supporters were Marxists, Nasserists, and Islamists but also secularized liberals united in their opposition to Mubarak's leadership and the anticipated power transition to his son Gamal (Clarke, 2013: 202). By openly contesting Husni Mubarak and his position, Kefaya was also the first political movement in Egypt to break the taboo of Mubarak's intouchability (el-Mahdi, 2009: 89; Beinin, 2009: 77; Oweidat, et al., 2008: 10ff; Tadros, 2012: 27; Fahmy, 2012: 372).¹⁴⁴ The opinion diversity of Kefaya's leaders notwithstanding, the group's manifesto clearly identified "the repressive despotism that pervades all aspects of the Egyptian political system and want for democratic governance" (quoted in Clarke, 2013: 203) as the major problem of the Egyptian state and annulment of the state of emergency as a key step to improve the overall situation. Other opposition groups and leading intellectuals, such as Ibrahim Issa, editor-in-chief of al-Dustur; Ayman Nour, leader of al-Ghad party; and Saad al-Din Ibrahim, director of Ibn Khaldun Center boldly followed the pattern initiated by Kefaya. They publicly criticized Egypt's government and questioned Mubarak's status as "the patriarch of the Egyptian family", hence tilling, as Fahmy (2012: 372) argues, "fertile ground for the emergence of an active civil resistance movement in Egypt."

In the 2000s, the number of protests and demonstrations grew exponentially. Protests, strikes, and sit-ins with the involvement of the Egyptian labor force grew from around 100 incidents in 2003 to 266 in 2004 and 614 in 2007 (Stork, 2012: 468; Clarke, 2013: 205ff; see also Beinin, 2009: 77ff). The increasing incidence of protests combined with their grassroots, often spontaneous character facilitated by the use of modern communication technologies to mobilize protesters produced new forms of civil disobedience. Some activists, for instance, focused their mobilization strategy on urban working-class areas where they organized open-air "advocacy-workshops" convened spontaneously via text messaging and the internet (el-Mahdy, 2009: 90). For Mubarak's leadership, it became increasingly challenging to contain and suppress protests with such numbers, frequency, and taking place on so many societal levels (Anderson, 2013; Stork, 2012: 470). The securitizing political elite increasingly resorted to sovereign violence as a strategy to counter and silence mushrooming voices of Egyptian dissent. Yet, it struggled to contain the growing discontent of the Egyptian population (Stork, 2012: 470; see also Sassoon, 2016: 151).

¹⁴³ The official name of Kefaya was The Egyptian Movement for Change (*al-haraka al-masriyya min ajl al-taghir*).

¹⁴⁴ It is noteworthy to mention that despite the fact that the protest movements integrated a broad spectrum of Egyptians, the Islamists, precisely the Muslim Brotherhood, largely restrained from participating in such protests in order not to provoke the government to clampdown on the movement. See e.g. Brown and Hamzawy (2010: 24).

5.4. The erosion of the fear barrier

The government strategies to contain resistance relied greatly on a combination of repression and legal constraints. Fear was a common denominator to both. Fear to become a *homo sacer*, specifically, controlled and disciplined the conduct of a large number of Egyptians. This fear, as Ghonim (2012: 3) noted, paralyzed the capacity of many Egyptians to contest and resist the political status quo. In such a context, in which “the risks of opposition activism are high and the prospects of positive change are, at best, remote,” as Wickham (2002: 119) suggests, “the most ‘rational’ response of the individual is a retreat into self-preserving silence.” Whilst the self-preserving silence, that might appear as acquiescence to the securitization process, was certainly true for many Egyptians, it does not account for the ‘irrational’ response. Especially in the 2000s, there were many Egyptians who participated in diverse demonstrations, protests, labor strikes, and sit-ins and risked persecution. Even under such conditions – high risks and low chances of change – Egyptians apparently revolted more than any time before during the Mubarak’s era. The wall of fear erected on the pillars of state of emergency that impeded voicing public discontent over the sociopolitical status quo was being undermined (Ghonim, 2012: 155; see also Fahmy, 2012: 372).

The erosion of the fear barrier is by no means a predictable event. Rather it is an outcome of complex processes and contextual conditions. Whether and how one experiences fear or does not, and whether one is courageous enough to resist or not, are highly subjective matters influenced by a particular context as well as one’s background and character. Resistance is a complex matter and, as Foucault (2002: 449) notes, “the man who rebels is finally inexplicable.” The restrictive contextual set-up might constrain some in their resistance in such a manner that they would require ten times more courage to revolt than others need (Havel, 1990). Taken to the Egyptian context, there were enough Egyptians, particularly among those “no-names” Egyptians from impoverished and marginalized areas, whose will to resist was significantly constrained by fear from repercussions and related existential questions should they participate in demonstrations and protests. This is not to claim that those who joined the 2011 protests have stopped to fear. Rather, their individual will to contest Mubarak’s leadership was not incapacitated by fear. This is illustratively underscored by a youth at Kefaya’s meeting: “Of course, I am afraid [of being arrested], but there is nothing else for me to do. I have no life, no job, and no future” (Oweidat, et al., 2008: 18).

According to Foucault, the paralyzing effect of fear might be invalidated in a situation in which an individual’s life reaches a point, or more precisely, an individual is convinced of reaching such a point, that his life cannot be bartered anymore:

“beyond the threats, the violence, and the intimidations, there is the possibility of that moment when life can no longer be bought, when the authorities can no longer do anything, and when, facing the gallows and the machine guns, people revolt” (Foucault, 2002: 449-450).

To put it differently: when the risk of death is perceived as a better option than the certainty of obedience, the barrier of fear loses its deterrent effect (Keating, 1997: 186). In such a situation, people might be more likely to risk their life or even intentionally embrace death to protest existing conditions which they view as no more bearable.

Inspired by Muhammad Bouazizi, a Tunisian vendor whose death sparked the revolution in Tunisia, four Egyptians set themselves on fire in the early 2011. Similarly, Bouazizi they chose death as an extreme form of protest against the sociopolitical status quo. Commenting on the self-immolation incidents, Asma Mahfuz, a young activist, painted their act as a form of protest against conditions of life that became no more bearable. In a video that went viral, she urged Egyptians to take to the streets on January 25th instead of killing themselves.

“Four Egyptians set themselves on fire, to protest oppression (*al-zulm*), hunger, and poverty, and degradation they had to live for 30 years. Four Egyptians have set themselves on fire, thinking maybe we can have a revolution like in Tunisia, maybe we can have freedom (*al-huriyya*), justice (*balad fiha 'adl*), honor and human dignity (*balad fiha karama*) [...] I'm making this video to give you one simple message. We want to go down to Tahrir Square on January 25th. If we still have honor, and want to live in dignity in this country, we have to go out on the 25th. We'll go out and demand our rights (*haqa'iquna*), our fundamental rights. [...] We just want our rights and nothing else. [...] The self-immolators were not afraid of death but were afraid of the security apparatus (*khawu min amn al-dawla*), were afraid of corruption (*al-fasad*)! Can you imagine that? Are you like that? Are you going to kill yourself, too? Or are you completely clueless? [...] Don't think you can be safe any more! None of us are! [...] I will not set myself on fire! If the security forces want to set me on fire let them come and do it! [...] I am going down on January 25th, and I will say “no” to corruption (*al-fasad*), “no” to the regime (*al-nizam*).” (quoted in a video uploaded by el-Baghdadi, 2011).¹⁴⁵

Don't think you can be safe anymore! None of us are! As Mahfuz's call underlined, there was no certainty about when one would have been treated as an acceptable citizen or a *homo sacer*. “Everybody constituted a possible target” (Salem, 2014: 30). Whoever could have been subjected *any* time to a random sovereign decision of a security official. The borderline was blurry (Sayed, 2013). There was for many Egyptians not much of, if any, difference, between the *normal* lives of optimized citizens and the unacceptable forms of life of security targets. Both were subjected to the possibility to be turned into a *homo sacer*.

¹⁴⁵ The videoblog of Asma Mahfuz was recorded on 18. January 2011 and shared on her Facebook initially. On YouTube, it was uploaded on 1. February 2011. The English translation, which follows the transcribed subtitles displayed in the video, was minimally adjusted by the author to provide more accuracy.

The imposition of exceptional security measures, which initially enjoyed “varying degrees of popular sympathy for and understanding”, became a burden and infringement of personal dignity of ordinary Egyptians (Fahmy, 2012: 351). The Agambenian exception spread beyond the designated scope of designated terrorist targets. It also transgressed *spatiotemporal boundaries* of the SSIS detention cells. Over the course of the 2000s, the exception – once limited in its institutional, spatial and target scopes – became a general rule. It overflowed its spatiotemporal boundaries and started, as Agamben (1998: 38) captures, “to coincide with the normal order, in which everything again becomes possible.” The chance to be rendered a *homo sacer* became an immediate and everyday possibility (see Salem, 2014: 33).

The death of Khalid Said in June 2010 became a symbol of this trend. Murdered by two security officers in an Alexandria side street, Said’s death as a *homo sacer* underlined that his fate was a relevant possibility to anyone. Bare life was no longer an exception but rather a condition of a normality (Salem, 2014: 33). Said’s fate was reduced to two photos of him, before and after his death. These photos became a symbol of “the sense that if this could happen to him it could happen to anyone, that ‘We are all Khaled Said’ [Kullina Khalid Sa'id], as the soon to be famous Facebook page put it” (Stork, 2012: 464). Khalid Said’s case attracted a national-wide attention. There were dozens of protests in support of Said and against the status quo that made his death possible (see e.g. HRW, 2011JANa: 1; Allam, 2015: 59). In these protests, Egyptians refused to become another Khalid Said, another *homo sacer*. They defied the processes of subjectification they were exposed to and thus refused, as Foucault (1982: 782) puts it, “what they were”, or more precisely, what they were supposed to be.

In the early 2011, against the backdrop of blatantly rigged parliamentary elections, dramatic developments in Tunisia and a deadly bomb attack on a Coptic church in Alexandria during the Coptic Christmas – the Facebook page “Kullina Khalid Sa'id” capitalized on the widespread sentiment of disapproval and called for a massive demonstration against torture, corruption, injustice, and unemployment (Tadros, 2012: 27f). Intentionally, it chose January 25th, National Police Day which commemorates the patriotic role of the Egyptian police in resisting the British rulers in the 1920s, to protest the intrusive role and impunity of the security apparatus (Ghonim, 2012: 122-160). The popular demonstrations began on January 25th, 2011 as protests against police brutality and abuses, dire economic conditions, and related corruption (Fahmy, 2012: 350; Salem, 2014: 30).¹⁴⁶

Although some opposition factions, such as Nasserists and Islamists including the Muslim Brotherhood, assumed a cautious position and refused to take part in the protests, the demonstrations, which lasted over three weeks, included thousands of

¹⁴⁶ If members of these opposition currents participated in the protests, it was their individual decision to do so. See Tadros (2012: 30ff).

Egyptians across the political spectrum (Tadros. 2012: 30ff). Initially, the protesters required a removal of Habib al-Adli, the Minister of Interior, along with a reform of the security apparatus. The demands, however, grew bolder over time and with the key support of Egypt's military achieved the resignation of Husni Mubarak. The 2011 protests, termed the revolution of freedom and dignity (*thawra al-huriyya wa-l-karama*), were result of civil disobedience rising over the last decade (Adib-Moghaddam, 2014: 54). The hegemonic configuration of power/knowledge, which the securitization process of the terrorist threat (re)produced and underpinned for three decades, was challenged.

5.5. Conclusion

The focus on resistance offers valuable insights into dynamics of sustained securitizations in authoritarian contexts of governance. Although the securitization of the terrorist threat in Egypt can be considered a successful case of securitization with regard to its length and the adopted exceptional measures, the process was far from widely accepted. The success/failure of Egypt's securitization was not dependent on articulated public endorsement. Instead, its success and thus continuity was largely related to government's capacity to contain resistance and control Egypt's sites of dissent.

The state of emergency, an exceptional policy to counter terrorism, significantly empowered the securitizing political elite and security professionals to downplay, disregard, and persecute alternative views and positions on security in Egypt. It was almost impossible to question and challenge the securitization process without facing substantial risks, including the possibility to become a *homo sacer*. The securitization process directly facilitated the government strategies to control the Egyptian dissent and contain resistance. The securitization process was thus not only a means to contain the resistance and oppress the Egyptian opposition on seemingly legitimate grounds vested in national security matters, but also to sustain the political status quo.

Insofar as power cannot seize complete control over what we say, think, and do (Foucault, 1980: 136), the docility of Egyptians was beyond a comprehensive reach of power. The government strategies to contain resistance were not, and could not have been, absolute. There were diverse actors who contested the securitization process and challenged the hegemonic configuration of power/knowledge relations underpinned by the securitization. Over three decades of Mubarak's reign there was no decisive moment for Egypt's dissent to decisively alter the existing power/knowledge relations. This, however, does not mean that resistance had not built up over time. The rising civil disobedience, especially in the last decade, evidenced the increasing popular discontent, culminating in the 2011 movement.

Fear of becoming a *homo sacer* was central fabric of government's strategies to tame the political opposition and contain resistance. The continuous erosion of its paralyzing effects concurred with the spatiotemporal spread of the Agambenian exception that started in the 1990s. Fear of becoming a *homo sacer* increasingly devaluated. Towards the end of the 2000s, there were only few Egyptians safe of arbitrary sovereign decisions of security professionals. The spread of Agambenian exception created a general mode of insecurity which blurred the frontiers between normal, optimized life and bare life, between acceptable and unacceptable forms of conduct. The risk of becoming a *homo sacer*, regardless one's conduct, connections, and societal position, was an immediate and everyday reality for a large number of Egyptians. Although the fear of becoming a *homo sacer* was not absolutely invalidated, the sense of insecurity prompted increasing numbers of Egyptians to transgress their anxieties and contest the sociopolitical status quo. The barrier of fear that paralyzed Egyptians to challenge the sociopolitical status quo was not broken in a single momentum, i.e., the 2011 popular uprising. Instead, it had been slowly eroding for a long time, especially in the last of Mubarak's decades, and the spread of Agambenian exception was a central contributing factor.

