

The American University in Cairo

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Through the Keyhole: Ethnographic Analysis of Cyber Violence in Egypt

A Thesis submitted by

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To

The Cynthia Nelson Institute for Gender and Women's Studies

August 2018

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Gender and Women's Studies

in Middle East/ North Africa

Under the supervision of

Professor Martina Rieker

The Cynthia Nelson Institute for Gender and Women's Studies

Dedication

To us, Cyborgs of different hues and shades.

To journeys that we never count for, yet changes us the most.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my interlocutors, my professors who are also mentors of their own right, my advisor for such a pleasant guidance, my friends, and my biological family; without you this wouldn't have happened. The reason why I said biological family, is that during the journey of this project and this certificate, I have made yet another family, one that through the toughest times, when we were are in our weakest points, we found strength in lifting each other up. In our good days we spread our colourful feathers wide like peacocks, we find joy in the ordinary and the mundane, we create the wild and magnificent from the scraps of affect we collect as we breath, we fight, we argue, and we stay strong; not as one but as diverse. The people mentioned in this thesis, and the people known but not mentioned in this thesis, have given me the honor of sharing their most private, intimate and vulnerable moments, of entrusting me with their data they could not utter sometimes even to their families, kids, friends; I only hope this thesis is insightful to whoever who will read it, not only in theory, or in its academic content, but insightful for you, as a person; a mind, body and soul.

Abstract

Internet has long existed in Egypt, however sudden scholarly interest came after the 2011 revolution. The global scholarly body tended to couple internet accessibility to the so-called Arab-spring, without studying the other forms and politics of internet as an evolution, and almost none have delved in the dungeons of Cyber violence in the MENA Region, needless to say in Egypt. It focuses mainly on individual-to-individual perpetration of violence, how, when and why people variably define unsolicited intervention with their data as “violence”, and how, when and why, they choose other notions to define such incident(s). By doing so, it opens up questions about notions such as surveillance, privacy, kinship, control and care, sovereignty, legibility, legitimacy, marginalization and rights. The structure is seen as a vertical gradient, each chapter is a dominant colour that seeps into the one the follows. While cyber violence is visualized as a circular gradient that floods into the center, while having nodes of colours around the edges that signify the prominent hue of the violence perpetuation and the effects of other nodes on its hue.

While this thesis is premised primarily on the Castellan view of the network society, various other scholars constitute the rest of the pillars of this thesis to engage more with notions of the state, the social, capital, violence, technology. From Weber, Deleuze, Das, Tilly, Arendt, and Fanon, to Haraway, Bernal, Spivak, Latour and McLuhan, these theories try to give justice to the multitude of entanglements produced by the 9 interlocutors whose stories are extremely rich and telling.

From Family, to friends, to work managers, to intimate partners, to totally anonymous persons; the perpetration of violence varying in justifications between care and control, have illustrated the Chimeras that our cyber selves are. Through engaging and living the ups and downs with my interlocutors, I have come to realize

the complexities that violence studies involve, beside those that Internet analysis have, through interviews, side talks, countless private messages, and cyber security measures, I have also understood the levels upon which social-scientists deal with their data, as well as themselves in the data, and how interlocutors and the social handle them.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Login Node.....	1
Thesis Question:.....	1
Background:.....	2
Literature Review:.....	3
Methodology:.....	14
Conceptual Framework and layout of the study:.....	21
Chapter 2: Grab them by the <i>Avatars!</i> : State politics in Cyber violence.....	26
Hala: Identity politics and politics of activism:.....	27
Dina: Politics of Cyber Journalism.....	38
Chapter 3: Disciplinary Society and its discontents.....	47
Hala: on the body, the cyber, and the culture of humiliation.....	49
Lara – A disciplinary society within the marginal one.....	55
Queer one down – Zeina, Sarah, Maha, Mostafa, and Noor.....	64
Mostafa: E Tu Brute?!.....	65
Zeina – A special case of attachment to the perpetrators.....	69
Noor- The Social contract and the cyber representation:.....	79
Sarah: On Parental Authority and Incarceration:.....	84
Maha: The Black box of Securitizing the educational institute.....	90
Chapter 4: Conclusions.....	96
Bibliography.....	102

Chapter 1: Login Node

Thesis Question:

Throughout seven years, from January 2011 until 2018, I was involved in various facades of academic and non-academic encounters related to cyber-mediated communications, and how they affected our lives on a minute-to-minute ground. Previously, I have come to study how digital technology and its employment in artworks have affected the way we come to define time and space (Fouda, 2016). Intersecting with this research and embedded within it, came my involvement in the January 25th revolution, and it made me witness how the same digital technology shifted our perceptions of geo-political space, of time, and of the social. Since the turn of the Millennium, digital technology has been one of the main mediums of communication and transmission of information, whether on the international, or the national levels. This use existed, and continued to prosper shortly before the 25th January Revolution, through blogging, tweeting, and video-blogging (Vblogs) by activists and citizen-journalists, which could be traced back to 2005, after the presidential campaigns in the Mubarak regime, to highlight the systematic violence and corruption. In that sense, it was not only the public practice of information transmission that has differed in terms of medium, but also the state and capital's ways of engaging with this shift in the paradigm of information and communication. This research sets off from the practical and theoretical premise of the complex interplay of the state, social and capital. It is the various known and yet-to-be known forms of violence resulting from that complex interaction that caught my attention to study. This brief background brings me to the main question that this thesis tries to investigate, which is: How does individual-individual and individual-state definitions of violence get to be shaped? Also, how does each individual get to redefine their life after and during this/these incident(s), and get to not define, as violence?

Background:

My engagement with political activism introduced me to the field of cybersecurity, both from the technical and political aspects. It was then that I was interested in knowing more about the dark sides of human interactions, that perpetuate and re-appropriate state practices, such as; stalking, moral policing, flaming, doxing, bullying and most famously cyber harassment and bullying. In the light of that, notions of morality, freedom of expression, solidarity, friendship, kinship, authority, control, sexuality, accessibility, agency, accountability, privilege, organization and assemblage are intertwining with violence that unraveled by and through my interlocutors experiences.

It is also important to mention that individual definitions of violence get to be shaped, not only by our family-related social, but also by our various and intertwined backgrounds of ethnicity, gender, political ideology, religion, nationality, class, and economic positions. Therefore, while doing this research I am also investigating my own stances of the subject matter. Finally, in studying ideas, meanings and practices of violence, that the presence of the state and capital is inevitable as a facade of the analysis, whether by being direct actors in imposing violence, or indirectly by enhancing, promoting and/or sustain individual activities of surveillance or moral policing - thus, establishing what I could call *societal panopticons*. This could also happen by negation, most notably through increasing this sense and practice of surveillance and commodification of information. State and capital also shape and affect the sense and practice of information privacy, which is for instance, apparent in the battle over encryption, and privacy policies whether on a judicial level or company/organizational level.

This analysis is premised on the theoretical engagement with the narratives of eight interlocutors who have come to participate in this research as people who have been subjected to what they defined as “Cyber-Violence”.

Literature Review:

The intricacies produced by cyber *selves* are never less than our offline ones. During the past decade our day-to-day interactions with mobile devices, laptops, or any other device that connected us together, has increased massively. Between potentialities, actualisations, and worries; our economic, social, political, and cultural being-and-becoming became knitted to technology. This has reflected on the disciplines of anthropology and ethnography in Egypt, which is what will unfold in the following lines.

There has been a large amount of scholarly literature on: technology, violence and cyber culture. This was due to the immense usage of electronic technology since the Second World War, all the way through the cold war, and the Vietnam war. This military-focused background of the innovation in the field of the early seeds of digital technology have provided a coupling between cyber media and violence. However, this coupling engendered two diverse reactions, the first was the public distraught from this *evil* technology that caused a tremendous amount of havoc; and the second was the exploratory approach taken by members in the creative field, such as engineers and artists. The last started to see the creative potentialities in these technologies, and making exhibitions of cyber artworks, and in doing so, they clashed with the public in ways that were sometimes life altering (Fouda, 2016; Reichardt, 1968). These ways of creative disruption, and what I could call *hacking* of mediums that have up until that point seeped into public’s consciousness only as weapons, helped to not only alter the way electronic and early digital technology is used, or

even manufactured; but also helped providing another lens on the contestation over machine-human interaction; one that pushed the gaze to the state as a power/control monopoly. Due to a multitude of factors, the end of the 1980s, and the 1990s have witnessed the onset of a wave of literature on cyberspace, most importantly the spread of domestic-based internet. This development helped massively in connecting different parts of the world to each other and in spreading the exploratory gaze, and pushed the boundaries of fear from technology, or *Techno-phobia* especially for cyber media.

Before engaging with the literature on technology, violence and cyber cultures, I would first like to begin by clarifying terminologies that are widely used, how they came to be, and kinds of debates ensued regarding their gazes, uses and anticipations of use. First of all, speaking about *Cyber Violence*, one must clarify what the *Cyber* entails. Cybernetics – the field of science through which cyber is coupled with countless actions – was first established by mathematician Norbert Wiener (1894-1964) in one of his comparative studies, that aimed to examine communication and control systems such as computers and human brain (Paul, 2008, p. 9). Cybernetics then describes what could be called: the human-machine ‘symbiosis’. A symbiosis that is the core of the studies in a multitude of fields, from Humanities and Social Sciences, to Computer Sciences, to Fine Arts, to Political Science, to Media Studies, among others. As a part of Technological innovation, cyber-mediated communication (CMCs), especially in the form of domestic use of Internet and the ever growing penetration of mobile devices; added to the newly seeping science of ‘the Internet of things’ has shifted the way of our experience of ourselves and the world around us. Internet of things is the newly-born notion that describes how we get connected to everyday-life – in other words *ordinary*- household objects, such as having

applications for the lighting in our home, or remotely controlling the kettles, curtains, televisions, wifi connection routers, heating and cooling systems, and other devices as such.

In his theory of the network society in the Information Age, sociologist Manuel Castells (Castells, 2010, 2017) stated that technology is basically creating a reproducible manner of doing things by the use of scientific knowledge (Castells, 2010, pp. 28–29). This use of scientific knowledge coupled with state and capital created what David Harvey called the necessary *annihilation of space by time* in order for the exchange procedure of capital to precede (Harvey & Marx, 2010; Marx, 1973, p. 449); and what Castells has called the becoming-ness of time as a “*flat horizon*” that occurs due to the enlarged scale of this aforementioned *exchange*, to the extent that not only the hardware is a commodity, but also the information transacted is exchanged as one. This information is then contested between three forces, in a non-linear order: the state, the capital, and the social. Meanwhile, Victoria Bernal argued against Castell’s notion of “Information age” and other notions such as ‘the digital divide’ and ‘information technologies’ instead suggested the notion of “Infopolitics” stating that the previous notions places questions of accessibility as the prime problem to internet analysis, while in fact, it is the question of politics of knowledge and its interplay with power and violence. In this sense, Bernal’s infopolitics notion is not only closer to Latour’s ‘moralities of the machine’, and McLuhan’s ‘medium as the message’ it is also – along with McLuhan and Latour- places the medium of knowledge exchange as the centerpiece of the analysis without a presupposition of its neutrality, or social good-ness (Bernal, 2014, pp. 16–17). Meanwhile, it is only through placing Bernal against Castells’ argument of the information age, that one realizes how close Bernal has come to tackle exactly the point that Castells’ overall

argument wanted to allude to, but never discussed strikingly. It is precisely this angle in analyzing Cyber Mediated Communication (CMCs) that this thesis is premised upon. It does not presume to social wellness of the internet as a medium, nor does it view the internet as a single medium, but rather a piece of clay that is shaped by many factors, passed from a hand to another, from a mind to another, staining the hand of each one it passes to, and embodying the multitudes of politics and hues that each hands have. It is not a passive medium, but indeed an active one, since the Digital in and of itself, is the transformation of the social, economic and political life, with potential effects that are not the same everywhere (Bernal, 2014; Castells, 2017).

The state, as a concept in this thesis- as well as a practice- is a complex and blurry one. On one side, as it will unfold, the state as a rhetoric and a discourse is blurred by reiterations in the everyday of the social. Knowing that in this case the social is not on the opposing shore of the state, but is actually ambivalent in a liquefied conduct, and a gradient like enmeshment. On the other hand, there are practices that can not be conducted by anyone but those men in power; practices such as mass surveillance, legislating ISP control, and controlling the accessibility status of mediated communication, technically and practically rely solely in those who are coined as *the state* in the Weberian sense, that is, the state as an organisation that controls means and tool of legitimizing the uses of violence (Weber, 1946, p. 397). Therefore, in short, the state – within the context of this thesis- should be understood as a fusion as well as a singularity of power practice; a practice of a “licensed lunacy” in reference Orlando Patterson’s phrase (Spivak, 2004, p. 564), where the social bless the power practice of surveillance, to an extent that is sees its practice within ones life, as an aim to strive for, thus transforming one to a *surveillor* (or the son of surveillance that is in itself one).

As for the social, I am alluding to a Deleuzian concept, meaning the dynamic interplay of strata and plane that constructs – at its intersection- the machinic assemblage. The stratifications upon which the organism is formulated are: Organism and Discipline, sign and interpretation and subject and subjectivation. It is in the processes of production and sense of the plane and the strata, that the senses of self and otherness, of presentness and imaginaries and made and unmade (Fuglsang & Sorensen, 2012). However, in stating their concept of the social, Deleuze and Guattari focused on the binary of the dominating and dominated, highlighted in Foucault's notion of 'disciplinary societies', and stressed that the fluidity of the capitalist mode of production, leads to a creating of a different power relation, that is: the production of the bio-political, and the formulation of the concept of life itself (Fuglsang & Sorensen, 2012, p. 5). To go back to the three non- linear forces; on one hand, the state is driven by power and control, that it practices through its institutional apparatuses, while capital's logic of production and accumulation; create together means through which the routes of communication and information are made accessible or inaccessible. The commonality between the state and capital is that, they both work within a given *technological* apparatus. Therefore the signals that people perceive adapts to those in power, and how they want the third axis: the social; to think. This leads us to what Castell called the "reprogramming in the process of communication" (Castells, 2017), which happens when those who are *counter-power* take control of the communication process and communicate their ideas to like minded people. In short, this renders communication of information into a commodity, that is contested in an ongoing process of dialectic relationships, between tensions of power and counter-power, by means that are rendered legitimate or not.

In discussing the notion of “legitimacy or not” and its interplay with this hyper communicated social, one is also discussing the notion of the margins of the state, and its formulation, since it renders subjects as legible or illegible, legal or illegal, and the terms and conditions upon which these renderings are made, as well as the ways in which the people of the margins get to craft a re-legibility and a re-reading for the legality. Veena Das, and Spivak have each discussed different aspects in the question of “legitimacy and legibility”; these aspects are: the notion of Rights, how law is refurbished in the politics of the margins, how this is reflected in rights claiming and in acts of violence. Spivak has discussed rights eloquently in her article, stating that in outlining the claiming upon which this bare minimum of rights is made, i.e. in establishing something such as our Human Rights discourses, one is also establishing the righting of wrongs. That is, that the establishment of the relationship between the fittest and the unfit in ways of social Darwinism (Spivak, 2004, pp. 523–524) that enables violations, and with no probable effacement of them in the process of rights’ claiming. It is also in Right claiming, that the imaginaries, upon which the subject made is conceptualized as a right-owning organism, by nature of being human (and I would add also non-human organism), and what are the limitations, and expectations of rights and duties expected and done from each party in the formation of the state and the social. In the process of formulating the righting, and the wronging, margins of the state are formed, as an important entailment of state-making, the same way exception is an important component of the rule (Das, Poole, 2004). In this sense, Das’ book insights us about the multitude of ways legibility of the subject and the law are reinterpreted into the everyday, by those living in the margins.

The question of legitimacy and illegitimacy is continued when discussing the notion of “Violence”, that comes as a part and parcel of that dialectic relationship.

