Media, Military and Masculinity
A semiotic analysis of men, masculinities and the military in Egyptian online press

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the connection between concepts of masculinity and militarism in Egyptian online press. In order to avoid reification of stereotypical, orientalist constructions of Arab men as villains or oppressors, this study does not look at men in the typical sense, either as individuals or as a group, but as gendered subjects, socially constructed through performativity. Furthermore, this study is grounded in material derived from four months of ethnographic field studies in Cairo, exploring the understanding of masculinities by Egyptian media audiences and media professionals. The purpose of this study, as such, is to locate ‘militarised masculinity’ within Egyptian online press; to explore how militarism and notions of masculinity become entangled and what role the media plays in perpetuating this entanglement. Seeing how the military is an institution of state-sanctioned violence, combined with a rigid, normative representation of men and a shunning of ‘deviant masculinities’ in media, it is possible that a celebration of (ideal) masculinity as militaristic is related to issues of violence against women, and persecution of non-heterosexual men. In a time when media personalities are actively working with the police to ‘hunt’ gay men, and publicly expose those seen as deviating from ‘traditional’ or ‘hegemonic’ masculinity, it is today even more important to examine Egyptian media, in regards to minority and gender representation as well as hegemonic discourse.

Keywords

Egypt; media; men; masculinities; gender representation; military; militarism; semiotic analysis.
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## Contents

**Introduction** .......................................................................................................................... 1  
Research problem and purpose ................................................................................................. 2  
Research questions ................................................................................................................... 3  
Material and delimitations ......................................................................................................... 3  
**Theory** ................................................................................................................................... 4  
Performativity, gender and queer theory ..................................................................................... 5  
Gender in media and media in Egypt ......................................................................................... 8  
Media influence debate .............................................................................................................. 10  
Masculinities and militarism ...................................................................................................... 12  
**Method** .................................................................................................................................. 15  
Semiotic analysis ......................................................................................................................... 15  
Practical application ................................................................................................................... 16  
Benefits and drawbacks ............................................................................................................ 17  
Roads not taken .......................................................................................................................... 18  
Rhetorical criticism ..................................................................................................................... 18  
Discourse analysis ...................................................................................................................... 19  
Quantitative methods ................................................................................................................ 20  
Data collection ........................................................................................................................... 21  
Definition of terms ..................................................................................................................... 23  
**Findings and analysis** ........................................................................................................... 27  
Ahram Online ............................................................................................................................. 27  
  'Major terror attacks in Cairo since July 2013: A timeline’ .................................................... 27  
  'Egypt’s options to fight terror’ .................................................................................................. 29  
  'Foreign intelligence behind recent terror attacks’ ................................................................. 31  
  'Cyprus, Greece and Egypt agree to step up "terror" fight’ ......................................................... 34  
  '13 Egyptians charged with forming ‘terror cell’ linked to Islamic State’ ............................... 35  
  'Egypt police arrest 35 on terror accusations’ ......................................................................... 36  
  'Egyptian court declares Hamas’ Al-Qassam Brigades a “terrorist group”’ ........................... 37  
Egypt Independent ....................................................................................................................... 39  
  'International conference in Makkah to fight terrorism next Sunday’ ................................. 39  
  '14 militants killed in Sinai, 5 tunnels destroyed’ ..................................................................... 39  
  'Azouli military prison: Egypt’s dark secret’ .......................................................................... 44  
  'Gaza militants condemn Egypt’s branding of Hamas as terror group’ ............................... 47  
  'Terror in Tahrir’ ...................................................................................................................... 50  
  'Three British girls join IS in Syria’ ........................................................................................ 51  
  'Prosecution: Egypt court places Sinai-based militant group and founder on ‘terror’ list’ .......... 52
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Investigations launched into alleged terror cell leader'</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendices</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-study interview guide</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Violence on the largest possible scale is the purpose of the military; and no arena has been more important for the definition of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005, p. 213).

Masculinity as a concept and an idea has been widely debated and studied. There are many different ways of approaching it, and, while often described as new or emerging field of study, it has been around almost half a century, even with different established academic fields dedicated to the study of men and masculinities (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, et al., 2003; Gardiner, 2002; Whitehead, 2002). Rather than applying an arbitrarily chosen academic definition of masculinity, the stepping stone of this study is in-depth interviews with Egyptian media professionals and media audiences, conducted in Cairo between August and December, 2014. It was then found that masculinity is, in the minds of the respondents, closely associated with the military (Abdelmoez, 2015b). The focus of this research project, as such, is the entanglement of masculinities and militarism in Egyptian online media. That being said, it would be impossible to conduct such a study without looking at historical developments of theory within academia (in regards to masculinities as well as military and media) and, perhaps most important, recent developments in Egypt and the Egyptian media landscape.

While media is a powerful tool both to create frames and to perpetuate a certain way of thinking, it can also work as a medium for revealing power relations in society, and to study them. It is, however, important to understand that the dynamics between audience and media does not necessarily mean a passive role of the audience, as simply the receivers of information. Indeed, it could be argued that the expectations of their audiences are something that media institutions are well aware of, meaning that, rather than somehow moulding their audiences, their news production deliberately follows the audiences’ views (Abdelmoez, 2015a). Therefore, this is not a study on the impact of media in the construction of hegemonic masculinity as militarised, or the role of media in individuals’ sense of a gendered self, but rather a look on the framing and manifestation of militarised masculinity in media. However, impact is not irrelevant. Considering the importance of perceived naturalness to binary gender expressions (Butler, 1990) and the meaning of stereotypical representations to construct gender boundaries (Dyer, 2002), it could easily be argued that media has a large impact on how masculinity is perceived by society in general. This view is supported by many of the interviewed respondents, both with the perspective that men are stereotypically portrayed and that women are underrepresented and marginalised in media.
Research problem and purpose

Through ethnographic studies conducted during four months in Cairo, fall of 2014, it was found that both media professionals and audiences alike heavily associate masculinity and manhood with the military. Former president and military officer Gamal Abdel Nasser was the man most often named an ‘exemplary man’ by respondents, his predecessor Anwar Sadat was spoken of as a father (at times referring to himself calling the air force pilots ‘his sons’), and the current president and former field marshal Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, too, was described as a representative of masculinity, although in a more suave form than the previous presidents. Clearly, ‘masculinity’ as a concept is by many related to the military (Abdelmoez, 2015b). However, this assertion must be put in the context of the interviewed respondents, most of which were journalists themselves. Therefore, this study seek to explore the connection between the concept of masculinity and militarism. Seeing as both journalists and media audiences emphasise the military in discussion on men’s media representation, can this connection be found in Egyptian press too? Are men as a category significantly often portrayed as soldiers (the ‘warrior ideal’) and servants of el-watán, the homeland? And is militaristic expressions of masculinity indeed celebrated and glorified in Egyptian press? Wood (2013) writes that: ‘Woven throughout our daily lives, media insinuate their messages into our consciousness at every turn’ (p. 31). Wood further notes that ‘[m]en are presented as hard, tough, independent, sexually aggressive, unafraid, violent, totally in control of all emotions, and—above all—in no way feminine’ (p. 32). This is similar to how respondents perceived the representation of masculinity in Egyptian media.

The purpose of this study, as such, is to locate ‘militarised masculinity’ within Egyptian press; to explore how militarism and notions of masculinity become entangled, and what role the media plays in perpetuating this process. Seeing how the military is an institution of state-sanctioned violence, combined with a rigid, normative representation of men and a shunning of ‘deviant masculinities’ in media, it is possible that a celebration of (ideal) masculinity as militaristic is related to issues of violence against women, and persecution of non-heterosexual men. In a time when media personalities are actively working with the police to ‘hunt’ gay men, and publicly expose those seen as deviating from ‘normative masculinity,’ it is today even more important to examine Egyptian media, in regards to minority and gender representation as well as hegemonic discourse.
Research questions

- How are connections between men, masculinity and the military manifested in the news produced by Al-Ahram and Al-Masry Al-Youm?
  - To what extent does Al-Ahram and Al-Masry Al-Youm enforce a selected representation of men as ‘warriors’ and defender of the honour of his homeland?
  - To what extent does Al-Ahram and Al-Masry Al-Youm enforce a selected representation of the military as a masculine institution, or a ‘factory of men’?

Material and delimitations

The primary sources for this study is news produced by the Al-Ahram Foundation and Al-Masry Media Corporation. There are several reasons why these are good sources: First and foremost, they are both large media institutions, owning several newspapers and outlets, meaning that there is an abundance of material to work with. Secondly, they both exist in English and Arabic versions and, thirdly, they represent two different sides of the Egyptian press, one owned and run by the government (Al-Ahram) and the other private (Al-Masry).

Data collection is easily made online, since both Al-Ahram and Al-Masry Al-Youm are present online. After initial delimitations have been made, such as a specific time-period from which to collect articles, the material can be gathered based only on the criterion that it refers to, or in any way mentions, the military or militarised subjects.

There are some delimitations that have been made, that needs to be addressed. First and foremost is that the media that will be studied is written news media, not broadcast, social or popular media. As such, if these mediums are considered discourse communities, I have chosen to study one that perhaps have less of an impact in the ‘common class’ than television and popular media does (cf. Dajani, 2011). Therefore, this is not a study on the impact of media in the construction of hegemonic expressions of masculinity, but rather a look at processes of manifestation. Even though Egyptian media audiences should not be considered a uniform entity, but rather a dynamic and diverse community, the written media itself may still work within and through their representation of men perpetuate a militaristic ideal of masculinity.

Furthermore, to get material that is both comparable and useful, the articles used will be on the topic of Egypt’s ‘war on terror.’ This provides room both for understanding how military masculinity is manifested, as well as the importance of ‘deviant masculinities,’ the terrorists, in this manifestation and the securitisiation by the Egyptian government.
Theory

This study, focused on masculinities and the military in Egyptian media, is a necessarily interdisciplinary study. It draws primarily from gender studies and masculinity studies (eg. Judith Butler; Raewyn Connell; Suad Joseph; Stephen Whitehead), media studies (eg. Noha Mellor; Julia Wood; Daniel Chandler), and Middle Eastern anthropology, postcolonial and cultural studies (eg. Walter Armbrust; Farha Ghannam; Stuart Hall; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak), but also relates to sociology and critical military studies (eg. Jeff Hearn; Michael Messner; Paul Higate; Paul Amar). Of course, these scholars and the theoretical framework they represent are also somewhat interdisciplinary, and placing them in a single field like this is a simplification. Many of them do research related to and used in the other fields, such as Suad Joseph (anthropology and media), Paul Amar (Middle Eastern studies and gender) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (gender studies).

In order to present a theoretical and methodological framework in a structured manner, however, it is necessary to categorise in a way that may seem unfair to the nuanced and important work these scholars do. This is in no way meant to generalise their work or minimise their importance in other fields, and the categorization is made only with consideration for its relevance to this particular study. Therefore, the first section will be on performativity, gender and queer theory. Here, the discussion will focus mainly on post-structuralist approaches to gender, Butler’s adaptation of performativity theory on gender studies and its relation to post-colonial feminism. It is important to begin with this category, as it forms a necessary background to this study.

While gender studies gives us an important background, the queer theoretical approach makes it quite abstract. There is another, more solid, basis too that is necessary to explore, one upon which the entire study is conducted: the media. While this, of course, is a very broad term, encompassing many different things, there are delimitations made in the actual study. However, to properly assess the subject, previous research related to it, and to place this study within the existing literature, it is necessary to look at these wider media theories. The exploration of media is done from two angles. First is the connection of media and gender, as thoroughly explored by Julia Wood in Gendered Lives (2013), a book so popular that it is now in its tenth edition. The second angle is media in the regional context, drawn mostly from Arab Media
Secondly, as this study relates to the field within gender studies referred to as (variations of) masculinity studies, it is important to look at the main theories within this field. Arguably the most important theory is that of ‘hegemonic masculinity.’ This, and many other perspectives on men and masculinities is presented in the book *Men and Masculinities* (Whitehead, 2002). In it, Stephen Whitehead discusses key theorists such as Raewyn Connell, Michael Kimmel, Michael Messner and Jeff Hearn. Jeff Hearn, among many other prominent masculinity theorists, also contribute to the edited volume *Military Masculinities* (Higate, 2003). This volume, containing everything from the history and anthropology of military institutions to the processes behind militarization of masculinities in local contexts, is very relevant to any study such as this and much theory, particularly in regards to cultural representations of the military, is drawn from here. These two aspects, masculinities and the military, together form the second category, and are necessary as they could be seen as the subjects of this study.

Last but not least, in regards to theory, it is important to explore the critique of what have been called ‘masculinity in crisis’ discourses. In the article ‘Middle East Masculinity Studies,’ Paul Amar argues that these discourses, particularly as they appeared in relation to the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, often misrecognise social forces, either on one side by portraying social subjects as pawns of a historical, colonial exertion of power, or as forerunners of ‘modernization.’ In an attempt to find new ways forward for this field, Amar brings in a critical perspective and places it in dialogue with post-colonial queer theory, feminist international relations/security studies, and public health studies, thus creating a map of the field in the Middle Eastern context. This is particularly useful in regards to the changing political and socio-economic landscape in Egypt.

**Performativity, gender and queer theory**

A theoretical key on which this study relies is performativity. Initially a concept of linguistics and the philosophy of language, it has been adapted to gender studies by Judith Butler (1988; 1990; 1997). Simply put, Butler asserts that gender and its expressions are not natural but constructed to seem so through means of language repetition. Therefore, gender is not the expression of identity, but rather identity can be understood as constructed through ‘gender acts.’ Raewyn Connell, one of the most important theorists in masculinity studies, adds to this way of viewing gender by stating that ‘gender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies

(2011), by Mellor et al., which is a crucial look at both the history of Arab media industries as well as recent reorganizations of such industries in the context of globalization.
and what bodies do, not social practice reduced to the body’ (2005, p. 71). The theory of gender performativity has become a central concept of queer theory, and the book in which Butler introduce it, *Gender Trouble*, is considered a seminal work of queer theory. The idea of gender performativity is largely based on post-structural and social constructivist thinking that language does not necessarily describe an objectively true reality, but discursively creates it. It is, however, important to note that this does not make gender insignificant or easily deconstructed. Nor does it mean that gender is an actively chosen performance, but rather a construction that forms the way bodies become gendered. This means that performativity does not signify artificiality, but instead that gender is a product of its own repetition. Therefore, Butler states that there need not be an ‘actor behind the act’ because the actor is constructed within the act:

As a consequence, gender cannot be understood as a role which either expresses or disguises an interior “self,” whether that “self” is conceived as sexed or not. As performance which is performative, gender is an “act,” broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority. (Butler, 1988, p. 528)

Butler also emphasise the meaning of gender as the repeated stylization of the body. This repetition really is a key-point as it is never constructed from scratch but, rather, since it is already highly present in our understood reality, gender is reified and cemented in interpersonal meetings, through which current norms are confirmed:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. (Butler, 1990, p. 25)

Swedish queer theorist Don Kulick, clarifies in an article entitled ‘No’ the difference between performativity and performance. Kulick writes that ‘performance is something a subject does. Performativity, on the other hand, is the process through which the subject emerges’ (2003, p. 140). This relates to Butler’s ideas about gender not being the expression of identity, but identity constructed through ‘gender acts.’ As such, gender is performative in the sense that it constructs the gendered subject. Due to its highly theoretical and encompassing nature, this will be the first topic explored herein.

It may seem odd to start with queer theory and Butler in a study that is looking at masculinity, since Butler denies existence of the masculine (and feminine) outside of the discourse. However, that is exactly why it is a good point of departure. If there is no inherent gender identity prior to the discursive, and as such no masculine identity before the claiming of one,
the symbolic meaning of masculinities, their constructions, and its representation is even greater.

With basis in the assertion of gender as performative, Butler (1990) embarks on a critique against early (and some contemporary) feminist activism and knowledge production as it heavily relied on women as the subjects of feminism. Butler argues that the female body or an identity of womanhood only exists within the cultural norms by which it is repressed, which means that activism on such a basis only acts to reify the normative, and in extension the opposed repression. Furthermore, such a constructed category of ‘women’ will always be exclusionary, not only in regards to gender, but also class, ethnicity/racialization, normative able-bodiedness, and more. This, because it relies on an essentialist definition of ‘women’s experience,’ and ‘what it means to be a woman,’ which has been a central part of feminist epistemology (during what is sometimes called ‘second wave feminism’). Therefore, critique against second wave feminism comes not only from post-structuralists like Butler, but also postcolonial feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Sara Ahmed. In her essay ‘Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses’ (1984), Mohanty writes that many feminist’s claims of a universal oppression, which they base on experiences of white, middle-class women, marginalise and make invisible the oppression experienced by racialized and classed women. In other words, the critique is not only based in time, as an evolution of one theory in reaction to another, but there is also a geographic divide, based on the hegemony of the Anglo-American academia in the production of feminist theory and the problem formulation taking its basis in white America.

Besides the critique of earlier women’s movements, postcolonial and queer feminisms have quite a lot in common, and many theorists, such as Sara Ahmed, work with both. Just like queer theorists, the postcolonial feminists argue that gender is not universal or inherent. The significance and the meaning of gender is, according to postcolonial feminists, formed in relation to racialization, sexuality and sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and more. An important difference, however, between this and earlier multiracial feminism is the emphasis on the formation of gender in the colonial project, something that works in many different ways. In an essay published 1988, entitled ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes:

The question of “woman” seems most problematic in this context. Clearly, if you are poor, black and female, you get it in three ways. If, however, this formulation is moved from the first-world context into the postcolonial (which is not identical with the third-
world) context, the description of “black” or “of color” loses persuasive significance. The necessary stratification of colonial subject-constitution in the first phase of capitalism imperialism makes “color” useless as an emancipatory signifier. (p. 90)

For Spivak, then, the colonial context provides a different subject formation, even of the same signifiers, meaning that they work within (or rather under) a colonial hegemony that governs the formations. The colonial representation of the colonised woman acted to construct such a subject without agency, hence the question ‘can the subaltern speak?’ In post-structuralists terms, and as stated by Spivak in the conclusion of her essay, no, ‘the subaltern cannot speak.’ This is so exactly because the subaltern subject is formed without agency, it exists in a power structure where subordination is a prerequisite for the subject’s being. This is exactly why ‘woman’ as the subject of feminism is, according to Butler, something that only perpetuates repression. The formation, or constitution, of the subject is therefore a common focus both for the postcolonial and the queer theorists.