The 2011 uprising significantly challenged the hegemonic configuration of power/knowledge relations underpinned by the securitization process. The effects of this moment, however, remained short-lived. The protesters exposed the myriad of exceptional powers, counterterrorism policies, and special security measures and challenged it as an illegitimate means to govern the Egyptian society. Yet, the political economy of truth-making, the securitization meta-narrative of Islamist terrorism that underpinned and rationalized the exceptional security practices remained largely uncontested. As such, during and in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 uprising when the hegemonic structure of power/knowledge relations was disrupted, the Egyptian protesters and opposition missed the opportunity to constitute a new politics of truth (see also Foucault, 2002: 133).

Only two years after the 2011 uprising and a year without the state of emergency, Egypt fell in the trap of the securitization of the terrorist threat again. The uncontested meta-narrative of Islamist terrorism became a means to legitimize a new Egyptian leadership supportive of the military coup in 2013. It also became an end to persecute and silence any political opposition ranging from the Muslim Brotherhood to liberal, secularized activists (see chapter 6).

6. Epilogue – Egypt after Mubarak

The 2011 uprising undermined the configuration of power/knowledge relations (re)produced by the securitization. However, it left the underlying corpus of knowledge about the terrorist threat largely uncontested. The 2011 protests, as well as the Egyptian dissent in earlier years, concentrated on the immediate effects of the securitization process, i.e. exceptional security practices and/or restrictions on civil liberties facilitated by the state of emergency. Yet, both failed to link the repressive exceptional framework to the narrative about the terrorist threat and thus to challenge “the truth” which was underpinned by and facilitated the existence of the exceptional framework. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the uncontested securitization narrative prepared a fertile ground for a new Egyptian leadership to restore the securitization process. This came to fruition just two years after the uprising, in the aftermath of the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood-led government in mid-2013.

In this chapter — which by no means aspires to offer an exhaustive analysis of the post-revolutionary Egypt as this would be a task worthy of a new dissertation project — I will show that although the securitization process emerged under new sociopolitical conditions and political leadership, it has been, in many respects, symptomatic of the counterterrorism campaign scrutinized in this thesis. The underlying corpus of knowledge about the terrorist threat was mobilized to introduce the securitization process as a legitimate political strategy to silence the political opposition and strengthen the post-coup leadership.

Once again, the threat of terrorism has been depicted as an existential threat to the life and well-being of the Egyptian society. Islamists, namely members of the Muslim Brotherhood and loosely anyone who has supported the ousted president Muhammad Mursi, have been framed as the source of the threat and designated security targets. On behalf of protecting the Egyptian population, the military-backed government introduced a series of exceptional security policies and measures to address the designated security targets. A number of exceptional security measures, including a new piece of counterterrorism legislation, consolidated the asymmetric configuration of the power/knowledge relations in favor of the political leadership and security professionals. Similar to the transformation of securitization in the Mubarak era, the securitization process has become a powerful political strategy to legitimize the political leadership as a guardian of the Egyptian well-being as well as to curb any political opposition.

The conceptualization of securitization outlined in this thesis offers an adequate and useful analytical perspective to examine and make sense of the most recent developments in Egypt. To demonstrate this, I will examine the re-emerged securitization process through the same conceptual categories and outline parallels between both securitization cases. By drawing a comparison between the two, I will

show that the current securitization process, although similar in form to the case scrutinized in this thesis, has been more intense in many respects: the framing of the terrorist threat has been more explicit; the level of societal support of the securitization process has been greater; the exceptional security measures have been harsher; and the governmental strategies to counter resistance have not left any space for a peaceful political opposition. The intensity of this ongoing securitization process is a central element that qualitatively distinguishes the current process from that of Mubarak's era. Moreover, it is a factor that I view to be a significant facilitator behind the normalization of the exceptional security framework in Egypt over last three years.

On the following pages, I will address the post-2011 developments, albeit particular attention will be paid to the events starting in 2013, after the securitization re-emerged. First, I will address the framing of the terrorist threat in the 2013 post-coup context that built upon the preexisting knowledge about the terrorist threat and linked it explicitly to the Muslim Brotherhood. Second, I will examine the exceptional security steps adopted to tackle the alleged terrorist threat. I will argue that the level of societal support for the securitization process, especially at its outset, facilitated the military coup in July 2013 and the subsequent unprecedented use of sovereign violence in form of extra-judicial killings of hundreds of Muslim Brothers and supporters of ousted president Muhammad Mursi. I will also point out a series of harsh laws that were rationalized by the omnipresent threat of terrorism, but were, in fact, used as a legal tool to mute and persecute the entire spectrum of Egypt's political opposition. Last, I will inquire into the resistance to the securitization process. Due to a relatively high societal approval of the counterterrorism campaign, I will show that to contest the securitization process means to risk social ostracism and to be politically labeled a supporter of terrorism. The unrestricted use of sovereign violence that has been manifested in extra-judicial killings, massive imprisonment, and the torture of regime opponents, has re-erected the barrier of fear and constrained the capacity and will of many Egyptians to resist.

6.1. Framing the threat

Although the 2011 uprising challenged the web of power/knowledge relations established and cultivated over decades, it left the deeply ingrained "truth" about the Islamist terrorist threat narrative uncontested. Although the poor performance of the Brotherhood-led government increased the unpopularity of Islamists/the Muslim Brotherhood and raised legitimate concerns about the future of the country, it does not hold as a singular rationale for Mursi's deposition in July 2013 and the subsequent unprecedented crack-down on the Brotherhood's members and followers. The rebirth of the securitization narrative was largely facilitated by the mobilization of existing, deeply rooted knowledge about the Islamist terrorist threat which had been (re)produced over decades by lengthy securitization processes and became an accepted "truth" of the Egyptian sociopolitical reality.

6.1.1. Mobilization of the power/knowledge prior July 2013

The developments which precluded the ousting of Muhammad Mursi's government in July 2013 prepared the terrain for the re-emergence of the securitization process. The short-lived reign of the Brotherhood from June 2012 to July 2013 was characterized by the Brotherhood's incapacity to reconcile diverse political forces. Mursi's reign alienated a number of Egyptians, including key Egyptian sociopolitical actors, such as members of the government, private media, security institutions, non-Islamist political opposition, and the revolutionary youth. The Brotherhood's partisanship and its inability to stabilize the country combined with the deeply rooted truth about the connection between Islamists, Brotherhood, and terrorism raised concerns about Egypt's future sociopolitical trajectory in hands of the Islamists and mobilized the Egyptian public against the Brotherhood. The continuity of the Brotherhood's rule was framed and perceived by a large part of the Egyptian society as existentially threatening to their well-being.

It is noteworthy to emphasize that the Brotherhood's leadership actively contributed to the negative framing of the group as hostile to interests and well-being of the Egyptian society. When sworn into the presidency in June 2012, Muhammad Mursi promised to be a president for all Egyptians. Yet, the government under his leadership failed to offer the inclusive political project that was necessary to overcome the general animosity and distrust the Egyptian non-Islamist political forces felt towards the Muslim Brotherhood. Instead, the cabinet's decisions and policies reinforced the impression of political opportunism and partisanship. For instance, Mursi's presidential decree in November 2012, one of the milestones that dramatically decreased the Brotherhood's popularity, granted Mursi an absolute executive power "to issue any decision or law without any alternative authority in the country having the power to oppose or revoke it" (Sabry, 2012). In result, the decree enraged a wide spectrum of Egyptian political scene including liberals, leftists, secularists, and Christians, and spilled over in weeks of violent clashes between pro-Mursi and anti-Mursi camps. Although Mursi soon revoked his decision, large segments of the Egyptian society had already been alienated. Other decisions made by Mursi, such as the appointment of a former al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya member as a governor of Luxor, where al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya killed over 60 tourists in 1997 (Chick, 2013), or Mursi's call upon Egyptians to join Islamist fighters in Syria against Bashar al-Asad's forces, added to concerns of many Egyptians about the future of their country.

The Brotherhood's government was also unable, as el-Sherif (2014: 7) notes, "to forge a working relationship with the state institutions in charge of 'legitimate violence' and rule making: the military, police, and judiciary." A major political reshuffle that followed the 2011 uprising notwithstanding, the field of security professionals remained largely uncontested, maintaining their traditional, long nourished distrust, and hostility towards Islamists (el-Sherif, 2014: 7). The Egyptian security forces were reluctant to

submit to the Brotherhood's sovereignty. Although Mursi's cabinet made concessions to security professionals, such as constitutional reinforcement of the political role of the military¹⁴⁷, abandoning investigations of the 2011 Muhammad Mahmud clashes between protesters and the military (Morayef, 2013), or renouncing the plan to reform security sector (Ashour, 2013; Burgrova, 2014), the Brotherhood did not subdue the security authorities. The lacking public safety soon became one of the sorest issues that displayed the Brotherhood's failure to forge a workable relationship with the old state institutions. The security forces increasingly withdrew from the Egyptian streets to police stations. In the spring of 2013, Egypt witnessed a series of paralyzing strikes of security personnel. The emerging vigilante groups engaged in summary justice increasingly stepped in to secure public safety. The general sense of insecurity many Egyptians experienced grew (Burgrova, 2014).

The silent mutiny of the state bureaucracy only worsened the overall position of the Brotherhood's government. The non-Brotherhood ministries were uncooperative and largely unresponsive to the Brotherhood's policies. The Muslim Brotherhood quickly became an isolated political force vulnerable to any confrontation (el-Sherif, 2014: 8). Thus, although the Muslim Brotherhood was governing, it was not ruling. When the massive anti-Brotherhood demonstrations erupted at the end of June of 2013, Mursi, as Trager (2015: 1) observes, "controlled practically nothing on the ground, and he was reduced to being a president in name only".

When Tamarrud (Rebellion), a popular grassroots anti-Brotherhood movement, emerged in late April 2013, the discontent with the Brotherhood's government was already widespread. Tamarrud was able to capitalize on pre-existing high tensions. Backed by a wide spectrum of the sociopolitical actors including Kefaya, the National Salvation Front, and the April 6 Youth Movement, Tamarrud assumed the role of a proto-securitizing actor that prepared a terrain for the re-emergence of the securitization of the Islamist terrorist threat. The ousting of Mursi on July 3rd, 2013 was a first sign of a successful securitization process. Supported by Egyptian private media, it spearheaded the anti-Brotherhood rhetoric that grew increasingly hostile to the Mursi's cabinet and the Brotherhood (Elmasry, 2013; Iskandar, 2013). Similar to the securitization under Husni Mubarak, Tamarrud used the national identity as a powerful coin to delegitimize the Islamist enemy. It depicted the Brotherhood as a treacherous group estranged from the Egyptian nation that aimed to "brotherhoodize" (*akhwana*) the country. Plans from Mursi's government to grant exclusive investment rights to the Suez Canal or to sell land to foreign actors were among those policies that directly reinforced the impression of the strong partisanship of Mursi's cabinet (Elmasry, 2013; ElNabawi, 2013). Its popular petition campaign, which called for the end of Mursi's rule, portrayed the Brotherhood's governing as a substantial threat to the Egyptian well-being and future.

¹⁴⁷ For a comparison of the key articles in the Egyptian constitutions of the 1971, 2012, and 2013 drafts, see the paper from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2013).

Although the Brotherhood countered the delegitimizing narratives, its reliance on conservative religious arguments was counter-productive; the religious connotations in the counter-argumentation reinforced the wide-spread notion that the group was made up of religious extremists, not Egyptian patriots. For instance, the Brotherhood's attempt to mock Tamarrud's petition campaign with a counter-petition action named Tagarud (Emptiness) in support of Mursi failed (Iskandar, 2013). Within a short period of time, Tamarrud mobilized millions of Egyptians against the Brotherhood's rule. Its anti-Brotherhood campaign peaked in June 2013 in anti-government protests that were unprecedented in size and scale and resulted in the deposition of the Brotherhood's cabinet by the Egyptian military (Kingsley, 2013a; Iskandar, 2013).

6.1.2. Post-Mursi framing of the Muslim Brotherhood

After Mursi's ouster, the narrative of the Islamist terrorist threat was central to legitimize the post-coup government. The new political leadership, including the Minister of Defense and deputy Prime Minister Abdal Fattah al-Sisi promptly identified Brotherhood members and Mursi's supporters as an existential security threat. In a massive media campaign, the interim government argued that in order to address and neutralize the terrorist threat posed by Brotherhood's members and Mursi's supporters, launching "a war on terror" (*al-harb 'ala al-irhab*) was necessary.

Although the Brotherhood was a security target during Mubarak's reign, its framing as a terrorist movement was never as explicit as it has become since July 2013. Whereas under Mubarak the Brotherhood was painted as the illegal organization (*al-tanzim al-mahzur*) linked with the terrorist threat indirectly through ideological and/or logistical support of militant Islamists, after the 2013 coup, the group has been directly referred to as the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood or the terrorist Brotherhood (*al-tanzim ikhwan irhabi*; *al-ikhwan al-irhabiyya*). In the post-coup context, the new political leadership needed to paralyze its major political opponent after ousting him from power and to legitimize its position. The explicit terrorism reference linked to the Muslim Brotherhood was a means to do so (Trager, 2015: 1-2). As an Egyptian political activist noted, "[t]he language of terrorism took the category of enemy to its extreme: it defined the military and the police as legal state agents against the Brotherhood as an illegal non-state actor" (Wahid, 2016). Less than six months after the coup, the securitizing rhetoric transformed into legal language. The Muslim Brotherhood was officially declared a terrorist organization. All Brotherhood activities became illegal and its members and supporters were turned into potential terrorists and thus also security targets (Fahim, 2013).