Frantz Fanon defined violence as any relation, process or condition by which an individual or a group violates the physical, social and/or psychological integrity of another person or group (Bulhan, 1985, p. 136); while stating that the *legitimate* forms of violence is that performed by police or a war, while the *illegitimate* form is that that goes against the framework of law or the ‘accepted norms of the society’. This statement places the law not only as a site of claim making, but also, as I shall write later, a site of violence. Max Weber has defined state as the practice of power from men over other men by means of *allegedly* legitimate violence (Arendt, 1970, p. 236) (my emphasis). Meanwhile, Castells took the more contemporary amendment on that concept and added that *legitimacy* is not necessarily part of the equation (Castells, 2017). How would the state then practice this illegitimacy, or problematic legitimacy of violence? Hannah Arendt, Charles Tilly and Slavoj Zizek answer that by addressing different facades and terminologies between violence, authority, force, strength and power.

Arendt started her series of important distinctions of idioms by stating that power is a group activity, thus I would say that the ability to be in power and counter-power in reverse is a group agreement of a certain set of ideas and concepts. Similarly, Castells stated that whenever there is power there is always counter-power, therefore his Foucauldian-based scope is premised on the analysis of domination and counter-domination, abilities and possibilities of voicing the subaltern in the institutions of societies. He stated: *"our historical experience is always determined by the relentless interaction between power and counter power; There is no social peace, sorry"* (Castells, 2017). Strength, on the other hand, is a singular action in the Arendtian perspective; it can be overpowered by the group’s strength, which is power. Force, she adds, is mistakenly coupled with violence, however it is in fact, the physical or

circumstantial force, that is seen also in the light of power of the collective, which could be a counter-power, such as social movements. Authority, which Arendt stated as the most abused term, lies basically in the “unquestion[ed] recognition by those who are asked to obey” without coercion or persuasion (Arendt, 1970, p. 239). Finally, the Arendtian view of violence as the instrumental characteristic used by power, is similarized with the iron hand that is covered by a velvet glove of power, and leads to the conclusion of law and bureaucracy as one of the most normalised versions of violence. Violence in Zizek’s terms, is divided over subjective and objective violence. Subjective violence is directly visible, such as civil unrest, terror, crime etc. Meanwhile, the objective counterpart is sub-divided into: symbolic (such as language and its forms) and systemic violence (such as the nuances of our everyday economic and political debilitation). Objective violence then is the violence inherent in the normal routine of the day, or what Das has called “the descending of violence to the everyday” (Das, 2007, p. 7). As this research unfold, there will be a multitude of forms of objective violence, and how people craft their ways of descending with it to the ordinary.

In performing that *descending to the ordinary*, the re-narration of the traumatic experience, is one of the important aspect in the ethnography of violence, which puts into question the notions of: time’s narration in violence, the language of narrating and re-narrating violence, and agency. Arendt answered that as she talked about the narration of violence by its survivors, which opened up the question of truthfulness, time, and agency. What Arendt called *Factual Truth* (Arendt, 1970, p. 4), was in fact embedded with in the truthfulness of a blurry, stuttering narrative of the traumatized victim. This definition forced itself to my brain when the notion of “allegory” was discussed one day, in legal and human rights defense context. I was attending a debate

that went between a group of Human Rights defenders on an incident of rape and sexual harassment that was narrated previously by the survivor over a broadcasted email. The debate and the investigation took a legal orientation, which usually use the word “*alleged*” to refer to the survivor’s testimony against the perpetrators. My premise on this debate, is that this “allege-ness” is sometimes an objective violence in and of itself, as an authoritative retraction of the “agency” of the matter narrated, as well as a blindness to the nature of recalling violent narratives. As I shall illustrate in the following chapters, the diffused narration of traumatic incidents seem to distort the order and length of time; sometimes there were things that took a lapse of a 24-hours seem like days, and sometimes days spent in confined spaces such as hospitals and so forth, seem like a fleeting or distorted and uncomprehended period. What I mean by “agency” in this discussion is: first of all, as a noun that comes after an adjective (such as: psychological *agency*), is used to describe the action of exerting power, influence and instrumentality. Second, it is the known and unknown sides of the self, that is in constant process of making and unmaking, by the causality of relational interaction, and knowledge of the self. Therefore, Agency, I would say is one of those terms that should be written with a capital “A” to illustrate it as an entity, a process of its own self that engulfs its own micro-processes of historicity, boundary making and unmaking, ideological development, and downfalls. Further definitions of agency has been explained by Chris Barker (Barker, 2003, p. 236) include the differentiation between the agency as self-constituting and agency as socially produced; stating that it is the culturally intelligible way to understand ourselves. This agency, is usually placed under the spot light for reclaiming and contestation, when it is deprived away from us i.e. when we are forcibly deprived from the validation of our opinions and actions.

Arendt discussed the notion of “Individual Challengers” which are the main adversary for power structure, and therefore the main target to violence (Arendt, 1970, p.239). In Charles Tilly’s argument, *Challengers* were part of the political agents that starts the analysis of “Contentious Politics” (Tilly, 2003, p. 30) beside the government, policy members, subjects and outside political actors. Challengers, he said, are the constituted political actors lacking access to government agents and resources. So, when different types of challengers decide to perform acts of violence together, they perform an act of collective violence, as a form of contentious politics. It is “contentious” because participants are making claims that affect each other’s interest, and “politics” due to the participants relations to the government, which is always at stake (Tilly, 2003, p. 26). However, as one can see, government never stands away from playing a role in these claims: by encouraging them, being claimed against, resolution of conflict or by establishing variations of ‘identity categories’ that determines the levels of visibility and access of the political actors.

Engaging with the question of identity categories and its fusion with technology. I continued with the use of Bruno Latour’s morality of the machine (Bijker & Law, 1992, pp. 225–258; Buchanan, 2018; Latour & Venn, 2002); and on Eve Shapiro’s concepts of norms, (i.e. the formal and informal rule of society and/or community that organizes and set modes of behavior, representation, or belief, whether in the shape of laws or in the shape of societal expectations, based on this is variably, the level of punishment for going outside those set lines) and embodiment (i.e. body as a site of meaning, experience and expression and the internalization of societal norms.) (Shapiro, 2010, pp. 9–10). One of the clear forms that makes the engagements of identity categories and its technological fusion are, the expectations about our behaviors, representations and imaginaries on our social media and other

online/offline interaction. These expectations are the main topic of contestation, and they are the contemporary example of the Latourian morals of the machine. In that light, Latour invites us to think of the computer network – among other networks – not as a tool that we shape in our societal behaviors and morals, nor that morals as the end product of that tool (or as he called it: means), but to think of them as “a fusion”, and by that giving them an agency of their own, as well as the expectation resultant of Shapiro’s norms in the form of our embodiment(s). In adopting such an, this project would be a viewing social media not as a tool, but as an *actant*. Hence, putting its entity as a medium equivalent to the other actants, which are the transmitted contents; with all its norms and embodiments.

This adoption is also what Marshal McLuhan has called “the medium as the message” (McLuhan, 1994). In discussing the digital medium as messages, one ought to change their gazes at the study of platforms of digital expression from a passive code, to the code as a constituent of our identities. In us being translated to codes, we are opening our identity formation to a set of questions that unravel in the course of this project, such as new conceptualizations of rights, new concepts of the notion of identity, protection, care and control, private and public, and solidarity. Each will unfold its theoretical premises as the emperical sides also unfold.

Now let’s take a step back, and discuss the gaps in ethnographic studies that are relevant to CMCs in the Middle East and North Africa, and in Egypt in specific. To start, there is a huge dismissal in so-called *traditional* ethnographies on Egypt in studying the role of CMCs as a part and parcel of our everyday existences. In doing so, ethnographers would benefit on the practical side, from discovering terrains in the technical side of ethnography that extends writing as a form of note-making, to reach blogging, photography, and videography as tools in the fieldwork (Pink et al., 2016)

by tackling ways in which they could protect their data from breaching, they would offer other ways of crafting the cyber security discourses, and other domains that bridge computer science and computational thinking with social sciences. Moreover, on the theoretical side, technology is an integral part of what we call our offline lives, and therefore, in not discussing technology and CMCs, there would be a huge part of representation and knowledge making that is not being discussed. Thirdly, in performing more and more studies on cyber violence, we are also gradually pushing for dealing with technology as an actant, not as a passive medium. Fourthly - appending the third point - the majority of the studies that discussed cyber activism, cyber violence, or social media and its role in social movements in the so-called “Arab spring”, discussed computer technology as a tool only, without delving deeper of the morals of the medium, or even in the *political economy* of the this technology in relation to Egypt in specific. With the lack of such insights it makes it easy to display a single-sighted narrative, which is the governmental reports on technological development vis-a-vis NGOs reports. In her discussion on the problems of practicing anthropology and social research in Egypt, anthropologist Hania Sholkamy (Sholkamy, 2001) has stressed that, there are indeed countless problems that we face as HUSS researchers in Egypt. First of all, the militarization of data; which refers to *supposedly* publicly accessible data; yet such data is manipulated either by falsification of declared data, or by congealing it from researchers. Moreover, the spreading of a readership that appreciate – what she referred to as – “scientific thinking”, which is basically a glorification to abstract numbers and statistics, and as an information designer for many years, I could definitely affirm this glorification. Third of what Sholkamy illustrated was how this ‘scientific thinking’ affected the response to any qualitative data, especially data that discussed politicized injustice or

violations related to the state; which was receiving it with suspicion and questioning, needless to say placing the researcher in ‘trouble’ with the authorities. The last part of Sholkamy’s argument was related to the overall low consumption of social science research, and the language in which this minimal production is written. In fact, you are probably reading these words in English, which is the fluent language of a small number of people. In order for any social science research to be ‘readable’ by the mass public, it needs to be ‘filtered’, a word that entails: simplification, what I could call “political tip-toeing”, and courage if not a sense of readiness for self-annihilation for the sake of how your words would be interpreted, and what could or would result from this interpretation. This is all related to general social science research, for researches like me (i.e. involving computer-mediated communication (CMC), one would add as well: the inability to comprehend the technical mechanisms and terminology.

Methodology:

I have previously explained in the literature review how cyber and traditional terrains are not separated by a slash, but rather they intertwine. Latour’s Actor Network Theory (ANT), is beneficial in feeding into this intertwine; by stemming from the simple notion that people act in networks, Latour, posited that non-humans are also an integral part of this network, and in doing so they exert agency in this interplay (Wessells, 2007, p. 352). ANT invites us to investigate outside the binaries and the disregarded by the fact of commonality, such as in saying Online, one need to assert that not only do they mean, the online and offline as and interplay, but the sub-interplays of gender, class, representations, moralities, identities, geography, state, non-state, violence and non-violence. In short, ubiquity in all the previous aspects as part and parcel of the word “online” or “offline”. Therefore, in visiting the field, I am

also visiting the actors establishing the networking of the field (Lupton, 2015, p. 46), I am establishing myself as a part of this network. As Deborah Lupton had further elaborated “Digitized lives” are not only about the mere interaction using ICTs but more about aspects and matters that have been long discussed among sociologists, like: selfhood, identity, embodiment, power relations, social inequalities, social networking, social structure, membership, community making, social institutions and social theory (Lupton, 2015, p. 5). In her book, she explained the alterations on the traditional and well known methodological approaches in social research, i.e. quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic analysis to CMC usage. Alterations that were mentioned in her research such as the use of digital sound recorder, e-surveys (Lupton, 2015, p. 43) have been appended in this research by the use of encrypted instant messaging applications, proxy (in order to congeal sensitive and/or information from state-surveillance and maintain the measures of interlocutor’s confidentiality). Lupton also included what she called “deliberate content-generation practices” such as blogging, status updates, like, tweets, posts, and comments over social media. In this research however, the question of surveillance and privacy instantly forced itself from the beginning. As mass-level surveillance is not a hidden or unknown matter – as I shall illustrate in Chapter 4 – there is a gap in the HUSS education, that was filled by my human rights defense knowledge, this gap is realized when IRB does not integrate ways in which surveillance is performed in this certain geography, as well as on a global, such a surveillance, with what was earlier mentioned on the gaze to Social Sciences by Sholkamy, easily risks the data gathered, the interlocutor’s life, and the researcher’s life, especially while performing researches for non-Egyptian governmental entities, or researches that discuss topics such as:

gender inequality, violence, political economy, military, etc. All of which are counted as red flags for the surveillance logic.

If one could think of the field as an exploration, not only of the “there” but the “here”, the inner and the outer; one would know that acts of self-care does not only include the physical safety of one’s self and interlocutors, but in a hyper digitized life security measures for data is a certain must. The methodology therefore helps not only to organize the data, snapshots, and written notes in ways that would make it easier to retrieve, but also in ways that make them less vulnerable to loss, and intrusion. I believe it is important in by now to highlight that, in taking a security and privacy-based methodological practice, I am not changing my everyday-to-day behavior, for me the applications and communication methods used are applications I have been using for the past good years, and have only updated its levels, or changed some of these applications or technical parts, in order to fit the ongoing events, whether in terms of censorship or encryption level and efficiency. I have noticed that not all of my interlocutors had similar technologies, some of them, I had to be persistent and clear in strictly using these technologies, and this also affected the way the interview went sometimes; as I had to illustrate the reason why such technologies are not only needed for this research context for the interlocutor’s safety, but also for them in general usage, for their safety outside my encounter. In doing so, I would say, it was as if my ordinary was slightly different from not only my interlocutor’s ordinary, but also the majority of the people around me ordinary. Whether it’s my family, my professors, or my friends; communicating with me takes a reroute from the usual. This on the other hand comes at a price, as I am an outcast from all the *common* but insecure ways of broadcast communication, such as whatsapp, instagram, facebook messenger, and twitter application. Usage of secure communication as a realization of

the intensity of mass surveillance being practiced globally, and descending with this to the ordinary, is a bridge I would say, some people pass it faster than the others, some people do not pass it at all, i.e. they either reroute what they say on these unsecure platforms, so it would not be what they could crudely think as *revealing of intimate details* for whoever is it performing the surveillance; or in a sharp opposition to a seeped feeling of surveillance, or extreme ignorance of the matter being; they filter nothing of what they want to say or represent, they expose it all. This last I would call a double act of self-annihilation, where the person, the user, is rendered as a re-reading of a *homo sacer* by the surveillor- where surveillance is placed in lieu of the act of killing-but-not sacrificed- and where the person sees their own cyber information, i.e. that part of their self as partially separate from their offline, or intimate self, and where a delusion privacy intertwine with an act of carelessness to the intimate and personal in the data transmitted leading to the other part of the self-annihilation process.

I have observed that I had two types of interlocutors – based on proximity- on the one hand, those whom I knew (i.e during the preparation for this project and throughout the past years), they have known about my interest in the topic and have showed interest in volunteering as interlocutors. On the other hand, those who were out there, that I still did not know of; I have then decided to start with those I do not know in the first place. At first I placed a detailed formal Arabic and English facebook post- since it is one of the widely used social media platforms in Egypt, where I called for anyone who believed that he or she has been subjected to any form of cyber-mediated violence to contact me. In Arabic the formal translation of cyber-violence is العنف السيبراني (*al-'onf al-sebrany*) which is as I have been talking with non-technologically aware people, found out is an unfamiliar term, therefore I used the

more common العنف الإلكتروني (*Al-'onf al-electrony*) which translates to Electronic violence. However, the formal language, and the length of this post made it less legible for people, and so I didn't achieve much call backs from it. Therefore, a couple of days later, I posted another one, this time with a more vernacular language, short yet elaborate, placing hints about what could constitute violence that is based in places that wouldn't commonly be familiar from the first moment, such as; intimate based violence, work-space/ related violence, stalking, and identity theft. I mentioned people from various and intertwining backgrounds: researchers, activists, human rights NGOs professionals, lawyers, members of non-heteronormative orientations, people who identify themselves as women, journalists and students. Only then I started getting feedback from various people; the next lines will elaborate on how I started and proceeded the conversations and meetings, as well as the note-making and taking in this project.

At first, I established a separate secure email, using one of the email service providers that are known among human rights defenders for having secure and encrypted servers, and that do not belong to any institutional or governmental entities. I used this email after possible interlocutors messaged me privately or on the post's wall to show their intention for joining, I did not discuss any further details on facebook, I only asked for their emails, in order to send them the consent forms, and discuss things further. It is important here to note that, I did not go in further depth even online, since I was aware that end-to-end encryption requires "both ends" to have be encrypted, needless to say having long and secure passwords for their emails, I could only be sure of my end, but not my interlocutors, and therefore, all that was mentioned on the emails did not specify, meeting times, or locations, or any further details than the ones in my consent form. Next, frequent chats, decisions of meeting

times and places, as well as follow-up talks were all held on Signal, which is a free and open-source end-to-end encrypted instant message application. I used this application for its high reputation for several years on security measures globally, as well as it being an open-source software, which meant that it was not owned by a private company, that software developers could not audit its source codes frequently and across the world. It was this way –and only this way- that we communicated. Furthermore, data (including recordings, notes, transcriptions, and snapshots of the attacks) were kept in encrypted drives, with the name coding, and a long arithmetically developed password, that was guarded in another password kept vault. This way I guaranteed that only I could access this data, and that even the backups that were kept regularly (in case any malfunction happened, which actually did), will not be harmed, accessible, or manipulated.