**Gender in media and media in Egypt**

Moving towards the intersection of gender and media, most of the work by Julia T. Wood is found. This is an important aspect to expand upon, but, quite surprisingly, very little has been written about the representation and construction of masculinities in media. Nevertheless, Wood (2013) provides an extensive and in-depth exploration of both gendered communication and the communication of gender, including representations of men and masculinities, and the social impact of those representations. Indeed, impact is a focal point in this work, and Wood (2013) refers to communication as ‘the fulcrum of change,’ which will be expanded upon in the next section. If, as is also argued by Butler, gender is something we do rather than something we have, then what constitutes ‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity’ is not internal, but given to us, through social conventions and contexts. Here, media play an important part to ‘teach’ gender. The representation of men as hard and tough then, of course, is not a description of an already existing reality, but is a lesson for men to enact masculinity. When such ideals are enacted by individuals, according to Wood, they are not only individual actions, but collaborative. They rely on the social conventions of gender, and are expressed in a particular context in which they become part of a gender ‘complicity.’ The acts, as such, are then ‘stylised performances [of gender] that are coded into cultural life’ (Wood, 2013, p. 63). I want to reiterate that Butler (1990) does not hold gender to be ‘a performance’ but ‘performative,’ an important distinction. Since gender does not exist before it is done, the act itself is ‘doing’ gender, not the subject.
Media today – be they old or new, print or online, broadcast or social – are recognised authorities in society. The influence that media of all kinds exert has been widely studied, and it is not uncommon referring to the media industry as the ‘fourth estate.’ There are, however, still areas to discover, in particular when it comes to Arab media, audience behaviour and the political landscape post-2011, after the ousting of Mubarak, and post-2013, after the ousting of Morsy. There have for example been many studies pointing to the ‘democratization power’ of Arab media (cf. Cottle, 2011; Lynch, 2006), but fewer that explore its influence on issues such as minority rights or gender politics.

Media have long played an important role in Egypt, both nationally and regionally, and these media have just as long been working almost entirely as branch of government to mobilise the masses. If not owned by the state, it was heavily regulated, and news institutions that offered a differing view from the state media was only allowed to a calculated margin (Abdel-Rahman 2012). In order to understand the Egyptian media landscape today, it is necessary to look at the historical role of its state media, and the changes it has gone through over the last few decades, in regards to press, audio-visual media and the emergence of ‘new’ media.

Prior to the revolution of 1952, there was a dynamic media atmosphere, marked by a diversity of newspapers, widely used as forums for free intellectual and political debate, not seldom regarding issues of nationalism and struggle with colonialism. Interestingly, the following independent years, free from British occupation, Egypt saw the decline of this media landscape, as the government took over ownership, closed down institutions, put down strict regulations, imposed fines or even jailed journalists and editors (Abdulla, 2011). Sahar Khamis writes that ‘both radio and television have always been very strictly controlled by the Egyptian government, since they were directly owned and operated by the Ministry of Information’ (2008, p. 260). This was done in order for the government to be able to utilise the power of media. Even if media are not necessarily ‘democratizing,’ there is still power to them. Mellor (2014, p. 266) writes about the media institution, that ‘it can be utilised as a mobilization tool to win the public opinion, and on the other hand, it can be used as a power to menace the ideological foundations of the Arab regimes,’ meaning that the Egyptian government may have seen media as their mouthpieces, but also as a potential threat if let loose. Through the Nasser era, all during Sadat’s presidency, and until the 1990s, this relationship between media and state was maintained.

It was under Mubarak’s presidency that media first came to be liberalised. A part of it this development was technological, such as access to the internet, introduced in Egypt in 1993, and
the emergence of satellite broadcasting; the first Egyptian satellite company, Nilesat, was established in 1998. Secondly, the government also opened up to privatization of media institutions, leading to an increase in opposition newspapers and, by the end of the ‘90s, the launch of Egypt’s first private television channel, ‘Dream.’ However, while businesses were allowed to grow, capitalise, and increase their profit, the state maintained control, by regulating private business to the benefit of that which was state-owned (cf. Khamis, 2008, Mellor, 2014). This meant that in spite of the newly diversified media landscape, state-owned media remained in a unique position, dominating the market. Repression of private media firms, by means of regulations and restrictions, continued to be variously utilised by the government, making for a shifting media environment.

While governmental hegemony and control is still widely exercised in the political domain, without genuine political participation, yet many alternative, resistant voices are emerging and having their own media as platforms to express their political thoughts and oppositional views. (Khamis, 2008, p. 266)

There was a large and increasing plurality of oppositional media outlets during the late ‘90s and early ‘00s, although exerting little actual pressure on the government. Their influence, however, continued to grow alongside increasing liberalization and technological advancement. It barely needs saying that media, particularly new and social media, eventually proved their catalysing power in the early months of 2011, when Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was removed from office.

**Media influence debate**

As a hegemonic process, social discourse is propelled by a desire to influence cultural values and beliefs. Ideas do not just come out of thin air, but they may appear to when someone somewhere sets out to express ideas of significance through some form of media. The pervasive presence of mass media has made it appear to be a natural part of our environment that is taken for granted until something appears to be wrong. (Gaines, 2010, p. 3)

While media could indeed be considered recognised authorities, their influence on society and individuals is far from consensually agreed upon. This debate is integral to semioticians and to this study, as it relates to how meanings and messages are interpreted as well as expressed, and thus what impact there is to communication. As previously mentioned, this subject has, when it comes to Egypt, mostly been studied in regards to democratization, rather than gender issues.
Therefore, most of the debate on media’s impact revolves around media’s democratizing possibility. Cottle (2011) argues that media inevitably have a major role in the sustaining, preserving, as well as opposing and stifling of political movements, which relates to the role of media in maintaining national unity and spreading a feeling of community (Mellor, 2011). However, this view of Arab media tends to idealise the public sphere in the Arab context. Mellor (2007, p. 73) writes that ‘the notion of the public sphere implies an idealised form of public participation,’ which she calls ‘The Habermasian Ideal.’ The argument is that this public participation is often limited to certain groups of society, whereas women and workers are excluded or have their participation limited to issues regarding the private sphere. As such, any understanding of the possible ‘democratization’ effect by media must acknowledge marginalised groups and how media becomes accessible and usable for such groups. Otherwise, it will just be another form of influence for those who already own the political, cultural and economic power.

However, whether or not media work as a force for democracy, it may still exert influence, and even one concerning democracy. Wood (2013) argues that media tell us what men (and women) are, or should be. While there might not be a direct effect, we are led to believe that certain gender performances are more ‘true’ or normal than others. In semiotic terms, certain practices get connected with a particular gender, while others get disconnected, thus forming a dichotomised structure. As an example, Wood (2013, p. 266) mentions women in the army, and how newspapers and talk shows might ‘feature poignant pictures of children watching mothers go to war,’ and discuss whether a woman should ‘leave her baby to go to war?’ This connects women and motherhood, and makes motherhood a central issue for women in the army, while the same is, of course, not done with men and fatherhood. ‘In addition, media imply that women – good women – don’t leave their children and that fathers aren’t able to take care of children while mothers are overseas’ (Wood, 2013, p. 266). Furthermore, this is a good example to show one way that the military is kept a men’s club, through the connection by media of women and motherhood.

Relatedly, the term *semiotic resources* is useful to understand how the construction of gender is not a one-way street. Semiotic resources refers to signifying practices and objects with semiotic potentials, that is the potential for a specific meaning. This is formed in part by past uses of the resource, so that meaning of a certain practice as ‘masculine’ draws from a history of connecting that specific practice to ‘masculinity.’ As such, media play a role in perpetuating such connections, which then informs the semiotic potentials (Ekström & Moberg, 2008).
Masculinities and militarism

These public-discourse versions of “masculinity studies” and everyday etiologies of racialized Middle Eastern maleness operate as some of the primary public tools for analysing political change and social conflict in the region. And these same sets of vernacular theories also prop up intelligence services and terrorology industries whose wildly inaccurate studies of Islamism, and of politics in general in the Middle East, are often built upon pseudo-anthropological or psychological-behavioralist accounts of atavistic, misogynist and hypersexual masculinities. (Amar, 2011, p. 4)

Studying masculinities in the Middle East, especially from the outside, is not an entirely unproblematic endeavour, too often riddled with neo-Orientalist tropes of Arab and Muslim men. In ‘Middle East Masculinity Studies’ (2011), Paul Amar searches for a way forward for the field, a way that he hopes to be ‘gender/sexuality/coloniality-conscious’ (p. 5). A way of doing so is looking critically not only at the subjects of masculinity, but focus on institutions of masculinity. The first such institution, or industry, recognised by Amar (2011) is what he terms ‘security masculinities.’ This category of masculinities industry is explained as such:

Policing, security and moral-governance institutions and private security consulting firms produce knowledge that defines Arab masculinities and subjects of surveillance including the sex predator, the thug/gang member, the trafficker, and of course the meta-subject of the emergency/security governance, the terrorist. (Amar, 2011, p. 6)

According to Amar (2011), it could be problematic to focus on masculinities that foster violence, such as criminal or even terrorist masculinities, because doing so often ignores aspects of power, class relations and coloniality, and legitimises security governance (heavy policing). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to keep in mind historical and contextual locations of power, even if the focus is the security state itself, or in this case the military. The research subject of this study must then be what Amar (2011) calls ‘the masculinised prerogatives of the state’ (p. 15). He argues that focusing on the relations between the construction of masculinities and these prerogatives of the military state obstructs the neo-Orientalist or securitising projection of ‘violent masculinity’ onto racialized, working-class or other marginalised communities as a way to legitimise authoritarian measures and/or draconian laws. While Amar (2011) does not himself work on militarised masculinities, his advice on how to focus on militarised masculinities, so as to not feed a securitisation discourse, is nonetheless incredibly valuable and important to keep in mind.
Awareness of power relations is very important, and the position of the military must indeed be understood as a position of power. A well-known scholar of studies into masculinities and violence, Jeff Hearn, refers to the military as ‘one of the clearest arenas of social power’ (2003, p. xi), and while this is a very broad state, it is nevertheless true about Egypt, not least since the return of a military leader to the presidency. Furthermore, the military have historically held an important position in Egypt, with both state and economy being militarised (manufacturing, farming, and construction conducted by the army, benefitted with a lack of taxation), and activities by the armed forces stretching far beyond simply waging war (cf. Abul-Magd, 2013).

Hearn (2003) also states that men, masculinities and the military have historically been incredibly connected to each other, and while again this is a broad statement, there is no reason to suspect Egypt to be any different. In fact, in the ethnographic studies in Cairo, leading up to this thesis, the most significant finding was the respondents’ understanding of the military as not only a male institution and a ‘factory of men,’ but as the epitome of hegemonic masculinity, no matter the respondents personal views of the military, or that form of masculinity (Abdelmoez, 2015b).

Hopton (2003) argues that the masculine identities that men often are encouraged to aspire to, are also something that they are encouraged to publicly demonstrate, as to affirm that they meet the societal expectations and therefore live up to certain values. ‘Military organizations, military successes, military pageantry, and rituals such as the “passing out” parades for successful recruits to the armed forces represent the public endorsement of such values and their institutionalization in national culture’ (Hopton, 2003, p. 112). This point is supported by the fact that social values that respondents in the ethnographic study emphasised as ‘masculine’ are also such that are easily conflated with joining the army; strength, honor, courage, and patriotism. This relationship between masculinity and militarism is, of course, also closely related to the nation state. This is according to Hopton (2003) used and reinforced by politicians in their securitisation and justification of state violence, and militarised masculinities are popularised in culture and media to the same end, feeding the idealization of such gender acts.
Therefore, studying the media representations of men, masculinities and the military could be seen not only as a challenge of such gender acts, but also as a way to challenge the military state and its security discourse. However, this is not an explicit purpose of this study, and it is important to remember that the theory of gender performativity does not prescribe any gender performances as right or wrong. The point, rather, is to show that there are no ‘natural’ gender performances. The construction of the military as male, or the male coded body as a possible warrior – or in civilian contexts a protector, or guardian, even in cases where it makes no sense (see Figure 1) – whereas the female body is constructed as one in need of protection, to be guarded, is nothing but social constructions.
Method

Semiotic analysis

It is natural for all living things to have specific capacities for sense perception that enable them to perceive and interpret signs necessary for their survival. Just as we are necessarily detectives seeking answers to questions by observing the conditions of the world around us, we all depend on signs as part of our everyday practice of communicating and interpreting meanings. Semiotics is the study of signs that represent and convey the significance of things. (Gaines, 2010, p. 7)

As defined by Gaines (2010), in the above quote, the focus of semiotics is signs and their meaning. The process of meaning-making is emphasised, not only in regards to how the signs are expressed and interpreted, but, perhaps most importantly, how the signs themselves work to produce meaning. In semiotics, a sign is defined as anything that can be interpreted. Furthermore, it considers signs a fundamental part of our reality, meaning that ‘reality’ is something that can be read, interpreted and decoded (Ekström & Moberg, 2008). While a sign can be anything from an image to a sound, from an object to an odour, the focus of this study is the linguistic signs. Linguistic signs was also the focus of one of the earliest and most important semioticians, Ferdinand de Saussure (Chandler, 2014).

However, as media, even written media, are often mixing text and image, it is important to note how certain images relate to news texts. Two concepts in this regard, mainly developed by the French semiotician Roland Barthes, are anchorage and relay. Anchorage refers to how interpretation of meaning is controlled by associating it with text, for example how the caption of an image limits the interpretations that can be made of the image. The caption fixes the meaning of the image and ensures an interpretation that falls in line with the ideology that the media producer wants to present. Relay, on the other hand, is the text/image connection, how an image can complement the text and vice versa. An ambiguous text can be complemented with an image to specify its meaning. Chandler (2014, ‘Intertextuality’) states that:

Awareness of the importance of intertextuality should lead us to examine the functions of those images and written or spoken text used in close association within a text not only in terms of their respective codes, but in terms of their overall rhetorical orchestration.

In other words, if images accompany a news text, the interpretation of that text, and the semiotic signs that constitute it, must necessarily be understood in conjunction with the images.
Practical application

Semiotic method can mean many things, and is sometimes even considered a point of view more than a particular method (cf. Gaines, 2010). Therefore, in order to have a workable, and applicable method for analysis, Chandler (2014) has developed a structured D.I.Y. (‘Do It Yourself’) that is used in this study. This involves an initial analysis of the surroundings, to identify the text (medium, genre, context, etc.) and one’s own purposes in analysing this text (reflexivity), before looking at the signifiers and what they signify – the two parts of a sign according to Saussure. This is then followed by questions such as ‘What reality claims are made by the text?’ and ‘To whom might it appear realistic?’ aimed at understanding the so called modality, and construction of reality.

An important aspect of semiotic theory is the paradigmatic analysis. The paradigms, which are explored in such an analysis, refers to the connotations (or implicit meanings) that ‘underlie the manifest content of texts’ (Chandler, 2014, ‘Paradigmatic Analysis’). To clarify, a paradigm is a set of signs that can be chosen, thus changing the meaning of the text. For example, lady, female, and girl may all appear to refer to the same thing, but which one is chosen in a certain context may alter how the message is interpreted (cf. Ekström & Moberg, 2008). The other side of this is the syntagm, which refers to the structure of the texts, such as how signifiers relate to each other and form hierarchies of meanings. Similarly, intertextuality refers to the text’s relation to other texts. This is important since the texts does not exist in a vacuum, and does not only connect the writer with the reader, but also the text itself with other texts.

Next, Chandler (2014) suggests looking at the semiotic codes, which is the means by which a sign can be understood in a specific way, i.e. the conventions of communication. This involves finding what codes are common and which are unique, an important aspect to distinguish the medium from other media. This part of the analysis also includes asking which codes are absent, since meaning is not only what is being expressed, but also what is not.

Lastly, the analysis is brought back to the reflexive and contextual sphere by contemplating the so called ‘social semiotics.’ This means asking who participates in the creation of the sign and the meaning-making process, and, perhaps more importantly, who is excluded? Chandler (2014) writes: ‘Illustrate, where possible, dominant, negotiated and oppositional readings’ (‘D.I.Y. Semiotic Analysis: Advice to My Own Students’). Indeed, this is an important question, particularly as the target audiences for the studied media are often different than those conducting the studies. Therefore, alternative ways of interpretation must be discussed and problematised.
Benefits and drawbacks

While there are many approaches to media literacy, semiotics provides a clear foundation for the analysis of mass communication and the production of meaning. More than understanding the intended meanings available to the intelligent interpreter, semiotics provides a systematic method for understanding how signs work to produce meanings. (Gaines, 2010, p. 7)

The basis of semiotics being a point of view more than a structured and clearly defined method makes it a widely applicable and versatile tool, possible to use in many different ways and combine with many other theories and approaches. It can be used to look at the production of news, or it can be used to look at the produced news. It can be used to look at the deliverance of media messages, or it can be used to look at the interpretation of media messages. Indeed, a semiotic analysis can mean many things and it can do many things.

Furthermore, while semiotic research has traditionally been associated with structuralism, it is today much less so. In fact, Chandler (2014) is clear in that while ‘both “common-sense” and positivist realism insist that reality is independent of the signs which refer to it, semiotics emphasises the role of sign systems in the construction of reality’ (‘Strengths of Semiotic Analysis’). In other words, the critique sometimes aimed at semiotics as a positivist approach, treating signs as holding unambiguous and inherent meaning, is a baseless critique. This is particularly so today, considering the increasing focus on social semiotics, which is the contextual process that gives signs meaning.

Semiotic analysis, as applied in this study, looks at taken-for-granted conventions, questions that which is seen as natural and highlights the ideology behind every-day communication. Chandler (2014) even argues that semiotics can be ‘fostering an awareness of the ideological forces that seek to naturalise signs’ (‘Strengths of Semiotic Analysis’). This makes semiotics not only a versatile tool, but also a powerful one.

Since, as previously mentioned, semiotics encompass a wide variety of methods and theories, sharing little other than the claim to focusing on signs, it is also hard to pin-point common drawbacks. This very same aspect, however, can also prove a challenge. A semiotic analysis can often seem unsystematic, with interpretations arbitrary while presented as objective truths. Even when theory and findings are discussed in close relation to each other, it may be difficult to reproduce the study. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to show differing or oppositional readings of the material, and be able to provide for and clarify the evidence for one’s analysis.
**Roads not taken**

Semiotic analysis is, of course, not the only method that could be utilised to answer the research questions of this study, but it was chosen, besides for the benefits previously mentioned, as it best fits the purpose and the material that is used. For one thing, the online news articles combine images and text, and includes hierarchies of headlines, leads, and main text. This means that not only are anchorage and relay useful tools but so are paradigm and syntagm, as they are very pragmatic concepts for understanding word-choices and hierarchies of meanings. While obviously not an exhaustive list, some of the other possible methods and approaches will be briefly delineated as to their key elements and some of the problems with those methods.

**Rhetorical criticism**

Sharing many key concepts with semiotics, rhetorical criticism, as an approach in media studies, also draws its strength from allowing the combination of different methods, in order to find ‘the rhetorical’ in a given text. In this understanding, rhetoric, similar to the focus of semiotics, is defined as ‘the human use of symbols to communicate’ (Foss, 2004, p. 3). This approach is sometimes also referred to as argument analysis.