Not unlike the media under Mubarak's reign, the media, both state and private, assumed a key role in dispersing the knowledge about the terrorist threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood in the public discourse. Using an exaggerated form of nationalism, such as

omnipresent Egyptian flags, military marches on radio, and variations of “the war on terror” banner in the Egyptian TV reminiscent of the post-9/11 US media discourse (Shukrallah, 2013a), the Egyptian media echoed the securitizing claims of the government and endorsed the “war on terror/the Muslim Brotherhood”. Seventeen editors of leading state and private media even issued a joint statement in support of the counterterrorism campaign and vowed “not to criticize the army or the state, and to refrain from publishing material that could incite violence and support terrorism” (Soliman, 2014a).¹⁴⁸ Soon after the 2013-coup, there was no room for media questioning the counterterrorism campaign. The Islamist-aligned media closed immediately after Mursi’s deposition (HRW, 2014AUG: 28). Other media and individual journalists that doubted the scale and/or objectives of the counterterrorism campaign, such as al-Jazeera’s Egyptian channel *Mubashir Misr*, a satirical show *Barnamig* by Basem Youssef, and Yosri Fouda’s and Reem Maged’s talk shows on ONTV were suspended and the journalists and media representatives often persecuted (AI, 2014JAN: 11; HRW, 2014AUG: 28).

The media’s stance largely reflected the wide societal support of the counterterrorism campaign which was, in many respects, beyond comparison with the securitization context in the previous three decades (see e.g. Trager, 2015). Especially in the early aftermath of the coup, non-Islamist elites, such as tech-savvy revolutionary youth, Egyptian Christians, as well as the old state representatives, relieved about the Brotherhood’s removal, were very supportive of the counterterrorism campaign aimed at the group and its supporters (el-Sharif, 2014). The coup was, unlike in the circles of Mursi’s supporters¹⁴⁹, praised as a revolution (*al-thawra*) and al-Sisi, the military leader, as a national savior.¹⁵⁰ In view of many Egyptians and the military, as Trager (2015: 1) notes, “Sisi’s decision to oust Morsi saved Egypt from outright chaos”.

Anxiety and hatred associated with the Brotherhood and its short-lived rule united the majority of Egyptians to call for an exceptional treatment of the group in the aftermath of the coup (Hamzawy, 2015b). Thus, al-Sisi’s call in July 2013 was met with wide support. He asked Egyptians in late July:

“[...] to take to the streets on Friday, to mandate me to confront terrorism and violence. I did not ask of you anything before. [...] I want you Egyptians to delegate the army and the police to confront violence in a suitable way. Please bear the responsibility with the army and the police. Show your steadfastness. This does not mean that I want violence or terrorism. [...] If violence or

¹⁴⁸ For more, see *al-Ahram Online* (2014).

¹⁴⁹ For Mursi’s supporters, the deposition of the Mursi’s cabinet was a coup (*al-inqilab*), not a revolution (*al-thawra*). In a reference to this distinction, Mursi’s supporters have been often referred to as *inqilabiyyun*.

¹⁵⁰ The public adoration of al-Sisi has reached such a level that al-Sisi’s portraits or name (often in a shortened version “CC”) appear on cups, chocolates, jewelry, flags, or boxer-shorts. See the blog “Sisifetish”, which stores visual documentation of al-Sisi’s adulation. For more, see also Abdel Aziz (2013).

terrorism are resorted to, the military and the police are authorized to confront that violence and terrorism” (Egypt Independent, 2013).

He received broad support to launch the “war on terror” aimed at the Muslim Brotherhood. On July 26th, 2013, thousands of Egyptians rallied nationwide in support of the campaign.¹⁵¹ Media echoed his calls and many public, well-known figures endorsed the “war on terror” campaign.

The approval from the Egyptian human rights community of the counterterrorism campaign illustrates the extent of the societal support to the government’s counterterrorism efforts. The bulk of human rights community, traditionally critical of exceptional security measures and policies, subscribed to the securitizing narrative that portrayed the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group and favored security over human rights principles (Morayef, 2013; Burgrova, 2015). Specifically, the bulk of the human rights community, including well-established organizations, such as *The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights*, or *al-Andalus Institute for Tolerance Anti-Violence Studies*, praised the Egyptian security forces for a violent dispersal of pro-Mursi sit-ins in August 2013, which resulted in the largest mass-killing of civilians in the modern Egyptian history comparable with the 1989 Tiananmen square massacre (HRW, 2014AUG; EACPE, 2013; Burgrova, 2015). The organizations also greeted the state of emergency and curfew declared in the immediate aftermath of the dispersal as “acceptable and reasonable procedures to be used until the safety and stability are back, under the condition that these procedures should instantly stop once the reasons of their existence [i.e., violent acts by the Muslim Brotherhood] end” (EACPE, 2013). Some organizations also introduced permanent projects supportive of the securitization narrative. The *Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies*, for instance, supervised a project with the objective of having the Muslim Brotherhood acknowledged as a terrorist organization internationally.¹⁵²

The post-coup political leadership adopted an aggressive, hyper-nationalist securitization rhetoric that has been largely unparalleled in its intensity to securitize the Islamist terrorist threat and remove its major opponent, the Muslim Brotherhood. Surfing on the hyper-nationalist wave, the post-coup government successfully mobilized large segments of the Egyptian society to support and approve of the securitization of the Islamist terrorist threat. In a very short time-span after the coup, the Egyptian society became extremely polarized. The “either with us or against us” logic has dominated the security discourse and disqualified any alternative positions on security matters ever since (Soliman, 2014b: 314; AI, 2014JAN: 8). In result, anyone who contests the merits of the “war on terror” is delegitimized as supportive of the terrorist

¹⁵¹ The Egyptian government officially launched the “war on terror” a few days prior to the public rally in its support. See e.g. Abdallah and Abdallati (2013).

¹⁵² The website of the Center is not accessible anymore. However, it can be accessed through the time wayback function.

See: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150314224145/http://ibnkhalduncenter.org/prog/arc.php?rw=0.12>

enemy (Hamzawy, 2013). Moreover, the societal approval of the counterterrorism campaign empowered the government to adopt exceptional policies that are, in many respects, unprecedented and will be discussed in detail in the following section.

6.2. The exception

The overwhelming societal subscription to the securitization narrative significantly empowered the post-Mursi government and facilitated the adoption of extraordinary security measures to address the perceived terrorist threat. Certain about its position and reinforced by the societal support, the post-coup leadership resorted to bold forms of sovereign violence which outstripped the exceptional security practices used in the counterterrorism context under Husni Mubarak in both quantitative and qualitative respects. As Mandour (2015) summarizes, “the nature of repression shifted from a measured, calculated approach under Mubarak to an unrestricted and systematic campaign under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.”

Egyptian human rights organizations have also reported an unprecedented level of state violence. Apart from prevalent ill-treatment and torture as well-established methods to interrogate, intimidate, and dehumanize targeted individuals (HRW, 2015JUN), the security forces have also increasingly resorted to sexual violence (el-Dawla, 2013) and forced disappearances (Mandour, 2015; AI, 2016JUL). Within just under a year, between July 2013 and May 2014, the Egyptian authorities detained, charged, or sentenced at least 41,000 Egyptians, 36,000 of which were confronted by the security authorities “during political incidents” (*khilal ahdath siyasiyya*).¹⁵³ The estimated amount of more than 60,000 political prisoners vastly exceeds the 5,000 to 10,000 political prisoners at the end of Mubarak’s era and is evidence to the unprecedented scale of repression (Mandour, 2015).¹⁵⁴

6.2.1. Egypt’s Tiananmen

The forceful clearance of pro-Mursi sit-ins in al-Nahda and al-Raba'a al-Adawiyya squares in Cairo on August 14th, 2013 demonstrates the readiness of the political leadership to use an unparalleled form of sovereign violence. The twelve-hour operation of the Egyptian security forces, likened by the Human Rights Watch to Egypt’s Tiananmen square massacre, became an act of an unprecedented use of lethal force against civilians in such a short time-span in the Egyptian modern history. The operation ended in the killing at least 800 protesters (HRW, 2014AUG: 6).

¹⁵³ The figures are available in detail at Wiki Thawra, a statistical website affiliated with the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights. See Wiki Thawra.

¹⁵⁴ The rapid increase of incarcerated persons increased pressure on the prisons, resulting in overcrowded cells and a hasty expansion of prison capacities. In less than three years, al-Sisi approved 16 new prisons, of which some are still under construction. For more, see Abdullah (2016).

The forced dispersal of the sit-ins, where thousands of Mursi's supporters camped in protest of Mursi's deposition over several weeks, transformed the squares into Agambenian zones of indistinction open to a public spectacle. The presence of media¹⁵⁵ notwithstanding, the life of many protesters became bare, stripped of basic rights, such as a right for a safe exit from the site or a right to be medically treated. The Human Rights Watch confirmed that, with the exception of a few minutes before opening fire, the security forces besieged the protesters and left "no safe exit until the end of the day, including for injured protesters in need of medical attention and those desperate to escape" (HRW, 2014AUG: 6). Hence, the possibility to be killed by the intervening security forces was an immediate contingency for the protesters present at both sites. One participant of the sit-in at al-Raba'a al-Adawiyya later recounted:

"They [the security forces] immediately fired teargas and live fire. It was so intense, I can't even describe it; it was not like the other times before [referring to prior mass killings], one or two at a time. It was raining bullets. I smelled the gas and immediately saw people being hit and falling down around me. I have no idea how many people were hit. We didn't hear any warnings, nothing. It was like hell" (HRW, 2014AUG: 38).

The protesters' lives were devoid of any meaning and by a sovereign decision of an intervening security official, could have been ended. This is illustrated by the testimony of a doctor at al-Raba'a al-Adawiyya site who refused to leave injured persons at al-Raba'a hospital:

"The Special Forces in black spread out and went around. They came to me, and I said, "I have injured with me." One officer said, "I am ordering you to leave." I said, "I can't leave with injured here; take them out yourselves!" He didn't respond; instead, he took out his pistol and killed the three injured men in front of me, shooting them in the heart. I was hoping he would kill me. I wanted to die. The pain was too much. I was shocked. I felt they were not human beings. I grabbed him and swore. He hit me. I am not sure why he didn't kill me" (HRW, 2014AUG: 74).

Despite the public exposure of the security operation, there was a little public outrage over the killing of the protesters except for a small segment of a liberal camp and, of course, Mursi's supporters. No one has been held accountable for the massacre (HRW, 2014AUG: 5). The fact-finding mission of the National Council for Human Rights, a government watchdog group, concluded a year later, in a sharp contrast to the HRW report (2014AUG), that the security forces "maintained a qualitative proportionality between the weapons used, but they failed to maintain proportionality in the intensity of all the sources of fire by armed people" (NCHR, 2014: 7). This statement cemented the entrenched impunity of the security forces. The othering discourse, a basis of the securitization of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist threat, functioned, in this sense, as both "an explanation as well as justification for the military's acts towards the MB" (Soliman, 2014b: 335).

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. the photo coverage by el-Shamy (2013).

6.2.2. The persecution of Egypt's political opposition

Since the outset of the “war on terror” in mid-2013, the Muslim Brotherhood members and supporters have been the prime security target. The resolution of the post-coup leadership to target the Muslim Brotherhood is illustrated in a statement from Ahmad al-Zend, the Minister of Justice and a former appellate court judge, in which he wished for the death of some of the 400,000 Brotherhood members:

“I swear to God, the fire will not be put out in my heart unless at least ten thousand [Brotherhood members] for each [slain officer] are killed.” (quoted in Middle East Eye, 2016)

In the context of the counterterrorism campaign, Brotherhood members and supporters have been facing extra-judicial treatment, including torture and murder. Thousands of them have been imprisoned and hundreds have faced capital punishments, often delivered in mass trials marred by unfair procedures.¹⁵⁶ In March 2014, for instance, an Egyptian court sentenced 529 Muslim Brothers to death for murdering a police officer (Kirkpatrick, 2014). Amnesty International criticized the verdict as “the largest single batch of simultaneous death sentences we’ve seen in recent years, not just in Egypt but anywhere in the world” (AI, 2014MAR).

The Human Rights Watch (2014APR) went further and suggested that “[a]nyone associated with the Muslim Brotherhood knows he’s a target.” The senior members, including Muhammad al-Badie, the Brotherhood’s Supreme Guide, and the former President Muhammad Mursi, were not spared and received the death penalties in other court sessions (HRW, 2014APR).¹⁵⁷ Even though capital punishment does not necessarily imply a death warrant¹⁵⁸, the sharp increase in number of death penalties when compared to Mubarak’s era, however, documents the determination of the post-coup leadership to increasingly utilize the sovereign right to kill when addressing security targets.

The steep rise in killing of civilians without due process corresponds this trend. Justified by the “war on terror” logic, the Egyptian security forces have killed hundreds of civilians since the 2013 coup. For instance, al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence documented 754 cases of extra-judicial killing in 2015 only (Abdalwahab, 2016). Most cases, however, go unnoticed by the Egyptian public. In media accounts, extra-judicial killing is usually reduced to a short comment which legitimizes the killing as an act of self-defense vis-a-vis a terrorist threat. This way, a number of civilians, especially in the context of the “war on terror” in the Northern

¹⁵⁶ See Death Penalty Database.