Several people who got in touch did not have any problem regarding the fact that I will be recording our conversation, having clarified that the recordings are for my own access, will be kept in encrypted drives, that their names were not going to be revealed, and that in case of their worry for signing the consent form, their oral consent is an alternative – which was usually the case. Overall, one of the first exciting notes was how open and ready people were to share their stories, knowing that they did not have previous acquaintance of me, and did not express any concern regarding the fact that I will be recording. This was the case of most of my interlocutors.

I have noticed however, that measures of data security and interlocutor-researcher communication security were highly unfamiliar among fellow researchers from Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines. It was not mentioned intensively in scholarly articles' methodologies, but it was alluded to through activism related

platforms, such as: Tactical Technology Collective, Electronic Frontiers Foundations (EFF), and Mesahat for sexual diversity in Egypt and Sudan.

As for the fieldnotes, I was careful to take notes in oral or written forms. They were divided into three categories: First were the pre-meeting notes, where I reflected on my interlocutors' communications with me, as well as describing my expectations, the surrounding, and my psyche before the meeting. Second, was the meeting itself, which was recorded through my mobile phone, after it was placed – most of the time – on airplane mode, to prevent any waves coming in or out of the device, or phone calls that can interrupt the conversation, the recordings were then transferred to the encrypted folder, at the soonest time possible. Third, were the post meeting notes, which were written/recorded directly after the meeting, sometimes on my way back from the meeting venue. These last ones reflected what I have just perceived, how I felt about it, how it brought up different questions, and unexpected ideas that mused up during the meeting. I have noticed that at some point, these notes started to get gloomier in their tone, some of the stories were so intense that I sometimes opened the recorder, or held my pen, and expressed in puzzled words the melancholy of the experiences I have just heard. But I would also say they helped a great deal in venting out, clarifying my mind, and setting out notes and hints that were so valuable and instantaneous they shouldn't have been left to later. Such a technique of rapid, instant jottings in my case was gained from two disciplines: Fine Arts, and Anthropology. It is not advisable in Fine Arts to wait for an idea, or the urge to draw, sketch or paint, till you have “a proper setting” or reach a finalized concept of the full artwork, if you have that urge, get any paper and a pen and draw it, because these become the most affective lines one can draw; and in anthropology doing the same procedure, in terms of note taking/ sketching/ recording or else also, captures the essence of what really

simmered there in yourself from the encounters, without further rationalization or theorization.

Conceptual Framework and layout of the study:

With the acknowledgment of the complex of interplay of state, capital and the social, this research will draw on anecdotes that will be divided in thematic chapters. The chapters' structure and the notion of cyber violence in this thesis, however; should not be seen as a separate entities, but rather as sketches. The structural sketch (see image below), it a vertical gradient, where this interplay is blurry, yet there are colour nodes that determine the prevalent hue of this level of the gradient. Meanwhile, if I could sketch the notions and modals of Cyber violence in this thesis, I would illustrate it as a spherical gradient (see image below), where different hues enmesh at the center, and around the edges, where this edge is blurry with the blurriness of what interlocutors define as violence and not-really-violence, and where there are nodes of specific hues at this blurry circumference that spill its dominance in a specific area of the sphere. The vertical and spherical gradients interweave, to establish an overall sense of the vagueness, but also with a sense of definition of the nodal hue. Nodes then are notions of state, non-state, kinship, activism, and legislation; as nodes they are specific in the vertical structure of the thesis, but as part of a network, they are ambivalent and enmeshed with each others, and with other subsumed notions, as we shall see.

The second chapter will discuss the anecdotes of Hala and Dina, whose narratives had a predominant hue of state perpetration of violence; i.e. the form and mechanism of violence perpetrated, could only be formed by a level of accessibility and authority, that lies solely in the hands of a state-official or a state apparatus. Yet it is blurred by how this state is blurred by acts of delegation of violence with same

levels of accessibility and authority, to form a *panpoly* instead of a *monopoly* of violence, and to do such a formation in ways that still maintains a shade of that dominant hue. It shows how both of them have used ways to re-route her life during and after their attacks; each according to her own context, background, severity, connections, knowledge, etc. Moreover, in this chapter, one will get to see the start of the re-readings of the law among the communities at the margin of the state, as well as among NGOs (both nationally and internationally), and how techniques provided by social media such as: deleting the posts, and safe-listings, are ways in which the interlocutors' deal with the ongoing flaming, threat emails, messages and comments, what in Das' terms is coined as "descend[ing] into the ordinary". It will also engage with notions ranging from press-freedom, to ethnicity, to privilege, activism and assembly. As I have alluded in the beginning of this chapter, the ubiquity and flexibility of relations that features the state-citizen relationship, will also feature itself in the structure of this research, as snippets of the second chapter will be mentioned again in the later chapters. This aims to show multitudes of facades of the violence they have been subjected to, as well as the chimeras they are, the re-reading of the self, and the world around them in their everyday, while living with close relation with the source of violence perpetration.

The third chapter will discuss the hue of individual-individual perpetration of violence. It will draw on other sides of Hala's narrative, as well as include the majority of the interlocutors in this project, namely: Mostafa, Zeina, Sarah, Nour, Lara and Maha, where one could see kinships, friends, and other forms of the social, reiterating the formerly mentioned hue of state discourses, or performing acts of moral policing in the forms of individual-to-individual violence, or group-to-individual violence. They will be divided under sub-thematic schemes, such as

queerness, patriarchy and marriage etc.; such general schemes does not aim to limit the dimensions discussed on the story, as much as it offers an overall umbrella of question. Chapter four, the conclusive chapter reflects on the collective of the anecdotes mentioned, as well as reflections on the journey of this colourful thesis and how we could conclude from various contexts, and various definitions of cyber violence, it will also draw on the arguments and counter arguments in summary, and sheds the light on questions for further analysis and recommendations in regard to the study of cyber violence in Egypt.

Visualizing the Structural Gradient



Chapter 1

Introduction to the Gradient, notions of the state, the social, capital, as well as the political economy of internet in Egypt.

Chapter 2

The state is the protagonist; yet it fluctuates its hues in other forms, spaces and actors.

Chapter 3

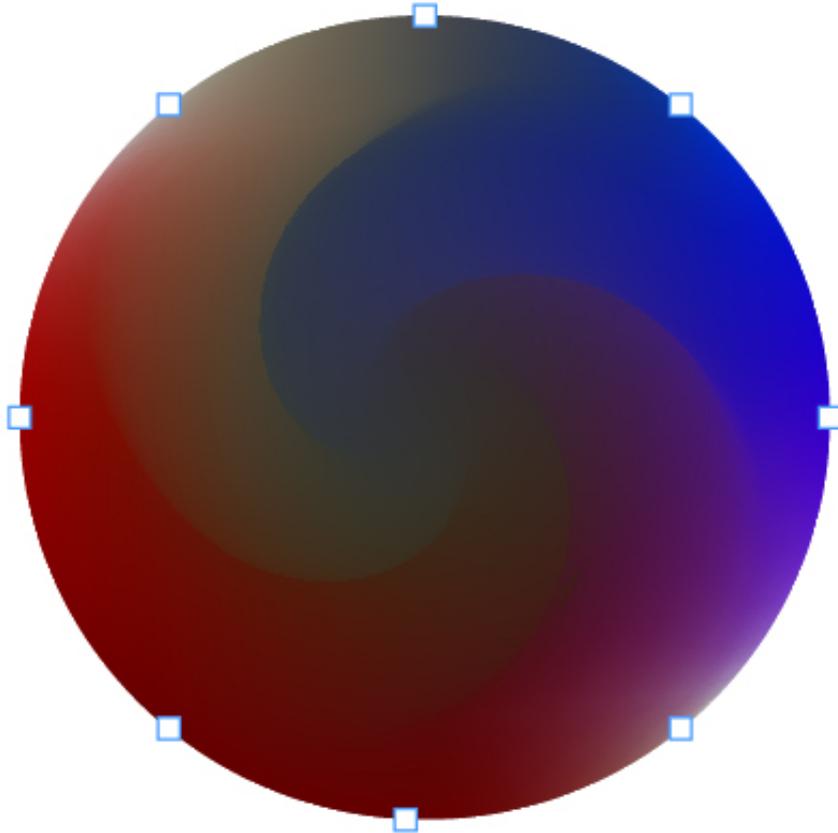
We can still see traces of the state as an actor, however, the individual to individual is the main protagonist. Along with the previous chapter they enmesh into the propositions & practices that reflect the everyday of a hyper-surveilled society.

Chapter 4

Conclusive chapter

Visualizing Cyber Violence

Simply put, if I could visualize cyber violence, it would be a circle with enmeshed hues that flood into each other. On one hand it has nodes that determines the most prevailing hue; on the other hand the fusion of colours represents the ambivalence through which Cyber violence premeets in the fabric of the temporalities and everyday.



Chapter 2: Grab them by the *Avatars!*: State politics in Cyber violence

In the previous chapter, I have mentioned how it is impossible to discuss violence without discussing the state. However, it is important to stress that in doing so, I am not separating the state and individual; on the contrary, what I aim for is to highlight the ways in which the both dissolve in each other in obvious and obscure ways. In this chapter I will discuss how cyber violence is institutionalized, in the obvious form of blogging and web-journalism, and the obscure form of hindering political bloggers through “anonymous” trials hacking and censorship. I will base my theoretical arguments on the scholarships of: Manuel Castells, Felix Stalder, Charles Tilly, Max Weber and Hannah Arendt, as well as a re-reading of Veena Das, Talal Asaad and Deborah Poole notions of state and community, margin making/ unmaking, in the light of the information age.

My interlocutors for this chapter unravel a bulk of intersectionality that offer a gaze on how the state maintains its mechanisms of power and obscurity, by creating social margins and languages that separate people of the same gender, the same nationality and even according to politics of resistances, to serve its own constantly changing - even paradoxical- code of order. These categorical formations pan up as tools of injustice, that is, when they reveal their actual hue as the tool of the master. Such times, have recently become more often than not, of an unexpected pattern. As we shall see in this chapter, times of attacks, through which renderings of race, colour, political stance, gender, etc. become an entry of attack, that is more and more custom made to the individual being attacked. This if it tells anything, it would highlight first: the culture of mass surveillance, and the level to which it seeped into the state’s logic

of governance; and second, the congealment of the criteria of those labels that could be attacked by the state, which in return spreads a culture of rumor, that renders *everyone* a cyber *homo sacer*.

Hala: Identity politics and politics of activism:

The first interlocutor Hala, describes herself as a Nubian (apart from, yet entangled with her Egyptian nationality), a researcher, and an Islamic feminist. My knowledge and relationship with Hala precedes the time of her participation in this research; she has been the first person to broaden my gaze on my everyday life and interactions with the Cairo public. I, a white person, while she on the other hand engaged with her everyday, as a person of colour. I have realized, then the validity of her claim that “Egyptians are racists”, which I heard from her around 2012. Ever since then I took an indirect oath to test this claim through joining other friends of colour, while doing some mundane and everyday activities such as; shopping in public streets or joining book festivals, all the way to more activism related settings and discussions. Indeed, her claim turned out to be an eye opener. I find this important to mention in the course of this study, to broaden the scope to subject-making and privilege that have seeped and normalized in our online and offline everyday.

Born in the 1980s, Hala came to encounter a conflict between her Downtown Cairene area of birth and residence, which was surrounded by other members of her bigger Nubian family. On the other hand, her street of residence also included members from different tribes from upper Egypt. Her childhood provided her with a surrounding that was somehow heterogeneous enough, that she felt it was the usual and the norm; that is, it is usual for us to come in different colours and to accept each others different customs and traditions. Such a view clashed at her tender age of school, when she started hearing racist comments from children and their parents

regarding her skin colour, and what she recalls as ‘misunderstandings’ between her school-mates. She said humorously: “There were incidents for example where we, as kids and friends in primary school, would be standing next to each other washing our hands, and they would take my hands and keep washing them thoroughly thinking my colour will fade away to their skin tones, and I would smile and tell them: believe me this is how it really is, it is not going to change, so don’t try!”. With the aggregation of such incidents to more unpleasant and unexplained ones, she became politicized about her skin colour, as well as gradually starting to feel a conflict of identities regarding her nation of origin and her nationality on paper, hence, gradually coming to the realization that she and people like her are a stark proof of the obliteration of identities under the big exclusive notion of nationalism, that is to say, you can not be Nubian and Egyptian at the same time.

This clash made her read more about the history told and untold about Nubians and Egyptians. About languages that are gradually fading away due to diaspora, a history that is softly being taken away through generations of diaspora-born Nubians, parents who according to one of her blogposts leave their children “mute” without caring much to pass the Nubian language, while caring very much about passing the “colonialists languages” (both English and Arabic) (Emam, 2017); and a state narrative that romanticizes their land, racialize their skin tone in pop-culture, and politically procrastinates giving them back what is left of their lands. This lead to the dissemination of Nubian culture as an oral and unorganized ‘pass-over’ from generation to generation; making the Nubian archive as only the members of the Nubian community in Egypt (Fouda, 2016). Taking this further, she came to realize the politics of obliteration when she studied political science at college at the turn of the millennium. She became an active participant in students assemblies, there she

also met and became part of some of the what will later be Egypt's finest group of women and human rights defenders. Through one of these encounters, she got to learn for the first time the concept of intersectionality, which made her at peace with accepting all of the identities she carried, a woman, a Muslim, and mainly a Nubian and an Egyptian; now it was time for action.

At that time, in 2005, political independent blogging started trending. As a safe space of expressing one's opinion away from the restrictions and risks of formal press publishing in Egypt, the blogosphere was the safe haven to discuss and engage with political corruption, which was used by a multitude of activists who walked hand-in-hand with offline social movements, such as Kefaya. Along with a handful of other activists, Hala started a blog in 2005, which offered a diverse array of re-readings of the public media articles and debates. Each one of this handful assortment of activists took the charge of a specific topic, from feminism, to Islamic philosophy, to politics and economy, she took charge of media related issues. Daily, she read all the newspapers that were issued for that day, highlighted the most problematic ones, and re-read them in the light of the current affairs to place a focus to the readers on the problems with the government policies. This intersectionality lead her to focus her interests on Islamic Feminism, and the life-long cause of the Nubians. Eventually she started working in feminist research activism.

When we had our conversation, she started by identifying violence as: *“it is any action (or group of actions) that place(s) risk on someone's life, or that creates a stereotypical image related to my race, or gender etc.”* (my translation). Her incidents with cyber attacks started to spread after the use of Twitter as a platform for expression. This included sexist and racist comments, such as: *“Go back to your country!”*, or when someone sent a photo of black people in chains and told her *“this*

is you!”. She responded to such incidents by blocking and/or reporting the attacker’s account. However, the interesting and debatable incidents were one that happened from another fellow activist in 2013. Hala used to follow this fellow activist/journalist on twitter, however after the Rabaa’ massacre, and due to different opinions she decided to “unfollow” him. At that time there was a trend on twitter to tweet the names of people you unfollowed, so she did the same, which she called “a stupid move”. In reply to that tweet, that fellow activist/journalist started tweeting several tweets cursing her, mentioning her genitals and race. She pondered the idea of raising a law suit against him, under the charges of defamation. However, she wondered if that will also affect his space of freedom of speech, and how the state apparatuses, from police to judiciary would seize this opportunity to perform extra pressures on him and his activism work. So, she consulted lawyers from Global Voices (which is an international human rights organization focusing on freedom of speech) in an email; who confirmed her suspicions. She retreated also acknowledging that she was not a special case, and that he usually cursed people who opposed him in such manner. This, she said, also made her think of the ways we express our opinions online, and how it is an open space, however how one should not dash every thought, especially the private ones, online.