The line between rhetorical criticism and semiotics is, as such, not very clear cut, but there are certain differences, particularly in regards to the theoretical terms and tools used. While semiotics focus on signifier, signified, paradigm and syntagm, it is more usual that a study looking at rhetoric use the terms *doxa* – ideology, values and beliefs, both on the individual level and shared within communities; *kairos* – timing, or ‘the right time,’ referring to that what is persuasive is dependent on time; and *logos* – a type of argument, evoking logic or rationality (cf. Foss, 2004; Mral, 2008; Boréus & Bergström, 2012). Other terms denoting types of argument, *ethos* and *pathos*, evoking expertise or eye-witnesses and evoking emotions respectively, can also be used, but are less common (Boréus & Bergström, 2012).

Just like with semiotics, a key issue with rhetorical criticism is its often unstructured approach to interpretation, and the following problems of validity and reliability. Sometimes, rhetorical analyses appear descriptive, thus portraying the rhetorical as unambiguous and apparent, while there might be more nuances. For simplicity, some may ignore the ‘unsaid’ arguments, raising further questions of the validity (Boréus & Bergström, 2012). As it is often argued that there is more power to rhetoric when it does not appear to be rhetoric, it is a necessary challenge to find clear evidence for one’s interpretation. This relates to the position of ‘doxa’ in rhetorical criticism, as one may not realise one’s own constraints:
The difficulty with [doxa] is that it always also affects oneself. It is easy to forget or to not even see the shared and normative values of one’s own group, just because they are the norm. Nevertheless, it is important to try to discern the factors that may constrain others' perception of the outside world. (Abdelmoez, 2015a)

Furthermore, it is just as important to discern the factors that constrain one’s own perception, and to theorise as to how that may affect the interpretation of the text. This is often left out of rhetorical analyses.

**Discourse analysis**

Discourse analysis is a term wider than both semiotics and rhetorical criticism, and may even utilise both as methods for its own purposes. Discourse analyses, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, usually aim to question power relations and knowledge production. The approach of these types of discourse analyses are closely related to poststructuralism, in that it focuses on the productivity of language; how ideas, rather than being formed in relation to a pre-existing reality, relies on a construction stemming from how language is used to organise our social world (Bergström & Boréus, 2012).

While signs and symbols are not studied in themselves, all discourse analyses take aim at language. A good example of how language works productively, constitutes subjects, and constructs power relations is Althussers concept of *interpellation*: ‘Interpellation denotes the process through which language constructs a social position for the individual and thereby makes him or her an ideological subject’ (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 15). The subject, as such, comes into being by being called upon as one (hailing). For example, when a police officer calls for the attention of a person on the street, that person is forced to respond, because of the ideological significance of the state apparatus that the police officers represents, and therefore also forced into a subject-role which cannot be seen as independent from the hailing. This also means that language (or speech) and action are connected.

Besides the different emphasis, on signs/symbols and discourse/language respectively, between discourse analysis and semiotic analysis, there is also a distinction to be made in that while semioticians looks at the text (here understood widely to also include photographs, moving images, and speech) discourse analysts are more interested in the context. This, however, does not mean that either approach completely ignores the other aspect altogether, just that the focus is different.
A primary problem with discourse analyses is that their approach to identity-formation is reduced to idealism, completely separate from the material. This complicates the understanding of historical processes, as it does not account for why some discourses form but not others (Bergström & Boréus, 2012, p. 401). Furthermore, the actually existing individuals behind the theories of subjects and agents tend to disappear in studies on discourse. Problems arise when people as research objects are ignored, especially when focus is on the identity formation that this individual may have part in.

**Quantitative methods**
All methods described so far have been qualitative, meaning that they are less concerned with quantification, reliability, and having a representative sample, and instead focus on studying the contextual and the specific, not the general. Quantitative methods, however, could also be utilised in a study such as this, and they have their advantages, such as being perceived as less interpretative, more reliable, more easily tested and reproduced and more useful in finding larger patterns. While there are many different types of quantitative methods, one of the most common, particularly in media studies, is content analysis (Boréus & Bergström, 2012).

A simple way of conducting a content analysis on news media is to look at word-choices, not as in rhetorical criticism or semiotics to understand the meaning or significance of that choice and other possible choices, but quantitatively, by counting the words chosen. This is a concrete and straight-forward approach to bringing patterns to light. However, it is heavily reliant on proper data collection and sampling, meaning that the material have to be both abundant and representative. A study using only articles from Ahram Online will only be representative for Ahram Online, and articles only taken from Ahram Online’s technology section will only be representative of Ahram Online’s technology section. This is, of course, also true for qualitative studies, such as semiotics, but since they do not seek generalisability it is also less of an issue. The quantitative researcher will have a better image of the studied subject the more (valid) material there is to work on (Boréus & Bergström, 2012).

Some issues with quantitative methods include not accounting for the sub-textual and the contextual. While it sometimes might be meaningful to know how often certain key terms occur in the news, it does not tell us how that term is used, in which context, and if there are understood secondary meanings that gets lost in the quantification. Indeed, not everything is possible to quantify, at least not with a meaningful turn-out.
Data collection

The selection of Ahram Online and Egypt Independent relies on primarily three aspects. First and foremost, they are both well-known and widely read sources for news. Secondly, they differ in ownership. Ahram Online is an online, English-language news outlet run by the state-owned Al-Ahram Foundation. Egypt Independent on the other hand was up until April 2013 an independent English-language subsidiary of the Al-Masry Media Corporation, but has since been put under the same management as the Arabic-language Al-Masry Al-Youm. Now they produce few of their own stories, but mostly translates the articles from Al-Masry Al-Youm (Abdelmoez, 2015a). Thirdly, although neither have any official political leanings, Ahram Online is known to be more state-friendly, while Egypt Independent have more leeway for critical reporting, and both have historically been more outspoken and open than their Arabic counterparts (Webb, 2014). This last point, however, makes Egypt Independent an important outlet to use, since they now mostly publish translations, and therefore provides material which possibly is closer, in content, to what is found in the Arabic media.

Selection of articles to analyse is done using Google. While both Ahram Online and Egypt Independent have their own search engines, using Google’s site search function ensures that both news sites are combed for relevant articles in the same way, and that the relevance of the search results are determined on equal terms. Using Google, as such, provides consistency to the selection process, compared to using the news sites own search engines. Having an automated search-engine select which articles are relevant also prevents limitation of the validity, as it is otherwise a risk that the sample is affected by the researcher, only containing articles that represents a certain point of view. This method is both web-based, meaning the internet is utilised as a tool for collection and sampling of data, and asynchronous, meaning that the data is not produced in real time, but pre-existing (Bryman, 2012, p. 658), and it has been used with great success before (cf. Abdelmoez, 2015a).

The selection is done by typing into the search field: ‘site:http://www.egyptindependent.com/terror Egypt’ and ‘site:http://english.ahram.org.eg/terror Egypt’ respectively. The articles containing those two words, terror and Egypt, from each site are then listed according to relevance, as determined by Google, of which the first seven from each will be used, making a total selection of fourteen articles. However, since the political landscape has changed drastically in the last years, particularly with the ousting of Mohamed Morsy in July 2013, the results are limited to after 8 June, 2014, when president el-Sisi officially began his presidency.
This also makes the relevance, and as such the results, change as without a set time frame, newer articles are prioritised (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).

**Figure 3** – Site search of Ahram Online, without set time frame.

**Figure 4** – Site search of Ahram Online, with set time frame.
Definition of terms

**Anchorage**
Anchorage, as previously mentioned, refers to how interpretation of meaning is controlled by associating it with text. Chandler (2014) explains that ‘[l]inguistic elements can serve to 'anchor' (or constrain) the preferred readings of an image’ (‘Intertextuality’). The anchorage works ideologically to steer the interpretation of the visual sign in a certain direction.

**Connotation**
Connotations are indirect associations, the implicit meaning of a sign, the contextually or subtextually understood which is not explicitly stated.

**Denotation**
Denotations refers to the *content* of a sign, which is its literal meaning.

**Entanglement**
Entanglement is defined by Hodder (2012) as ‘the dialectic of dependence and dependency between humans and things’ (p. 206). Drawing from the idea that humans depend on things, things on other things, things on humans, and human on other humans, Hodder (2012) uses entanglement to describe this system of dependence (productive) and dependency (limiting). This concept provides an interesting way to look at masculinities, the military, and male coded bodies, and the relationship they have with each other.

**Masculinity/ies**
Masculinity, or masculinities as there are many and sometimes contradicting meaning, expressions and behaviours ascribed to the term, is difficult to define, not least because there is such as diversity in scholarship and so many theories of it. Furthermore, what masculinity signifies is different over time and place, and will not mean the same thing to an academic in Stockholm, Sweden, as to a worker in El Warraq, Egypt, which is another reason for speaking in the plural.

The pre-study leading up to this work aimed at exploring localised perceptions of masculinity among Cairene media audiences and media producers:

There are, as have been seen, several common themes that emerges in media audiences and media professionals personal reflections on what masculinity signifies. Most themes are related but often mentioned separately. For example, *heterosexuality* could be stated or implied, but is always an integral part of what is considered “true masculinity.” Related to this is *family*, which comes with the expectation of men as *providers* and *protectors*. These roles also extend to the *nation* and the *military*. Protection and militarism, in turn, relates to ideas of *strength*, *honour*, and *courage*. Providing on the other spectrum could
be related to responsibility and honesty, while both providing and protection could be related to control. Men are almost exclusively seen as possessors of power. Indeed, the patriarch, ultimately represented by the iconized leader, is truly the quintessence of Egyptian masculine identity, thus bringing us back to the (heteronormative) family. (Abdelmoez, 2015b)

Whitehead (2002) precedes the question on what masculinity is by calling it ‘those practices and ways of being that serve to validate the masculine subject’s sense of itself as male/boy/man’ (p. 4). He also provides a perspective on men and masculinities as ‘symbiotically entwined, in so much as they coexist in a political landscape that assumes a natural gender order to things’ (p. 5). There is then both a view of masculinity as illusory, while ‘men’s practices’ are material.

An interesting perspective, counter to that of Whitehead, is given by Jack/Judith Halberstam, author of Female Masculinity (1998), who provides both a pragmatic approach to masculinity while at the same time challenging and problematizing the generally held conviction of masculinity as essentially male. Halberstam argues that ‘masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects’ (1998, p. 2). S/he thus emphasise masculinity as performative, without an interiority that dictates expression, and therefore, just like Butler, stresses that no gender performance is ‘more natural’ than the other. Focus, instead, should be on hierarchies and power, and how masculinities, when limited to male coded bodies, are used as instrument to uphold male dominance and female oppression. To exemplify, women’s service in the military is often opposed by arguments against their capacity to serve, particularly in combat. While this notion of women’s (lack of) capacity for violence is formed socially and culturally, so is the notion that sex/gender/sexuality is irrelevant to state violence. The difference then is simply that the military’s enactment of male-embodied masculinity works to exclude women and uphold the idea of women’s physical inferiority (Kovitz, 2003). It is therefore important to always question definitions of masculinity, to ask oneself if such a definition is more descriptive or more prescriptive, lest one ends up reifying social constructions that form hierarchies and power relations.

**Paradigm**

Paradigm refers to the relation between the sign used to the signs not used. Saussure called it the sign’s associative relations, although it is today more common to speak of paradigmatic analysis and paradigms (Chandler, 2014). Paradigms are, as such, sets of sign (either signified or signifiers) that can be used interchangably, but according to semiotic theory significantly alters the meaning. Chandler (2014) uses the example of the sentence ‘the man cried.’ Instead of ‘man,’ one could write ‘boy.’ Instead of ‘cried’ one could write ‘screamed.’
Polysemy

Polysemy refers to the possible multiple meanings of a sign. Often times the signified is ambiguous. Take for example Magritte’s pipe (see Figure 5), which comes with the seemingly paradoxical anchorage ‘ceci n’est pas une pipe,’ meaning ‘this is not a pipe’. Although, if we interpret ‘this’ as a signifier, it is only a paradox if it would signify an actual pipe, which it does not, since the pipe shown is just a representation (can you stuff it with tobacco?). ‘This’ could also refer to the painting itself, or even the canvas upon which the words are written. In other words, when ‘this’ is studied as a signifier, it is not self-evident what is signified. Therein lies the polysemy of the sign. Signs are often more polysemic in their connotations than denotations.

Securitisation and the security state

Securitisation is a term coming from International Relations theory, mostly associated with the so called Copenhagen School. It refers to how threat and need for security is constructed, rather than relying on a material reality, and the social process in which groups of people construct this threat (Buzan, 2015). The security state, in such a system, utilise securitisation to legitimise authoritarian measures for control. It participates in, or takes advantage of, the construction of national threats in order to justify means of governing that would otherwise be met with resistance. In regards to militarised masculinities, this concept is important in that it shows how the construction of military necessity as well as masculinist protectionism/guardianship relies on ‘securitised human subjects, particularly those of sexualised gender’ (Amar, 2011).
Signs – Signifier and signified
A sign, according to Saussure, consists of two parts, the signifier and the signified. The signifier could be understood as the more straight-forward, or materialist, part of a sign, the form that it takes, while signified means what that signifier stands for or the concept behind it. Chandler (2014, ‘Signs’) states that the ‘sign must have both a signifier and a signified. You cannot have a totally meaningless signifier or a completely formless signified.’

Syntagm
If paradigm is understood as a vertical set of absent signs that could replace the present one, meaning that the sign has a position in this vertical line, then syntagm refers to the horizontal line in which order is of significance. Particularly important in imagery, the syntagm gives a hierarchy of meaning, as certain things are highlighted while others are hidden. It can also refer to texts, as a sentence follows a particular, chosen, order, as does chapters and subheadings. The fact that ‘rhetorical criticism’ was listed before ‘discourse analysis’ in the discussion on alternative methods might reflect the author’s personal views of these methods, their usefulness in this study, or perhaps how close they are perceived to be to a semiotic analysis.

Terror and terrorism
Wardlaw (1989) argues that defining terrorism is a practice made difficult by the fact that it is a moral problem. At its core, this morality issue stems from the ‘assumption that some classes of political violence are justifiable whereas others are not’ (Wardlaw, 1989, p. 4). This is important to remember as it emphasise that most definitions will have political consequences. This leads to a very selective usage, excluding for example state-actors, which makes terrorism a difficult concept academically. In order to find a working definition, Wardlaw first makes a distinction between terror and terrorism, as the former may not always constitute the latter, for example as used by individuals for criminal and/or personal, rather than political, goals, or because of mental health issues. Therefore, central to this definition is the drive to influence the political landscape, either by ‘mobilising forces sympathetic to the cause of the terrorists or by immobilising the forces of the incumbent authorities’ (Wardlaw, 1989, p. 9). This definition, as such, also holds a component of resistance to authority, excluding state-actors, but possibly including legitimate political opposition acting in response to repression.
Findings and analysis

Ahram Online

‘Major terror attacks in Cairo since July 2013: A timeline’

Interestingly, the first search result from Ahram Online is not a regular article, opinion piece or any other sort of commentary, but a timeline of terror attacks since the ousting of Mohamed Morsy. This provides a controlled context as the article relates itself specifically to a political issue, Morsy’s ousting, as a starting point for terror attacks. The lead paragraph reads: ‘Ahram Online chronicles the major attacks in Greater Cairo since the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi in 2013.’ The signifier Greater Cairo also provides context, as terror attacks in Egypt are otherwise associated with Sinai.

The timeline is categorised on the website as ‘News content,’ falling under the section ‘Egypt’ and its subsection ‘Politics.’ These categorisations should be considered the genre (‘news’) and sub-genre (‘domestic politics’) which according to Chandler (2014) forms a system within which the signs need to be understood. By reading the text as a news-text, the reader knows what to expect, that person is familiar with the conventions of communication, and thus interpret the signs unconsciously. Furthermore, ‘news’ implies an unambiguous reality claim.

The search keywords of the article are: Cairo, Egypt, Islamists, Timeline, Bomb and Terrorism. These are some of the article’s important signifiers, designated by the writer, or perhaps an editor, as the most relevant descriptors. Cairo and Egypt are two relatively straight-forward signifiers, denoting geographical areas relevant to the events reported about, although Cairo, as mentioned, holds one connotation in particular, which is ‘not Sinai,’ as that is the usual geographical area where stories of terrorism in Egypt takes place. The article, in the first paragraph, mentions ‘multiple attacks that were no longer limited to the Sinai Peninsula.’ Islamists is a more complex signifier, referring in this context broadly to the assailants of the reported terror attacks. Therefore, besides the denotation ‘supporters of Political Islam,’ it connotes ‘terrorists.’ Since the timeline takes it starting point in the ousting of Mohamed Morsy, who was affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, it is implicitly communicated that the Islamists are supporters of President Morsy, and the attacks are stemming from resistance against el-Sisi’s presidency. At the very least the article draws connections between the attacks and the Islamist bloc of which the Muslim Brotherhood is a part.
The keyword ‘timeline’ denotes a chronological presentation of events, but also connotes a linearity of the same events connected with each other through time. In other words, this is further evidence showing that by placing all of these events on a line starting with the removal of Mohamed Morsy from the presidency, there is an implied connection between Morsy, or his supporters, and the ‘major terror attacks.’

Terrorism is an interesting signifier, as it is surrounded by a debate in regards to what it signifies or should signify. For one thing, it encompasses a wide variety of international and domestic crimes, such as torture, crimes against humanity, targeting of civilians, destroying food sources, infrastructure and industry, etc. However, as described in the definition of terms, this usually only applies to non-state actors which reflects the political and controversial nature of the term (cf. Tiefenbrun, 2010; Wardlaw, 1989). Furthermore, its political nature also makes ‘terrorism’ inherently paradoxical, as the terrorist will also be considered a hero, revolutionary or ‘freedom fighter’ by others. As such, the actors behind the act are very polysemic, anchored by the sign ‘terrorism,’ which denotes violence and/or aggression in one way or another, particularly illegitimate violence, as those who considers the act justified would likely not refer to it as terrorism, or an act of terror.