¹⁵⁷ At the time of writing this thesis, both verdicts have been appealed.

¹⁵⁸ The existing practice exhibits a significant discrepancy between the amount of capital punishments and their actual executions. The death sentence appears to be rather a form of the highest possible legal punishment. It is a legal way to secure an imprisonment of an individual in the entirety of his life. The life sentence, which would be the alternative, refers to, in the Egyptian Penal Code, to 25 years of imprisonment.

Sinai¹⁵⁹, have been turned into militants and terrorists postmortem to legitimize the extra-judicial character of their death (Burgrova, 2017: 12; see also Sakr, 2016; Abdel Azim, 2016).

Although the Muslim Brotherhood has been the central security target, the “war on terror”, as Brooke (2015: 2) notes, has been “nested within a larger effort to reincorporate civil society and prevent the emergence of potentially independent centers of activism”. The counterterrorism campaign has gone clearly beyond targeting Islamists designated as terrorists (see e.g. HRW, 2015JUL). Soon after the forceful clearance of the pro-Mursi’s sit-ins in August 2013, the Egyptian government began to crack down on any political opponents. Hundreds of people, including prominent political activists and leading figures of the 2011 revolution, such as Alaa Abd al-Fattah, Ahmed Douma, Ahmed Maher, Mahinour Elmasry, and Yara Salam, as well as ordinary Egyptians who have criticized the government on variety of issues, have been persecuted and imprisoned along with the Brotherhood’s members and other Islamists (Mada Masr, 2015a; HRW, 2015JUN). The estimated number of up to 60,000 political prisoners housed in the Egyptian prisons is evidence to this trend (Abdullah, 2016).

It is noteworthy that apart from the Islamists and political activists, a large part of the Egyptian prisoners of conscience is comprised of “no-names” Egyptians who have been imprisoned by mistake or for minor offenses. To the latter group belongs, for instance, Mahmud Muhammad Ahmed, a teenage student who spent more than two years in arbitrary detention for wearing a T-shirt with the slogan “nation without torture” on the third anniversary of the 2011 revolution (Mada Masr, 2016a).

The Egyptian incarceration facilities continue to function as Agambenian zones of indistinction. Whereas during Mubarak’s reign, the prisons were not the core site where the life of Egyptians was stripped bare, now the prisons have increasingly been taking over this function. The overcrowded cells, unbearable heat, lack of air ventilation in summer and cold temperatures in winter, and deliberate carelessness of the authorities about prisoners’ health combined with pervasive torture essentially subject the incarcerated Egyptians to a slow death (al-Misri, 2015).

“We almost die here from the heat, and there’s no draft or breeze of air, especially when the fans don’t work. Insects, cockroaches, ants and even worms spread quickly in our cell because we’re forced to keep our food inside. We have no refrigerator.” (a prisoner quoted by al-Jazeera, 2015)

Deprived of any life quality, be it proper food, clean water, bearable temperature, adequate medical treatment, or access to books, the life of political prisoners is stripped bare. The security officials are the petty sovereigns empowered by their impunity to decide about the fate of individual inmates. As Sherief Farag, who was imprisoned in al-Hadra prison facility, noted in his letter from prison “[h]ere [in al-Hadra prison] we

¹⁵⁹ For more information on the “war on terror” campaign in the Northern Sinai see Burgrova (2016).

began to learn that the officer is the source of life: he can give or can take away, tempt or withhold, carrying life or death, depending on his whims” (al-Nadeem, 2014: 85-86).

The numerous accounts of political prisoners leaked out of the Egyptian incarceration facilities depict the grave incarceration conditions that turn their life into an experience between life and death. Esra Taweel, a political activist, for instance, described her life in prison in a letter titled *Graveyard of the living death* as following:

“We keep waiting for angels to come and save us, but they never come. Prison is a wicked thing; life is losing its meaning, or more accurately, there is no life here. We are like the living dead.” (Esra Taweel quoted in al-Jazeera, 2015)

A similar perspective is shared by an imprisoned student, Sherif, who compares the prison to a grave and views his life as being killed already.

“I can’t express what is going on inside me without sadness and grief for what we are in. They now want us to die twice. Once alive on their hands in their prisons, and another time by God’s fate and the end of our life and I see that the second way is better for me now. I don’t want to be alive in my grave. The “prison” for me is like a grave exactly and worse.” (Sherif’s letter quoted in al-Nadeem, 2014: 41)

The Egyptian prisons and detention facilities are zones of indistinction where thousands of Egyptians, *homines sacri*, experience an existence of a living dead exposed to the omnipresent contingency of a physical death, be it a result of torture, of a slow death by a deliberate neglect of authorities, or of an ordered execution (Mada Masr, 2015b; HRW, 2015JAN).

6.2.3. Integration of the exception into an ordinary mode of governance

In the outset of the “war on terror”, the post-coup leadership adopted a time-tested means to establish an exceptional framework to tackle the threat. In the immediate follow-up of the protest’s dispersal in August 2013, the government declared a state of emergency, including a curfew in key governorates and the capital (Gehad, 2013). With exception for the northern Sinai, where the state of emergency and strict curfew was repeatedly imposed over last four years, the state of emergency was lifted in November 2013, after the constitutionally prescribed maximum of three months.¹⁶⁰ In contrast to the securitization context during Mubarak’s reign, the government abandoned the state of emergency as a temporary exceptional framework to underpin the securitization of the Islamist terrorist threat and it chose to integrate the exception into the ordinary framework through a series of harsh, counterterrorism centered laws, most notably the Protest Law of 2013 and the Anti-Terror Law of 2015.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ After deadly attacks on churches, the state of emergency was imposed again in April 2017 for three months.

¹⁶¹ In the absence of a legislative body, which was dissolved in mid-2012 and began to operate again in early 2016 after new parliamentary elections, the president was authorized to issue laws per decree. In the period between the 2013 coup and the first session of the newly elected parliament, Adly Mansour (2013-2014), an interim president, and Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, the Egyptian president since

The Protest Law of 2013 was adopted immediately after the state of emergency was lifted in November the same year. As such, it became a tool to push out political activism and dissent from the public space and thereby allow the government to (re)gain control over the public sphere. The law criminalizes any kind of a public gathering¹⁶² of more than ten people without prior approval from the Ministry of Interior. The approval of the Ministry of Interior, a backbone of the “war on terror” campaign, is, however, virtually impossible to receive for any protests and demonstrations critical of the current political leadership. Thus, the protests, sit-ins, and road blockades staged by the Muslim Brotherhood as well as diverse forms of public protests organized by liberal circles are automatically classified as criminal acts to be punished harshly. To deter Egyptians from protesting, the law gives right to security forces to use excessive and lethal force to disperse any unauthorized public assembly and foresees several years of imprisonment for participation in an illegal public gathering (The Protest Law, art. 13; see also AI, 2013NOV; HRW, 2013NOV). The law’s strict enforcement has reinforced its deterrence effect. Dozens of liberal activists who staged a peaceful protest against the law’s adoption in November 2013 were the first to be subjected to its enforcement and have been imprisoned since.

The Anti-Terror Law of 2015 was a major milestone of the securitization process. Through its adoption, the political leadership anchored a permanent exception in the ordinary legislative framework. Based on a vague definition of terrorism, the law foresees harsh punishments for any actual or planned complicity in terrorism activities that are defined as:

“any use of force, violence, threat, or intimidation domestically or abroad for the purpose of disturbing public order, or endangering the safety, interests, or security of the community” (art. 2 of the Anti-Terror Law).

The broad, unspecific definition of terrorist activities leaves room for a wide interpretation and unrestricted law enforcement. The definition of a terrorist entity that was prescribed by an earlier law on terrorist entities follows similar suit and defines the terrorist entity as:

“any association, organization, group or gang that practices, aims at or calls for destabilizing public order, endangers society’s well-being or its safety interests or endangers social unity by using violence, power, threats or acts of terrorism to achieve its goals.” (Fouad, 2014)

Combined with the Law on “Terrorist Entities” of 2014, approved only a few months earlier, it empowers the state authorities to hand down life in prison or death sentences

2014, issued more than 340 decrees. Although presidential decrees are required to be approved by a parliament, the parliament has to discuss and vote on the decrees within the first 15-day period of its existence. Thus, there is not enough time to review all decrees and the legislation made by the president is as a matter of fact approved. See el-Sadany (2016), TIMEP (2016).

¹⁶² The Protest Law (art. 2) defines a public gathering quite vaguely as: “A public meeting is any gathering in a public location or place wherein persons may enter or be allowed entry without a personal invitation and whose number is no less than 10, for the aim of discussing or exchanging opinions about a subject of a public nature.”

for members of any groups that use violence or threaten to do so (see art. 12, 21, 28, 29 of the Anti-Terror Law of 2015). Moreover, the vague wording allows the government and security forces to label political movements other than the Muslim Brotherhood, such as 6th April Movement, Kefaya, or Ultras as terrorist entities and thus to deal with their members as alleged terrorists (Fouad, 2014). In the current counterterrorism context, minor offenses, such as illegal assembly, blocking roads, obstructing traffic, or possession of unlicensed firearms are easily qualified as acts that *destabilize public order* and *endanger society's well-being* and the transgressors are subjected to harsh punishments under the scope of the Anti-Terror Law (Mada Masr, 2015c).

Apart from the vague wording open to a wide interpretation by the law enforcers, the Anti-Terror Law boosts the entrenched impunity of Egyptian security professionals in a direct way. It legalizes the act of extra-judicial killing in order to fight terrorism.

“Enforcers of the provisions of this Law shall not be held criminally accountable if they use force to perform their duties or protect themselves from imminent danger to lives or properties, when the use of this right is necessary and adequate to avert the risk.” (Art. 8 of the Anti-Terror Law)

In practice, as long as security officials use lethal force in a context of countering terrorism, their impunity is legally guaranteed (Hamama, 2015). The Anti-Terror Law also reestablishes the state's monopoly on information and its distribution, at least in the field of national security. It criminalizes public accounts and reports that cover the counterterrorism campaign including terror attacks or groups and divert from the official line of the Ministry of Defense. Authors of narrations which contradict official statements face the accusations of “false reporting” and are subjected to financial fines beyond the means of an average Egyptian and/or imprisonment.¹⁶³ In result, there are, for instance, no independent sources to cover the counterterrorism campaign in northern Sinai, a region which is a base to the most lethal terrorist group in Egypt; the Sinai Province has affiliations to the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (see Burgrova, 2016). The media coverage of the “war on terror”, in Sinai and beyond, has been reduced to repeating official statements (Sakr, 2016; see also Afify, 2016) which has made the official counterterrorism accounts the dominant source of information about the counterterrorism campaign.

Not unlike the securitization process studied in this thesis, the law remains a prime tool for introducing extraordinary measures and legitimizing exception on behalf of security. The actual securitization process, however, differs in one crucial point. The exceptional framework has been introduced as a permanent part of the existing sociopolitical order. Although the newly introduced terrorism-related laws are exceptional in their content,

¹⁶³ “Whoever intentionally, by any means, publishes, broadcasts, displays, or promotes false news or statements on terrorist acts inside the country or anti-terrorism operations contrary to the official statements released by the Ministry of Defense shall be punishable by a fine of no less than 200,000 Egyptian pounds and no more than 500,000 Egyptian pounds, without prejudice to the disciplinary penalties prescribed” (Art. 35 of the Anti-Terror Law).

they are embedded into the ordinary legal framework as permanent elements. The firm integration of the exception into the ordinary framework nullifies the presumed temporariness of the exception and blurs the frontiers between the exception and normality. The terrorism-related laws are clearly not exclusive to security targets, i.e. members and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, but apply to anyone who defies the actual sociopolitical order. The Egyptian security professionals are legally confirmed in their role as petty sovereigns who can decide on the worthiness of one's life. The exception has become a new normality.

6.3. Resistance

Egypt's majority society welcomed the removal of the Brotherhood's government, which had been perceived as an existential threat to the Egyptian well-being. When the post-coup leadership declared that treating the Brotherhood as a terrorist entity was a necessity, the society's support expressed for the coup easily transformed into the support of the "war on terror". The societal approval of the counterterrorism campaign also underpinned societal sanctioned processes of marginalization, delegitimization, and exclusion of those who have opposed and questioned counterterrorism activities and/or the designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization (Morayef, 2013). Especially at the outset of the counterterrorism campaign in 2013, resistance to the securitization process was thus virtually reduced to the Brotherhood's members and supporters and a few political activists and human rights groups that criticized the illegitimacy of the power transition and/or the grave violations of human rights on behalf of the counterterrorism campaign.

6.3.1. Margin of freedom

The government strategies to forestall resistance and optimize the conduct of governed Egyptians have combined restrictive laws, delegitimization campaigns, and the proliferation of fear; the latter is linked to the routinized exercise of sovereign violence by the Egyptian security forces.

Not unlike governmental strategies during Mubarak's era, the law has been an underlying governmental tool to optimize the governed society and delineate the frontiers between acceptable and unacceptable forms of conduct. The vague wording of the newly adopted laws, however, invites wide interpretation of these frontiers by law enforcement authorities. Thus, although Egypt has finally introduced a comprehensive Anti-Terror Law after more than three decades of counterterrorism, the distinction between a terrorist and an optimized citizen is not defined by the vague law but rather by individual decisions of petty sovereigns that take advantage of the law vagueness. This is exemplified, for instance, in the case of the schoolboy Khaled Bakara. The

security forces detained Bakara for possession of a ruler with a Raba'a sign.¹⁶⁴ Bakara was investigated for belonging to a banned terrorist group and possessing an item that “has a symbol that shows violence and offense towards the armed forces” (al-Jazeera, 2014) and thereby inspires violence against the armed forces (see also Kingsley, 2013c). In another case, the security officials detained and investigated Mahmud Hussein, a teenage student, for more than two years. The trigger of Hussein’s detention and accusation of belonging to a banned terrorist group and attending unauthorized protests was the fact he was wearing a T-Shirt with an inscription “The nation without torture” and a scarf with the logo of the 2011 revolution (AI, 2016MARa; AI, 2016MARb).