In 2016, due to my interlocutor’s participation in the group amending the constitution of 2014 as a Nubian representative; her personal blog got censored in a way that made it inaccessible for her, but other people were able to see it. Moreover, there have been several attempts on hacking her facebook and email accounts, which more often than not, created mini-anxiety episodes for her. This is a part of Hala’s case, which included some state agency in the imposition of violence, meanwhile,

there are other parts that I will refer to in the next chapter, regarding intimate Cyber violence.

This part of Hala's story, raises so many questions, such as; how activism community in Egypt have managed -throughout years of marginalization- to re-read the state laws, and investigation procedures, which cast the shadow of the state's presence. It also raises the question of publishing as a way of 'alternative' mode of expression, and the ways in which the state's mass-surveillance react, to show an oscillation between state's loss of control and proof of sovereignty (Stalder, 2006).

The first question which is that of the political activism community and the re-reading of the law, engages with concepts of the state, the politics and the margin, and how communities that are at the peripheries of the state (either as Nubians or activists) reread, or re-implement the *law* that they partially contest. Max Weber had stated that the notion of the state and the political are closely associated. the state is not something that one can identify in terms of if its ends, but rather in terms of its *means* (Weber, 1946). That is, any political association that is capable of creating, regulating the means of power of violence. Therefore, as Trotsky and Weber agree, if there is no violence, there notion of the state would be eliminated; not to say that this is the *only* mean of the state, but it is a mean that is exclusively controlled by this entity called the state; hence the aforementioned definition of the state, as an association that monopolizes the legitimization of this mean of force. Politics, he stated, is closely associated to the sharing and distribution of this power, of this right to use force; either among states, or among groups within a state. Therefore, for something or someone to be of a political position, it means that the distribution, transfer, and maintenance of power fall within the sphere of activity of this person, and or that thing. This cordially means that those striving for political activity are also striving for

power, for one reason or another, either for idealistic or egoistic aims, or to enjoy power for power's sake, that is, the prestige and accessibility that power provides. Therefore, the center point of contestation here is *power* and its accessibility, even if this accessibility is simply the accessibility to be alive. But what does it mean to not be at the focal point of this distribution of power, in other words, like a Nubian, or an aboriginal, what does it mean to be at the margin of the state?

In the light of her study on threats in the form of judicial and communal systems in the Peruvian state, Deborah Poole stated that the notion of the margin of the state is the nation-state's form of subject-making, that is maintained directly and indirectly. More profoundly by creating the language and routes that shape the mindset and the 'embodied space' of the everyday of those inside these margins. This is in order to create a sharper and more defined definition of who is "with" and who is "against" the state's code of order, what Deborah Poole called "Territorial Margin" (Das & Poole, 2004, p. 38). The imagination of the state margins are based on 3 factors: 1- the undiscovered (or yet to be discovered) territories that the state hasn't controlled yet, 2- how the state is experienced through spaces, forms and practices in how this state's codes are legible/illegible for the public, especially the inhabitants of the margin, 3- the spaces constituted between bodies, laws and discipline. In the light of Castells argument on CMCs such as social media, he introduced the concept of "space of flows" as the ability to exist in spaces without existing in places together. This fluidity of time-ness and space-ness, shifted the logic of social institutions in ways that took advantages of that fluidity. In his Leibnizian stance, Castells stated that space is not a container, or a given, but rather a social construct that is shaped by and transformed along social relations (Stalder, 2006, p. 141), therefore space is not a mirror of social relations, but rather a by-product of them and a source of social

dynamics (Stalder, 2006, p. 144). In the time-space relationship, Castells had had a first argument, before 1980s, that stated that space is the material support of time-sharing social practices, and that it brings together those practices that are simultaneous in time (Stalder, 2006, p. 144). This changed due to people's - i.e. social actors' - ability to share time without having to be in the same 'physical' spaces. Moreover; social institutions restructured its logic to take advantages of this new nature, to the extent that this "space of flows" became the baseline of competitiveness, and most prominently capitalist firms (Stalder, 2006, p. 145). The key to Castells' space of flows argument is, *its materiality*; since it illustrates how creating, maintaining and navigating (or access to) these spaces are expensive and complex. Hence, new spatial patterns for urban development, will also feature new modes of social exclusions and stratification (Stalder, 2006, p. 147). This also means that, the spatial domains upon which power and counter power is being expressed, also represent sites of the political practice in the Weberian sense. These sites, these *territorialities*, in the information age, are also the web- which makes, Victoria Bernal's notion of infopolitics a closer term to this battle over virtual territorialities.

Castells, providing another explanation on the question of state and margin but with more focus on the notion of power; has argued that cultural power- as opposed to the commonly known classical form of power- is based on "symbolic violence" (Stalder, 2006, p. 139). Both being based on violence, "symbolic violence", Castells defined, is the capacity to delete a code by another code in the individual brain. However, in critique of this concept, Stalder added that the missing piece from this definition is the concept of 'structural violence' (also called systemic violence, by Zizek (2008) where violence is imposed by someone without their direct, violent agency. The most obvious form of this structural violence is Thomas Frank's

definition of “hegemony”, which is establishing a new common-sense that lead people to a specific preference by repeating a certain opinion over and over, sometimes counter to its common sense (Stalder, 2006, p. 113), hence with out their direct violent agency intervening in imposing or producing this violence. In terms of the state and information networks, in its core, the concept of CMCs already places the state in a crises (Stalder, 2006, p. 113), or a *perplexity* between a network that challenges it prime goal of “control” that is synonymous in its logic with “sovereignty”, and its obligation to engage in the politics of media, in order to practically.. exist. I will explain this dynamic briefly in the light of Castells’ notion of state loss of control.

Premising on Hala’s narration, the loss of state control happened at first, through the development of mass media, starting TVs and escalated by the spread of independent satellite channels, which challenged the trials to dominate portals of public knowledge transmission, and make it horizontal and multi-dimensional instead of mono-focal. These portals, beside being horizontal and challenging, are also interested in engaging in politics based on it premise of being an important economic actor, making it, not only biased, but to some extent, this biasness is in unexpected ways, due to that economic base. Second is the spread of the domestic use of internet, which is basically a domain that is premised on the logic of disrupting the of information transmission, and transforming it to a *panopoly*. The attempts of the state to control this by means of law, and what I could call *para-legal* activities (such as what happened with my interlocutor from hacking attempts, or blog censorship, or the censorship of several websites related to journalism or human rights defense, as well as the on and off attempts to curtail the “Signal” application are, as Castells argue, a lost battle for the state. Since, this very same state, needs this very same medium in

order to not only practice its information politics (Stalder, 2006, p. 115)¹, but also to justify its goals of state securitization (i.e. its transferal from welfare state to warfare state), development and investment in the information sector which is the key in its presence on the global market map. The state then is, expressing its loss of control, as well as its inability to restrict the gate of that control, by not only encouraging the investment in it, trying to manipulate directly and indirectly the languages used over it and the mechanisms through which it is provided (as I have illustrated in the previous chapter on through the structure of the political economy of the internet in Egypt); but also by concurring to the rules of this technology in terms of its politics, even if it topples the very notion of party politics.

The state then as we get from Veena Das, Deborah Poole, Max Weber and Manuel Castell, it always is in the making, obscure, and illegible at least by one or more part of the society. If it is not for the dimension of flow of time and space that distinguishes the information society, it would be for its importance of this currency that is information in the global economy. In this second part, I would like to continue my engagement with the communities that *actually are* at the margin of the state, that I mentioned at the beginning of this analysis. It seems then that the communities at the margins are not only fluctuating with the same fluidity of the state's situation, but also they play an integral part in the legibility of the state's violence mechanisms; either it is by re-reading the law imposed by the state, or by confirming its sovereignty by being a part of it (such as policemen and government inspectors), or by directly clashing with it, or by maneuvering their everyday in the outskirts of the state. In the Egyptian context, and in the light of Hala's story, the first form is visible by the way NGOs functioned and are functioning in regard to conflict resolution. Incidents such

¹ According to Castells, Information Politics, is the politics premised in its substance, organisation, process and leadership, by the inherent logic of the media systems, especially New Media systems

as the one between Hala and the fellow activist/journalist, and ones that are more severe such as rape, blackmailing, domestic violence and outing that occur within the community of the NGOs, and human rights defenders. They are investigated within a collection of *prominent* and *respected* human rights defenders, who are sometimes lawyers, and sometimes aren't. In that investigation, those who are proven guilty, are known to others who did not necessarily engaged with either parties of conflict at any point, and they are penalized by forms of seclusion and alienation. The things that involve investigative evidences include: selfies, shared images, screenshots of comments and/or private messages, and so forth. Things as contents of personal profiles for workers of human rights defense as weather or not they could be counted as the opinion of the institution they work for is sometimes a point of debate. However, by and large, the base through which people from the human rights community offer a scope of re-reading the law, through abiding by legal nominal that are weaved into the body of the Egyptian penal code, such as in Hala's case "defamation", but through re-establishing their own form of the jury, as well as their own forms of punishments, such as: alienation, public apologies, and restricted presence when the other party is at the same space. This, done without engaging with the state, and premised on offering an ethical view of the law and its practice that is more often than not enhancing a moral code that suits those who are in power (Pojman & Tramel, 2009). Ethics, however is discussed within the borders of yet another body of law: the international human rights agreements; hence came the reply from Global Advocacy, that re-affirmed her suspicions on the downsides of raising a law suit against the fellow activists.

Meanwhile, this practice of re-reading, even though is a re-iteration of state logic, is distinguished from it by the fact that it is always a work-in-process, a point

for debating, reviewing and contestation. In other words, law here is a dialectical matter, and solely an imposition. Until 2016, the majority of the NGOs were registered under the state's law, either as a law firm or as a civil society organizations, hence, confirming the legitimacy of the state in one way or another. An example in Hala's story, on how this dynamic is always a state of on-going battle over space and time of flows, and the un/creation of borders, is the censorship of her blog, in ways in which she can still post by texting, but can not access it to see what she is posting, as if it is a mechanism that works on partial censorship as a policy of frustration to the censored party. The state however, is allegedly basing its premises on the notion of 'maintaining public order' or 'maintaining the state's sovereignty' in a way that is, as I have alluded, actually a proof of its downfall, and its inability to realize and cope with the state-citizen flux, and is not a sign of its sovereignty.

On another aspect, the state politics as a monopoly of the means of violence, is also a monopoly over its affects. The battle over censorship, hacking attempts, blackmailing, even trolling, is not only a technical one but, mainly, I would say a mental and psychological drainage. As I have multiply witnessed the mental breakdowns that Hala passed through every time she called for assistance when there was a hacking attempt to her social media account, or email, it was evident that controlling this state of terror, or anxiety, as well as - due to control over telephoned communication- the networks that operates in the time of the crisis, was as important as the control over the medium itself. This anxiety was not only hers, but also, transmissively mine, since it was my responsibility to offer proper, quick and efficient technical guidance, as well as calm her down, and show her the real perspective of this curtailment mechanism. Many times I would think about why is it that she finds this insight in me, or that there are many other activists who are much more aware

than me, or how glad I was that nothing more malign happen, malign here, meaning that it would exceed my knowledge of cyber security measures and require programming skills, which I lacked. This also made me sub-consciously create a pattern of the attacking attempts, which showed how fragile the state was, to the extent that it uses such ways in silencing not only the past (a la Trouillot), but also the present, in ways that are very short term, needless to say, surpassable.

Dina: Politics of Cyber Journalism

I would like to start the story of my second interlocutor from the analysis I have provided earlier. After January 25th, 2011 revolution, journalism have gained a great reputation. And with the history of surveillance on printed, auditory, and visual production by the state; whether by maintaining a threat policy for any word that will go outside the line, or by maintaining ‘friendships’ and alliances with editors-in-chiefs of the independent journalism portals, or in the case of Dina: actually being the management of the agency she worked for. Management here, entitles the chair persons, who are a higher rank than the editors-in-chief. Still, journalism became an alluring domain for youth who engaged in the revolution, and who sometimes took the professional side of it in order to pursue their take-off careers that started in citizen journalism, or in order to have an institution that could back them up politically, financially, and materially with the topics of their interest.

Dina, who comes from a non-Cairene middle class family, is married to a human rights advocate, and has two young children. She started her career in journalism in 2011 in a precarious market of informal journalism, where she usually shifted from one agency to another. She started by telling me that the journalists market started closing after Rabaa’ massacre. This harmed many journalists who were trying to work on *non-official* narratives. For her she was interested in investigative

journalism, and topics that covered women rights issues. In 2016, through connections, she got a job at one of the online news portals- which is a category that thrived a lot after the January 2011 revolution. She later learned that the portal was owned by people in the National Security Forces (NSF). However at that time, she was having a tough time personally and financially, which made her accept the job, believing that she will be mainly working with the editorial management, not the chair persons. Shortly after her starting work, she told the editor-in-chief that she was interested in investigating a story that involved the death of a foreigner, with allegations of torture that could only be performed by trained personnel, the story was a matter of public debate and politically sensitive. The editor-in-chief not only agreed but also provided her with manpower from videographers, to editors, to liberty in stay-at-work times, on one condition: the work should be reviewed by that editor-in-chief always, due to its sensitivity. Her investigation lead hr to prove with material evidence the falsification of the state's narrative which denied any official interference in the murder. When she informed the editor-in-chief of her findings and evidence, she shocked her with the reply: *"The topic has to be reviewed by the management"*. Suddenly one day, when she was off-work, she found out that the topic was published by the Head of her department. The next day she was suspended from work, and sent to interrogation. She was interrogated three times, by the editor-in-chief, the HR department and by a secret services officer. During the last interrogation they kept pressuring her to reveal her sources for the investigations, which she refused to unravel, they then started using a different tone alluding to knowing her husband's work, she replied by saying that this is an investigation with her, not her husband, and that they worked in totally separate matters. Two days later, she found out she was transferred to the entertainment section, which was an end to her career as a journalist.

However, this was not the issue, the main issue was that her new head of department was a person who “*wrote reports on his colleagues*”, a word that is famous in Egypt since probably the Nasserite regime, when people wrote reports for the NSF about details related to their peers, in other words, her new head of department, who was working in what was supposed to be an independent news agency, was a state informant. One day, he called her asking her to make a report on the Tiran and Sinafir protests that were taking place at that time. He asked her to take photos of the security gatherings in her where about, she instantly refused because it was too dangerous, so he asked her to head to Tahrir square, as soon as she reached there, she was arrested, and sent to yet another investigation by NSF. After this last arrest incident, she quit her job writing a reasoned resignation letter, which was refused. With a work condition that did not provide her a contract, insurance, or any security, she just decided she was not going again. However, in a domain that strives on rumors, she said she knew that there was a rumor spreading that she was having an affair with her former head of department, which both of them ignored. After quitting, she found on Facebook that there was an independent documentary that stated the affiliation of that agency with NSF, in the comments section the agency’s editor-in-chief stated that “*You can only hold us accountable for our work, not the company that owns us*”, intuitively Dina replied that this was atrocious. A few days later she was walking in the street, and suddenly found a group of people who called her. When she finally answered on one of them, she found out that a former *friend* of hers who knew the editor-in-chief personally posted statuses name calling her, and referring to the rumor of the affair, without directly mentioning her name. Such flaming from that person continued from 2016 until shortly before our interview in 2017. These incidents also affected her work, since she could not find work in a big agency till 2017, due to the

strong connections her former editor-in-chief had with heads of agencies. She entered in a phase of depression, which was also present because she could not tell her husband about any of what happened: *“I couldn't tell (my husband), he's a guy just like any other guy, even if I didn't actually do that”*. She finally decided to take a legal action against the person who flamed her when he wrote her name in one of his tweets directly threatening her. She said when she told her husband about the whole story, his instant reaction was *“What is he having on you?”*. She realized then that no matter what she did, a woman's honor, personal life, and reputation is always the front line of attack in any fight, even a purely professional one.

Going back to the incident of her arrest, I asked her if any of the agencies she worked for, including the one that is the main topic of her story, had a communication policy that regulated the calling, messaging, and photographing platforms they were allowed to use, to guarantee a safer journalistic, non-surveilled practice, she shook her head passively, stating that they used regular phone calls and sent documents over an email related to the agency, or their personal emails, or Facebook messenger, or whatsapp. She said that she had/have no awareness on how to protect herself or her data on the digital communication devices, and that only international famous news agencies had such a thing, with parts as long as seven pages on usage of social media, the personal profiles of the journalists, and what to post and what not to post on their personal profiles.