While there are few direct mentions of gender in the article, there is a clear and significant overrepresentation of male figures in the images (a total of ten images showing men in relevant roles), and stories, as observers as well as military and police. It is very likely that ‘terrorist,’ therefore, also connotes a male figure. This is further strengthened by the signifiers ‘militants,’ ‘military,’ ‘army,’ ‘jihadist groups,’ ‘Islamists,’ ‘security forces,’ ‘security/police officers,’ and ‘policemen,’ all belonging to the same paradigm as ‘terrorists’ (signifying actors utilizing violence, legitimated or not). In each and every case, these signifiers refers to masculine figures, both in connotation and as anchorage to the images of male figures occupying these roles (see for example Figure 6), but there is also an interesting divide between hero (ideal) masculinities and villain (deviant) masculinities found in these terms. While ‘militant’ denotes someone engaged in armed combat, this article only uses it in regards to non-state-affiliated combatants. See for example the sentence: ‘A military campaign against militants – dubbed Operation Eagle – has been ongoing in Sinai since August 2011.’ Here, the military is placed against ‘militants,’ thus making a clear separation of the state-sanctioned violence, which is the connotation of ‘military campaign,’ with the illegitimated violence of ‘the militants,’ denoted in the term itself. The military campaign is constructed as counter-violence (even if violence is only hinted to), as a necessary measure against the violent masculinity that is embodied by ‘the militants.’
’Egypt’s options to fight terror’


Originally published in the printed Ahram Weekly, this article is written by journalist Ahmed Eleiba and is categorised by Ahram Online as ‘News,’ placing it in the same genre as the previous article, although without categorisations such as ‘Egypt’ or ‘Politics.’ While it lacks designated search key words, it does, of course, contain many important signifiers, such as ‘terrorism,’ ‘extremism,’ ‘military,’ ‘Islamist radicalism,’ and ‘security.’ These are, as such, shared with the previous article and may be interpreted as signifying the same things, as well as sharing their gendered connotations.

The focus of this article, as opposed to the former, lies on international actors, rather than domestic, Egyptian ones. It is presented as an objective listing of different point of views on the issue of ‘Countering Violent Extremism,’ but shows a clear tone of emergency and necessity for Egypt’s ‘vengeance approach’:

Fresh from waging air strikes in Libya to punish Islamic State (IS) forces for slaughtering 20 Egyptian Copts, the country had been hoping for an international alliance to act on Libya. At the very least, they expected that the international coalition operating in Syria and Iraq would include Libya on its agenda, but this was not announced at the conference.
Terrorism and ‘violent extremism’ is in this article, interestingly, not only equated with the Libyan affiliations of Daesh (IS), although that is the main focus, but once again the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is discussed, as the possible ‘root of Islamic radicalism.’ While this claim is made with reference to Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, it is nonetheless a choice from the journalist to bring up this point, not only once, but later in the article also emphasising that Egypt have designated the MB a terror group, and even stating that ‘the Brotherhood is doing all it can to destabilise the country, in order to boost its argument that its exclusion from power is the reason for the instability.’ As such, this could again be seen as part of a securitisaton process, in which deviant, terrorist masculinities are used to legitimise that of the Egyptian Armed Forces. At the same time, violence conducted by the mentioned state-actors, particularly Egypt, is hidden by use of different signs from the same paradigm. Here, ‘operation,’ ‘strategy,’ and ‘military response’ are used, as ‘campaign’ in the previous article, to mean exactly legitimiated violence, without explicitly stating so.

Like with the timeline of ‘major terror attacks in Cairo since July 2013,’ gender is not explicitly stated, while the absence of non-men is glaring. Men, however, occupy many roles here, as politicians and generals, as leaders and decision-makers, as scholars and experts on security, defence, foreign policy, political science, etc. There is literally no hint towards non-men occupying these roles, and little to no room is left for interpretation of the signifiers ‘terrorists,’ ‘Islamists,’ or ‘extremists’ as anything other than gendered male, if only signified implicitly. Furthermore, it is important to remember that ‘[m]ilitary, defense and security-related institutions […] have historically been “owned” by men and occupied by men’s bodies, which also has influenced these institutions’ agendas, politics and policies’ (Kronsell, 2005, p. 281).

In other words, with the focus being on the necessity of ‘military response,’ the military men are portrayed as the ones who can best solve the problem of villainous men, the terrorists. Political men are, however, also included in this solution, but only marginally, in the second to last paragraph: ‘Along with the military response Egypt has shown itself capable of, Cairo is also pursuing diplomatic efforts.’ First, Egypt’s military capacity is reiterated, after which government politics, signified in the rhetorical trope ‘Cairo’ (using geography to speak of an institution), is presented as an option to legitimiated violence in dealing with ‘the turmoil.’

The article is then finished with a paragraph containing this single sentence: ‘With or without help from the West, Cairo has a strategy on terror, various regional allies and a multi-faceted plan of action.’ Once again, the article writer tries to strengthen the narrative of the Egyptian military masculinity as capable to deal with the threat of deviant men.
‘Foreign intelligence behind recent terror attacks’

Just like both previous articles, this one is categorised as ‘News,’ but lacks both sub-category and designated search keywords, other than ‘News’ and ‘Sinai.’ However, this article also contains many signifiers in common with the previous, such as ‘militant group,’ ‘soldier,’ ‘terrorist,’ ‘jihadist,’ but it is also the first to directly use ‘men,’ apart from in ‘policemen.’ This in reference to the actors otherwise called ‘militants’ or ‘terrorists’: ‘An anonymous group of masked men released a video claiming responsibility for the navy attack.’ This explicitly shows how the signifier ‘masked men’ is considered paradigmatically interchangeable with ‘militants,’ ‘terrorists’ and jihadists,’ even though gender is also ‘masked,’ adding to their, and other absent signifier’s (e.g. ‘soldiers’), gendered reading and gendering significance.

The article deals with attacks against the Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) in North Sinai and Damietta, claimed by the Ministry of Interior to have been orchestrated by ‘foreign intelligence.’ As such, the national threat, against which military capability – embodied by military men – can be confirmed, is heightened by placing it on a peer-to-peer (state) level:

Egypt's interior ministry said on Monday that foreign intelligence was behind the recent attacks against Egypt's army in North Sinai and Damietta, state-run news agency MENA reported.

The threat is also emphasised by stating that the group concerned, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis (ABM), have ‘pledged allegiance’ to the infamous Daesh (IS). The impact of such a framing can be shown by the analysis in Foreign Affairs, entitled ‘ISIS Enters Egypt’ (al-Anani, 2014), which refers this same story. So, even though ABM have been active in Sinai for a long time, they are somehow considered more of a threat simply by association with a globally more known organisation. This Ahram-article plays on the same chord, following up the construction of the group’s threatening association with a further statement on the military’s capabilities:

The North Sinai attack prompted Egypt's army to create a buffer zone between Rafah and the Gaza Strip in an effort to root out the militant groups operating in the area.

So, what we have here is a construction of the threat, embodied by ‘terrorist group’ ABM, followed by the reiteration of the ability of the armed forces to handle the threat.

Ideologically, the sign ‘foreign intelligence,’ possibly signifying Qatar or Turkey, two countries known to oppose the presidency of el-Sisi, acts to separate the group, responsible for the terror attacks, from the Egyptian nation, as to more clearly construct the military as national guardian.
By connecting the known group Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis to an unknown foreign power, their actions, particularly acts of violence, are automatically considered illegitimate rather than revolutionary or part of a popular resistance. However, the threat is reported as something mostly affecting the military, rather than civilians, thus portraying the military men as both guardians of the nation, protecting civil society, and risking their lives in doing so:

Egypt’s security forces have been facing a decade-long jihadist militant insurgency in Sinai, with militant attacks increasing over the past year and expanding into Cairo and the Nile Delta, killing hundreds of army and police personnel.

Here the writer refers to ‘Egypt’s security forces,’ i.e. the military, and the struggle against their antithesis, the ‘jihadist militant.’ The signifier ‘security’ denotes safety or protection from harm, while connoting the military, which both acts to legitimise their ‘force’ and to prop them up as guardians or protectors. That the attacks have been increasing and expanding into Cairo and the Delta thus act to show an increased necessity for this guardianship, as does a brief mention of civilian casualties, following a statement of the military’s ‘success’ against the militants: ‘The military says it has killed and arrested hundreds of militants. Civilians have also been caught up in the violence.’ This manifestation of the military as guardians play well with the common discourse of male guardianship (cf. Ghannam, 2013; Eduards, 2007). Following such an interpretation, the manifestation of the terrorist threat may be seen as a ‘villain masculinity,’ that threatening other man, against whom the violence of the ‘heroic/military masculinity’ is legitimised. Ghannam (2013) recounts Egyptians using the terms gada’na¹ and baltaga² to differentiate between forms of violence, legitimated or not, and it is possible that this report alludes to the same differentiation. The military, the gada’ in this context, use their violence against militants, in protection of the nation, which is made necessary because of the terrorist, the baltaga, who using it against civilians, the nation, and the gada’.

Like the other articles from Ahram Online, there is nothing that suggest a reading of the Egyptian Armed Forces as anything other than masculine male, although the textual suggestion of masculinity is rarely explicit. However, this article is precisely the only one analysed that

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¹ Gada’na (جدعنة) is an Egyptian term, denoting courage, decency, and strength of character. It is female grammatically, but is used more often for men, such as in the sense of ‘gentleman.’ In the interview study preluding this (Abdelmoez, 2015), several men used Gada’ as a descriptor of themselves, as well as of what they thought it ‘means to be a man.’

² Baltaga ( بلطجة) in an Egyptian term, which refers to ‘thuggery’ and was used extensively during the 2011 uprising to refer to criminals hired by the regime to attack protestors. Gendered female grammatically, but very rarely used for non-men. It is the embodiment of villain masculinity, and the concept, as used on Egyptian streets rather than in laws, ‘focuses mainly on the improper uses of violence in daily life’ (Ghannam, 2013, p. 123).
explicitly refers to the militants as men, even though such a reading is implied in all articles. That is, while ‘militant’ and ‘soldier’ are informed by the semiotic potential of the military as masculine, it seems rare that ‘men are called men,’ thus hiding the connection.

Chandler (2014) suggests discussing the ‘ideological functions of the text,’ which in this case, as with the previous articles, can be interpreted as to construct, or take advantage of, a national threat – the deviant/terrorist masculinities – in order to legitimise the state’s military apparatus, the ‘security industry,’ and by extension the militarised masculinity. In order to do so, the actors placed in the role of a threat, jihadists in particular and Islamists in general, are separated from the nation, and the immediacy of their threat is propped up:

In late October, an attack on an army checkpoint in North Sinai left over 30 soldiers dead. The Sinai-based militant group Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis (ABM) claimed the attack in a 30-minute video clip published online on Friday. ABM has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, the militant group which has seized large parts of Iraq and Syria.

It is possible that this plays part in placing the military in what Eduards (2007) calls ‘the national drama,’ specifically in the role of guardian. This draws from to the trope of a national family, wherein the nation is symbolised as a woman, such as in the Cairo statue ‘Nahdet Misr’ (see Figure 7), in need of protection from a male guardian.

Figure 7 – The statue ‘Nahdet Misr,’ portraying mother Egypt, pictured on an Egyptian bill. The Sphinx may be interpreted as a representation of the past, of history, heritage, or tradition.
‘Cyprus, Greece and Egypt agree to step up “terror” fight’


This article is produced by the international news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) and is notably different from the previous articles in both style and content. It is categorised as ‘News,’ labelled ‘Egypt,’ and ‘Politics,’ and the search key words are ‘AFP,’ ‘Egypt,’ ‘Greece,’ ‘cyprus [sic],’ ‘terrorism,’ ‘declaration,’ and ‘El-Sisi.’

The article begins with a paragraph stating: ‘Cyprus and Greece on Wednesday agreed with Egypt on the need to step up cooperation in the fight against "terrorism" in the troubled eastern Mediterranean region.’ This is an interesting sentence in that one of the key terms, ‘terrorism,’ is put in quotations, perhaps as a way to take distance from the controversial nature of the term. It also places Egypt in the active role, by phrasing it as Cyprus and Greece agreeing with Egypt, rather than them all agreeing with each other. This portrays Egypt as leader and key player in the regional ‘fight against terrorism,’ even though Cyprus appears to be the host of this meeting.

While the military and state-run military operations are only hinted towards, this article reveals another ‘category’ of masculinity, the political man. The three main actors in this story are ‘President Nicos Anastasiades of Cyprus, his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras.’ Together they are represented as leaders, united to ‘jointly combat terrorism and violent extremism for the sake of security,’ wherein military forces plays a central part. However, as military actors and the military as an institution are absent in this article, so is any manifestation of military masculinity absent.

Figure 8 – ‘Crossing the Red Line’ by Huda Lutfi
'13 Egyptians charged with forming 'terror cell' linked to Islamic State'


This article comes directly from Ahram Online and revolves around a story similar to one of the previous articles, on connections between Daesh and Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis. It is categorised as ‘News’ but without sub-categories, and contains the search key words ‘Egypt,’ ‘Militants,’ ‘Court,’ ‘Islamic State,’ and ‘Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis.’ Other signifiers include ‘terrorist cell,’ which denotes a small group of terrorists working within a clandestine cell system, ‘army forces,’ denoting state-military personnel, and ‘infidel,’ a term that reveals religious motives.

The lead paragraph reads: ‘Defendants allegedly formed a terrorist cell to attack security forces and installations.’ This sentence acts to portray a threat, particularly against ‘security forces,’ which signifies military personnel, while at the same time not making an absolute reality claim, by use of the signifier ‘allegedly.’ This is a recurring term, both within this article and in others, and its usage may be understood as part of the conventions of the genre, aimed at creating a distance between the writer and the stories reality claim, in favour of impartiality.

While it is likely that the signs, ‘militants,’ ‘army/security forces,’ and ‘terrorists,’ all hold the semiotic potential of masculinity, that is that they draw from a historically narrow, gendered, usage, this is only an implicit manifestation of military masculinity, which relies on an already understood perception of reality. There is nothing outside of the terms, in this context, that can confirm the gendered reading, meaning that the terms then relies entirely on the interpretation of the reader. No gendered relay or anchorage is made, either through imagery, or by intertextually (between texts) and intratextually (within the text) association one sign with another. At the same time, this also works in the other direction, in that an oppositional reading, of these terms as gendered non-masculine, or even non-gendered entirely, could have been promoted by the media producers (writer, editor, headliner, etc.) but was not. There is no reason to believe that the article is supposed to oppose the reading of ‘military’ as ‘male,’ in which case it may not actively produce military masculinity, but perhaps perpetuates the status quo. Roland Barthes regards writers as orchestrators of text that is ‘already-written’ (Chandler, 2014, ‘Intertextuality’). This means, for one thing, that the writer is never truly the originator of a text, as no text is every truly original. The writer, thus, only has the power to mix writings that are already existing, which in turn means that the historical usage of signs, as well as its gendered signification, plays an integral part in forming the text and the way it ‘should’ be read. This still does not mean that gendered signification is explicit, but such an interpretation of writing implies that the same, historical, signification is maintained within the text.
'Egypt police arrest 35 on terror accusations'

This article, like the previous one, is produced directly by Ahram Online. It is categorised as ‘News’ and does include the sub-categories ‘Egypt’ and ‘Politics.’ The search keywords are ‘Ahram Online,’ ‘Egypt,’ ‘Arrest,’ ‘Police,’ Interior Ministry,’ and ‘Terrorism.’ The article, again like the previous one, centres on the possible formation of ‘terrorist cells,’ although in this case targeting ‘public and private property, as well as security posts.’ The story itself is said to come from Al-Ahram Arabic.

This article also uses the term ‘allegedly,’ likely with the same meaning as previous articles, and contains the signifiers ‘Islamist,’ ‘militant insurgency,’ and ‘security forces.’ While, as mentioned, ‘allegedly’ makes for a nuanced reality claim, the article also associates the story with an unambiguously proclaimed increased threat:

The arrests come as Egyptian authorities fight a growing militant insurgency that has specifically targeted security forces and their posts. Although the deadliest attacks hit the Gaza-bordered Sinai Peninsula, other smaller attacks have become commonplace in Cairo and other cities.

As such, the ‘growing militant insurgency’ is presented as an absolute reality claim, as truth. Perhaps more importantly, the article makes sure to emphasise that ‘security forces’ are particularly targeted, while noting that civilians also face the threat, even in Cairo. This may have at least two ideological functions. For one, it could be to portray the struggle as being between the state-military and the ‘insurgents,’ meaning that the state have provoked a reaction that thus could be seen as somewhat justified. On the other hand, seeing how the article also notes the threat against civilians, this paragraph may also be a way of placing the military in the ‘heroic’ role, as national guardians. This way, the military is manifested as necessary, heroic and effective at what they do, since only smaller attacks hit civilians.

Egyptian authorities blame the group of ousted Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood, for orchestrating the violence and have designated it as a terrorist organisation. The Brotherhood denies engaging in violence.

This paragraph is, of course, important in that it associates the ‘growing militant insurgency’ with the Muslim Brotherhood, albeit with a somewhat nuanced reality claim. However, since the reporting of Ahram Online have made strong connections between the signifier ‘Islamist’ and violent actions, it is possible that the use of this term here is meant to strengthen the claim by the authorities. This is then followed by a sentenced aimed at impartiality.
Just like the previous article, gender is never explicit other than in the word ‘policeman,’ who is mentioned as a victim of violence directed against the police in Faiyoum. What is interesting, however, is that this is the first article Ahram Online article to use the term ‘people,’ arguably a very gender neutral term, interchangeably with ‘militants’ and ‘terrorists.’ While the article ‘Foreign intelligence behind recent terror attacks’ used ‘men’ in such a way, this writer has chosen ‘people,’ which may be an attempt to not disclose the gender of those involved, aimed at gender neutrality or simply not making assumptions when it is not known. This interpretation could strengthen the idea that ‘men’ is used interchangeably with ‘militants’ and ‘terrorists’ as part of a process of gendering those terms. However, it is also possible that ‘people’ is meant to create a distance to the accusations, which would also be why the article repeatedly uses ‘allegedly,’ and refers to the subjects as ‘suspects,’ rather than ‘perpetrator,’ or any other term that makes a clearer reality claim.

'Egyptian court declares Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades a “terrorist group”'

This article is produced by Ahram Online, and is designated as ‘News,’ under the categories ‘Egypt,’ and ‘Politics.’ The search keywords are ‘Ahram Online,’ ‘Hamas,’ and ‘Al-Qassam Brigades,’ and the lead-in reads ‘Hamas have said they reject the “dangerous” verdict.’

The lead-in is followed by an image of a row of ‘Palestinian members of al-Qassam Brigades’ in full military attire, their weapons placed in front of them while they are praying (see Figure 9).

Figure 9 – ‘Palestinian members of al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas movement, pray before a military parade marking the 27th anniversary of Hamas’ founding, in Gaza City December 14, 2014 (Photo: Reuters)’
The same story is also reported in Egypt Independent, although produced by Reuters, which as such will be elaborated upon in the following section. The specifically gendered signified in this article is clearer than the previous Ahram Online article, in part thanks to the relay of the ‘armed wing of the Hamas movement,’ to the row of military men. Furthermore, the article contains direct reference to male, military figures, such as ‘Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri.’ Note the use of the gendered ‘spokesman,’ rather than ‘spokesperson,’ which is used in other sources. However, Egyptian state-affiliated actors, such as ‘army and police personnel,’ are left without gendered relay or associations, but there are also no indications that those signifiers are meant to be read as either non-gendered or non-male gendered.