As both cases underscore, simply wearing a T-shirt or displaying the Raba'a sign might be enough criteria for security professionals to decide about one’s (un)acceptability and designate him a terrorist/supporter of terrorism. There is, however, little certainty or clarity about what the criteria of (un)acceptability might be central in other individual case. As Stacher (2016) observes, such criteria “may bear little resemblance to the law, but relations between state officials and society come to have a predictable rhythm. People understand where the red lines are, and they can choose to stay within them or to step across.” But as Stacher (2016) adds, “Egypt does not work this way under the field marshal who became president, ‘Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi.” In this respect, the new terrorism-related laws have become, with regard to their vagueness, instruments to legalize arbitrary sovereign decisions of law enforcers.

In such a context, the arbitrary use of sovereign violence has flourished. Security officials have used torture, sexual violence, and extra-judicial executions to address anyone whom they perceive to have defied the existing sociopolitical order and/or contested the legitimacy of the transitional leadership. In this regard, Amnesty International speaks of repressive measures which target “[a]nyone who dares to speak out is at risk, with counterterrorism being used as an excuse to abduct, interrogate and torture people who challenge the authorities” (AI, 2016JUL). Since the counterterrorism legislation invites a wide interpretation, whether the law has been transgressed or not is a result of individual sovereign decisions of security officials. Their sovereignty in decision-making appears to be firmer than during Mubarak’s reign. As Stacher (2016) notes, the official subordination of security forces to al-Sisi’s government notwithstanding, they appear “to have slipped the leash of the executive branch” and act beyond al-Sisi’s control.

The arbitrariness in the use of sovereign violence has increased insecurity among Egyptians about what conduct is acceptable and what not; and thus, it has also

¹⁶⁴ The Raba'a sign is usually displayed as a four-fingered salute on a yellow background and primarily was used to express solidarity with the killed and injured protesters during the dispersal of the pro-Mursi sit-ins in Cairo in August 2013. The symbol has, however, overcome this reference and has become a general symbol of opposition used by the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters. Under the Anti-Terror Law, the Raba'a symbol is, however, interpreted as an explicit support of a terrorist organization which is punishable up to five years of imprisonment.

reinforced the paralyzing effect of fear of becoming a *homo sacer*. The barrier of fear, undermined during the 2011 uprising, has been re-erected. Egypt under al-Sisi's leadership has been compared to Brezhnev's Soviet Union (Jebreal, 2016; the Guardian, 2016). According to Hamzawy (2015a; see also Dawoud, 2016) fear is a central building element of the current leadership which is "a state of pure tyranny, which thrives in a republic of fear and hides behind the banner of Egyptian patriotism, all the while exploiting crimes of terrorism, which are used to justify further oppression, subjection, and disregard of rights and freedoms." Many artists, journalists, scholars, and writers have been, as Jebreal (2016) notes, "terrified to do their jobs". Fear proliferated through the arbitrary enforcement of counterterrorism measures has paralyzed the will of many Egyptians to resist and question the sociopolitical order.

Smear campaigns have been yet another strategy of the post-coup leadership to contain resistance and discredit vocal opponents. Hamzawy (2015a) observes that the regime has aimed the smear campaigns especially at "those who stand out from the masses by denouncing the regime's unilateral and authoritarian style, and those who refuse to be dragged into the McCarthyism that seeks to justify terrorism and violence." Like similar campaigns in Mubarak's era, the vocal critics are delegitimized as disloyal to the national cause.¹⁶⁵ This way, for instance, the human rights groups, especially those which condemned the clearance of the sit-ins in August 2013, have faced an intense defaming campaign (Morayef, 2013). They have been routinely referred to as "traitors supporting terrorism" or "mercenaries selling their services to the highest bidder" (Okail, 2013b). Although many of them continue to work, the smear campaigns have negatively affected their public credibility; delegitimizing "rhetoric exposes rights groups to immediate assault, not only by the authorities but also by the inflamed public, who see the activists as traitors, foreign agents, or naïve troublemakers" (Okail, 2013b).

6.3.2. Clusters of resistance

The wide-spread euphoria that followed the ouster of the Brotherhood leadership combined with the hypernationalist securitizing rhetoric downplayed critical views on the counterterrorism campaign. Wide ranks of the Egyptian society including the bulk of human rights groups, at least during the first months after the coup, embraced the counterterrorism campaign as the only legitimate means to a stable, prosperous, and possibly democratic Egypt. Consequently, many Egyptians have turned a blind eye to the exceptional, extra-judicial measures adopted in crack-down on Mursi's supporters, including the massacre of pro-Mursi's supporters in August 2013. In this regard, Alaa abd al-Fatah, one of the prominent activists, warned that after the Raba'a massacre "[a]nother battle of narrative would start: getting non-Islamists to accept that a massacre had happened at all, to reject the violence committed in their name" (Alaa abd al-Fatah quoted in the Guardian, 2016).

¹⁶⁵ There have been also cases of smear campaigns that were centered on the immorality of the exposed individual. For more, see Jebreal (2016).

In the aftermath of the coup, the Egyptian society was highly polarized along supporters of Mursi and supporters of the new leadership. However, there was a small segment of Egyptians represented mainly by liberal activists and few human rights organizations that opted for an alternative position and contested the counterterrorism campaign without siding with Mursi's camp. Initiatives such as *al-Maydan al-Thalith* (the Third Square) or *Masmou3* (Listen) stood for a "third way" to the binary positions of the securitizing leadership and Mursi's Muslim Brotherhood. *Masmou3*, for instance, was a loose online movement which called in its regular tweets for daily protests by making noise at one's window at a specific time:

"Against Brotherhood (al-ikhwan) and the religious current? Against random steps of the state and overwhelming chaos? Every day at 9pm open your window and make some noise for 5 minutes and let out your voice #masmou3."¹⁶⁶

Like the non-Islamist opposition during the Mubarak's reign, the "third way" dissent challenged the exceptional framework introduced along with the counterterrorism campaign. The empowerment and impunity of the security forces, as well as increasing authoritarianism of the transitional government were major points of its criticism. While being critical of the counterterrorism campaign the "third way" dissent also contested the Brotherhood's legitimacy to lead the country. In result, it has been exposed to resentment by both the Muslim Brotherhood and the transitional leadership. The "third current" representatives have been turned into unwanted, unacceptable individuals who have been delegitimized through defaming campaigns and excluded from the optimized Egyptian society (see e.g. AI, 2014JAN: 8). As one political activist noted in his blog:

"[t]he discourse of terrorism has an effect of divide and rule. In the following months, I was not deemed the enemy per se, but by not siding with the conqueror I was a dissident, and therefore a target" (Wahid, 2016).

Exposed to the high risk of being targeted and moved to the detention and prison facilities, some left Egypt for exile. Ramy Essamy, for example, the Tahrir revolution singer and song writer left the country. Others, including Alaa abd al-Fattah, Yara Sallam, Mahinour al-Masry, Ahmed Maher, Ahmed Douma, and hundreds other were arrested and imprisoned.

Although the "third way" dissent in a form of ad-hoc organized initiatives perished just a few months after the coup, the "third" position, i.e. being critical of the Brotherhood as well as of the government, has been occupied by an increasing number of Egyptians. Against the backdrop of repressions that have embraced many Egyptians, including the die-hard supporters of the regime, such as parts of Tamarod's leadership, many Egyptians have grown critical of the counterterrorism measures (see e.g. Maher, 2013; ANHRI, 2014; Rashwan, 2013).

The case of Alaa al-Aswani, an active Kefaya member and a prominent literary figure

¹⁶⁶ See the Twitter account of Masmou3: <https://twitter.com/masmou3>

who converted from a supporter to a critic of al-Sisi's, illustrates the transformation many Egyptians originally supportive of the post-coup government and the counterterrorism campaign underwent. Like many others in the Egyptian leftist intelligentsia circles, al-Aswani supported Tamarod's calls to remove the Brotherhood's leadership and supported al-Sisi's "war on terror". In line with the official securitizing rhetoric, al-Aswani, for instance, described the massacre of Mursi's supporters in August 2013 as a justified act in time of war arguing that the Muslim Brotherhood is "a group of terrorists and fascists" (Kingsley, 2013b). A year later, al-Aswani's position, however, began to change (see e.g. Fisk, 2014; McBain, 2015). In a protest against an increasing number of restrictions imposed on freedom of speech in Egypt, al-Aswani stopped publishing his regular columns in the Egyptian daily *al-Masry al-Youm*, claiming that "criticism and difference of opinions are no longer allowed. Only praise at the expense of the truth is allowed" (Kortam, 2014). Ever since, he has been subjected to a smear campaign in which he is depicted as a Qatari agent, an affiliate of the Brotherhood, and/or a CIA spy (ANHRI, 2014; Fisk, 2014).

The securitization process and related counterterrorism campaign have been challenged by the security target, the Muslim Brotherhood. Although the Muslim Brotherhood has officially denied the terrorist group label (see e.g. MEMO, 2014), its ranks, fragmented in result of the intense security crackdown, have been increasingly torn between the peaceful, nonviolent and more aggressive, violent approach (Ayyash and Willi, 2016: 3f). Especially in the early aftermath of the coup when the channels for peaceful political opposition were still available many Brotherhood's members and supporters participated in public protests and sit-ins, blocked roads, or distributed leaflets (Fahmy, 2013). There were, however, also acts of violence that intensified in the aftermath of the security operation against the sit-ins in August 2013. Mobs of Mursi's supporters torched and looted more than forty churches nationwide, killing four people (HRW, 2013AUG).

Later on, against the backdrop of the intense counterterrorism campaign, which left no space for the peaceful expression of political concerns and tolerated no contest to the leadership, violence became an increasingly attractive option for some Brotherhood members and supporters. Whereas the younger Brotherhood generation pushed for "smart violence", i.e. selective use of violence against the state authorities as a means of retaliation, the old guards did not appear to be willing and/or able to come up with an alternative to "smart violence" (Ayyash, 2015; see also Fahmi, 2015). Although the non-violence doctrine still appears to be a dominant discourse among the Brotherhood members (Fahmi, 2015), there has been a significant number of disillusioned Brotherhood members who joined homegrown militant groups and took up arms against the state (Fayed, 2016).

Over the last three years, the sociopolitical context of a "war on terror" has significantly

constrained the margin of Egyptian freedom. The lack of possibilities to channel political opposition through non-violent means has, on the one hand, intensified the inclination of some Egyptians, especially among the Islamists, to resort to violence. On the other hand, this situation has led many Egyptians who had been politically active to yield their engagement. Letters from prisons, a literary genre which has boomed in recent years in Egypt, testifies to the prevalent state of despair and hopelessness among the latter group. For instance, Alaa Abd al-Fattah, one of the leading Egyptian activists, imprisoned for participating in an illegal protest in 2013, wrote from prison three years later:

“It has been months since I wrote a letter and more than a year since I’ve written an article. I have nothing to say: no hopes, no dreams, no fears, no warnings, no insights; nothing, absolutely nothing.” (an excerpt from a letter from prison published in the Guardian, 2016)

The sense of despair combined feelings of futility to challenge the existing sociopolitical order is, however, observable also outside Egyptian prisons. This is underlined by a comment of an Egyptian blogger known as Sandmonkey on why he had stopped blogging:

“writing about Egypt these days is like writing another round-up of this week’s most unfortunate events: It’s boring. It’s like tweeting from the Titanic. How many times can you possibly say “we are sinking. This is not going well. #saveus #thebandiskillingitthrough” before it just becomes spam? Somehow talking that you are still alive but not in optimal condition when so many around you are dying just seems like bad form. Whining is so 2013 anyway.” (Sandmonkey, 2015)

6.4. Conclusion

The preceding elaborations dedicated to the most recent developments in Egypt have demonstrated that the securitization of Islamist terrorist threat did not vanish with the 2011 revolution. The knowledge about the unacceptability and dangerousness of Islamists which had been formed over the last decades remains deeply rooted in the Egyptian security discourse. Like the securitization context during the Mubarak’s reign, the post-coup leadership has mobilized this knowledge to oppress political opposition referring security and well-being of the Egyptian society as legitimatizing rationales.

Although the actual securitization of the Islamist terrorist threat and the securitization scrutinized by this thesis bear similar patterns, the dynamics of each process vary, specifically, in the intensity factor that is observable in four aspects. First, the actual “war on terror” has been based on a very explicit framing of the terrorist threat, i.e. the Muslim Brotherhood. The security target has been thus a very explicit target from the outset of the securitization process. Second, the scale and intensity of the sovereign violence which the Egyptian security forces have adopted to target the perceived

terrorists outstrip the security practice known in Mubarak's era. The clearance of the sit-ins in Cairo which has, according to the Human Rights Watch (2014AUG: 5) "likely amounted to crimes against humanity", clearly underscores the intensity of the sovereign violence in the context of the actual "war on terror". Third, from the securitization's outset, the exception has been introduced as a part of the Egyptian normality. In particular, the legacy of the state of emergency has been abandoned and the exceptional security provisions have been directly integrated as a part of normality in the ordinary legislation. Fourth, the governmental strategies to contain resistance have been so far largely centered on coercive methods which combined arbitrary exercise of sovereign violence and fear proliferation. In result, the extremely constrained margin of Egyptian freedom, which does not allow for a non-violent, legal forms of dissent, has reduced the forms of resistance to either violence or resignation.