There are some technical points that I would like to highlight. First, for anyone who know about matters of freedom of information, the right to access of information, the right to privacy, or Cyber security, one of the first facts is that institutions' personnel's accounts are always accessible to the Information System administration. This acts as both a protection, in case of sudden incidents, such as arrest or death, so

that the information would not get leaked, and a risk, in case there were attempts to hack, censor, or any other unauthorized action in regard to the institution or the individual working for it. Also, there is usually an unspoken code among the realm of activists, that everyone is surveilled unless proven otherwise. A code that globally thrived after the whistle blowing incident by NSA's former employee Edward Snowden, and the start of the Wikileaks, on a more journalistic related basis, the Panama Papers were one of the similar occasions where privacy of personal digital print, as well as the professional one, were not merely a matter of the sacrecy of private information, but to a certain limit, a matter of life and death. Hence, came my question about the communication policy.

Picking up from the theoretical analysis at Hala's story, as well as offering an analysis to the dynamics of Journalistic domain in Egypt. The ways in which marginal communities and the subjectivities are seen, are not just as passive reactors to the state policies and mechanisms of violence, but a non-binary relation where communities are recreated according to including actors of violence from that same marginalized community, such as informants; as well as the community's re-interpretations of the law and its practice (Das et al., 2004, p. 167). However, both stories problematize a certain aspect of Das' argument on this non-binary vision; which is when she stated that "governmentality is instituted through sporadic, intermittent contact, *rather* than and effective panopticon system of surveillance" (my emphasis). This part is problematic, not in its allegory of a non-sporadic sense, but in the view of the effective system of panopticons as exclusive from the first part; I contend that since the core logic of state is control and power as Castells and Weber have previously argued; panopticons are then the big cross that the state and its actants (both in its side and in its margins) are trying so hard to keep standing while being metaphorically

whipped by the uncertainties of the global market and its effects. If the panopticon was not the main tool of violence that is aimed at maintenance of its sovereignty, then the whole other toil of uncertainties are not worthy of keeping up with. In other words, it is evident that one of the main ways of state's sovereignty is establishing a system of *societal panopticons* that extends its direct management to seep into societies; especially those at the margins in a mode of 'real subsumption' (a la Marx). This is created and maintained in order to sustain the expensive shift in its logic imposed by the forms of media politics, and competing in the global market; as well as to maintain a constant status of discipline; that is, a constant type of exercise of power.

The Panopticon's relation to the disciplinary society as Foucault had argued, is that it commits these apparently paradoxical acts of group making, yet managing to individualize discipline. Whether it is in the form of a school (or a university), a hospital, a prison, or a household, panopticism as a mechanism is made to create a unifying space, where it is made possible to see the targeted constantly, and identify immediately, while maintaining to keep the individual as an object of inspection and never a subject of communication, it also creates and maintains a subject making that is in constant awareness of its permanent visibility, which maintains an automatic function of power (Foucault, 1995, p. 200).

In the light of re-reading Das' argument, while recalling Manuel Castells' views of "institution logic" and "communication and information", I would like to highlight the marriage and complex relationships between state and institutions of knowledge transmission, such as – in our case here – The Press. Institution logic, Castells argues, is formulated around the state; state and capital are the corner stone of our society. Both state and capital operate within the given technological apparatus,

each to achieve their own aims, between control and accumulation respectively. Meanwhile, through communication and information, people are connected, so if the process is controlled by those in power, therefore the signals that people receive comes from a system that adapts to what that form of power thinks, or would like people to think; he adds Communication and information is also, the main component of the accumulation and distribution of wealth and power, the actual process that determines this, will depend on specific communication paradigms; such as the press, the church etc., so the way we think depends on the interaction between our neural network and with the social (Castells, 2017). As a part of the communication paradigm, Internet as a technology is a free technology that is difficult to control. However, while it is used for freedom to create connected networks, it also creates “A global surveillance bureaucracy”, due to its massive digital exhaust of information, from emails, to instant messages, to phone calls. That is the most direct expression of the logic of power in the digital age, it is the formation of a Panopticon, in which everything is known the state with very little judicial accountability, as well as, the commodification of information, we are all data. (Castells, 2017).

In Das' argument on the *Signature of the state*, she argued that the state is literized and embodied in regulation forms that oscillate between *rational and magical modes of being*. Rational modes of being are rules and regulations that are embodied in law and institutions, the first is the distinguished by a sense of a hazy by overwhelming power, seeping into the everyday by examples of rumors, gossip, mockery etc. Magical modes, on the other hand, are premised on 4 claims: first, that the magical is not fiction, since it has implications in the real; second is, the lack of transparency that characterises the forces mobilized to perform this magic; magical practices are usually coupled by forces of danger due to the combination of obscurity

and power, which is the third claim; the last claim resides in the presupposition of one's vulnerability upon engaging with magic (Das et al., 2004, p. 162). Obscurity and power that cloaks the dynamics of media agencies and their internal dynamics of decision making, and its external dynamic of its relation with the state on one hand, and its role as an actor in the economy on the national and global aspects on the other, recalls the what Marx alluded to as a key ingredient to the exchange of capital, and decision making under the capitalist mode of production.

In explaining justice, threat and guarantee in the local agrarian Peruvian context shows that the state imposes a code of instinctual mechanism of fear, for both its informants in the marginal communities as well as the rest of the marginal population (discovered and yet-to-be discover), that for the marginal population acts as a re-reading of the law, it creates a mode of threat and vulnerability due to its arbitrary power, as well as a guarantee of legibility/legitimacy. Threat and guarantee are distinguished as a "site" that his neither spacial not stable, but rather a site that is only sensed through fleeting and normalized moments of engagement with language institutions, spaces, and agents of the state who represent justice and law (Das et al., 2004, pp. 36–37).

What Veena Das called the "spectacular signatures" of the state is then premised on the sign as a tie between politics and powers of writing (Das et al., 2004, p. 62), not only in the forms of creating legible and illegible forms of law and its practice, or by subliminally imposing ways in which information as a commodity is being transacted, but also in the fluid and obscure ways in which subjectivities are being made and unmade in the light of its undeclared loss of control under the prominence of the network society in the informational era. The main tension of that network society as Castells explained is the tension between relationship dynamics of

global networks, economic and cultural aspects and the specificities of local identities (Stalder, 2006, p. 128).

Platforms of expressions on the internet – with its increase of intimacy and penetration- are then timeless spaces of flows that are in constant contention between those who access it and the those who *try* to control it, between power and counter power. On one side, there are the increasing population of the margin, with all their complex and intersecting identities, places them at an anticipation of a face-to-face contentions over politics of representation on that free internet. State on the other hand, acts on maintaining its magical signature in the margin – and the margin-to-be – through recruiting agents in marginal communities who act as societal panopticons, hence creating a constant state of exception and moments of anticipation, or by replicating itself – sometimes unintentionally- in the form of community's re-reading of the law within the context of conflict resolution. However, the main fact still remains, Internet is a place of multitude of possibilities as much as it is of risks.

Chapter 3: Disciplinary Society and its discontents

In the previous chapter, I have illustrated through two narratives how the state in one way or another, had the main hue of online/offline violence. Either by a congealed intervention that is though not declared, point fingers directly to it, either through motives or accessibility; or via congealed agreements with heads of portals of public knowledge management, such as news agencies. Such interventions do not stop at that point, but seeps into the anticipation of violence, or the spread of the culture of doubt, rumor and inspection.

Such a culture, incite not only its narratives of surveillance that is manufactured and monitored by the state, but also clones itself through the public behavior. Such cloning is what concerns this chapter, through which my interlocutors get to narrate stories of what they got to define as violence and more importantly what they got to *not* define as violence.

In this chapter, I go deeper in other dimensions of the story of Hala, that was not mentioned in the previous chapter. As well as focus on issues related to the sides of other stories that highlights people's perception of what they got to define, and how it was defined as violence, how it shape their experience with their own symbiosis, and how is time narrated in the traumatic experiences of the cyber?

In such analysis, I continue adopting from the views of Max Weber, Manuel Castells' and Charles Tilly views on the state, politics and violence, and their relation to technology. Moreover, I engage with Foucault's notion of disciplinary society, Veena Das, Donna Haraway, and Karl von Holdt's engagement with Pierre Bourdieu and Fantz Fanon.

In bridging the linkage between the state's most obvious form of instituting violence, law, and habituating this violence in the society, customs, Bourdieu's notion of Symbolic violence, states that the coupling of law and customs create mechanisms of violence, that is imbued into the fabric of societal cognition in invisible ways. That invisibility in itself is as such even for the people who undergo this violence. It is also what makes such forms of violence existent and persistent as a form of coercion by consent, creating a misrecognition of subjectivities in the social order. Such forms of customary symbolic violence is seen in forms of thought, understandings of social frames, and dealing with memory is bridged through the state's formations of categories, through which violence is put into practice and precipitation over time (von Holdt, 2013, p. 115). The reiteration of such symbolic violence in the formation of social order, and hierarchies of domination is what creates a "culture of urban violence" (von Holdt, 2013, p. 113). Such "Revolutionary violence", as Fanon called it and argued, is needed in the process of counter-colonialism, not only to counter-power the arbitrary nature of colonialism, but in order to regain a social psyche away from the inferiority created by the colonialist towards the colonised; meanwhile, such reciprocity of violence is also recreating macro-versions of social orders of violence among the undomesticated colonized, in a loop, that is only different in the fact that in the second, such social basis of violence, makes such forms of violence undistinguished, if not excused, hence creating symbolic violence. In an evolutionary view of the symbolic and revolutionary violence, one could see the state's re-appropriation of colonialist discourses and imposition on creating a social order as a revolutionary violence; it could also be seen that the macro application between people among each other as a form of 'expected' violence, and therefore at some level indistinguishable. This aforementioned, summarizes the linkage between the state and

its creation of categories upon which violence is imposed in various levels and platforms, and the reiteration of almost similar forms of violence between people and each other, based on the very same categorical identifications. Here, violence transgress from the Arendtian perception of it as a tool, to a more intuitive form, i.e. a force.

Hala: on the body, the cyber, and the culture of humiliation

In her account, Hala unraveled yet another part that is unfathomable to the ordinary, which was her cyber-sex life. In a country where almost every kid with an access to internet must have accessed porn websites in one way or another, at least once, Hala was no exception. In her first year of college, she recalled was her first encounter with porn sites. On the local level, Egyptian youth took chat rooms such as: MSN Messenger, Yahoo messenger and ICQ, as platforms to know each other and most of the times to have cyber-sex. People engaged in Cyber-sex, transgressed the need to existence in the same place, by engaging in sex-ting (a term that combines Sex and Text Messaging) and web-cameras attached to their mobiles for live Audio Visual sex streaming. It was on Yahoo Messenger that she started meeting people for that purpose, however, in her case she was careful not to show who she was, so she did not purchase a web-cam or a head-set, and was just satisfied with texting, which she kept using until after her university years shortly after the turn of Millennium. Hala's narrative also showed the turns of generations, from cyber-sex chatrooms, to Social Media (SM), such as Whatsapp and Twitter, in her case.

When she recalled the reasons behind her cybersex usage, she said that she kept loving men “from a third party” and was not successful in making any romantic relationships with someone up until she was almost in her Thirties of age; however, she said giggling “I still had [sexual] urges that needed to be fulfilled”. Some sex

partners that she met in these chat rooms, transgressed to meeting offline, when they felt chemistry, and after more than a year of strict no-photo, no-audio/video policy. But, as she mentioned most of the men she met were not interested in having a serious relationship with someone they met “in a dirty place”; here starts the meta-narratives of cybersex and reflections of social structure in the online boudoir.

Sending Nudes, is currently one of the well known cybersex notions, any two people- or more- engagement in cybersex is asked to send nudes. In most of the cases involving at least one male partner, who is usually the one to ask first, and in the first meeting. Hala had a strict policy including this issue, she said that the first thing a sex partner usually do was post a photo of his body and penis, “if you’re that comfortable with your body, I’m not” she said giggling; But it was not funny, since she went through lots of fights over this matter. Another matter was the humiliation, she mentioned that, on several incidents humiliation extended the limits of what could be tolerated by her, and that for some reason - that she still did not fathom-, men seem to think of humiliation as: sexy. In one incident, she was chatting with a sex-partner who she has already known online, and were involved together over a long distance relationship, interrupted by an offline relationship on her part; in this incident he called her a “bitch”. Angrily, she refused to be insulted in such a manner, and when he explained to her that his premise was complementing her by giving her the metaphor of a female canine, who has more libido than the male counterpart, she told him it was still not fine by her, and that it was a silly complement.

Recently, Hala started using Whatsapp and Twitter, using another phone line, by a different service provider than the one she used for her usual day-to-day communication, with a different name for the Truecaller application, and in the case of Twitter, from another alias, with a separate email account. This, she said made

cybersex easier for her, instead of being busy writing with one hand, voice messages made it easier, more immersive and intimate, and humorously she said “more hygienic”. Yet, similar encounters of humiliation, and guys publicly declaring on their twitter timeline that they have “a fuck-date” now, meaning her, made it an “uncomfortable” experience “not violent, but... I felt cheap” she said.

Donna Haraway’s *A Manifesto for Cyborgs*, highlighted several important aspects that theorizes Hala’s story: First, the human-machine symbiosis, that creates a mapping our social and bodily realities, rendering us *Chimeras*² in the twenty first century (Haraway, 2004, p. 8), some fantasmic creature that partially true and partially *truer*³. Second is how the very notion of sex, gender, race and class are all but a lump of sexual science discourses and other flaccid social practices, that creates a flat rendition of a much complex entity such as a female, such a flattened imagery is what she called an ‘optical illusion’ (ibid).

In linking both Haraway and von Holdt arguments, a clearer vision on the mechanisms upon which ‘collective violence’ take it premise is explained by Charles Tilly. In his argument, Tilly states that collective violence sometimes happen outside the range of governments, however governments do play a role in one way or another as a monitor, an object of claim or as a third party, and in this case, collective violence becomes a special case of contentious politics (Tilly, 2003, pp. 9–10). People who come to practice such violence are -in principle- are a set of people who have a shared definition of of stakes; and in practice, every actor plays a role in claim making that includes at least one cluster of the aforementioned connected people among whom widely shared set of principles are circulated to form their social order (Tilly, 2003, p.

² In Mythology, Chimera, is a fictional beast that incorporates more than two animals, most famously figured as the body and the head of a lion, with another head of a goat, and a tail taking the shape of a snake.

³ By that I intend to re-read the image of a Chimera in the cyber presence, as a true and truer, in the sense of the truth of its presence as a fantasmic as well as the elements composing this Chimera, which are separately also true in their own right.

31). These actors are networks of shared histories, cultures, and memories, and they have established relations to other collective actors that shape their internal structures. In doing so, such collective actors express their entities not as singulars but using one or more forms of political identities, like: workers, women, queer, and so forth; that help highlight the codes of boundaries, shared narrative about these boundaries, social relations *across* and *within* those boundaries (Tilly, 2003, p. 32).

Category formation, he stated, is a set of sites that share a boundary distinguishing all of them from – and relating them to – at least one set of sites that is excluded visibly by the boundary. Such a formation, creates identities through which one is an element in relation to these boundaries by inclusion or exclusion according to which boundaries one agrees or disagree with. Identity formations also occur by means of invention, borrowing or encounter. The first is when an authoritative entity steps in to lay a boundary and establish the relations across and within this boundary, Borrowing is when relation packages are imported trans-boundaries; while Encounter, is when previously separate networks come to contact with one another on the ground of competing on resources and resulting in the establishment of boundaries and relations. Thus, as a process of making and unmaking of boundaries and subjectivities, category formation highlights the power structures contended and consented in a specific society and/or between societies and each others.

At the essence of this process lies social inequality, which is sustained through two main mechanisms: Exploitation and Opportunity hoarding. Once at work, social inequality only depends on creating a ground for practice and creation of unequal relations, which is adaptation, and replication of such practices and relations from one site to another, which is emulation (Tilly, 2003, pp. 9–10). This practice and multiplicity can not happen with out public practice, which brings us back to

Bourdieu “symbolic violence”, Fanon’s “revolutionary violence” and offers an extension on the replication of collective violence sublimed into the social fabric, and seeped into our Cyber existences, creating violent Chimeras, or violent cyborgs.