This article also follows the pattern of how a national threat is manifested, and how deviant masculinities are placed in the role of this threatening ‘other.’

The court reasoning explaining the verdict said that papers provided by the plaintiff proved that the group were implicated in bombings in Egypt, and that the brigade's recent planning and financing of terrorist attacks show that Al-Qassam brigades and Hamas have swayed from their original cause of fighting the Israeli occupation. The court added that the group's aim is now to target Egypt's security. […] The court decision comes two days after a series of militant attacks in North Sinai left at least 30 people dead, mostly security personnel. Sinai-based militant group Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, which recently pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, claimed responsibility for the attacks.

While the article does reference the court, the reality claim is fairly strong in the accusations against the groups. They are explained as a clear national threat, and by including a mention of Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis (ABM), the groups are thus associated with each other within the text. There is an implication here that Hamas is supporting ABM, even though it is not said explicitly. This does not only act to strengthen the claims against Hamas and their armed wing, but also to further emphasize the ‘foreignness’ of ABM, as to better place them in a role that is external to the Egyptian nation, represented by the army that is fighting them.
Egypt Independent

‘International conference in Makkah to fight terrorism next Sunday’


This article, coming from the Egyptian-state run Middle East News Agency (MENA), is a short announcement of an international conference ‘Against Terrorism’ organised by the Muslim World League. It contains no mentions of either Egypt, the Egyptian Armed Forces or any other military entity apart from ‘terrorist groups.’ Therefore, there is little to analyse in relation to the purpose of this study and will be replaced with the next ‘relevant’ article as determined by Google.

‘14 militants killed in Sinai, 5 tunnels destroyed’


This article, an edited translation from Al-Masry Al-Youm, reports about the killing of fourteen ‘militants’ and arrest of four ‘terrorists.’ As such, it shares many signifiers with the articles from Ahram Online – ‘Military,’ ‘terrorists,’ ‘militants’ – and others that are unique – ‘Second Army,’ ‘Improvised Explosive Device (IED).’ The article begins with a reference to ‘Military spokesperson Mohamed Samir,’ which is interesting in that it uses the gender neutral signifier ‘spokesperson,’ even though the Arabic original is gendered male (متحدث). In other words, this signifier could be evident of a gender-awareness in the translator or a perception of the intended audience, but of course still signifies a male, military figure (see Figure 10). As such, the reading of this military representative as male is just as clear as the military figures in previous articles.

The ‘Second Army’ refers to the highest field formation within the Egyptian Armed Forces, itself divided into several divisions, and the places referred to, Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah, are both located in Northern Sinai, bordering to the Gaza strip. This suggests that the ‘wanted terrorists,’ a phrasing that emphasises that they are known (and therefore dangerous) criminals, are connected to an Islamist group inside Gaza, such as Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad, or groups working between borders, such as smuggling rings. However, the Islamist angle is, unlike the articles in Ahram Online, not played at all. ‘Terrorists’ and ‘militants’ are signifiers used interchangeably, but neither ‘Islamist’ nor ‘jihadist’ is used, even though such associations
could very easily be made, considering the locations and actions reported on. Indeed, some
commenters read the article as referring to the ‘international Muslim Brotherhood.’

The article continues with the following paragraph:

Samir added that 14 militants were killed in northern Sinai in an exchange of fire in the
districts of al-Nosraniya, al-Zawraa and al-Quwaiaat, pointing out that the army arrested
a very dangerous terrorist named Sweilam Mohamed Salem Salama.

The phrasing ‘exchange of fire’ shows that the military men are putting themselves in danger.
Even more clearly than either this or the connotation of ‘wanted terrorist,’ it is also directly
stated that the terrorist in question is ‘very dangerous,’ making the arrest an accomplishment
for the military and acts to support and legitimise the armed forces as guardians of the nation.

Figure 10 – Military spokesperson (man) Mohamed Samir, image from the Al-Masry Al-Youm article:

مقتل 14 تكفيريًا في سيناء ودمر 5 أنفاق برفح

[‘14 takfīris’ killed in Sinai and 5 tunnels destroyed in Rafah’]

3 *Takfīri* (تكفيري) is a Muslim who practices *takfīr*, which is accusing another Muslim of being a *kāfir*, meaning
infidel. As such, it is not synonymous with ‘militants’ as it contains a religious denotation, but does not
necessarily denotes violence in the same way as ‘militant.’ It does, however, mean a degree of defiance of the
establishment as the right to declare someone a *kāfir* is usually reserved for religious scholars and jurisprudents.
Interestingly, the article then breaks with this narrative with this paragraph, detailing the destroying of a field hospital and seizing of medical equipment:

Also, a field hospital that was allegedly used by terrorist elements was destroyed and equipment, such as a device to sterilize surgical instruments, an oxygen cylinder, a filter for surgical operations, a device for measuring blood pressure and a furnace for sterilization, were seized.

Destroying a hospital of any kind is, of course, a controversial move. It requires very justified, extenuating circumstances, which perhaps is provided by the statement that it was ‘used by terrorist elements.’ However, the signifier ‘allegedly’ acts ideologically to question the truth, as to not make an absolute reality claim. Furthermore, ‘terrorist elements’ does not mean terrorists, and could signify civilians, or non-combatants, that are in one way or another simply associated with ‘the terrorists.’

The argument that there is a deep, ideological function to ‘allegedly’ is strengthened in that no such signifier is used in the Arabic original. In the Arabic article, it is simply stated that the field hospital is used by terrorists, and that is was destroyed:

وأشار إلى أنه تم تدمير مستشفى ميدانى، كانت تستخدمه العناصر الإرهابية والتحفظ على بعض محتوياته من بينها «جهاز لتعقيم الأدوات الجراحية، وأسطوانة أوكسجين، وفلتر مياه للعمليات الجراحية وسماعة، وجهاز لقياس الضغط، وسخان كهربائي، وفرن تسخين للتعقيم»، كما تم تدمير مولد كهربائي وأسطوانة أوكسجين كانت تستخدم في تشغيل المستشفى الميداني

Literal translation, as opposed to the one published, as quoted above:

He [Mohamed Samir] stated that a field hospital that was being used by terrorist subjects has been destroyed, and some of its contents were seized, including a sterilization machine for surgical tools, oxygen cylinder, water filter for surgeries, stethoscope, a blood pressure measuring device, a water heater, and a heating oven for sterilization. A power generator and an oxygen cylinder that were used to operate the field hospital have been destroyed.

The Arabic article also contains a lead paragraph that has been left out of the translation:

واصلت قوات الجيش عملياتها العسكرية في سيناء للقضاء على البؤر الإرهابية والعناصر التكفيرية، وأسفرت المواجهات عن قتل 14 تكفيرياً والقبض على 4 آخرين

Translation:

The army troops continued its military operations in Sinai to eliminate terrorist camps and takfīrī subjects, and the clashes resulted in killing 14 takfīrīs and arresting 4 others.
Many other differences are found between the Arabic version and the English translation. For example, as previously mentioned, the English version have been made more gender-neutral, it has been rid of religious connotations and denotations, such as translating takfiri to ‘militants,’ and leaving out the lead paragraph that refers to these subjects. Furthermore, the reality claims made by the Armed Forces in regards to the takfiri-militants are questioned by being referred to as allegations. This is not only in regards to the field hospital. One sentence about destroyed vehicles, in the English version, reads that they were ‘allegedly used in carrying out terrorist attacks.’ In the Arabic original, it is simply stated that they were ‘used in carrying out terrorist attacks,’ making for a completely different reality claim, and potentially a completely different manifestation of military masculinity. The same is true for the last paragraph, in the translated English version reading: ‘Also destroyed was a workshop allegedly used for manufacturing IEDs that contained 15 sacks of explosives and molds to manufacture bombs’ (added emphasis).

These differences show an attempt towards a more nuanced language, or perhaps a way of reporting oriented more towards the perceived English-speaking audience. This means that there might be a difference in reporting between the languages, by extension affecting how military masculinity is exhibited. Nonetheless, the result is two ideologically different stories, one in English that attempts to emphasise markers of impartiality, and erase gender markers, as well as downplay religious factors, and one in Arabic that props up military justification, and does not hide either religious or gender markers.

As can be seen, this article differs from the ones from Ahram Online, in that the role of the military is not portrayed as consistently positive. There seems to be a dual message, however, perhaps due to the dual form of the article, as an Arabic article written by a journalist with one point of view, and as an English translation done by someone else, most likely with a different audience in mind. This would explain inconsistencies, not only between the two versions, but also within the English version, such as one the one hand portraying military capability and the risks taken by military personnel, while at the same time adding markers of impartiality that work against the narrative of the military spokesperson. Weighing in aspects that are probably not determined by the translator, such as accompanying image, the ‘military capability narrative’ gets precedence. Imagery is also something that is syntagmatically prioritised in these articles, as they are placed right after the title, usually the first thing the reader will see and take in. Therefore, the meaning of the images, and their anchorage or relay, should be emphasised. This article contains an image with the relay stating that ‘soldiers guard a base in Arish, Sinai’
(see Figure 11), and they can be seen standing in front of several Egyptian flags wavering in the wind.

Read in this manner, this article both plays to the same tune as the Ahram Online articles, in that it portrays the military masculinity, anchored by strongly nationalist imagery of soldiers standing guard in front of wavering flags, in relation to the dangerous, villain terrorist, reaffirmed by reporting of the extent of their destruction. At the same time, the article also, to some extent, breaks with the securitisation narrative by questioning the reality claims made by the army spokesperson. Also, the fact that Mohamed Samir is referred to in the gender neutral does little to the reading of him as a male, military figure, and it definitely does not disrupt the construction of the military masculinity. In no way is an alternative reading, i.e. a reading of the military as non-masculine, suggested. As with the other articles, the signifiers always refers to men and are meant to evoke images of either ‘heroes’ or ‘villains.’


Figure 11 – ‘Soldiers guard a base in Arish, Sinai’ (Photo: Tahseen Bakr)
‘Azouli military prison: Egypt’s dark secret’


(Accessed 5 May, 2015)

In an entirely clear break with previous articles, this one begins with the following paragraph:

The Egyptian military is torturing civilians and prisoners are disappearing in secret military prisons without judicial oversight in one of the toughest crackdowns on detainee rights, according to evidence collected by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

This article, seemingly only existing in its English version (produced by Egypt Independent rather than Al-Masry Al-Youm), is labelled ‘news’ and contains the keywords, designated by Egypt Independent, ‘police torture,’ ‘prisoner abuse,’ and ‘torture in Egypt.’ It revolves around a report from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) about human rights abuses since the ousting of President Morsy.

The reality claim is unambiguous. Instead of using ‘allegedly’ or in any way question the truth of the story, the article makes direct ‘truth statements,’ such as the initial statement that the ‘Egyptian military is torturing civilians’ (added emphasis). This reality claim is backed up by ‘evidence,’ which is another interesting signifier, as it denotes irrefutable proof. While it is usual that articles refers to authorities or experts, a rhetorical tool called ethos, that could simply have been done by the phrase ‘according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch,’ rather than, as it reads now, ‘according to evidence collected by Amnesty International […]’

The reality claim, as such, is strengthened by the signifier ‘evidence,’ which means to say that not only is it the claim of these authorities, it is undisputable fact.

The focus of this article is much less on terrorist organizations, only mentioning the word once, and more on the Egyptian Armed Forces. Therefore, the mode of gendering the military as masculine is a little different than in previous articles, as it is not placed in opposition to terrorist/villain masculinity, but rather revolutionary/hero civilian, as seen in these two paragraphs:

The testimonies shed light on a new chapter of the military’s wide-scale human rights abuses against civilians that peaked after General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi – now the country’s president - ousted the first democratically elected president in Egypt’s modern history on 3 July 2013.
[…] Inmates there, mostly held for either their anti-military or anti-coup stances, are routinely electrocuted, beaten and hanged naked by for hours until they give satisfactory confessions to interrogators.

First, there is a statement of the military’s illegitimate or even illegal actions, as denoted in ‘human rights abuses,’ and that this is a both new and old, as the metaphor ‘chapter’ signifies a new start within an already existing framework. As such, it is implied that the military have always, or at least for a long time, been involved in these operations, but that it has now grown worse. This new, worsened situation is then associated with the ousting of President Morsy, furthering the portrayal of the military-political leadership as illegitimate and dangerous.

Second, the ‘inmates’ are described as victimised by the military due to ‘anti-military or ‘anti-coup stances.’ As such, it is clear that the victims are wrongly persecuted, on political grounds, and that their only crime is resistance and opposing the military-political leadership. Thus, the military is constructed as the villain, although there is no reason to read the military gender as any different. Signifiers such as ‘soldier’ and ‘military’ only refers to men, and the same imagery of male soldiers with weapons and other military gear seen together with an Egyptian flag, as used by the other articles, is present here too (see Figure 12). The military men are

![Figure 12– ‘Army forces monitor the area outside of Rafah’ (Photo: Mohamed Al-Shamy)](image-url)
further portrayed as utilizing violence, only that it in this case is deemed illegitimate. So, as the military occupies the villain role in this narrative, it is separated in regards to the civilian, rather than the terrorist.

In the Bonnier lecture ‘Burning Man and Laughing Cow,’ Kraidy (2015) talks about the body politic of Egyptian activism, and the human body as central to resistance. In this resistance, it is particularly the heroic body that is central, as it is the body being put in danger. Heroicism, in this context, is the risking of the body as a part of opposition and revolutionary resistance. This could be used to describe the ‘inmates’ that this article revolves around, in that it is these ‘heroic bodies’ that are being represented. However, while the military body is still represented and read as masculine, the civilian is, interestingly, more ambiguous. ‘Inmates,’ ‘prisoners,’ ‘detainees,’ and particularly ‘civilians,’ contain less connotations of gender than ‘soldier’ or ‘military.’ Also, while these signifiers in all cases refers to men, when referring to specific people, one interviewee in the article states: ‘In Azouli prison there is a women’s section. You actually hear their screams during interrogation.’

Lastly, this article takes aim at the construction of the military’s legitimacy and the securitisation process of the Egyptian state, by stating:

Yet, despite the heavy-handed crackdown on both secular and Islamist opposition and freedom of speech, Sisi’s government has failed, at least until now, to dismantle the network of Sinai-based radicals, topped by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. The group remains a threat to the country’s stability and, in turn, the economy as it stepped up terrorist operations since Morsy’s ouster.

This paragraph have a clear ideological function in that it uses the state’s own stated imperative, to create stability, and turn it against the government. Despite the increased policing, militarisation, use of torture and civilians being tried in military courts and put in military prisons, as this article have discussed, the country have only seen an increase in ‘terrorist operations,’ and less stability. ABM, still likely connoting masculinity, is represented as a real and present threat, but the military is not represented as a possible protector.

In this sense, the gendering of the military as masculine may be interpreted as, at least partly, disrupted. As the military is villainised and represented as incapable, they are removed from the role of guardian and protector. Here, Kraidy’s (2015) model is useful in that this becomes a representation in which the classical (masculine) body of the military is challenged by the mediation of the heroic body under torture. At the same time, that the military is challenged by the representation of it as a violent and dangerous entity may not necessarily mean that it is
challenged as a masculine entity. Indeed, violence may too connote masculinity, and it is still only the civilian sphere that is allowed representation by non-male figures, and even then only indirectly through a male witness.

‘Gaza militants condemn Egypt’s branding of Hamas as terror group’

This article comes from Reuters, which means that it is produced neither by Egypt Independent nor Al-Masry Al-Youm, although may have been edited or modified. It is also of significance which title is used, the designated key words and the image chosen. The title, much like the articles from Ahram Online, uses ‘militants’ to refer to the non-state military actors, in this case the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades (EQB), which is the military wing of Hamas. This signifier is further strengthened in its connotation of males utilizing violence in defence of a certain idea or ideology (such as a nation) with an image showing a seemingly endless line of masked men, in military clothing and carrying weapons (see Figure 13). On their heads they wear bands coloured in Islamic green, with the name of their brigade, Ezzedine al-Qassam, and the Shahada⁴, which showcase their religiousness. Their unmatched clothing and informal stance gives the viewer a sense of them as somewhat ‘paramilitary,’ or less of a ‘legitimate’ military.

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Figure 13 – ‘Gunmen from the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, line up outside the house of their late leader Ahmed Jaabari, after mourners finished visiting his family to pay their condolences in Gaza City on 22 November 2012’ (Photo: AFP)

⁴  لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله
‘There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God.’
The article only contains two designated keywords, barely differing from the actual title, as they read ‘Egypt's branding of Hamas as terror group,’ and ‘Gaza militants.’ The first paragraph reads:

In a statement read by a masked gunman, 10 armed Palestinian factions jointly condemned on Thursday an Egyptian decision to list the military wing of the Islamist group Hamas as a terrorist organisation.

While ‘gunman,’ of course, is a male-gendered signifier in itself, its reading is further informed by the image of the ‘militants.’ However, in regards to organisation, there are somewhat contradictory terms, using ‘armed Palestinian factions,’ compared to saying ‘military wing.’

The first term includes any group participating in armed conflict, no matter their status as state-sanctioned, paramilitary, revolutionary, or even terrorist groups. ‘Military wing,’ on the other hand, signifies authorisation of armed force, therefore alluding to sanctioned use of violence.

The branding then, by Egypt, of the EQB as a terrorist organisation is portrayed as an attempt to strip them of this authorisation, and make their actions illegitimate by default.

The article then leaves the signifier ‘military’ and instead refers to the EQB as ‘Hamas's armed wing,’ and later again mentions ‘the 10 armed groups.’ As such, the connotations associated with the EQB through the use of ‘armed faction/wing/group,’ are emphasised over those that comes with ‘military.’

Also, as the image, as previously stated, showcases a lack of unified clothing, an informal stance, and the fact that they are masked, which gives connotations of criminality, the reading of the EQB as non-authorised combatants is further strengthened.

While the Egyptian military is not in focus in this Reuters article, they are mentioned, together with Egyptian ‘police officers’ – note the use of the gender neutral term – and in the same light as in the articles by Ahram Online. That is, they occupy heroic bodies, risking their lives in struggle, who are placed in the role of villain masculinity, just as in previous articles. In this case they are called ‘militant groups fighting to topple Sisi's Western-backed government.’

This phrasing, referring to el-Sisi as backed by ‘the West,’ works ideologically with the emphasis on the religious affiliation of the EQB and the other mentioned ‘armed groups’ – ‘Islamic Jihad, the Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a Salafi group called Swords of Islam, and five other factions.’