On the theoretical level, the analysis of the actual Egyptian counterterrorism campaign has demonstrated the applicability of the conceptualization of securitization as outlined by this thesis in a different political context than originally scrutinized by this thesis. In this sense, it underlines the strength of the securitization theory as a theoretical approach which can be flexibly, though case-sensitively, used to analyze diverse security contexts, including the actual "war on terror" in Egypt.

7. Three facets of securitization

This thesis has introduced a tailored conceptual framework and novel T-E-R model that addresses the issue of a perpetuated securitization process. Building on my theoretical claims raised in the opening parts of this thesis, I have analyzed the Egyptian state of emergency as an empirical instance of a prolonged securitization case and examined its endurance over several decades during the reign of Husni Mubarak (1981-2011). The analysis of the Egyptian state of emergency and related “war on terror” has demonstrated that the combination of exceptional discourses with the routinized security practices offers an analytically fruitful and mutually complementary framework to address lengthy securitizations. Deepened by post-structuralist insights into the modern statecraft and exceptionalism which were offered by Michel Foucault’s and Giorgio Agamben’s works, the conceptual framework has proved to be very beneficial to explore and identify factors pertinent to the issue of a perpetuated securitization process. The T-E-R conceptual model, specifically, has enabled me to examine the complex interplay between the Egyptian “war on terror”, the lengthy period of the state of emergency, the sustained legitimacy of Mubarak’s regime, the clientelistic networks, the oppression of the political opposition, and the abusive conduct of the Egyptian security forces.

The scrutiny of the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign has also supported my central theoretical argument that securitization can be viewed as a political strategy to maintain societal control by (re)configuring the bandwidth of (un)acceptable forms of life. The securitization process, specifically, allows the government, first, to construct, frame and identify individuals and/or forms of conduct as acceptable and unacceptable, desirable, and undesirable, prosperous and threatening to the governed collective and, second, to exclude the latter from the optimized society and thereby to expose individuals identified as threatening to an exceptional treatment sanctioned by the securitization logics of exception. With regard to the central argument, my research has identified three major fields of interest, the process of framing, the exception and security practice, and resistance. Through these fields, the questions of durability and persistence of a securitization process have been accessed and elaborated.

Although the perpetuation of a securitization process has been studied in this thesis in relation to the Egyptian “war on terror”, the research results are pertinent for the securitization scholarship engaged with the perpetuated securitization cases beyond the context of the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign examined in this thesis. The following pages outline the underlying theoretical contributions of my research and their relevance for the study of perpetuated securitization cases.

Securitization as a process of optimizing the self

Theoretical contribution I: Securitization does not only legitimize the exceptional treatment of security targets, but it also addresses and disqualifies individuals who do not fit into the (re)defined category of an optimized collective.

For the CS, securitization is a process that introduces and legitimizes exceptional measures that are deemed necessary to address the threat (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 3; Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 213). In addition to the urgency of the threat as an external factor that motivates securitizing actors to securitize an issue, the need to protect a threatened entity plays a key role. It is on behalf of a threatened referent object that securitizing actors claim urgency to act and address the threat by means that likely override “the possibilities of judicial review or other modalities of public influence upon bureaucratic or executive decisions” (Aradau, 2004: 392; see also Buzan, et al., 1998: 25).

The dialectical relationship between the threat, i.e. the dangerous other, and the protection of the referent object is one of the central, though overlooked, CS observations. As Vuori (2011) reminds us, securitization scholarship tends to neglect the dangerous other as an analytical category pertinent to the securitization framework.

Didier Bigo, one of the few scholars to link the referent object and the dangerous other, offers important insights in this matter. For Bigo (2002: 80), securitizing often involves stereotypes, reductionist arguments that tend to ignore the complexity of the issue at stake. The other is thus framed as a threat and classified as a dangerous figure, while its counterpart, us, is reproduced as its ideal flip-side (Bigo, 2002: 70). Us, in this regard, is the CS referent object. Vuori (2011), like Bigo, emphasizes the relevance of the other and urges (2011: 186) a more in depth analytical focus on the dangerous other. According to his claim, the study of the dangerous other can advance our understanding about securitizing actors as well as about the contextual setting of a securitization process as such. In this regard, Vuori (2011) along with Bigo and Tsoukala (2008), point at an underlying, yet overlooked question posed by the securitization theory: “towards whom and with what consequences” securitization is aimed (Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008: 5).

Securitizing, i.e. the framing of the threat, (re)establishes the binary divisions between *us*, i.e., what must be protected, and *them*, the dangerous other, what must be addressed by exceptional measures. As suggested by Bigo (2008a), Michel Foucault’s governmentality offers valuable insights into the processes of societal inclusion/exclusion (see Foucault, 2009). Moreover, it also integrates the notion of interventionist governmental strategies in the life of a governed population and its betterment through biopolitical optimization (see Lemke, 2011; Krasmann, 2011; Larsen, 2011). The governing, in this sense, is not based on “a binary division between

the permitted and the prohibited” (Foucault, 2009: 5). Instead, it refers to the continuous (re)establishment of what is optimal, i.e. what falls within “a bandwidth of the acceptable that must not be exceeded” (Foucault, 2009: 6). Governmentality, as a specific form of governance and theory of society, embeds processes of societal inclusion/exclusion into a wider context of processes and practices through which society is governed. Moreover, it also addresses questions about what forms of life are optimal and admissible and what forms of life are not (see Bigo, 2008b).

Following this line of the scholarship, I have argued that securitization can be reinterpreted as a biopolitical process of inclusion/exclusion through which governed population is optimized.

I have outlined the dangerous other, security targets, as a promising analytical unit that can answer Bigo’s and Tsoukala’s question “towards whom and with what consequences” securitization is aimed (2008: 5). In reference to the referent object, I have argued that the security targets are framed and constructed as a dangerous other to the optimized life of the governed society. Thus, they are constructed as existing beyond the bandwidth of acceptability; through such framing, they are excluded from the optimized society. Their life becomes devoid of any value to the optimized society (see Tagma, 2009; Agamben, 1998) and might be subjected to exceptional security measures, such as arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detentions, ill-treatment, torture, and extra-judicial killings.

I have also shown that the dangerous other cannot be separated from the self, i.e. the referent object. Taken down to the referent object, i.e. the governed society, the referent object emerges as more than a mere object of the government’s protection. Specifically, I have maintained that securitization as a biopolitical process justifies governmental interventions in the life of the referent object (see also Bigo, 2008b). Because it allows for (re)configuration of “a bandwidth of the acceptable that must not be exceeded” to borrow Foucault’s words (2009: 6). The (re)configuration of the bandwidth of societal optimum primarily allows to construct the dangerous other, excluded it from the optimized society and thus legitimize exceptional treatment of those identified as a threat. But as my research has demonstrated the exceptional measures might also concern those who contest the (re)configuration of the societal optimum and thus likely transgress the bandwidth of societal optimum. As noted, for instance, by Huysmans (2004: 333) or Vuori (2011: 197f) in times of crises, the appeal on the imagined unity and social cohesiveness of us against them resonates within the society and downplays dissenting voices as a betrayal.

As I have demonstrated, with regard to the Egyptian society and its optimization through the “war on terror”, the governed society is more than a mere passive referent object to be protected. The referent object is subjected to interventions through which

the governed society is (re)optimized largely along the binary positions of security and threat, us and them, acceptable and unacceptable forms of life and conduct. The inquiry into the Egyptian construct of “the Islamist” as the “evil” other associated with the terrorist threat has pointed at a simultaneous process which (re)constructed and re-optimized the “true” self of the Egyptian society along the notions of patriotism and modest religiosity. Securitization, in this sense, produces both forms of life which are disqualified as threatening to the governed collective as well as forms of life which are constructed as worthy of protection.

The construction of the binary distinction between them, e.g. Islamist terrorists, and us, e.g. the threatened Egyptian society, thus facilitates the delegitimization of alternative positions on matters of security. As my analysis has demonstrated, the Egyptian opposition that contested the counterterrorism campaign was sidelined, depicted as treacherous, and delegitimized for its alleged siding with “the terrorists”. So too were other individuals, such as homosexuals, who did not fit in the social norms of optimized collective targeted. In this sense, securitization is not only a political strategy to exceptionally address those who personify the threat, i.e., the security targets. It is also a means to disqualify and delegitimize actors – while preserving the facade of political legitimacy – who, due to their conduct and/or positions, exceed the boundaries of an optimized collective. Securitization can be thus understood as a tool of societal control through which individuals who stand for views alternating from the securitization narrative are delegitimized, downplayed, and possibly silenced.

Securitization as an empowerment of securitization professionals

Theoretical contribution II: The empowerment of security professionals and institutions that securitization fosters through the adoption of exceptional measures is hardly reversible and motivates actors and institutions in the security field to keep the securitization process going. This observation, pioneered by the Paris School, gains relevance especially in the context of an Agambenian exception in which the law is rendered an empty signifier for the security practice.

The CS emphasis on the speech-act notwithstanding, an increasing number of scholars agree that the process of constructing a threat is irreducible to a discursive enunciation of securitizing actors (e.g. Hansen, 2000, 2011; Williams, 2003; Mavelli, 2013; Wilkinson, 2007; c.a.s.e. collective, 2006: 459; Sjøstedt, 2011). This position, pioneered by the Paris school securitization (see Bigo, 2002, 2007), maintains that securitization can also develop through unspectacular, non-discursive channels that include daily routines and a range of bureaucratic practices in the security field (see e.g. Williams, 2003: 524; Huysmans, 2011: 375; Abrahamsen, 2005; Aradau, et al., 2008). The Paris school, in particular, emphasizes the role of security professionals, such as the police, military, intelligence services, and other institutions active in the field of security, and

adds thus an important angle to the securitization scholarship (see Bigo, 2002: 76; Bigo, 2008b; c.a.s.e. collective, 2006; Mavelli, 2013: 174; see also Aradau, 2004: 395).

The security professionals are not just privileged actors who produce authoritative knowledge about security and thus contribute to shaping of a threat (Bigo, 2002). Through their everyday conduct and struggles with the dangerous other, they also legitimize their authority to speak about risk and security (Bigo, 2002; 2008b) and therefore to shape the security priorities of the state (Berling, 2011: 386f). For Bigo (2007), security professionals are not neutral actors. Their engagement in securitization processes is bound to questions of their own meaningfulness and empowerment. As without threats, their function, i.e., to ensure security and address threats, loses meaning and they are rendered irrelevant (Bigo, 2007: 224). Moreover, as Bigo (2002: 65) points out, securitization also introduces measures that empower security professionals as experts in the field of threat management. Thus, even if the threat is addressed the security professionals are unlikely to give up their empowered status.

Although Bigo does not primarily engage with securitizations that include the disruption and exceptional overriding of the existing rules as the CS model assumes (see e.g. Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008: 5; Bigo, 2008a: 113), his perspective on security professionals and their practices provides insights into securitizations with exceptionalist discourses (see also Bourbeau, 2014: 202; Bourbeau and Vuori, 2015). In reference to Carl Schmitt's position on exception and politics, the exception, defined by the CS as a realm of security which allows for suspension of normal rules, is a presumed outcome of a successful securitization (Balzacq, et al., 2015: 3; Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 213). In the CS view, securitization thus reinforces the binary distinction between the normal, ordinary issues of the political agenda and the security issues which need to be addressed by means that suspend the normal rules (Buzan, et al., 1998: 24-25).

Giorgio Agamben's state of exception, defined as a zone of indistinction (Agamben, 1998: 170), offers a solid conceptual base to reconcile both: the CS exceptionalist security discourses and Bigo's routinized security practices. Moreover, as argued in this thesis, it also suitably complements Foucault's biopolitical optimization in a way that it addresses and contextualizes the matters of biopolitical exclusion. Similar to the CS, Agamben draws on Schmitt's argument about two normative orders. The state of exception is, for Agamben (1998: 20-21), a threshold between a normal situation and chaos (see also Schmitt, 1979 [1934]: 18-19) defined by operation of sovereign power to which the outside law is devoid of meaning (Opitz, 2011: 106; see also Ojakangas, 2005: 7ff). Therefore, security practices such as torture, shoot-to-kill policies, or extra-judicial killing, that would be legally unfeasible even in authoritarian contexts, are thereby made possible. Agamben's zone of indistinction illuminates legal black holes in securitization contexts which integrate security practices justified on the grounds of an existential threat that are illegal and would be under other circumstances unthinkable.

The relevance of Agamben's contribution to the securitization scholarship marks also his emphasis on the life of individuals within the zone of indistinction who are subjected to exceptional security measures. Epitomized in the figure of *homo sacer* for Agamben (1998: 137ff) the life of those in the zone of indistinction is rendered a bare life that is devoid of any juridical value, deprived of a dignified meaning valid outside the zone of indistinction and is thus reduced to *zoë*, a pure physical being. For Agamben's *homo sacer* a physical death is a possible contingency (Agamben 1998: 71f, 102f; see also Tagma, 2009: 408f, 418f). Moreover, since his life is located beyond both human and divine laws, between "licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and juridical protection no longer made any sense" (Agamben, 1998: 170), the killing of *homo sacer* does not constitute a homicide (Agamben, 1998: 81ff).