In Hala’s narrative, one could see our aliases or online personae as Chimeras that we carry and inhabit. In inflicting unsolicited and nonconsensual violence, it is an action that is online and offline of a cyber entity that is also a cyborg. Porn sites often times than not post revenge porn, which is a form of non-consensual pornography that usually happen after the end of a relationship (Bates, 2017). Moreover, in the majority of cases related to Arab countries such as Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, it happens without the women’s knowledge using hidden cameras in bedrooms or mobile phone cameras. According to Bates, revenge porn did not have that magnitude even 5 years ago, however, according to my own observation, I have notices lots of revenge porn that was highly politicized since the invasion of Iraq in 2001. Such videos were based on featuring at least one “Arab” or Arab-looking woman being humiliated in violent sexual encounters by men who are usually dressed in army suits. Therefore, I would like to argue that the history of revenge porn is stemmed from a re-iteration of a pervasive contemporary war culture, that renders *revenge* here not only as a manipulative strategy to the victim as a person, but to a whole race, gender, nationality etc.

Technically, revenge porn sometimes stem from casual everyday and every couple encounters, most famously whatsapp and facebook messenger, which though gives the illusion of privacy, is actually not as such. Spreading a video or photo of non-consensual sex goes viral in no time. It also comes at no shock that interest in sexting is more prevalent among men than women (Bates, 2017). Most flagrant incident that reached the social media and news headlines was the incident of a young

girl, from one of Egypt's northern governorates, who sent a video of herself belly dancing to her – then- boyfriend. At the end of this relationship, the boyfriend threatened her of publishing that video, and shaming her in her neighborhood, she did not bow to his threat, and he indeed uploaded the video on youtube of his girlfriend, who was back then veiled and living in a conservative society (G. Ahmed, 2017; BBC Stories, 2016).

Effects of revenge porn depend in severity from one person to the other, but mostly it involves psychological and procedural impacts that alter its victims lives. Psychologically, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, inability to keep a job, or to maintain a relationship is among the most prevailing impacts of revenge porn and non-consensual pornography. Procedural alterations in victims' lives were most prominently shunning away from social media and other forms of online interactions, leaving their place of residency – especially if it was a closed community – and more positive reactions would include the victim's involvement in raising their own digital security knowledge.

Social Media (SM) has widely been used to advocate and broadcast feminist voices against such oppression, as well as highlight the loopholes in the popular media news regarding carelessness of women who send their nude or semi-nude photographs to anyone without profound knowledge of the other part. One of the most prominent campaigns worldwide was the “Me Too” campaign that highlighted not only sexual harassment, but also, many other non-consensual actions against many gender /non-genderous persons. In the previous story of the girl from the northern governorate in Egypt, she has decided to take that direction, as a woman, as a feminist, she re-published the video she sent to her ex-boyfriend and spoke about how her hobby of dancing and her ability to do so is not a shame or a disgrace, however,

non-consensual publishing is; and thinking that one can *shame* a woman should end while the notion of consent and respect should prevail not only among men but among women regarding their own imagery and self conception.

Not feeding the trolls; Poland argues is one of the lame trick that one could give to a child, when they come to them complaining about being bullied (Poland, 2016). However, not feeding the troll - or not answering the bullies- is unpractical in the informational era, since in most cases there is an impossibility to *completely* take-down the published material. Also, such a discourse as well as “she should have known better” not only is basing the idea of men committing such actions on gratification and domination of a gender over the other, it also enhances stereotypes that establishes the women’s body as a “risky spaces” (Bates, 2017, p. 25), and ignores, or unfamiliarises non-consensual sexual assaults between same-sex partners, married couples, and even men as victims. Further complexities are seen among the following lines and narratives of other interlocutors.

Lara – A disciplinary society within the marginal one

As I have mentioned earlier, one of the uncanny places of sexual violence is that between married couples. Lara’s case is simple yet complex in various ways. She was raised in an agnostic family in Egypt, however on paper they are all Muslims. Her family though open to the majority of things that the regular middle class family would not approve of, such as homosexuality, being in a relationship without marriage; chooses to abide strictly by societal norms when it comes to “the family’s *reputation*” (quoting my interlocutor). Lara’s story started with her 15 years of marriage coming to an end. Well after the marriage, she said she started being the sole financial provider for the family, especially after 2011 when he decided he won’t work. They had agreed priory not to have kids, but he forced her into having one.

Moreover, he shared with her the laptop, iPad and car, which within her context, she was not giving any mind to her basic cyber security measures; such as memorizing her own password, leaving her iPad and laptop with almost no password or even pin locking, and he memorized all her passwords.

One day, while she was outside, he decided to access facebook from her iPad – instead of his usual way of access through the web platform. Shortly before this, she had just made a post within a very small private group of married women – who basically all know each other – saying how life with him is getting terrible to handle, and other intimate parts of their life. She went back home to find he has left the house – which he usually did when they had a fight; except this time she decided not to fight for him to be back, and she asked for a divorce. He started to retreat from the idea when he found out he will have no resources for living. Between his departure to on the end of 2016 till the beginning of the next year, she started feeling attracted to another man, a friend of hers, whom she felt more powerful, opinionated, and for her it was what she looked for in a man; but as soon as she felt that attraction, she said she insisted on the divorce. Before the divorce, she and the other man/friend only met outside of work context twice. When she kept insisting on the divorce, her – back then- husband started to sense there was another man involved, so he acted very smoothly and granted her the divorce. Meanwhile, she gave her daughter her mobile phone – with all the accounts still on – to be able to check on her daughter wherever she was, including being with her father; while she bought a new one, with the same accounts of the old one. One day, her daughter came back telling her she couldn't find her mobile, and that her dad said, the mobile probably got stolen. Lara said, she took it as an act of carelessness, and bought her daughter a new one. Then suddenly, she found her ex-husband calling her, picking up a fight after she uploaded a casual video

of her daughter dancing. She had already blocked her husband from her social media lists, so she was surprised how he knew about this video; he replied, that a friend of his told him about the video in a casual talk; and he kept up the fight. All that she said, she didn't fathom that he knew this first hand. Another time, while Lara was getting her daughter ready before the regular visits with her father, she sent her daughter off with her dad, and went back to see her phone, but couldn't find it. So, she went out of the house and called her phone, to find him (her ex-husband) answering the phone, wondering how did her phone get into his car, and excusing himself that he must have mixed it up with his own phone; and that he will bring her back her phone within twenty minutes. When he came, she found out he had bought the exact same model and colour of her phone.

Until one of the days, during the regular visit from his daughter, he took the girl and traveled without her mother's permission – this is according to the national personal status law is illegal. In order for Lara to get her daughter back, she agreed to his condition to necessarily meet her family “to set some rules”; despite her being clear with him that this is not going to lead him anywhere since no one has authority over her actions; but she wanted her daughter back.

On the day of the meeting, her family – which is basically her paternal aunt, uncle and her aunt's husband – and her waited for him to arrive. He entered with a stack of printed papers, which was all the whatsapp, facebook, instagram; private messages, group talks and public posts for the past two to three months. During which, she had gotten into a relationship with her male friend, started traveling and going out with him, knowing that parts of her family knew about this relationship and were fine with it. Only then she made the guessing that in the aforementioned incidents when he took her phone *by mistake*, and her laptop, that he might have

installed a spyware⁴. He did all this, she said, to have any sort of *legal* evidence that she is “*saye’at al seir wal solouk*” (a legal term in personal status law, that translates to “a person – usually a woman – is acting immorally”) which is in the court of law, could deprive her from custody over her daughter. Then he shifted the talk from her having an apartment that is close to her place of work, instead of their marriage apartment, saying that she did so, so that she could have a space where her boyfriend could come to her freely, and he unraveled the papers he printed. The messages included messages within the secret group of women mentioned previously, whatsapp messages between Lara and the man she was in a relationship with, as well as other messages between Lara and a friend of hers, where her friend is making very private confessions about her broken marriage, and the fact that she was cheating on her husband. So, the spying didn’t only risk Lara’s life, but it risked other women’s lives, and placed Lara in hot water with these women. Lara had a paradox of reactions at that moment; internally she told me she felt scared and angry, but on the outside, she kept a calm and straight complexion, repeating one word “This is none of your business, we are divorced”. On the other side, her ex kept threatening her angrily, telling her he will send her to prison, and tell all the agencies she was working with that “they are working with an adulterer and a whore”. Her family’s reaction was that they took his side, on the premise of “The family’s reputation”.

However, after this scene was done, Lara, instantly called her friends from the secret group, told them what happened, and asked them to remove her from any secret group. Then she sought legal advice, which informed her that he will be the one in a problem if he ever sent these papers to the court of law, based on breaching private communication and stalking, which made her stand stronger. She also sought Cyber

⁴ Spyware are software programs that could be installed on any digital device (mostly common in PCs, mobile devices, tablets, and laptops) that give the capability to track all the activities online and offline of the targeted device remotely, and real-time. This might include: location history, keystrokes, web history, conversations as they are happening etc.

security advice, which lead her to change her digital behavior completely; she performed a heavy campaign to report her facebook account so it would be blocked by the administration, she changed her operating system from windows to the open-source Linux, which is much more secure, made passwords to all her devices and accounts, made other accounts for social media, started being careful towards what she tells and who she added on her friend's list, and she never left her devices away from her. Till the day of the interview, she said, her ex still threatens her with the papers; moreover, lots of her friends stopped knowing her after they felt that their secrets went out, which on her account, she felt was completely understood.

‘Cyber stalking’ is a term used to describe a set of behaviors that aims to disrupt victim's/survivor's online and offline everyday, through means of email monitoring - directly or via “sniffer” programs, Sending threatening or insulting or harassing emails, Spamming the targeted person's email with malicious emails, stealing the victim's identity and using it to send false messages to others, or – as in the case here – using programs online and offline to detract the victim's personal information and private communication. As technology have expanded, the ways in which stalking could be done does not lie in the simple tools of laptops or mobiles, but seeps to internet communication, GPS devices, wireless video cameras, and others (Southworth, Finn, Dawson, Fraser, & Tucker, 2007, p. 843) Meanwhile, some researchers have stated that the term *Cyber Stalking* is very limited, and disregards the multitude of other ways through which people could use to stalk someone, hence suggesting the term “Stalking with technology” as a broader term (Southworth et al., 2007, p. 844).

Here one could clearly see an interplay of legal and digital knowledge, that is only realized in the case of a crisis, a disruption that unravels truths that were never

known, and knowledge to come anew, a new normal. There is also a mistaken view regarding the power of the printed and the digital. But the main point here would be intimate violence and how it is crafted in misogyny to disregard basic rights of privacy.

Lara's case is not uncommon, in fact I personally have heard various levels of cyber stalking inflicted upon kins and partners, as well as a numerous amount of people whose significant other know about their password and can at any time log into their account. This highlights not only the ways in which people acquire and/or utilize their knowledge of cyber security in order to control their kins and partners, but also, how especially in the case of significant others there is an overlap between the concept of Trust and the concept of Privacy. Reports on such incidents can be reported to the police, however, many people generally – no gender specified – prefer not to report to the police and try to solve it in their own ways, in order to prevent more people knowing about the private conversations that happened. This case transcends from an optional case to obligatory in the cases where the victims of stalking and/or cyber violence in general are marginal subjectivities; women, people who identify or are threatened due to being in the LGBTIQAA++ community, and non-hegemonic ideologies (religious, social status, politics, etc.) to name a few. Thus leaving the victim with limited gadgets to work on. Moreover, The state has played a role not only in aggregating such a behavior on the public level, and making it “descend to the everyday” (Das, 2007); but also in creating an image of trustlessness towards their role as a protector. Since before the 2011 Revolution in Egypt, many people were stalked, monitored, and even jailed due to their SM activities and Online communication (Abdel-Hamid, 2017; Fouda, 2014). Also regarding the state and how they deal with this ‘new’ form of violence the laws and law drafts that has been on the

scene after the revolution lack perspective and insight to the fluidity multi-layered maneuvers that the perpetrators take to perform their attacks, needless to say they are mainly focused on ‘fighting terrorism and deviant discourses’ according to the bodies of the laws issued; this last point will be debated thoroughly in the next chapter.

As much easy as it will be to view Lara’s case based on the premise that she was not careful enough of basic internet usage codes of conduct; basing analyses on such a premise is no less than blaming the victim for her abuse, due to her lack of knowledge. Instead, I am not trying to say that everyone should use internet safely and mind their own business, which is idealistic and unrealistic, but I would like to navigate the intricacies and conceptual basis upon which people like Lara’s ex-husband saw that it was his right to do actions as mundane as sharing his former wife’s devices, which also meant her agreement on such a behavior at one point or another, and what might have influenced the way her family decided to take sides, while disregarding the not only ethical but legal crime of privacy breaching being committed by him.

Life disruptions such as the one we have here, and several of the other narratives to come in this chapter, are one of the main things that invites us to revisit the tranquil imagery of the domestic household (Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work et al., 2012). Intimate partners and family members usually design the division of labor around the house in order to maintain the stability of the technological workflow they have, which comes in the mundane and usual negotiations among the household members. In such negotiations, as oppose to the work space and its technology, notions of privacy and security are undermined and not taken into consideration, since one does not usually think of the household as a periphery for adversary. Castells called these negotiations: Protocols, which he

claimed what enables interdependence on the basis of independence (Stalder, 2006, p. 134), such independence and interdependence could be viewed as a water scale, where factors of patriarchy, politics of representations and financial power within the house hold versus the societal power given to men over women, and supplemented by laws that precipitates marriage inequity. I would like to argue that, Lara's ex-husband's premise of sharing the devices without appreciating his wife's privacy of her own information, and this as an act of self righteousness, is a macrocosm of the exact same view of state's loss of control debated earlier in the previous chapter. If the state replicates its formation indirectly, seeping into the veins of the ordinary day-to-day practice, of both people who in this aspect of their life abide by social formations, moralities and structure and those don't, it becomes clear that a feeling of loss of control, in Lara's ex-husband's case his lack of financial independence, and the loss of happiness from his ex-wife, leads to a model of the militarization of communication, a state of micro panopticon on the premise the idea that 'if I controlled her communication, I control something, hence I feel like I have a use and a word in this household'. The status above also shapes the way people who do not abide by social formations, morals etc. to fall for the discourses of "shame, reputation of the family, the social power over the individual power" as a sole reference at times of crisis, such as the confrontation that happened at Lara's family's house, due to inability to fabricate a story line that suits one's own beliefs on spot – while on spot here means that implies not a momentarily, but a prolonged moment of loss, and threat. In such a state of real subsumption of state's language and terms of legibility, the community derives its own legibility from a particular reading of the state (Das & Poole, 2004, pp. 166–167), and once the state is placed at the centerpiece of one reading their own self, and reading the other, there's is a simultaneous chance for forgery, imitations and

memetic performance of the state's power. Hence, Das invites us to shift the gaze from the expected whereabouts of violence, to the uncanny, seemingly banal and or serene places and spaces of violence, such as the household.

It is also in such a fabrication of ideologies, control over machine, and taking sides at times of life disruption that there is an engagement with the Manichean theory of violence (Bulhan, 1985, pp. 141–144), where the perpetrator of violence is being figured as the image of the powerful, holder of legitimate authority, rendering the other in a submissive situation that can seep so deep into the oppressed mentality making a distortion of self image and right for freedom and equality. It creates an either/or logic, that is seen at life disruptions in moments of coercion, mourning and lack of access. Such a theory is not only in the sense of the state and public, or state's in relationship to each other, or even in relation to colonialism, but it replicates it self even among the opposition it creates.

This incident as well as one's that I will narrate later also opens the question of the moralities of technology. Marshall McLuhan had argued that the “medium is the message”, i.e. the aspects through which communication technology shaped and structured the communication mechanisms and dynamics was more profound than *what* they communicated (McLuhan, 1994; Stalder, 2006, p. 27). Now fast forward to the networks through which these technologies play an integral part in, Castells argument that the “Network is the message” illustrates the dynamics of such aforementioned negotiations and life disruptions.