They are then associated with the Islamic State, in the last paragraph, reading:

Last week the Egyptian wing of Islamic State claimed the killing of at least 30 soldiers and police officers in four separate attacks in North Sinai, among the bloodiest in years.
As such, this article too falls in line with the construction of soldiers as heroic, willing to sacrifice their bodies in protection of the symbolic ‘body’ that is the nation. The opposition, in turn, is the stranger, the villainous men who seek to destroy that body. Following Bauman (in Eduards, 2007), the construction of the foe (the foreigner, the enemy), is crucial to knowing the friend (the own, the citizen), and this division is necessary for the construction of the nation. The stranger, in this division, is neither friend, nor foe, but one that seeks to topple the division itself – a system Bauman calls ‘cosy antagonism’ – and ‘bring the outside into the inside’ (Eduards, 2007, p. 35).

The nation, Egypt, is portrayed as threatened, and therefore in need of protection from both outside and inside forces. This legitimises both militarisation and policing. By associating the EQB with the known and less disputed terrorist organisations, the Islamic Jihad Movement, and, particularly, the Islamic State, they are likely perceived by the reader as a terrorist organisation too, thus giving right to the Egyptian government’s decision to brand them as such. Therefore, they can successfully fill the role of villain masculinity, a manifestation based on the connection of men, particularly ‘othered’ men, and violence. The friend then inevitably become the one who supports the military masculinity in their struggle with the foe, as the soldiers are portrayed as the heroes that sacrifice for the nation. This makes it hard to oppose, as the idea of a protector is hard to see as negative. Ideologically, this portrays the military not only as necessary, but also necessarily positive. If now the military is read as masculine, the same portrayal of necessity and positivity is true for military masculinity, defined as guardian.

Figure 14 – From ‘Cut and Paste’ by Huda Lutfi
'Terror in Tahrir'


This is, to say the least, a very interesting article, and by far the one that stands out the most, in style, genre, format and content. It is an opinion piece by Diana Sayed, and revolves around the issue of sexual harassment and violence, in Egypt in general, and Tahrir Square in particular.

The article makes the following argument:

In the midst of all the chaos of the country’s politics, there seems to be one constant:
Women are being pushed, figuratively and, in many cases, literally, out of the public sphere.

This, of course, differs greatly from the other articles used in this study, but is nevertheless analysed, as it still deals with the Egyptian state and military, Egyptian politics and public life, and, arguably, a form of terrorism. It could be argued that it is not on the same level as that by Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, but violence against women in protests and in public gatherings, especially when perpetrated by the police or military, are clearly and systematically used to ‘terrorise’ women, to scare other women from participating and thereby excluding women from the public sphere. Therefore, the violence is directed not only to the specific victims, but to a larger group of people, i.e. to inflict terror. This is not an argument unique for Diana Sayed, but has been made by many writers and scholars before (cf. Hafez, 2012; El Deeb, 2013; Rizzo, 2014; Long, 2014).

Interestingly, while it could be expected that ‘men’ and male figures plays a prominent role in this article, they are never explicitly named as such. Where this topics often runs the risk of reifying socially and culturally constructed connections of masculinity and violence, it is also true that men’s violence against women is something material. In other words, men are well overrepresented as perpetrators of violence. Despite this, this opinion article completely avoids mentioning men altogether. In fact, ‘the perpetrators’ does not seem to be in focus at all, and when they are, they are never explicitly gendered. The word ‘women’ is, of course, mentioned several times, but ‘men’ only appears once, in a quote from United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay:

“I deplore the fact that sexual violence is permitted to occur with apparent impunity in a public square, and that the authorities have failed to prevent these attacks or to bring more than a single prosecution against the hundreds of men involved in these vicious attacks. There has also been far too little effort to grapple with the sexual harassment and sexual violence taking place in a number of Egyptian cities,” Pillay said.
This is a good example of how the perpetrators are called out as men, while no connection is made between a perceived manhood, masculinity, or any other ‘innate being,’ and the violence. The article as a whole, however, neither address men as perpetrators, nor reify masculinity as inherently violent. Therefore, it also avoids participating in the construction or portrayal of masculinity in a problematic way, but perhaps to the expense of an analytical edge.

It is also possible, on the topic of sexual violence and harassment in the public sphere, to bring up the role of the military and/or police, but this is not done either, apart from a short comment about how testimonies point to some attacks being ‘instigated by secret police.’ As such, this article does not participate in any form of representational politics, either in the manifestation of the military, or a critique thereof.

‘Three British girls join IS in Syria’


This article is another ‘edited translation from Al-Masry Al-Youm’ and chronicles a story of Daesh’s recruitment of British girls, two fifteen years old and one sixteen years old, all three from London. It is designated as ‘News’ and contains the tags ‘British girls,’ and ‘IS.’

The article is styled with single paragraphs separated by pictures of the three girls, possible to evoke sympathy for the girls, as most pictures are simple headshots, rather than to portray them as criminals. The article also states:

The newspaper pointed out that the girls may have traveled to catch up with their friend Aqsa Mahmood who left Glasgow in Scotland to marry an IS militant in Syria in 2013.

The newspaper mentioned is in fact Scotland Yard, the Greater London Metropolitan Police Service, which the article mistakenly refers to as a newspaper. This sentence is also the only mention of any military figure, presumably male based on heteronormativity and Mahmood’s relationship to the person. Since this is the only such mention, there is little in the article to analyse in regards to the representation of military masculinity in Egypt Independent. What can be concluded, however, is that there seems to be a perceived ‘news value,’ from the producer, in that there are young girls joining Daesh, rather than young boys. This is likely evident of a view of boys as having more ‘potential’ of sympathising with Daesh and their cause. It is also possible that Daesh is seen as hostile and/or dangerous towards women and that it is somehow self-destructive for girls to join, whereas boys would not face the same treatment. Nevertheless, boys are then implicitly more likely terrorists than women, adding to the semiotic potential.
'Prosecution: Egypt court places Sinai-based militant group and founder on 'terror' list'


This article comes from a unique news outlet in Egypt, called Aswat Masriya. This is an initiative supported by the UK based Thomson Reuters Foundation, which is the charitable arm of the multinational news agency Thomson Reuters. Their mission is to support impartiality and independence in journalism, but of course they themselves, as funders and providers of news content, also influence the organisations that they support. In many ways, Aswat Masriya has shown similar political leanings as Egypt Independent, and for both of them Reuters ‘function[s] as “gate-keeper” and have a huge influence on how news is reported, especially when it comes to Aswat Masriya, given their cooperation’ (Abdelmoez, 2015a).

The accompanying image, ‘a snapshot from a video released on Twitter by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis on August 28, 2014,’ also comes from the original Aswat Masriya article (See Figure 14). It depicts eight male figures, all masked. Six are standing in a line, holding guns and wearing somewhat matching heavy-duty Kevlar vests, but otherwise mismatching clothes. One is standing slightly in front of the others, similarly dressed and holding a piece of paper, presumably a statement regarding their organisation. Behind them a man wearing a red headscarf, possibly a traditional kūfiyyah styled untraditionally to cover the face, can be seen sitting in the driver’s seat of a white SUV. Next to the car is a wavering black flag – usually referred to as the ‘Black Standard,’ rāyat al-sawdā’ – that is associated with Jihadist groups such as Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis or Daesh. In the upper right corner is an added (through video editing) emblem, depicting a globe in black and white behind an open book, presumably the Quran, an automatic gun in black to its left, and the same black flag wavering from the gun. This image, as a whole, works as a clearly gendering anchoring of the signifier ‘militant group’ which is used to describe ABM:

Egypt's Criminal Court designated the Sinai-based Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis militant group as a "terrorist body", placing its founder on a "terror list", alongside 207 other group members, the prosecution said on Saturday.

The use of ‘militant group’ itself is rather interesting, since it is an unnecessary qualifier, other than to emphasise the groups violent actions. The sentence would have been complete even without that term, making the decision to include it even more significant. In this way, it acts as a legitimisation of the court decision, since ‘militant group,’ as can be seen in other articles, is used interchangeably with ‘terrorist group.’
The article continues with reference to the man behind the decision, ‘Egypt's top prosecutor Hisham Barakat,’ highlighting the ‘political man’ in opposition to the group. This is followed by an explanation of the background of the decision, which acts both to gender security forces as male, ‘policemen,’ and to place the security-state in the guardian position against the threat. The wording of the charges against the members of ABM strengthen the argument that they are portrayed as playing part in a national drama of hero/guardian versus villain/threat:

All defendants face the charges of "establishing, leading and joining a terrorist group, assaulting citizens' rights and freedoms, harming national unity and societal peace, spying for the Palestinian Hamas Movement, vandalising state institutions, murder and possession of automatic weapons, ammunition and explosives."

While this is a quote from Hisham Barakat, its inclusion, as well as the quote itself, shows that, ideologically, there is a connection between ideas of national unity and the need for security, thus furthering the securitisation narrative.

The article continues by, as some of the Ahram Online articles did, by associating the groups with the supporters of former president Morsi:

Militancy inside Egypt has seen a significant rise since July 2013, with the military ouster of Islamist President Mohamed Mursi, following mass protests against his rule. Most attacks target security forces in North Sinai.

This paragraph further portrays the threat as increasing, becoming more imminent. It also reaffirms the role of ‘security forces’ in the protection of Egypt, as well as popular support of the military, by associating their move against Morsi with ‘mass protests against his rule.’
'Investigations launched into alleged terror cell leader'


The last of the articles published in Egypt Independent is produced by Al-Masry Al-Youm, and is as such an edited translation. It is categorised as ‘news’ and it contains more search keywords than most other articles in this study: ‘Abu Basir,’ ‘al-qaeda,’ ‘Islamist militants,’ ‘Nasr City terror cell,’ ‘national security,’ and ‘terrorism.’ All these are, of course, interesting signifiers, and they also show a break in style from previous articles, in that it pin-points and names more specific topics. These terms together form a set relating to the previously referenced ‘national drama,’ here signified by the struggle between ‘national security’ and ‘terrorism.’ All terms apart from ‘national security’ belong to the same paradigm of national threat, and are used interchangeably throughout the article.

The article is also interesting in that it specifically references and discusses many male figures; Sami Maghraby, a.k.a. Abu Basir, in the article referred to as the possible leader of an Egyptian terror cell, Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian surgeon who is known as the leader of Al-Qaeda, Karim Ahmed Essam al-Azizy, according to the article a terrorist killed by security forces. Besides these, there are several mentions of military/militant entities, such as ‘National Security Service,’ ‘jihadists,’ ‘Security authorities,’ ‘Nasr City terrorist cell,’ ‘militants,’ ‘militant networks,’ and ‘security forces.’ At least two things can be noted here. First, there is a clear focus on the portrayal of threat. The military’s presence remains secondary, and military entities are mentioned much less than their opposition. The second notable aspect is that the military entities is portrayed largely illusive, precisely as entities, often unnamed. Every single figure that is named is labelled as affiliated with terrorism, and the military and state is instead referred to with tropes, such as ‘security authorities.’

Just as with Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis being associated with the Islamic State possibly working ideologically to separate them from the Egyptian nation, thus more squarely placing the military in the guardian role, the Nasr City terrorist cell is associated with Al-Qaeda, in all probability with the same ideological function:

The Interior Ministry said the militants were suspected of having links to Al-Qaeda and planning attacks inside the country and abroad.

As with virtually every other article, the gendered connotations of the military signifiers are textually never explicit, but dependent on an already existing semiotic potential of the military as male masculine.
Conclusion

Understandings of military men tend to cluster around these extreme variants of masculinity and become attached to common-sense understandings of soldiers, sailors, and airmen; in essence “our boys” who are tough and unrelenting in the face of hardship. (Higate, 2003, p. 27)

The idea of the nation, the nation state and masculinity have many common focal points, but they can sometimes be hard to notice. Oftentimes, the nation is raised above the political, which hides its construction and its political nature. The same is true for military operations and their legitimacy. It is often described as necessary due to certain circumstances, involving the ‘stability’ and ‘security’ of the nation, making it difficult to oppose. There are, as such, connections between nationalism and gender constructions, as the national project comes with obligations to serve it, which for men means to kill and put themselves at risk for the nation. This obligation is aided with constructions about ‘male bravery’ and ‘courage’ aimed at making men feel that military service is somehow essential to masculinity. This nationalistic, military masculinity is placed against ‘the threat,’ often constituted by a villain masculinity, the terrorist. The threat, as such, plays part in a securitisation process, which acts to legitimise militaristic masculinity, in the security narrative portrayed as the ‘hero.’ These articles have shown examples of when and how this is done, as well as exceptions to the narrative.

One of the first, and most obvious findings is the overwhelming degree to which both the military figure and the villain is portrayed by male coded figures. The reading of ‘soldier’ as male is informed by imagery of uniformed men, their nationalism reinforced by wavering flags, and their heroism strengthened by association with bomb scenes. This is particularly true for the state-owned Ahram Online, and there are important differences found between their reporting and that of Egypt Independent and Al-Masry Al-Youm. One such difference is the potential ideological functions of the texts. While Ahram Online articles tend to construct military masculinity as a national guardianship in relation to the terrorist masculinity, Egypt Independent remains more critical towards this narrative, while keeping the representation of the military as male. It is possible to argue that this critical perspective on the military as a national guardian is due to Egypt Independent not being affiliated with the state, as opposed to Ahram Online. However, another explanation may lie in the language used, and the perceived audiences by the media producers. In order to reach further understanding on this subject, audience research and comparative analysis of Arabic and English sources would be necessary.
So, how are connections between masculinity and the military constructed and manifested in the news produced by these sources? As noted, for Ahram Online the securitisation process appears to be pivotal in the manifestation of the military as an institution of male guardianship, and of soldiers as ‘heroic men,’ defending the homeland. However, talking about a ‘construction’ of military masculinity may be misleading, as this would be more of a reinforcement of existing connotations, part of a process of becoming rather than a construction from scratch. Ahram seems to work heavily with terms that already carry semiotic potential of masculinity, which may or may not be intentional, but nevertheless becomes a type of code unique to the medium – unique in that it is different than the codes of Egypt Independent.

Egypt Independent appears more eclectic, which may be understandable as the articles come from a wider variety of sources, such as Egypt Independent themselves, several originally published in Arabic in Al-Masry Al-Youm, articles from Aswat Masriya and from Reuters. This also shows that the difference may lie between the target audiences of the article. The article ‘14 militants killed in Sinai, 5 tunnels destroyed,’ aimed at an English speaking audience, questions the legitimacy of the reports by the Egyptian Armed Forces, and thus disrupts the securitisation narrative, while the same article in Arabic is far less critical and treats the military reports as reality claims, which has an opposite effect. In general, texts that could be interpreted as directed more towards a non-Egyptian audience, such as those produced by Reuters, use a more careful, nuanced, and gender neutral language.

In regards to the extent that Ahram Online and Egypt Independent/Al-Masry Al-Youm enforce a selected representation of men as ‘warriors’ (the warrior ideal) and national defender, these articles show that there is definitely an overrepresentation of men as ‘warriors,’ although not necessarily in the service of the nation. Some are cast as villains, some are cast as heroes, but the only real difference in the reporting lies in whether or not their violence is deemed justified. Both these roles relates to a ‘national drama,’ revolving around issues of stability and order. There are, however, two other type of roles available for men. In ‘Egypt’s options to fight terror’ political men of different kinds (e.g. decision makers, security experts, and diplomats) are portrayed next to military, although they are only given marginal space, and still represented as ‘defenders of the nation’ as the story revolves around the issue of ‘terrorist threats’ to Egypt. The other role is the category of civilian, appearing at least marginally in most of these articles. This is a gender-neutral category, and civilians are mostly spoken of as such, that is that it may include men, but cannot be exclusively read as male, unlike the ‘warrior’ or ‘political man.’
Now, that men are primarily portrayed in military/militant roles may not be a significant finding since all articles are – or at least are supposed to be – about terrorism in Egypt. Because of this, it is also not possible to state that men, as portrayed in these articles, are necessarily associated with masculinity, even though such a conclusion can be drawn from previous ethnographic studies. However, it is significant from the other perspective, that there is literally no trace of non-male presence in these military/militant functions. As such, from the other direction, the articles from both Ahram Online and Egypt Independent indeed enforce a selected representation of the military as a male masculine institution, in that no room is given for reading the military and military personnel as anything other than male. This relates to the semiotic potential of ‘military,’ as a signifier connoting ‘masculinity,’ meaning that it draws from previous uses to inform such a connotation. ‘Military masculinity’ builds on a constant reference of ‘military’ to masculine figures, and of masculine figures as ‘militaristic.’ This means that it is a self-perpetuating gendering, which can only really be disrupted by a combination of radical and transgressive measures.

Lastly, it can be concluded that even when there is a clear overrepresentation of men in the articles, even to the extent of only male figures being present, it is rare to find explicit mentions of that fact. Men are rarely addressed as men, even when pictured and coded as masculine to the extreme (see any of the figures of men with guns), but spoken of as ‘soldiers’ or ‘militants.’ This may very well be an issue of language, both in the sense of English being perceived as a necessarily more gender neutral language than Arabic, but also in the sense of a perceived English speaking audience being more inclined to take in a text that does not manifest gender explicitly. This, however, would not explain the continued use of gendered terms, such as the recurring ‘policemen,’ why it could also be interpreted as simply something that is not reflected upon. That does not mean that there is no underlying ideology, there definitely is, but only means that avoidance of referring to the soldiers as ‘men’ is simply a habit, or part of the style of the profession that has been learnt. Nevertheless, changing this, to ‘address men as men,’ could be a measure to highlight, and thus disrupt, the overrepresentation of men in the portrayal of the Egyptian military and non-state military actors. The issue with this approach is that is risks reinforcing the semiotic potential of male gendered signifiers, if it is not combined with increased critique of the securitisation narrative, the prerogatives of the security-state and the hegemony of men therein.
References


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In July 2013, President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, then defence minister, called on Egyptians to take to the streets to give him a mandate to "confront terrorism," only a few weeks after the army overthrew president Mohamed Morsi after mass protests against his one-year rule. The mandate was followed by multiple attacks that were no longer limited to the Sinai Peninsula.

A military campaign against militants – dubbed Operation Eagle – has been ongoing in Sinai since August 2011. Clashes between the army and jihadist groups in Sinai have continued, as have attacks in other cities including the capital Cairo.

Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, a Sinai-based jihadist group, has claimed responsibility for major attacks in Sinai and around Egypt since Morsi's ouster – but a number of other Islamist militants groups are also active in Egypt.

14 August 2013: Armed Islamist militants fire RPGs at Kerdasa's police station in Giza, killing 11 officers. The incident came on the day security forces dispersed pro-Morsi sit-ins in Cairo, killing over 500 and injuring more than 3,700. Over 40 policemen were killed and around 210 were injured during the dispersal.
5 September: Egypt's Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim survives an assassination attempt in Cairo's Nasr City when a remote-controlled bomb blows up his motorcade, injuring 22.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

17 November: A high-ranking national security officer, Mohamed Mabrouk, is shot dead near his home in Nasr City. He was involved in investigations regarding Muslim Brotherhood and jihadist groups. Ansar Beit At-Maqdis claims the killing a few days later.