Agamben's conceptualization of zones of indistinction and *homines sacri* clearly adds a more nuanced perspective on security understood by the CS as a realm of exception. Yet, as I have argued, unless Agamben's radical position on the zone of indistinction as a product of sovereign exceptionality (1998: 142f, 181) is modified, it cannot enrich the securitization scholarship. Along with other authors (e.g. Tagma, 2009), I have maintained that the zone of indistinction as well as dangerous others transformed into *homines sacri* are products of biopolitical optimization. Specifically, in case of my research, they are the product of a successful securitization. They are not a result of a transcendent sovereign, a given natural fact, but of "a juridico-political construction" (Genel, 2006: 60). The same logic goes for the exceptional security practices. They are not apolitical normative constructs, they "are the outcome of political acts by politicians and specialists on threat management" (Bigo, 2002: 68).

As I have shown, Agamben's insights on the zone of indistinction and *homines sacri* underscore Bigo's argument about the empowerment of security professionals and extend it to the realm of exception. Particularly, I have maintained that their empowerment relates to their role of petty sovereigns and gatekeepers to zones of indistinction. As the law is rendered an empty signifier there, the impunity of the security professionals operating within is ensured. In this regard, I have argued and empirically shown that such an enormous empowerment of security professionals creates an environment of a path-dependency in which the exception is gradually normalized and becomes a new rule. As the Egyptian case underlines, the security professionals are prone to maintain the securitization status quo because they are unwilling to give up the acquired privileges and/or to be held accountable for their security operation conducted in the mode of impunity.

The scrutiny of the Egyptian securitization case has also demonstrated that even though the state of emergency as an extraordinary security measure was anchored in the Egyptian legal framework, the law was not a point of reference for the security practitioners involved in the counterterrorism campaign. The counterterrorism practice

including intimidation, torture, extra-judicial killings was virtually *above* the law and so was the existence of unauthorized detention facilities, torture chambers, special sections of prisons. In such a context, securitization legitimizes the establishment of legal black holes and empowers security practitioners as their gatekeepers who operate in a mode of sanctioned impunity. By implication, as it has been illustrated in detail on the practices of the Egyptian security apparatus, the security professionals assume also the role of petty sovereigns who decide in their everyday security practice on the worthiness and unworthiness of individual subjects.

Securitization as a means to consolidate asymmetric power relations

Theoretical contribution III: Resistance greatly affects the persistence and perpetuation of a securitization process. Securitization can be sustained as long as it is not decisively contested. Thus, for securitization to persist, public approval is not a necessary precondition. As such, this observation is especially valid in contexts of illiberal political systems in which expressions of disagreement over the sociopolitical status quo are likely to be contextually constrained.

For the CS, a securitization is successful “only if and when the audience accepts it as such” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 25). The audience is thus an inseparable, fundamental part of any securitization process. The lack of clarity about the audience as an analytical category (Léonard and Kaurert, 2011: 58f; McDonald, 2008: 572), however, complicates the definition as well as the empirical identification of the moment when it approves the securitization move (Stritzel, 2007; Balzacq, 2011a; Salter, 2008).

While the CS admits that the audience’s approval does not necessarily have to emerge out of “civilized, dominance-free discussion” (Buzan, et al., 1998: 25), the body of securitization studies in the Western context and the fact that majority of empirically oriented securitization studies analyze situations in more or less democratic contexts (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 42), sets the direction of the securitization scholarship. The audience’s (dis)approval of a securitization process is largely perceived as a voluntary activity (Stritzel, 2007: 362). Moreover, the public inactivity or apathy to a securitization process is then often implicitly interpreted as a legitimizing approval of the securitization (Vuori, 2008: 70).

This position, however, does not account for contexts or factors in which “the possibility of free speech and political structures that guarantee individuals protection against random as well as systematic violence” (Buzan and Hansen, 2009: 216) may not be developed. More recent CS work acknowledges this deficit (see Buzan and Hansen, 2009; see also Stritzel, 2007: 362; Vuori, 2011: 188). Moreover, as few authors, such as Hansen (2000), Wilkinson (2007), or Holm (2003), point out, the analytical prioritization of audience’s approval downplays the pertinence of the silence of those who, due to a lack of possibilities to participate in political processes, limited access to

traditional forums such as print media, or simply out of fear of possible repercussions, do not articulate their security concerns and oppose to the securitization processes.

The conceptual dilemma linked with the identification of the audience and its approval can be overcome by a radical change of the default perspective. As I have argued and shown empirically, the elaboration of resistance to securitization instead of approval opens up new horizons for securitization analysis. Although, the most recent securitization scholarship has brought up resistance as a relevant subject of analysis, its perspective has been so far reduced to acts of counter-securitization, associated primarily with the security targets (see Vuori, 2011; Stritzel and Chang, 2015). In this regard, I have maintained that Michel Foucault's governmentality, in which his emphasis on analytics of power is an integral part, offers a useful framework to conceptualize and make sense of resistance in the securitization context. Moreover, it can account for resistance beyond the category of security targets.

For Foucault (2009: 2) there are no relationships in which the mechanisms of power are not intrinsic. The power relations are neither static nor immune to resistance. As for Foucault (1982: 780f), resistance can arise anytime and as such might alter the hegemonic configuration of the existing power/knowledge relations. That is also why resistance cannot be predefined for it does not arise prior to the power relation it opposes (Foucault, 1990: 122-123). Moreover, Foucault also addresses contextual settings dominated by extremely asymmetric power relations that are likely to be (re)produced by securitization processes, especially in illiberal governance contexts. Specifically, he admits that “[i]n a great many cases, power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom” (Foucault, 2000: 292). Yet, in his view, even “an extremely limited margin of freedom” allows resistance to emerge. This should not imply that Foucault celebrates resistance, an antithesis of a dominant power relation (see Rouse, 2005: 12). Resistance is for him a productive force that is not inherently a negative or positive (Foucault, 2002: 452).

Drawing from Foucault's insights into power/resistance, I have maintained that, like other processes (see e.g. Karskens, 2009: 127; Wilson, 2009: 31; Stetter, 2008: 75), securitization is wedded into a web of power relations. Therefore, securitization always embraces the possibility of resistance, which might occur at any level of agency (individual, group, or societal level), at any moment of securitization, with a varying intensity and uncertain results (see Vuori, 2011: 190). By implication, I have argued that the analytical category of audience cannot be conceptually predefined. As it is a product of resistance which is a possible, but not an automatic, power effect of a securitization process and which does not arise prior to the power relation which it opposes (Foucault, 1990: 122-123).

Moreover, I have also maintained that securitization might be successful and perpetuated over a longer period of time, existing resistance notwithstanding. Depending on the context and configuration of power relations vested in the securitization process, resistance may modify existing mechanisms of power (Karskens, 2009: 128; Wilson, 2009: 31f; Lazzarato, 2006: 17).

On the empirical level, the scrutiny of the Egyptian case has shown that the securitization process was, despite its persistence over three decades, far from being widely accepted. On the contrary, the counterterrorism campaign was regularly contested at diverse levels of society. Yet, the asymmetric configuration of power relations, which the securitization process consolidated, constrained possibilities for resistance as well as the readiness of Egyptians to contest and challenge the exceptionalist discourse. Those who questioned and criticized the securitization process risked to be classified as being beyond the bandwidth of the optimized collective and thus being possibly exposed to exceptional security practices. At the same time, those who restrained their criticism were often rewarded for their loyalty through a share on the state rent.

In this regard, the perpetuation of the resistance–securitization nexus is clearly a complex story. Resistance can challenge securitization's continuity, as was the case of the 2011 revolution in Egypt. Yet, the emergence/absence of resistance is clearly not an independent variable. Its emergence or absence is largely influenced by the asymmetric configuration of power relations, which securitization (re)produces.

7.1. Contribution to the scholarship

This thesis makes a threefold contribution to the scholarship:

First, it addresses the matter of perpetuated securitization that has been so far rather overlooked in securitization studies. Moreover, it suggests a specific conceptual model, the T-E-R model, for how to analyze and make sense of such securitization cases, especially in the context of counterterrorism campaigns. To do so, it offers a conceptual refinement of securitization theory by an elaborate combination of exceptionalist discourses (Copenhagen School) and non-discursive everyday security practices (Paris School) deepened by post-structuralist insights provided by Giorgio Agamben's exception and Michel Foucault's governmentality.

Second, by exploring the Egyptian "war on terror", the thesis expands on a relatively small number of securitization studies dedicated to the scrutiny of securitizations in a non-Western and/or non-democratic context (Vuori, 2011; Julius, 2014; Bilgin, 2011; Wilkinson, 2011). It therefore demonstrates both the applicability and relevance of the securitization framework in such contexts.

Third, on the empirical level, the thesis expands the literature on the “war on terror” in non-Western contexts, which is a rather marginal interest of the mainstream “war on terror” scholarship. The thesis, specifically, proposes a perspective how to make sense of the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign sustained under the state of emergency throughout the entire reign of Husni Mubarak. With respect to the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign which had been renewed in the aftermath of the 2013 coup, the thesis also offers a conceptual framework to examine and make sense of the current developments in Egypt.

7.2. Observations and further research

The merits of my research for the examination of perpetuated securitization cases, along with my fresh perspective on the Egyptian counterterrorism campaign notwithstanding, the subject of its inquiry can be extended in both directions, i.e. on the theoretical and empirical level.

The conceptual framework proposed by this thesis offers a solid guideline to examine perpetuated securitization cases. Yet, it has been implemented on one empirical case only. In this respect, it is desirable to explore the theoretical premises suggested by this research in empirical contexts other than the Egyptian “war on terror” under Husni Mubarak. In logical sequence, the current Egyptian counterterrorism campaign forms an attractive subject of study. The research, however, should not be limited to Egypt. The developments of the last two decades have offered enough empirical material to study “wars on terror” in diverse geographical and sociopolitical contexts. For instance, the recent developments in Turkey, where the state of emergency was implemented after a failed coup attempt in July 2016 and was used to enhance the counterterrorism campaign, provide an interesting context for further examination.

Whether the conceptual framework suggested by this thesis can be utilized to study and examine perpetuated securitization processes other than related to the threat of terrorism constitutes another challenging inquiry. In this thesis, I have outlined an understanding of securitization as a strategy to consolidate asymmetric power relations and introduce Agambenian form of exception. Though, as abundant securitization studies testify (e.g. Lupovici, 2014; Abrahamsen, 2005; Diez, et al., 2016), securitization does not necessarily have to include anything resembling an Agambenian exception. Securitization of global warming clearly illustrates that securitization might urge actors for a joint action without notions of zones of indistinction and *homines sacri*. The conceptual framework proposed by this thesis is thus certainly limited in its application in contexts which lack extremity, as the Copenhagen School presumes. Though its contributions at the individual nodes can be adopted and further elaborated on separately, they suggest many specific directions for the research of perpetuated securitization processes which are located thematically beyond the threat of terrorism.

Thus, rather than addressing the general problem of perpetuated securitization, one can also choose to focus on specific dimensions as outlined and studied in this thesis.

The field of resistance emerges as one of the most promising fields for further research. It comes along with the most recent trend within the securitization scholarship that engages with the complex relations between securitization's resilience and persistence and the discourses and practices of resistance (e.g. Stritzel and Chang, 2015; Topgyal, 2016). Hence, it offers a possibility to extend and contribute to one of the most vibrant areas of the current securitization scholarship. There are, specifically, two specific points of research interest that deserve a deeper elaboration.

In this thesis, I have analyzed the acts of resistance which appeared during Husni Mubarak's reign. Yet, with regard to my research design and the lengthy period of time under scrutiny, I intentionally neglected the acts of resistance which emerged in the everyday life of ordinary Egyptians, such as daily encounters with police, the SSIS, or *mukhbirin*. Such a research inquiry which addresses the everyday resistance would likely offer new insights into the interrelation between the solidification of power relations, (absent) resistance, and persistence of a securitization process. The second line of inquiry is directed at the examination of resistance within the ranks of securitizing actors and/or security practitioners. As argued in this thesis, the securitization of the terrorist threat was decisively challenged with the support of the Egyptian military during the 2011 revolution. In this sense, resistance of parts of securitizing actors and/or security professionals might be perceived as an indicator of looming securitization legitimacy and of a possible alternation of power relations. Yet, as my research testifies, such a research inquiry is empirically extremely difficult to be conducted as the empirical data, such as protocols of governmental meetings in matters of security, records of decision-making processes, as well as on record interviews with state and security officials are usually inaccessible for security amateurs, i.e., researchers.

The exception constitutes another major area of a further study. The exception–fear–(absent) resistance nexus specifically deserves further examination. Instead of fear of the perceived threat, which is traditionally associated with securitization processes, I have concentrated on fear produced and proliferated through the exceptional security practice of the Egyptian security apparatus. In particular, I have pointed out that this form of fear is a pertinent factor to persistence of securitization process as it significantly influences the emergence/absence of resistance. Due to the scope and design of my research, in which fear played an important nevertheless not central role, I have traced the emergence and proliferation of this form of fear through human right reports as well as interviews with human rights activists. A more extensive field-research focused on the everyday life of ordinary Egyptians and their struggle with fear of becoming *homines sacri* was thus accordingly left aside.

The centrality of fear proliferation to maintain docility of the governed society, which was suggested by my research, however, is certainly worthy of further and more throughout research. In particular, inquiries into how fear is proliferated within the society, how it affects the everyday conduct in a given sociopolitical context, and how it can be overcome, should be central for researchers who concentrate on this facet. It would also be desirable to relate the research of the exception–fear–(absent) resistance nexus back to a larger discussion within the securitization scholarship dedicated to the analytical relevance of silence of marginalized groups (see Hansen, 2000; Balzacq et al., 2015: 16).