However when such life disruptions occur, people who are so in the oppressed side of the scale, get to create a new normal, and a reconfiguration to the expected notions of home, intimate partner power relations, dependency, to turn their own heads and ours to coping mechanisms, making and unmaking of routines of

technology, like what happened with Lara, starting her divorce and providing her daughter her own phone for check ups, to her seeking legal and technological support after her attacks. Such reconstruction of a technological logic and routine, while on one side it is extremely stressful for the survivor's life, leading to the disorders aforementioned; it slowly and surely restructures the social and infrastructural routines of technology including division of labor, acquisition rights and access rights, as well as shaping legal and social discourses engaging with moralities of the machine and the protocols of Human-Machine-Social symbiosis (Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work et al., 2012; Southworth et al., 2007).

In short, means of life disruptions lead people affected by that disruption to create ripples in the seemingly quiet lake of intimate relationships. These ripples as much as it reflect badly on the survivor's psyche and social, they also highlight the cracks in this and other relationships around them. Moreover, technology as part and parcel of our everyday and social, gets to be reconfigured in the light of unfamiliarizing their probable inflicted violence and the descendance of this violence to the ordinary. Such a descend affects the discourses and conceptualizations on state and advocacy levels, in ways that takes into account the individual narratives in the populace, as well as the knowledge circulations of digital predatorship.

Queer one down – Zeina, Sarah, Maha, Mostafa, and Noor

As social media is a place of broadcasting advocacy and feminists discourses, it is also prominently a place for extreme prejudice and defamation. Non-heteronormative sexualities is one of the subjectivities – with all its complexities within – that finds a salvation of expression and gathering in SM platforms. Briefly put, Some of these cases, the predators were friends, others were family members, the general society, and even the institution of study.

Mostafa: E Tu Brute?!

Before my meeting, I remember the feeling of anticipation, a slight anxiety and concern regarding security, which is in the context of investigating violence, being a human right defender, and an AUC-ian was a pack that always, and still makes me concerned. I believe that the ghost of the late PhD Exchange student: Giulio Regini, hovered intensely above my head. However my interlocutor's unintended optimism managed to lighten things up for me. When I met Mostafa, he was my first interlocutor for this project, he reached out to me after I announced the initial call for participants in my project. We communicated further on a secured email, where he was provided the consent form, and agreed to meet in a public cafe in one of middle class Cairo districts. He arrived shortly after my arrival to the meeting place, dressed up in a Keith Haring illustrations t-shirt, the early-twenties well built guy, had a gleeful smile on his face. He was so eager to start his narrative, that he delved right into the story of his assault; so I had to pause, and ask him to inform me more about the background of himself and his usage for digital media.

Mostafa is originally from upper Egypt, during his teenage, he realized he was gay. Apart from the perplexities accompanied by such a discovery of the self, in a society that idolized the macho image of the man and it's synonymy with heterosexuality; he started using facebook messenger at the age of fourteen or fifteen for meeting up with other gay men. Meanwhile, he had his high school two friends since childhood, they went out together, when the other two would fight he would solve the issues between them, and when high school came they were studying and taking their lessons together.

Everything was going "smoothly" until in high school, his facebook account started getting hacked. One incident he was talking with a probable date and the other

party started saying: “.. by the way I know who you are, and what school you go to, and I know your friends” and he said their names “X and Y, and I will tell them. *Aaand Mission Accomplished*”. When he changed his password, he found a message saying: “*Hey, why did you change your password?! Anyway, no problem, we have already made a copy of everything*”. He also started receiving anonymous harassing phone calls, and noticing conversations done from his facebook account that he never did in person. Parallel to these incidents was a change in his friends’ actions:

“Suddenly, both of them decided not to be any close, and they started to be close to each other... I started knowing that they were going on outings without me.”

Then one day, a month prior to their high-school tests, the three of them were studying at a cafe, then Mostafa noticed they started acting strangely; leaving the table every while and having side talks, as well as requesting his phone to allegedly send some song from his phone to another one. Until both his friends came back to the table and confronted him. They told him that they knew he was using his facebook account to date guys, and that they are concerned about him and wanted to talk with him if he needed help.

At that point, Mostafa made the connections to all the previous incidents, it was them. He recalled feeling so lonely, so worried that his parents’ would know, his siblings, and that their relationship would be tarnished forever. He started wondering why his best friends would do this to him, place him under the toil of psychological harm, stress and anxiety, if they were really worried about him as they said. *“I just wanted to get out of that cafe, I wanted to vanish, I didn’t want to see [them] again”*. They told him that they wouldn’t out him or give his number to anyone, but according to him, that didn’t happen. As a response to what he called “the court” they did for him at that cafe, he started defending himself saying it was just out of curiosity, which

the confirmed otherwise, saying they saw the messages and knew that this was not out of curiosity. He later knew that all of this including “the court” was leaked to other people, as a result:

“lots of people decided not to talk to me. I spent a whole year literally alone. At that time I had 15 years – I wasn’t even 16 yet- no one at all, not one single friend.”

He shunned away from any interactions with anyone, and he started asking his father – with whom he was living with during high-school years, while his mother was in Cairo with his sister – to have his lessons for the last high-school year alone at home. When his dad noticed that he was not going out and asked him, Mostafa replied that he was interested in focusing on his studies. For an extrovert person, he mentioned that his last year in high-school was debilitating in every possible way; he was stressed out, scared all the time, he went to his exams then directly to his house avoiding eye-contacts with anyone. It was not something he was used to, he recalled laughing *“I think from that time I became traumatized from people my age [both laughing], like seriously [laughing]...”*. It took him some more years to regain trust in anyone of his own age. Right after finishing exams, he booked the train to Cairo, and spent the entire summer vacation with his maternal side. Then he applied to the university in Cairo.

Technically; repercussions included terminating the usage of his long-used facebook account, he started using another one, and changing his number, because they distributed his number on people to harass him. When I asked him if he still went back to his old facebook account, he replied that he forgot the password and never got back to reading the messages again.

This incident left great scars of trauma that are unforgettable to him, but he also turned it to a positive side: He stopped being scared of anything. The worst that he could think of had already happened, which was his parents and siblings finding out about him, even though he said it happened in another way that he did not want to say, but he survived that, as well as the harassment that happened during the high-school years. What he couldn't get over was the fact that this happened to him from his closest friends, trust was what was breached here.

At the time of our talk, another parallel event was happening: the crackdown on members of LGBTIQAA++ community after the pride flag was raised in a concert for young rock bands, most notably “Mashrou’ Leila” band, whose lead singer “Hamed Sinno” is openly gay. Further focus on this concert and its position in relation to Information Communication Technology (ICTs) as a “Bullring” for contesting identities, was discussed further by gender researcher Lara Mansour (Mansour, 2018). At that time, the Egyptian state drafted a law explicitly criminalizing homosexuality and/or any sign that promotes it. I felt compelled then to ask my interlocutor if this affected his online behavior in any way, and he replied that it might have brought some concern to him, he had no clue how the government would criminalize such a fluid thing as sexuality, stating that using the same discourse of the government that drafting a law as such *is* what they keep calling *Terrorism* to be feared from.

In Sara Ahmed's *Orientation* (S. Ahmed, 2006), she stated that heterosexuality, or *becoming straight* is indeed a socially imposed direction, through which one is forced by social pressure- in the form of accumulation, gift returning, and reward- to follow certain paths and reproduce them, and watch them as they direct us and leave their marks on our bodies and psyche. She then reflect on her model on the writing table versus the dining table; while the writing table's sensory is

personal, indicative of the person sitting on top of it, the dining table on the other hand is one through which a family gathering is made, gatherings are not neutral, they are directive. The two models could be seen clearly overlaying in the form of social media, however it is exactly this overlaying that create contestations that forms the boundaries we get to manufacture, and that are no less that the boundaries we make offline either by indication and guidance, or by clashing, trial and error. Most of us perceive their personal accounts as *personal* i.e. private, a place where one could be selective of the people surrounding them as well as how s/he/they represent their own self to that world. However, clashes and blurrings between the *social* in the SM never cease to pour the offline social, the familial indications, the prejudice, and the unintended or intended violence from repercussions, that unlike offline spheres, is hard to efface.

Zeina – A special case of attachment to the perpetrators

As I have highlighted earlier, SM is for lots of us a safe haven for expression, not only to select parts of ourselves that are ambivalent to the offline surrounding, but to create circles of support, and be able to fully immerse into socials and representations that are otherwise – and for different reasons- impossible to be expressed. Zeina was a special case as an interlocutor, she was a person who opened up so many questions, in relation to the notion of an ethnography of violence such as: How the levels of engagement the field, and what they can put an ethnographer through; also how can ethnographers deal with heavy and sometimes triggering engagements?; And in the realm of herself as and interlocutor and a silenced survivor of violence, such as: What is it that constitutes “Friends” and “Foes” on the virtual, when the actual is not accessible? To what extent is the online identity of someone

enough for one to not only seek psychological help, but also build and intimate relationship? And finally, What gets to be called as violence and what does not?

Before I start telling Zeina's encounter, it is important to mention the background of hers and of how we came to meet. I met Zeina only once, for this interview, and I consider myself lucky, since no one has ever met or seen her from the group where we both met priorly. By that time Zeina she was 20 years old, a young veiled Alexandrian girl, with a mixture of sad, shy and hesitant look in her eyes. We agreed to meet at a certain day, and she kept checking on me on my way from Cairo to Alexandria to make sure I was fine and didn't lose my way. Her story starts beyond the technological, or cyber violence. She came from an intensively patriarchal and violent family; the family that consists of four male and one female sibling, as well as her mother and father, were used to the father punishing them by tying them up to the furniture and beating them up with canes, hoses, or belts. When the father passed away when she was 14 years old, not only did this punishment keep on going with the family members, but also, the girls didn't inherit a portion of their father's money or property; in her family, she said, women don't inherit. Thus, she has always suffered from communicating with her family, to an extent that when she got epileptic episodes or attempted suicide (which she said she did almost weekly), she could stay in her room in the dark for days without anyone checking on her. She also never had any close friends, and so, when she wants to search for anything including help, she goes to her most familiar tool, computer.

The First incident that Zeina came to talk to me about as Cyber-Violence, was directly after her father's death, she had gone into what *she* identified as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) where she would swear at God and have strange ideas in roaming in her brain. Her, back then, friend advised her to go to a Sheikh, because she

could be *possessed*. So, Zeina searched Facebook for Sheikhs who could give her psychological advise and indeed she found one, and it said he was not in Egypt, but living in Saudi Arabia. After several conversations, he asked her first to send a photo of her eye, so he would know if it was physiological or possession, she did. Then confirmed it was possession, so he asked her to take photos of her house, so he could read Quran *from where he was*, she did so as well. A while later, he asked her to meet her in person, and she refused, so she found him sending photoshoped porn photos of her in sexual positions in her house, and asked for a 40,000 pounds ransom. She didn't have that much money, but, in a very logical voice she said, she stole the money from the house.

During the meeting, he kept insisting on her going back to his place, and she kept declining. He then showed her the photos, and *supposedly* erased it from his device. Then, he asked her for her Facebook password, in her narrative, to make sure she wouldn't out him; and then she left. When she arrived back home, they had already found out that the money was stolen. She said in a hesitant voice, they kept torturing her for a year; from humiliation to beating, to being locked up in a dark room for days without food or drink. During the start of that period they kept asking her to open her facebook account, but no matter how she explained and showed how she couldn't they didn't listen. Then, they suggested they will take her to a forensic doctor, to *examine her* i.e. to see if she's still a virgin or not. She looked traumatized and hesitant, she stuttered in her talking; so I made sure throughout to tell her that she didn't need not to say everything, that she could stop when she needs, and most importantly: that I won't be angry with her if she did, but she smiled and continued...

The attack due to this incident as she said, did not stop till that very day, may be got lesser, yet anything she asked for was refused; and more importantly: They

regularly fetched in her mobile phone. That shocked me, because Zeina is an active member on a secret LGBTIQ++ group; she replied that she erases everything from her phone daily, and used the web platform for her facebook communications, not the application. However, she mentioned that part casually, and mainly as a sequence for the blackmailing incident.

The second incident happened after two years from the first one, and for the same reason, i.e. seeking psychiatric support. It is worthy of saying though that the second predator “May” was still in contact with my interlocutor even after the interview, and it was the main reason we remained in contact to help her from the urge to contacting her predator again:

“I told her everything, and I think she used that, I use to go to a psychiatrist but behind my family’s back, because I’m a dependent personality, hmm, I get attached quickly and too much, so she started becoming like addiction, like she’s a drug or something, you know...”

Unlike the first incident, she humorously said, she thought a little more and asked her for a certificate for medical practice, and her predator did indeed send her a certificate, *online*. Gradually that doctor (who is a female – at least her facebook profile is) told her that she loved her, and they became verbally married; my interlocutor elaborated: *“She told me “From today you’re my wife” and I agreed”*. At this time she was feeling really down, so she wanted any positive feeling; however, this *alleged* doctor would always complain about Zeina’s crying phases and complaining, and would usually ask her to send nudes. When my interlocutor refused to have cyber-sex with her, her attacker neglected her for 2 weeks, causing a state of hysteria, till she was begging her to answer. May then went back to talking to her

under conditions that Zeina keeps saying humiliating words about herself, such as: “*You’re my slave, you’re my dog, kiss my feet, listen only to what I say*”. It didn’t stop at that, but extended to the level of commanding her to injure herself using cuts and piercing. Later after our interview, Zeina sent me a couple of photos, one with her hand cupping blood, and the other is one of May’s messages to other members on her page, saying that she is going “*...to lead her to hang herself*”. According to the screenshots I was sent, May does not have anything against Zeina to blackmail her with! It is pure psychological manipulation, and acts of *schadenfreude* (enjoyment of seeing someone in trouble).

After three months of communication, May vanished; and at that time Zeina had started knowing two trans women online and they became friends; for her they were family. She shared with them her story, and told them that she is going to expose her predator. Zeina, then found out that she wasn’t the only one sending her messages, begging May to reply, and sent May a message that she intends to expose her and her actions. It wasn’t easy at that time, nor at the time she was talking to me (which was almost seven months of not communicating with her), nor after this interview for Zeina to stay away from her perpetrator, in one of our later conversations, she said:

“She’s like a venom in my blood, I can not get her off me”

The impact of the later attack on her included recurring thoughts of suicide, suicidal attempts and failure, and constant thoughts of going back to communicate with May that I constantly talked her out of. Then I managed to get her in touch with someone who could get her appointments with psychiatrists who were LGBTIQ++ friendly, so she wouldn’t have to go through the turmoil of psychological or physical manipulation again.

Zeina's case is very complex in many ways. First of all as an interlocutor/researcher relationship, it was debilitating and hard to go back and read or listen to her narrative. It was harder in general, to try to talk someone out of suicide, when you are a person suffering from severe depression and anxiety yourself. Hence, as our personas as researchers/humans intertwine, it puts both into a test of the self. A test for one's limits, of one's devotion, and of one's ability to maintain self-care and psychological agency and well-being. In that account I found that Hume and Mulcock were insightful into familiarizing this fact as part and parcel of the fieldwork, one after all is a human, with a possibility and an advantage to build relationships with one's interlocutors, being their friend, living with them, offering them support, or building a network (Hume & Mulcock, 2012). Second, as I have mentioned earlier, Zeina did not pose the perpetration from her family as one of her attacks, it was just a casual mentioning, thus posing the question of what gets and what gets not to be defined as violence. Third, her attachment to her last perpetrator was of stark interest to me, why would someone be drawn to a *virtual* relationship that was extremely toxic as this one. Fourth was the way she made very close friendships with people she never met, yet, she called them family, even took their advice whether to talk with me or not. Fifth, and last, is the act of pseudonyms as an act of protection, embodiment, representation, as well as a gateway for perpetrators to conduct their violence. I will try to answer these questions in the following lines.