24 January 2014: Four bombs targeting police kill six people and injure dozens. The bombs hit Cairo's central police headquarters, a police unit stationed near a metro station in Giza’s Dokki district, a police station in Giza's Al-Talbiya district and another near a government building in Giza's Haram district.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

The Museum of Islamic Art, across the street from the central police headquarters, suffers extensive damage as a result of the explosion.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

28 January: General Mohamed Said, an aid to the interior minister, is shot dead near his home in Giza's Haram district by unknown assailants riding a motorcycle.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

2 April: Three explosions kill a policeman and leave at least five injured in three explosions at Cairo University.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

2 May: A car explosion in downtown Cairo kills one civilian, on the same day three explosions kill four people in Sinai.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

25 June: Four small bombs hit four metro stations Cairo, injuring at least six people, and two other bombs blow up near a Cairo courthouse in Heliopolis.

28 June: An explosion in 6 October kills one girl and injures her parents, a result of a bomb planted in a call centre under construction.

30 June: A series of explosions near the presidential palace in Heliopolis kills two police officers and injures three. The Islamist militant group Ajnad Misr (Soldiers of Egypt) had earlier announced it placed bombs in the area.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]
30 July: A bomb-laden car explosion kills three suspected militants in Giza.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

21 September: A bomb explosion near the foreign ministry in downtown Cairo kills two lieutenant colonels and injures at least five policeman and a civilian.

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

*Ahram article 2:*

**Egypt’s options to fight terror: Analysis**

Ahmed Eleiba, Thursday 26 Feb 2015

Differences emerged between US and Egyptian views on countering terrorism in Washington last week

The US-hosted Conference on Countering Violent Extremism that brought together the representatives of 60 nations in Washington last week did not go as Egypt’s representatives had expected.

Fresh from waging air strikes in Libya to punish Islamic State (IS) forces for slaughtering 20 Egyptian Copts, the country had been hoping for an international alliance to act on Libya. At the very least, they expected that the international coalition operating in Syria and Iraq would include Libya on its agenda, but this was not announced at the conference.

The conference did not give birth to a global strategy on terror and served instead to underline differences between various points of view, especially those of Cairo and Washington.

According to Alaa Ezzeddin, director of the Strategic Studies Centre, an affiliate of the Egyptian military, Egypt has made it clear to other nations that it will strike at reservoirs of terrorism whether these are inside or outside the country.

Speaking at the last week’s conference, US Secretary of State John Kerry told participants that the West “is not in a war against Islam” and that terrorist groups do not act in the name of
the world’s one billion Muslims.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said that Muslims are more often than not the victims of extremism. The Jordanian foreign minister told the conference that the current confrontation with terrorist groups should be viewed as “World War Three.”

Saudi Arabia called for drying up the sources of terror through concerted global action. The UAE called for partnership with the US to confront the IS propaganda war.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukri said that the terrorism seen today has its roots in the Islamist radicalism of the 1920s, a possible reference to the Muslim Brotherhood, which was formed in this period.

Egypt’s ambassador to Washington, Mohamed Tawfik explained Egypt’s point of view and voiced the hope that the international coalition against IS would pay more attention to the situation in Libya.

Gamal Abdel-Gawad, a political science professor at the American University in Cairo who followed the conference, sees a clear divergence in views between Egypt and the US.

“The US still sees political Islam as a present and legitimate player, not a synonym for extremism,” Abdel-Gawad said. “The US administration also differentiates between extremist Islamists and moderate Islamists and believes that the moderates can be effectively integrated in politics as part of an acceptable political system.”

According to Abdel-Gawad, “US officials believe that the integration of political Islam currents, including those suspected of extremism, in political life would be beneficial.”

Egypt, whose government has labelled the Muslim Brotherhood a terror group, disagrees.

Countries in Europe are starting to appreciate the Egyptian point of view, Abdel-Gawad said. Even in the US, differences exist over the best way to deal with terror.

In a speech to the nation on Sunday, President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi reiterated the importance of Egyptian-US strategic ties. But the future of these ties depends on US perceptions of how the Egyptian government is acting on domestic issues, Abdel-Gawad said.

If Egypt can maintain stability and produce a political system of an inclusive nature, the Americans may come round to Cairo’s point of view.

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood is doing all it can to destabilise the country, in order to boost its argument that its exclusion from power is the reason for the instability.

Kamal Al-Helbawi, a former leader of the Brotherhood’s international organisation, believes the Americans are hedging their bets. Speaking to the Weekly, Al-Helbawi said the US position, stated in the national security document released a few weeks ago, calls for continued talks with both the government and opposition in Egypt.

“Washington is dealing with the government and the opposition at the same time, according to a strategy of keeping options open and seeking to manipulate the contradictions in the region,” Al-Helbawi said.
“The moderate Islamism Washington is talking about is the one it wishes to create, not the one it ascribes to the Brotherhood or other so-called moderates. This at the end of the day could lead to further turbulence in the region,” he added.

For now, Egypt’s best option is to turn to its Arab partners for help. Its diplomats will try either to dust off the Arab Joint Defence Agreement, or form a coalition with other nations such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE and Jordan, Ezzeddin said.

Abdel-Khaleq Al-Abdallah, a political adviser to the Abu Dhabi heir apparent, believes that Egypt will put together an Arab alliance to deal with terrorism. “After all, this issue is of more concern to the Arabs than any other people,” he said.

Along with the military response Egypt has shown itself capable of, Cairo is also pursuing diplomatic efforts. It is talking to Russian diplomats in Syria about a possible political deal, and engaging Libyan civil currents in talks to explore a possible end to the turmoil across its western borders.

With or without help from the West, Cairo has a strategy on terror, various regional allies and a multi-faceted plan of action.

*This article was first published in Ahram Weekly

**Ahram article 3:**

Foreign intelligence behind recent terror attacks:
Egypt's interior ministry

Ahram Online, Monday 17 Nov 2014

Attacks on army checkpoint in North Sinai and on navy ship were carried out with foreign intelligence support

Egypt's interior ministry said on Monday that foreign intelligence was behind the recent
attacks against Egypt's army in North Sinai and Damietta, state-run news agency MENA reported.

Abdel-Latif added that the identity of the parties supporting the terrorist groups "would be revealed after army's recent strikes against militant groups in North Sinai."

In late October, an attack on an army checkpoint in North Sinai left over 30 soldiers dead. The Sinai-based militant group Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis (ABM) claimed the attack in a 30-minute video clip published online on Friday. ABM has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, the militant group which has seized large parts of Iraq and Syria.

The North Sinai attack prompted Egypt's army to create a buffer zone between Rafah and the Gaza Strip in an effort to root out the militant groups operating in the area.

The second attack Abdel-Latif referred to occurred last week, when the Egyptian army said that one of its boats was attacked off the coast of Damietta in the Mediterranean Sea. Five navy personnel were injured and eight were left missing, the army said.

An anonymous group of masked men released a video claiming responsibility for the navy attack.

Egypt's security forces have been facing a decade-long jihadist militant insurgency in Sinai, with militant attacks increasing over the past year and expanding into Cairo and the Nile Delta, killing hundreds of army and police personnel.

The military says it has killed and arrested hundreds of militants. Civilians have also been caught up in the violence.

_Ahram article 4:
Cyprus, Greece and Egypt agree to step up 'terror' fight_

Cyprus and Greece on Wednesday agreed with Egypt on the need to step up cooperation in the fight against "terrorism" in the troubled eastern Mediterranean region.

President Nicos Anastasiades of Cyprus, his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras made the pledge after talks in Nicosia.

In a declaration, they said the "scourge of international terrorism" now threatens Europe, the Gulf, and the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the Sahel region and sub-Saharan Africa.

"We strongly condemn all terrorist actions and call upon all states to actively and effectively confront this menace and to step up cooperation on security matters with a view to countering extremist groups and exposing their political and financial supporters," they said.

The three agreed to jointly combat terrorism and violent extremism for the sake of security in the eastern Mediterranean, a region virtually encircled by conflicts.
"We are encouraged by the recent gains of the Iraqi forces in Iraq with the support of the anti-ISIL international coalition," the statement said, using another name for the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group.

Anastasiades, Tsipras and Sisi expressed their "support for the legitimate government of Yemen and for the preservation of its unity and territorial integrity".

They said the only way forward was for UN-led efforts to resume inclusive talks in Yemen, where an advance by Iran-backed Shiite rebels has forced President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia.

Their statement also backed UN envoy Staffan de Mistura, who on Monday begins new talks aimed at launching full negotiations to end Syria's four-year conflict.

They said they were "gravely concerned over the deterioration of the security situation in Libya" and the growing terrorist threat affecting security and stability in neighbouring countries.

The leaders of Cyprus, Greece and Egypt said they were committed to tackling the often deadly problem of migrant trafficking across the Mediterranean.

"We agree to mobilise all efforts at our disposal to prevent further loss of life at sea and to tackle the root causes of the human tragedy that we are facing."

Ahram article 5:

13 Egyptians charged with forming 'terror cell' linked to Islamic State

Ahram Online, Tuesday 25 Nov 2014

Defendants allegedly formed a terrorist cell to attack security forces and installations

Egypt's top prosecutor on Tuesday referred 13 alleged militants to criminal court on charges of forming a "terrorist cell" targeting police and army forces, a statement from the prosecutor's office said.

The cell, allegedly based in the Nile Delta city of Tanta, is linked to the militant group of the Islamic State, which has claimed control over large swaths of Syria and Iraq.

The prosecutor's office said investigations showed one defendant established and organised an unlawful group to obstruct the rule of law, hinder state institutions from their duties, assault citizens' personal freedoms and harm national peace and unity.

The defendants – six arrested and seven on the run – include teachers at Al-Azhar Islamic University, as well as students, employees and doctors.

The group is also allegedly charged with inciting against the government, considering the president an infidel and inciting attacks against security forces and Christians and their property.
Militant attacks have spiked dramatically since the July 2013 ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, mainly targeting security forces and their posts.

Hundreds of security personnel have been killed, with civilians occasionally caught up in the violence.

Most of the major attacks have been claimed by Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, a Sinai-based group which swore allegiance to the Islamic State earlier in November.

In some videos, militant groups claimed they have stepped up assaults against authorities in response to a crackdown on Morsi supporters that has killed hundreds and put thousands in jail.

The prosecutor's statement on Tuesday said one of the defendants confessed to embracing Islamic jihadist ideology, which calls for violence against authorities, who are labelled infidels – or unbelievers. The defendant allegedly confessed to forming the group and providing military training for its members.

Three other defendants are charged with funding the terrorist group, providing them with weaponry and ammunition and possessing guns.

Security forces confiscated an alleged handwritten letter from "the state of Islamic Iraq to our Muslim people in beloved Egypt" and a book detailing how to use weapons in challenging the state and its institutions.

In October, a military court sentenced seven Egyptian men to death and two to life in prison on terrorism-related charges, the first trial to be conducted against Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis.

Defendants in the case known as Arab Sharkas – named after a village where an attack took place that killed two military officers – were charged with planning terrorist operations, shooting at security forces, attacking military facilities and naval ships and being members of Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis.

Ahram article 6:

**Egypt police arrest 35 on terror accusations**

Ahram Online, , Sunday 8 Feb 2015

The 35 allegedly formed four different cells to target public and private property, as well as security posts

Egyptian police arrested 35 suspects accused of forming four terror cells, Al-Ahram Arabic news website reported on Sunday.

The arrests come as Egyptian authorities fight a growing militant insurgency that has specifically targeted security forces and their posts. Although the deadliest attacks hit the Gaza-bordered Sinai Peninsula, other smaller attacks have become commonplace in Cairo and other cities.

Egyptian authorities blame the group of ousted Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood, for orchestrating the violence and have designated it as a terrorist
organisation. The Brotherhood denies engaging in violence.

Nineteen people were arrested in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria for allegedly forming a group to prepare bombs to target governmental and police posts as well as public and private transportation. Security forces said they confiscated materials used to formulate explosive devices.

In the Nile Delta city of Daqahliya, a group of ten people "revived the secretive organisation of the (Brotherhood)," the Ministry of Interior said. The group allegedly planned sabotage actions on a number of places including Mansoura public university.

In the southern city of Fayoum, police arrested three people who attacked a police station in January killing a policeman and injuring another. Three others were arrested in Giza governorate.

**Ahram article 7:**

**Egyptian court declares Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades a 'terrorist group'**

Ahram Online, Saturday 31 Jan 2015

Hamas have said they reject the 'dangerous' verdict

A Cairo court has declared Hamas’ military wing, Al-Qassam Brigades, a terrorist organisation.

The case brought against the group by a private plaintiff accused the organisation of involvement in and financing of terrorist attacks inside Egypt, and of attacking army and police personnel to destabilise the country.

The court reasoning explaining the verdict said that papers provided by the plaintiff proved that the group were implicated in bombings in Egypt, and that the brigade’s recent planning and financing of terrorist attacks show that Al-Qassam brigades and Hamas have swayed from their original cause of fighting the Israeli occupation. The court added that the group's aim is now to target Egypt's security.
The verdict by the Cairo Court of Urgent Matters stipulates that members of the group in Egypt will be labelled a "terrorist element".

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said the group rejects the verdict and objects to the bringing of Al-Qassam Brigades into Egyptian domestic affairs.

Abu Zuhri, writing on his official Facebook page, said this "dangerous" verdict only "serves the Israeli occupation."

"Al-Qassam Brigades are the symbol of resistance against the Israeli occupation, and a symbol of the [Palestinian] nation's pride and dignity, despite all attempts at defamation," the statement added.

The court decision comes two days after a series of militant attacks in North Sinai left at least 30 people dead, mostly security personnel. Sinai-based militant group Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, which recently pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The Muslim Brotherhood organisation was declared a terrorist organisation by an Egyptian court last year; its representatives have denied any links with the increasing number of militant attacks that have taken place in Egypt since the Brotherhood was removed from power in 2013.

The relationship between Egypt and Hamas, the de facto rulers of the Gaza Strip, has been tense since the ouster of the Brotherhood’s Mohamed Morsi.

Egypt has accused Hamas of being involved in the smuggling of weapons through underground tunnels into the restive Sinai Peninsula, an accusation that the group has denied.

To combat the increase in militant attacks, which are concentrated in North Sinai, the army has destroyed numerous smuggling tunnels that link Egypt and Gaza, as well as demolishing hundreds of houses in order to create a buffer zone along the Gaza border.
International conference in Makkah to fight terrorism next Sunday

Under the auspices of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the Muslim World League will hold the International Conference Against Terrorism, during the period from Sunday 22nd to Wednesday 25th February.

The conference, which will be held in Makkah, will be attended by more than 400 scholars from all over the world.

The Secretary General of League Abdullah Bin Abdul Mohsin Al Turki said the conference comes under the theme of the fight against terrorism, including the serious incidents currently experienced by the world as a result of the terrorist acts that tarnished the image of Islam in the eyes of others.

Al Turki stressed the need to confront terrorism, describing the terrorist groups and their supporters as misguided groups who are not going right according to Islam.

He called on the international community to confront those who support terrorism, terrorist organizations, and incite sectarian sedition and unrest in the Muslim societies.

14 militants killed in Sinai, 5 tunnels destroyed
Soldiers guard a base in Arish, Sinai

Author: Al-Masry Al-Youm

Military spokesperson Mohamed Samir said the Second Army arrested four wanted terrorists in Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah, destroyed a vehicle and six motorcycles without license plates that were allegedly used in carrying out terrorist attacks, and destroyed five tunnels in Rafah. Samir added that 14 militants were killed in northern Sinai in an exchange of fire in the districts of al-Nosraniya, al-Zawraa and al-Quwaiaat, pointing out that the army arrested a very dangerous terrorist named Sweilam Mohamed Salem Salama.

Also, a field hospital that was allegedly used by terrorist elements was destroyed and equipment, such as a device to sterilize surgical instruments, an oxygen cylinder, a filter for surgical operations, a device for measuring blood pressure and a furnace for sterilization, were seized.

Also destroyed was a workshop allegedly used for manufacturing IEDs that contained 15 sacks of explosives and molds to manufacture bombs.

Edited translation from Al-Masry Al-Youm

Publishing Date: Mon, 25/08/2014 - 18:08

Egypt Independent article 3:

Azouli military prison: Egypt’s dark secret
The Egyptian military is torturing civilians and prisoners are disappearing in secret military prisons without judicial oversight in one of the toughest crackdowns on detainee rights, according to evidence collected by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

The new exposé is based on testimonies by detainees who spent time in the secret prison and evidence was collected by local and international human rights organizations.

The testimonies shed light on a new chapter of the military’s wide-scale human rights abuses against civilians that peaked after General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi – now the country’s president - ousted the first democratically elected president in Egypt’s modern history on 3 July 2013.

”Military prisons are only for military personnel who violate military rules or civilians who attack military institutions,” said a soldier in the Defense Ministry’s media department, preferring to remain anonymous.

He categorically denied that civilians could be referred to military prisons without legal ground. The interview took place in April 2013 as part of an in-depth investigation for The Guardian on civilians who disappeared during and after the 18-day uprising that led to Mubarak’s ouster in 2011.

Yet, Egyptian human rights lawyers and activists have a list of 30 civilians who are reportedly being held in secret at Azouly prison inside Al-Galaa Military Camp in Ismailia, 130 km north-east of Cairo.

Abuses against detainees are considered to be the worst at military prisons as there is no access to lawyers, family visits or prosecution oversight like other civilian prisons. There are stories of burning oil being poured on victims, genitals being electrocuted, in addition to fierce beatings.

Some Egyptian families interviewed during the 2013 investigation confirmed that their relatives went missing after being arrested at army checkpoints and were never found since, a fact-finding committee appointed by then-president Morsy in 2013 concluded.
In a related report by the same paper in June 22, 2014, three victims said that officers from the military intelligence led the interrogations and torture. The intelligence division was headed by Sisi until 2012.

Former detainees who survived the horrible experience told Amnesty International that around 400 detainees are being held in the three-storey prison block with no charges or access to lawyers or families.

Inmates there, mostly held for either their anti-military or anti-coup stances, are routinely electrocuted, beaten and hanged naked by for hours until they give satisfactory confessions to interrogators.

"He (the interrogator) ordered the soldiers to make me totally naked. The electric shocks were in every place in my body, especially the most sensitive areas – my lips, behind my ears and under the shoulders," Khaled, a former prisoner told The Guardian.

"The electrocution was over my clothes, but on the testicles," said another victim.

Hand-written letters by several prisoners, detained as of June 30, 2013, were compiled in a book by El Nadim Center for the Management and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence. Two letters, written by prisoners who spent time in Azouli military prison, describe the brutal use of torture in a place dubbed by human rights activists as "Egypt's darkest secret".

The independent Egyptian NGO received an anonymous letter on March 14, 2014 from a prisoner explaining how he was tortured.