Much research remains to be done on sociopolitical ramifications of the securitization process in terms of the marginalization and oppression of actors located beyond the category of security targets. As I have shown in chapter III, the process of constructing a threat legitimizes a governmental intervention in the referent object. The referent object is not just a mere object of protection, but becomes also a subject of (re)optimization. This observation opens a research path to examine mechanisms of discrimination, marginalization, and, in a more extreme case, of persecution of those who do not comply with the redefined bandwidth of the optimized, yet are not identified as security targets. My research has focused, in the first place, on the oppression of the Egyptian political opposition. Yet, as the empirical evidence suggests, there were other actors, such as civil society organizations or homosexuals, that were classified as being beyond the bandwidth of an optimized society and subjected to an exceptional security treatment as the security targets were. In this regard, it is thus desirable to examine the optimization of the referent object and its sociopolitical ramifications in a greater detail and diverse empirical contexts.

Whether securitization persists or not is a complex, hardly foreseeable matter. We can, as this thesis has shown and outlined, however, inquire into how a securitization process persists and is perpetuated over time. Thereby, we can learn more about the securitization process itself and gain insights into the complex matrix of security, legitimacy of a ruling elite, and political oppression.

8. References

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9. Appendix

9.1. List of interviewees

Dr. Lisa Anderson – 12/11/2013 (New Cairo, Cairo), political scientist and director of the American University in Cairo

Dr. Ahmad Seif el-Islam Hamad – 15/11/2013 (Mohandeseen, Cairo), lawyer and founder of the Hisham Mubarak Law Center

Dr. Hafez Abu Seada, 17/11/2013 (al-Manial, Cairo), lawyer and director of the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights

Dr. Ayman Okail – 18/11/2013 (Matbaa – Cairo), lawyer and director of the Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights

Prof. Dr. Basyouni Hamada – 23/11/2013 (6th October City – Cairo), professor of mass communication and media at International Academy for Media Sciences in Cairo

Muhammad Zarai – 24/11/2013 (Skype interview – Cairo), Program Manager at Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Dr. Hani Sayed – 25/11/2013 (Zamalek – Cairo), an assistant professor of law at the American University in Cairo

Dr. Aida Seif al-Dawla – 26/11/2013 (Downtown – Cairo), counsellor and founder of the al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims

Basma Mohammad – 26/11/2013 (Downtown – Cairo), counsellor at al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims since 2007 working on the psychological rehabilitation of torture victims

Hani Shukrallah – 3/12/2013 (Berlin), journalist, former editor-in-chief of al-Ahram Weekly and al-Ahram Online

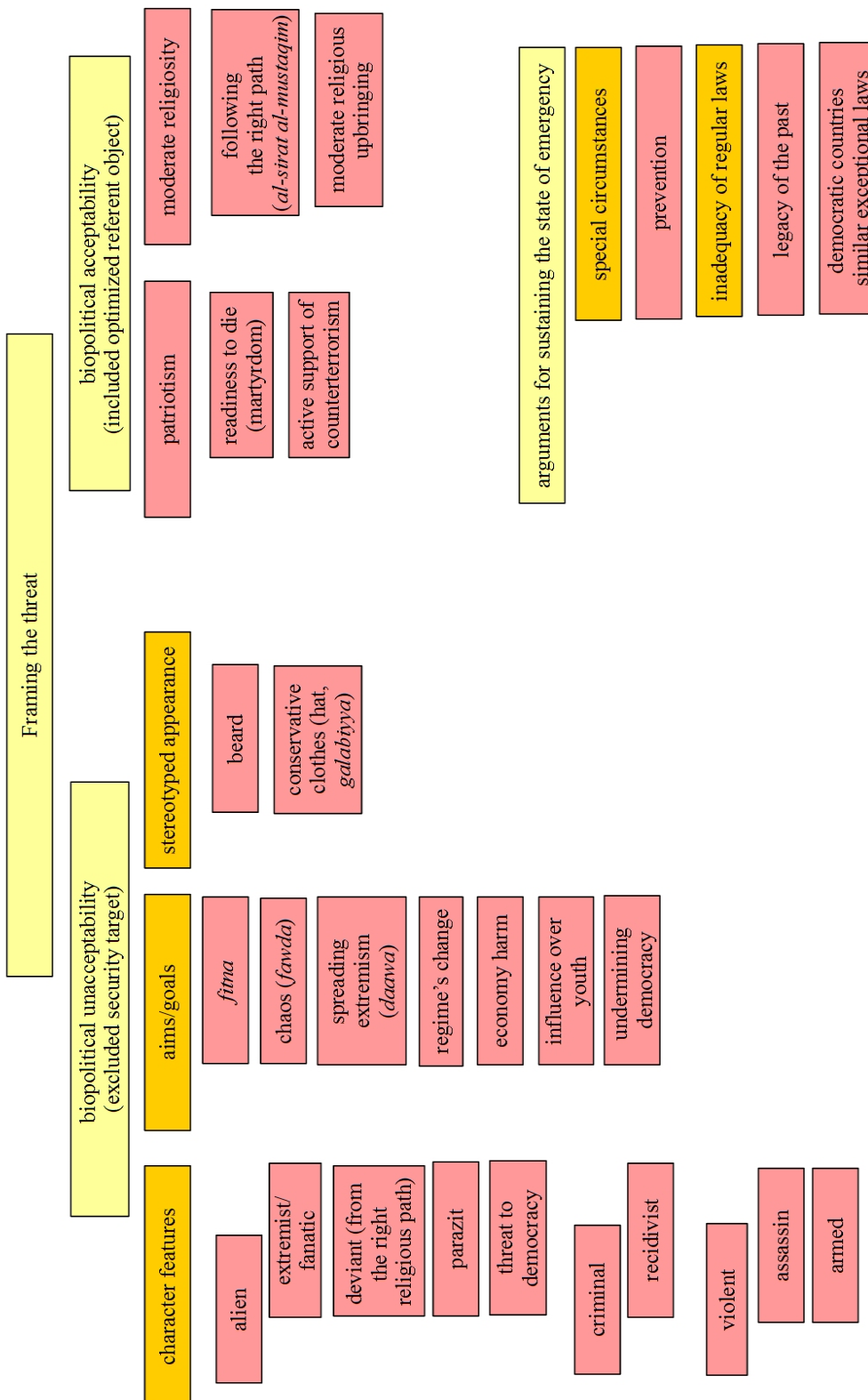
9.2. Coding structure

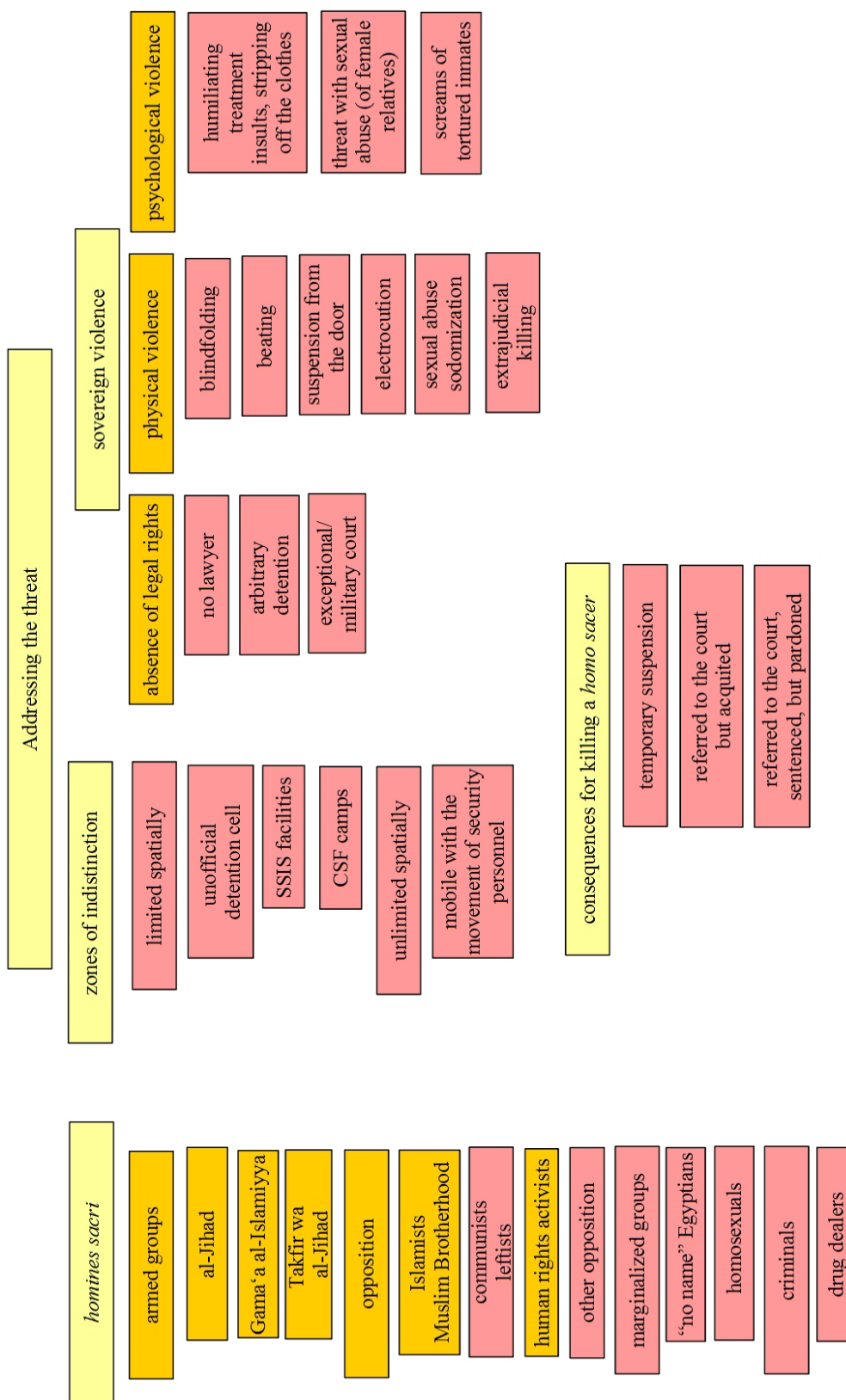
Explanatory notes:

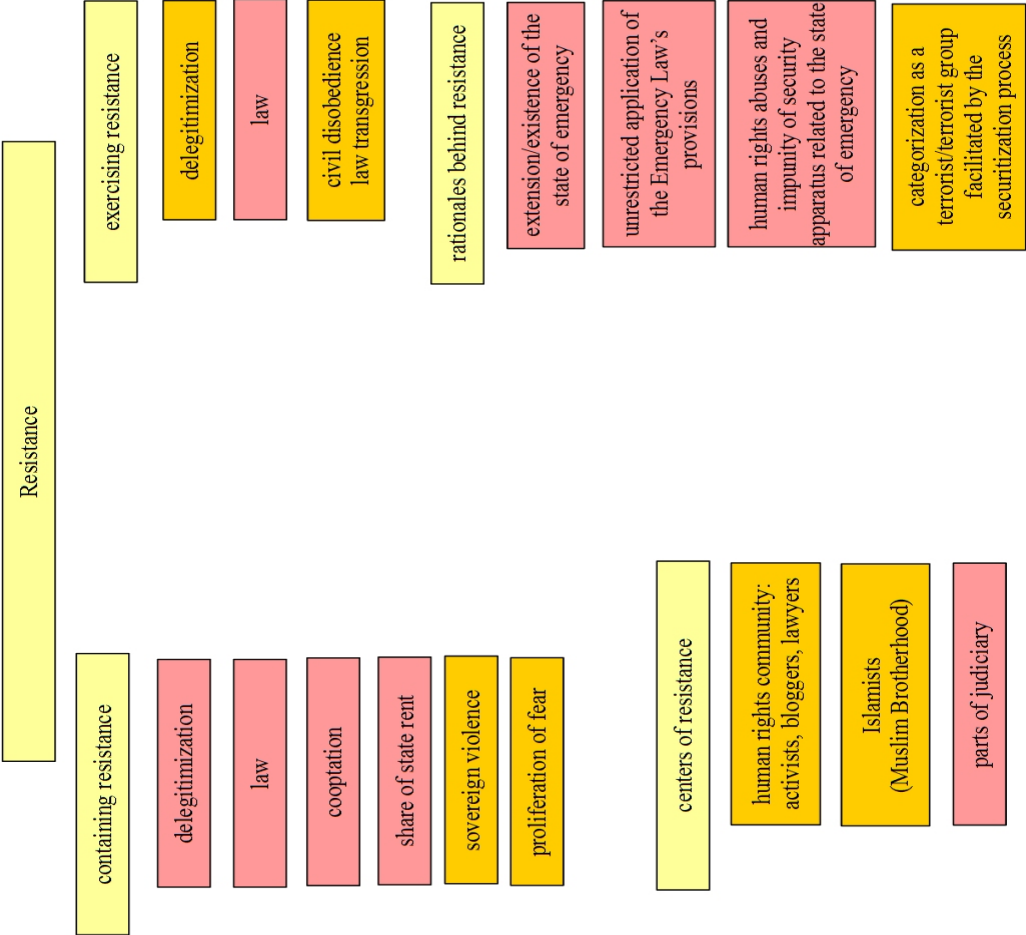
inductive codes

codes based on induction
and deduction

deductive codes







9.3. The renewals of the state of emergency (1981-2011)

1981 – 7. October

1982 – 20. June

1983 – 2. October

1984 – 29. September

1986 – 19. April

1988 – 20. March

1991 – 6. Mai

1994 – 21. April

1997 – 27. February

2000 – 27. February

2003 – 13. March

2006 – 4. Mai

2008 – 26. Mai

2010 – 11. Mai