"Torture takes place by pouring boiling water, boiling oil and electrocuting victims," he wrote. "Some detainees are bound by their feet and hands throughout the day in solitary cells for months. In Azouli prison there are hundreds of detainees who have committed no crime. Several young detainees were killed under torture. There is a mute detainee with half of his body paralyzed."

"Another detainee, Ayoub, 12, was accused of bombing a tank and they killed his father in Sinai," letter also said. "Using the toilet is allowed only once before dawn and every three people have five minutes. The beating continues on the way to the toilet. Food is not enough (bread and macaroni)."

From the same prison, a letter written by a prisoner named Abdel Moneim Bahaa El-Din Gomaa read: "I was kidnapped from my home on 23 January (2014) and held at Azouli camp for 27 days during which I was tortured with electricity, beaten and flogged with an iron chain."

"In Azouli prison there is a women's section. You actually hear their screams during interrogation," he added.

"These are practices associated with the darkest hours of military and Mubarak's rule," said Hassiba Hadi-Sahraoul, Middle East and North Africa Program Deputy Director at Amnesty International. "Egypt's military cannot run roughshod over detainees' rights like this."

According to estimates by WikiThawra, which is run by the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR), an estimated 41,000 people have been imprisoned or indicted since July 2013. Other counts suggest 16,000.

During the period since the 3 July 2013, ousting of Morsy, Egyptian security forces have used excessive force on numerous occasions, leading to the worst incident of mass killings in Egypt’s recent history, Human rights Watch said in its report published on June 9, 2014.

Judicial authorities have handed down unprecedented large-scale death sentences and security forces have carried out mass arrests and torture that harken back to the darkest days of former President Mubark's rule.
Yet, despite the heavy-handed crackdown on both secular and Islamist opposition and freedom of speech, Sisi’s government has failed, at least until now, to dismantle the network of Sinai-based radicals, topped by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. The group remains a threat to the country’s stability and, in turn, the economy as it stepped up terrorist operations since Morsy’s ouster.

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Sun, 06/07/2014 - 21:02

Egypt Independent article 4:

Gaza militants condemn Egypt's branding of Hamas as terror group

[Gunmen from the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, line up outside the house of their late leader Ahmed Jaabari, after mourners finished visiting his family to pay their condolences in Gaza City on 22 November 2012]

Author: Reuters

In a statement read by a masked gunman, 10 armed Palestinian factions jointly condemned on Thursday an Egyptian decision to list the military wing of the Islamist group Hamas as a terrorist organisation.

An Egyptian court last week banned the Izz el-Deen Al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, in line with a crackdown by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on the Muslim Brotherhood, of which Hamas is an offshoot.

That decision prompted a source close to the Brigades to say that Egypt, which has mediated several past ceasefires between Israel and the Palestinians, including a truce to end a 50-day Gaza war last summer, could no longer be trusted as an impartial player.

In the statement read aloud by the gunman in Gaza, the 10 armed groups said that their fight was only with Israel and they had never taken the battle outside the region encompassing Israel and the Palestinian territories.
"Resistance factions and the Qassam Brigades concentrate their work against the Zionist enemy," the gunman said.

"We reaffirm that we do not intervene in the internal affairs of Arab countries and we hope that no one will export their internal problems towards the Palestinian people and its resistance factions."

As well as the Qassam Brigades, the statement was signed by Islamic Jihad, the Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a Salafi group called Swords of Islam, and five other factions.

Egypt says that weapons are smuggled from Gaza into northern Sinai, where they end up in the hands of militant groups fighting to topple Sisi's Western-backed government.

Hamas, which has controlled Gaza since 2007, has denied providing any logistical, military or other assistance to groups fighting Egyptian troops.

Last week the Egyptian wing of Islamic State claimed the killing of at least 30 soldiers and police officers in four separate attacks in North Sinai, among the bloodiest in years.

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Thu, 05/02/2015 - 16:47

*Egypt Independent article 5:*

**Terror in Tahrir**

Women activists have protested all over the world against sexual violence in Egypt. The protests, which took place in front of Egyptian embassies in 20 capitals worldwide and in Cairo, sent a clear message to the Egyptian government that the international community will take a stand against sexual harassment in solidarity with the women of Egypt.

In the midst of all the chaos of the country's politics, there seems to be one constant: Women are being pushed, figuratively and, in many cases, literally, out of the public sphere.

Despite being at the forefront of the revolution that occurred two years ago, women continue to face much the same kind of systematic targeting they faced under the Hosni Mubarak regime.

For example, Cairo's Tahrir Square, seen as the heart of the protest movement, has become a dangerous place for women. On 25 January 2013, the second anniversary of the Egyptian uprising, numerous women reported being sexually assaulted, including many who were raped.
Nazra for Feminist Studies, an Egyptian NGO, documented one protester’s story about what happened to her at Tahrir when she was caught in a crowd of demonstrators:

“I did not understand anything at that moment ... I did not comprehend what was happening ... who are those people?”

“All that I knew was that there were hundreds of hands stripping me of my clothes and brutally violating my body. There is no way out, for everyone is saying that they are protecting and saving me, but all I felt from the circles close to me, sticking to my body, was the finger-rape of my body, from the front and back; someone was even trying to kiss me ... I was completely naked,” she recounted.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay condemned the attacks.

“I deplore the fact that sexual violence is permitted to occur with apparent impunity in a public square, and that the authorities have failed to prevent these attacks or to bring more than a single prosecution against the hundreds of men involved in these vicious attacks. There has also been far too little effort to grapple with the sexual harassment and sexual violence taking place in a number of Egyptian cities,” Pillay said.

In response to such violent attacks, Nazra and other leading Egyptian NGOs, including the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, HarassMap and Al-Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, have formed Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment, often abbreviated as OpAntiSH. The coalition has been a prominent critic of revolutionary groups and political parties that have failed to combat attacks on female protesters.

Though it is not certain who is behind the frequent attacks, OpAntiSH suggests they are not random.

“We believe they must be organized, because they happen most of the time in the exact same spots in Tahrir Square and they use the same methodologies,” the coalition said, adding that testimonies collected were similar to accounts of 2005 attacks thought to have been instigated by secret police.

Nazra adds, “We will not be frightened; we will not hide in our homes. Sexual harassment is a social disease that has been rampant for years, used by the regime to intimidate girls and women.”

This is not a new problem in Egypt, but it is one that grows more disturbing with each brutal attack. According to a 2008 report by the Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights, 83 percent of Egyptian women had experienced some form of sexual harassment. The problem is exacerbated by a failure to prosecute the perpetrators.

One activist recently observed, “There is no accountability for these people. They know that they can get away with it again and again.”

The Egyptian Railways Authority announced last week that it would enforce women’s-only train cars on several popular routes to and from Cairo in a move to try and curtail the rampant issue of sexual harassment. However, it’s a move that some activists say addresses the symptoms and not the cause of the attacks.
The issue frequently happens in the shadows of more well-documented news events surrounding Egypt’s journey toward democracy. It is clear that Egypt is a nation in desperate need of stability that is safeguarded by institutions established to guarantee human rights.

It’s not easy bringing in democracy after generations of dictatorship or to change mindsets that have been entrenched for so long. But if the new Egypt is to emerge stronger and better than the one of the past, women must be permitted to safely participate in political dialogue. They must be able to walk down the street or into areas of protest safe from fear of attack.

If the revolution of Tahrir Square is to take hold permanently, all Egyptians — men and women, alike — must be able to participate to ensure that every Egyptian lives with dignity and enjoys democracy.

Diana Sayed is Human Rights First’s Pennoyer fellow and an advocate and researcher in the Human Rights Defenders Program.

Egypt Independent article 6:

**Three British girls join IS in Syria**

**Author:** Al-Masry Al-Youm

The British newspaper Telegraph has quoted Turkish intelligence sources as saying that Shaima Begum, 15, Khadija Sultana, 16, and Amira Abbasi, 15, are three British girls who fled from London last week and crossed the Turkish-Syrian border to join the Islamic State, and that their families pleaded for them to return home.

The newspaper said the three girls, who are students of the Bethnal Green Academy in east London, took Turkish Airlines to Istanbul and went from there by car to the border town of Tal Abyad that is controlled by IS on Friday.
A Turkish intelligence source told the newspaper that the Turkish authorities believe the girls met a member of IS in Istanbul who is responsible for helping foreigners who want to join the organization.
According to the Turkish source, the girls stayed in Istanbul for two days before they went to the border. They left London last Tuesday at 8 am from Gatwick Airport.

The newspaper Scotland Yard, Turkish Airlines and the British Border Guard were not informed that the girls went to Syria, believing Shaima Begum used her sister's passport.

Richard Walton, head of the Counter Terrorism Command, said he could have stopped them had he been notified.
The newspaper pointed out that the girls may have traveled to catch up with their friend Aqsa Mahmood who left Glasgow in Scotland to marry an IS militant in Syria in 2013.

It said the police had investigated the three girls when their friend Mahmood went to Syria but the Counter Terrorism Command did not think they would follow her.

The British newspaper *The Independent* quoted Mahmood’s family as saying that it is ashamed that Mahmood persuaded the three girls to join IS, as at least one of them was in contact with her on Twitter.

The family also said Mohmood has a Twitter account named Om Laith that she uses to attract newcomers to IS.

During the last Friday prayers at the Whitechapel Mosque east of London, the congregation was asked to give any information that could help the Counter Terrorism Command reach the three girls.

*Edited translation from Al-Masry Al-Youm*

**Publishing Date:**
Sun, 22/02/2015 - 16:50
Prosecution: Egypt court places Sinai-based militant group and founder on 'terror' list

Egypt's Criminal Court designated the Sinai-based Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis militant group as a "terrorist body", placing its founder on a "terror list", alongside 207 other group members, the prosecution said on Saturday.

Egypt's top prosecutor Hisham Barakat said in a statement that the ruling was issued in a court session on Thursday, adding that it was based on his request.

The decision comes in implementation of an anti-terrorism legislation issued in February to prepare a "list of terrorist bodies" and a "list of terrorists", based on decisions by a special criminal judicial circuit at the Cairo Court of Appeals.

The prosecutor general said his decision is based on investigation conducted in a case where over 200 Ansar alleged members are on trial for assassinating policemen and bombing security facilities.

The trial of the 213 defendants resumed on Saturday.

All defendants face the charges of "establishing, leading and joining a terrorist group, assaulting citizens' rights and freedoms, harming national unity and societal peace, spying for the Palestinian Hamas Movement, vandalising state institutions, murder and possession of automatic weapons, ammunition and explosives."

The defendants are also accused of complicity in an attempt on former Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim's life in September 2013.

The prosecution said that the individuals listed as "terrorists" are accused of communicating with and receiving training from the al-Qaeda militant group. They then established "training camps and cluster cells" in several governorates including Sinai, the statement read.

The designation order is valid for three years, according to the statement.

An individual whose name ends up on a terrorists' list is put on a travel ban list. If the individual is a foreigner, they are put on an entry ban list.
Individuals listed as terrorists would also have their passports seized and would be prevented from issuing new passports, as per the law.

Militancy inside Egypt has seen a significant rise since July 2013, with the military ouster of Islamist President Mohamed Mursi, following mass protests against his rule. Most attacks target security forces in North Sinai.

Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis has claimed responsibility for most militant attacks carried out in the governorate since 2013. The group pledged allegiance to Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria last November, renaming itself as the "Sinai Province".

Thirteen people were killed in two separate attacks in North Sinai last Sunday, including security personnel from the police and the military. Ansar claimed responsibility for both attacks on a twitter account believed to belong to the group.
Prosecutors requested assistance from the National Security Service on Thursday to obtain more information about the alleged leader of the so-called Nasr City terrorist cell, Sami Maghraby, alias Abu Basir.

Abu Basir is said to be close to Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri.

The suspect is accused of coordinating all the Nasr City terrorist cell operations in Egypt. Security authorities say they arrested members of the cell in October before they could carry out their assignments. The detainees reportedly told investigators that they are jihadists and that they were trained in Marsa Matrouh.

The Interior Ministry said the militants were suspected of having links to Al-Qaeda and planning attacks inside the country and abroad.

They belonged to cells in the Cairo districts of Nasr City, Sayeda Zeinab and Heliopolis, as well as an area on the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road, a ministry statement said, adding that the suspects lived in rented apartments and used false names.

In the October raid, security forces killed Karim Ahmed Essam al-Azizy, who was initially identified as a Libyan. Officials have said they had information Azizy may have had links to the 11 September attack on the US Consulate in the Libyan city of Benghazi, during which Washington’s ambassador to Libya and three other Americans were killed. This information could not be confirmed.

The investigation suggests militant networks might have a foothold beyond Sinai, and that Egypt could be attracting militants from other nations such as Libya and Tunisia, which like Egypt last year toppled autocrats that had suppressed militant Islamists.

Edited translation from Al-Masry Al-Youm

**Publishing Date:**
Thu, 08/11/2012 - 18:26
Pre-study interview guide

Note: Findings and analysis of this study can be found in its entirety in Abdelmoez (2015b).

1) Personal information:
   1.1 Age group? (15-29; 30-49; 50-64; 65+)
   1.2 Gender identity?
   1.3 Born outside Egypt?

2) Professional information: (For media professionals :)
   2.1 Profession? Media affiliation (institution)?
   2.2 Media role?
   2.3 Educational background?

3) Media consumption:
   3.1 Main source(s) of news media?
   3.2 Main language of news acquisition?
   3.3 Other sources of news media?

Interview topics: Masculinity, media, gender representation, gender expression.

Main question:

What does the term “masculinity” mean to you?

(What does it mean being “masculine”?)

Additional questions:

Has your perception or understanding of masculinity changed over time?

Do you believe your view to be representative of society at large? If no, how does it differ?

Is there a “successful” way of being a man?

What do you think of when you hear the word “macho”?

Is masculinity the same as maleness?

Is masculinity the same as manhood?

Is there a diversity of masculinities? If yes, what delimits it (what is its limits)?

What is “female masculinity,” or can women be masculine?

Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you give me examples?

Can you explain what you mean with [...]?
Main question:
What determines “masculinity”? (Mechanism of its formation)

Additional questions:
Does one “become” a man? If so, how? (“From boys to men”)

Has this changed over time? (Is there an “emergent masculinity”?)

Is masculinity, or has it ever been, challenged? (Is there a “masculinity crisis”)

Do you believe your view on this is generally accepted by society at large? If no, how does it differ?

Is masculinity natural to men? (Are men naturally masculine?)

Is there a difference between “being a male” and “being male”?

Is masculinity bound to the body?

How are these mechanisms expressed in masculinity as a concept?

Is masculinity a set of rigid attributes or is there a scale of masculinity?

Clarifying questions:
Can you elaborate on that?
Can you give me examples?
Can you explain what you mean with [...]?

Main question:
Could you name some physical attributes/traits you associate with masculinity?

Additional questions:
Does these attributes relate solely to the male body?

Are these attributes true for all/most men, or do they represent an ideal?

Is there a purpose [natural, evolutionary, cultural, social] of these attributes?

Clarifying questions:
Could you clarify the meaning of [...]?
Can you name some men exemplifying these attributes?
Main question:

Could you name some emotional attributes/traits you associate with masculinity?

Additional questions:

Does these relate solely to the male psyche?

Are these attributes true for all/most men, or do they represent an ideal?

Is there a purpose [natural, evolutionary, cultural, social] of these attributes?

Clarifying questions:

Could you clarify the meaning of [...]?

Can you name some men exemplifying these attributes?

Main question:

Is either aspect (physical or emotional) more important than the other in defining masculinity?

Additional questions:

If not, how do they complement each other?

If yes, in what way is it more important?

Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Could you clarify the meaning of [...]?

Can you name some men exemplifying both emotional and physical masculinity, as you view it?

Can you name some men exemplifying defying both emotional and physical masculinity, as you view it?

Main question:

Are there attributes/traits you associate with masculinity that you can label as neither physical nor emotional?

Additional questions:

How important are these attributes to your understanding of masculinity as a whole?

If possible, how would you label/categorize the attributes?

Are these attributes true for all/most men, or do they represent an ideal?

Is there a purpose [natural, evolutionary, cultural, social] of these attributes?
Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you name some men exemplifying these, neither physical nor emotional, attributes of masculinity?

Main question:

Do you believe there to be aspects of masculinity unique to Egypt?

Additional questions:

What do you think is primary aspect on which men are judged in Egypt?

How does it differ from other countries in the world?

What do you believe to be the underlying reasons for this difference?

Are there aspects of masculinity unique to the Arab countries?

Are there aspects of masculinity dependent on religion?

Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you give examples of [...]?

Can you name some men exemplifying these, situated, attributes of masculinity? (Particularly Egyptian men)

Main question:

Do you believe there to be aspects/descriptions of masculinity unique to the Arabic language?

Additional questions:

Are there Arabic words/terms, sayings or idioms you feel relate to masculinity or its absence?

Do you think the language used affect how gender is expressed?

Are there aspects of masculinity you feel is better expressed in English?

Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you give examples of [...]?
Note: After having considered some aspects of masculinity and its meaning, I would like you to keep your previous answers in mind when continuing with questions, as they are based on those answers.

Main question:

Do you believe men, as a category, are portrayed in a similar manner (relating to previous answers) in media at large?

Additional questions:

Do you believe men, as a category, are portrayed differently in Arabic than English-language media?

Do you believe men, as a category, are portrayed differently in independent than state-owned media?

Do you believe men, as a category, are portrayed differently from women, as a category, in media at large?

Do you believe the visualizations (imagery/photos) of men in media are dependent on certain ideas of masculinity?

Do you believe the descriptions (textual) of men in media are dependent on certain ideas of masculinity?

Do you believe there is a deliberate representation of men as a category?

Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you give examples of representation of men in media?

Main question:

Do you believe gender representations in media have an impact on its audiences?

(Both in the sense of space given equally and in the ways people are portrayed engendered)

Additional questions:

Is there a one-way or more dynamic relationship between media and its audiences?

Do you, in your acquisition or consumption of news media, contemplate the representations of men and masculinities?

*Do you, in your role as a media professional, contemplate the representations of men and masculinities?*
Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you explain what you mean with […]?

Note: You have mentioned […], […] and […] as aspects of masculinity. Please keep these in mind when answering the following questions, as they are based on those aspects.

Main question:

Do you believe [...] to be an aspect of masculinity that could be found in Egyptian media?

Additional questions:

Would that be directly stated or implied?

Would it be evident in both text and imagery?

Should it be?

Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you explain what you mean with […]?

Main question (only for media professionals):

Are there, at your media institution, any regulations relating to what we have been talking about?

Additional questions:

Are there, at your media institution, ever discussions about how gender is represented?

Would you, in your role as a media professional, be allowed to use [...] as a descriptive in your media texts?

Have you ever, in your role at this institution, been asked to alter the way you represent a person or a group of people? (Based on what?)

Clarifying questions:

Can you elaborate on that?

Can you explain what you mean with […]?