In the previous chapters and interlocutors, we have seen the ripple effect of state violence showing in forms of surveillance, coercion, and establishment of a culture of informants. This culture has seeped among the crowd, imposing hegemonic moral notions that are void from any logical thinking; and among the household by effect of misogyny, toxic masculinities, and most of all a multiplier effect of the

Manichean theory (Bulhan, 1985). This embeddedness of violence in the forms of social hierarchies and dominance structures, that takes the channels of communication, cognition (or misrecognition or feelings, is what Bourdieu defined as “Symbolic Violence” (von Holdt, 2013, p. 115). It is symbolic precisely because it distorts the victim’s admission to its very nature. In other words, its gentle and normalized form is invisible even to the victim herself. The coupling of law and custom produce the existences the subjectivities through which it exerts its violence upon, making it subliminal by the habituation. Behavioral scientists have identified definitions of violence based on Intent, Action, Result, which rendered violence as intentional action or use of force in order to impose physical injury on someone or group (Bulhan, 1985, p. 133). Violence is subdivided in this domain to two couples of opposing relations: Instrumental vs Expressive and Legitimate vs Illegitimate. Instrumental violence is the most banal, characterized by a physical constrain where one party forces actions on another, that wouldn’t have been done otherwise; while the use of pain and injury as an end in itself. However in terms of legitimacy, legitimate violence is the social sanctioned use of violence monitored by police action and war, while illegitimate use of violence is what goes against the laws and social norms (Bulhan, 1985). All this does not really tell the ways in which a narrator consciously or unconsciously mention something as violent and others as not. However Karl von Holdt has mentioned that violent conflicts create cycles of violence, even on the individual level, it creates circles of defense (von Holdt, 2013, p. 123), this is also aided in terms of technology by Sarah Pink (Pink et al., 2016, p. 32), where she said that, as mobile phones are a tool of emancipation as well as a tool for circumvention. Power dynamics and circles of oppression re-iterates itself in

various form, making domination and submission on the level of everydayness technology such as mobile phones and Laptops.

In Zeina's case it was clear that this domestic, prolonged, and normalized violence, that descended itself to the ordinary long time ago, was not a matter of debate and disruption to her; on the contrary was the attack from outside that signaled what she thought of as "Digital Violence". Also there seem to be another characterization to the violences inflicted upon her, the domestic was a deaf-tone disciplinary. I got the feeling that they must know something about her, that they did not confess and did not know how to deal with it, so they decided to neglect it as well as monsterize its beholder; something such as Epilepsy, or Psycho-genetic condition. Disorders such as Bipolarity, Borderline Personality disorder, OCD, and others have been proven to be genetic. Hala was a live proof among others, including information from psychiatrists in non- research based settings, she was Bipolar, while her late father suffered from a misdiagnosed Bipolarity, which lead to him taking his own life. Therefore, cyber violence was seen against the heavily physical violence as non-sensial. This reminded me of Ursula LeGuin's Citizens of Omelas, who lived happily on the expenses of the child kept in the dungeons, the child was not a he or a she but an "It". Indeed, there is a mysterious resemblance between the way the people of Omelas dealt with the child, and the way Zeina's family dealt with her:

"Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement: to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed." (LE GUIN, 1991, pp. 4-5)

Negotiation of technology, seemed to have created a *new normal*, based on micro-life-disruptions in Zeina's life, leading her to know matters of cyber security by

common-sense, such as erasure of online and downloading activity, usage of the browser platform to access SM websites instead of the application, using pseudonym for her social media activity, and keeping the majority of her personal details in the dark and unexposed; such measures acted as *fragments* of self-surveillance for the sake of self preservation (Das, 2007, p. 5). This proves Das' point of view that inhibiting violence and knowledge of oneself are not in the big events but rather in the ordinary, the mundane, the everyday that is in and of itself eventful (Das, 2007, p. 5).

One quote I felt analyzed a lot the ways in which time was narrated distorted in Zeina's story, as well as her stutters and interrupted deep breathing as she was telling her story:

“Words were spoken, but they worked like gestures to show this violence – to draw boundaries between what could be proclaimed as a betrayal, however delicately, and what could only be molded into a silence” -(Das, 2007, p. 9)

Zeina was not attacked for her sexual orientation, but for an accumulation of a disconnected and abusive family, psychological disorders, and young age. Zeina, like so many others wouldn't confess something as her sexual orientation to her family, they would either kill her, institutionalize her, or worst.. marry her off. So, since she can not go out from this trap, the solution I believe, was to write herself from the plien-air of forgetfulness, in the flux of SM. Hence making online friends that will provide the help needed. This invites us to think about the concept of “embodiment” of Eve Shapiro (Shapiro, 2010, p. 9) and of Cavell's notion of “forms of life” (Das, 2007, pp. 15–17). Shapiro defined embodiment as where the body is a “site of meaning, experience and expression” and an internalization of the cultural norms, and the expression of that on the outer form. Yet, she then warns us from “assuming the body” i.e. how “the body is assumed to tell the world about its beholder without

utterance”. Indeed, such assumptions, or as Butler would call the “frames of apprehension” (Butler, 2009) are based on normative formations that transgress to a dictation of expected actions and categories, but also to aggression in the case of failing this assumptions, i.e. rendering them as beings worthy of living or -simply-not. Cavell appends on that last part in identifying the ways in which forms of life gets to be depicted; in his perspective, it is not necessarily about the state and biopolitics such as in Agamben and Foucault’s arguments, but in the stitched dangers in the everyday life that occur when recognition and agency are being stripped away from one person to another, premised *not* on the basis of the oppressed being a member of a community or not, but one one being granted their own life itself or not, being read as a human or an impeccable beast.

Several arguments have been made pro and con online friendship, as to be considered a true friendship or not. Basing all their arguments on the Aristotelian theory of friendship, Bulow and Felix (Bulow & Felix, 2016) used their own examples, as well as their counter-arguers arguments; such as Sherry Turkle’s (Turkle, 1996) example and Fröding and Peterson’s story of Alice and Betty (Fröding & Peterson, 2012), to argue that actually online friendships gives us the space to eliminate what we believe of ourselves as not worthy of notice, and enhance the imagery we want and need, and hopefully -if I might add – with the level of privacy and secrecy that we aspire for. As we see in their argument, and as I have witnessed in observing Zeina’s online behavior, before and after our interview: Online personas had helped reflect that part of Zeina that she wanted to show, the part that as she said *“Doesn’t want to add to people’s everyday misery”* so, it posts silly things, and trivia, usually ones that involves people’s participation in reply. No one would imagine her having a miserable life as such, simply because no one met her. Moreover, it added a

shard of privacy by her being so fluid in effacing and remaking her profiles with similar names, according to every violent upturn.

Lastly, such constant and repetitive effacement of online activity her own version of developing a *coping strategy* with her constant, various and prolonged state of exposure to violence. On defining *Coping*, I refer to Giordano, Dusek, & Everly's definition mentioned in Scarduzio, Sheff & Smith paper on Online Sexual Harassment, which defined it as:

“... attempts to neutralize stress, or as any action that protects people from being

psychologically or emotionally harmed.” (Scarduzio, Sheff, & Smith, 2018)

In her case, Zeina found refuge in multiple strategies for multiple levels of the external and familial sides: At first, there is Problem-Focused Coping strategies, represented in changing online behaviors (like account deletion), and peer interventions (when she asked the group admin to post May's profile for mob-reporting action). Then, there is a stance of Active- Emotional Focused Strategy, represented in her taking the action of reaching out to talk to others, like her transwomen friends, myself, and other members who could get her contacts for help, and also in expressing emotions (such as when she felt the courage to write about her rape experience by her brother as a young girl). Finally, there was a Passive- Emotional Focused Strategy on a big level, represented in acts of “Normalizing” the familial attacks, and the sense of “powerlessness” that she oscillated between, when it came to Elham's control over her psyche.

Noor- The Social contract and the cyber representation:

The year 2011 was a transitioning year, not only in terms of toppling a 30 year old regime in a mid-year vacation, but also a transition in lots people's lives. It was a

time where we truly felt like everything is possible, and for the majority of us, it felt like there might be a chance for diversity to exist. Nour was not any different. She believed that there could be a place for one Muslim lesbian woman to live her everyday without this being the struggle of her life. Nour has always been out, she said that she first came out gradually to her closed circles, but after 2011 she thought that social media is a place for people to perform and be whoever they were, so she started sharing posts, and giving hints to her sexual orientation, and explicitly saying she was a lesbian once or twice. Her relationship with her father deteriorated due to her sexual orientation and her outspokenness about it, and in 2011 she moved out of the house, then few years later, she left Egypt for Sweden then the US. Around 2014, she had started an initiative for solidarity with Egyptian LGBTIQAA++ community, it was active online, doing campaigns and reflecting the reality of the LGBTIQAA++ community in Egypt, counter to the official declarations.

In July 2017, Nour, then in the US, changed her relationship status on Facebook to “Being in a relationship” with a photo of her and her girlfriend. The post, which was shared among friends only, had lots of support from her friends, but to her surprise, her father sent congratulating her in a comment. It was a moment she said, she will never forget. She took a screenshot of her newly changed status and her father’s comment, and made another instagram and public facebook post saying that she never thought the day would come where her father would congratulate her on a relationship with her girlfriend.

Heaven and hell collapsed after this post. It made headlines, she was faced by millions of hate speech posts, from both Egypt and Puerto Rico (where her girlfriend is originally from), details about her and her family including their place of residence, their facebook accounts were outed, her father and sister started getting threat

messages, varying from swearing all the way to death threats. She replied with one post, published on the Solidarity with Egypt LGBT facebook page (Solidarity with Egypt LGBT, 2017). In that post, she stated that her father, whose privacy have been violated, and who has been cursed and threatened, “is no difference from any other conservative, Muslim, Middle Eastern father; he sees homosexuality as a disease and religiously forbidden, and he prays for my cure before my happiness, the only difference is that he decided to believe that if what I was doing was forbidden and punishable in the day of Judgment, it will be me who’ll be punished not anyone else.” She also outspokenly said that she realized why such a personal post made this big propagation, since it was in a country that has high sexual harassment and gang rape rates, where the female body is always fetishized needless to say the lesbian bodies, where men are expected to act in a specific way - which in her case would be marrying her off, abandoning her, or even murdering her- her dad chose to act differently, he chose to love her the same way she loved him; unconditionally.

In her analysis during our interview over signal, Nour stated that there was probably a reason why her story made that gig apart from the aforementioned; the presidential elections were about to start at that point, and it was a perfect opportunity for *“the system to create a crisis, and practice their usual moral policing”*. Meanwhile, the impact it left on her was shocking, leaving her in depression, and fear most of the time, ruining her relationship with her girlfriend, they actually broke up, and making it difficult to communicate or focus at work. As I mentioned earlier her father and sister got threatened, but it reached an extent that National Security called her father and implied that if he really cared about her and his reputation, he should kill her.

She decided to take the upsides short days after the incident; looking at the support messages she received from people, telling her how she inspired them and gave them hope out of their miserable life. She started being even more outspoken about the violence she and other LGBTQ members are being subjected to in Egypt, while acknowledging the fact that she is privileged she managed to flee the country before being killed or jailed like many other people at the margins of the state, whether for their sexual, ideological or political affiliations. She said she was being thought of as a public figure and she started acting like one. Technically, most of the aforementioned actions were performed via live streaming on facebook, or via other public news platforms such as Buzzfeed (BuzzFeedVideo, 2017). She was also active when the crackdown happened on LGBTIQ members a couple of months after her incident – The Rainbow flag incident; however, she had numerous critiques on how and when the activists of the LGBTIQ++ community decided to declare such actions publicly.

Nour's testimony could be rendered as an intersection between bio-politics (à la Foucault), which in itself renders sexual politics as national ones; public repercussions of state discourses, such as we have witnessed in the previous interlocutors; and a symbol of "Global information village"(Zizek, 2008, p. 58). It also opens up the question about the concept of alienation in that information village; and the concept of the transmission of moralities, and imposition one people within the same community even when they are spatially and temporally belonging to another realm of moralities. Moreover, it brings to discussion and engagement the concept of tolerance and otherness within this transmission of moralities. I will engage with the aforementioned in the following.

When I listened and witnessed Nour's story, it brought back to my mind the memories of alienation, which is what I feel a lot of us who participated in the 2011 revolution actively suffered from. *Alienation* as Zizek, identified is the distance interwoven in the everyday life (Zizek, 2008, p. 59). This distancing is put into a dilemma of being so close yet so distance in the age of the networked society or as Zizek called it "Global information village"; even though a network society makes us trans-nationally closer in terms of the annihilation of space and time, it is the fact that a small event in a country can cause violent ruptures in another very distant country. Freud had stated that the main point of this proximity that gets to be called a "neighboring relationship" is premised on traumatic *intrusion* with another way of social practice and rituals, that disrupts our own concepts (Zizek, 2008, p. 59). Intrusion then is what determines the *other* as one or not; therefore it is not an other if its presence is unintrusive. Also, as Zizek stated: "*My duty to be tolerant towards the other effectively means that I should not get too close to him... [i.e.] respect his intolerance to my over proximity*" (Zizek, 2008, p. 41).

That being mentioned, the fact that she - as a lesbian woman- accentuated by her father's reaction to her relationship, acted as an intrusion to people's not only moralities but basically, the expectations the majority cloak upon the internet as a medium as much as this medium is imposing a pushing force against a stark hegemony with no counter-power. These moralities of the medium, in a networked society, transcend the geographical connotations; and expressed in a multiplier and repetitive effect of SM expression (comments and messages). In Miller and Slater much older cyber- Ethnography on Trinidad, one of the main things they mentioned, was how sending messages from the family members outside the country to communicate with their family, in the forms of emails and e-cards, was one of of the

ways to assert and highlight “Trinness” (Miller & Slater, 2000). Hence, comes the idea that your homeland identity and politics - including the expected moralities *on* and *of* the machine, or what Latour called “The program of action” (Bijker & Law, 1992, p. 152) - do not leave you as you leave as an individual, or on papers, but rather one remains a live *gadget* of the society, one that is – one various levels- countering the power of the hegemonic cloak. It also explains the state politics induced in creation of a crisis, and how the *social* in the SM platform do have a distorted comprehension of notions of *proximity* and *other* and its relation to the *online*. Here the medium is indeed the message, while the politics of the medium is central to the contestation of power. It is not a mere issue of accessibility, nor a presupposition of the medium’s good intention, but rather these issues fall into a collective of other contentious politics.

Sarah: On Parental Authority and Incarceration:

One of the main reasons I was interested in Sarah’s narrative, was the fact that she mentioned her incident on a casual talk between us earlier as “*not really violence*”; I later asked Sarah if she would like to tell me more about her incident in the course of my research, and she agreed.

Sarah was a University student in one of the distinguished private universities in Egypt. She was also an activist in LGBTIQ++ causes on campus and later off campus. In that regard and at that time, the administration policies permitted such activities since it had a blurred line of freedom that oscillated between American protocols and Egyptian ones; which meant that *thorny issues* such as political opposition, assembly, and sexual and reproductive rights were permitted to be debated and instituted among university student, even written about in the Universities

periodicals and magazines as long as they were mostly in English, so it wouldn't be published to the greater audience of non-English speakers.

Before her incident, Sarah started approaching online groups of LGBTIQAA++ was done through a Facebook account that was not her 'main' one; i.e. not the one she posted family friendly things on, or having personal details about her life on. But this alternative Facebook account was totally disregarded as she started to know these people on a personal level, as well as whatsapp; she was also volunteering in one of the on-ground LGBTIQAA++ organizations in Cairo, which involved holding events of awareness, advocacy, and debates on the status of the community locally and regionally. On the personal aspect, Sarah's family consisted of her, her two sister's and their mother; since their parents were separated and later her father passed away, her uncle – who lived and worked abroad - took charge of the disciplinary actions of this family.

One day, after the first day in one of the proceedings of this organization's events - that was supposed to last over the weekend- in 2014, her mother called her and told her that her uncle was back in town and that she needed to pause all her plans for the following day because "he needed to talk to her". Sarah didn't fathom that it was anything serious, and thought that the most that it could be about was a regular 'why are you giving your mother a hard time' kind of talk. When her uncle arrived, they sat her, and she suddenly found her mum asking her about the LGBTIQAA++ entity she volunteered for *by name*, something Sarah never disclosed to anyone in her family, nor her relation to and LGBTIQAA++ activities. She denied knowing what her mum was talking about. However, she knew that her mother had connections in the National Security, connections that were good enough to let her perform background checks when she needed to, especially in regard to prospect business partners. So,

while her mother was doing one of her prospect partners' background checks, she thought she would ask about the alibi Feminist organization Sarah used to mention to her mum in order to camouflage her activities. Her national security informant told her that this organization is working on LGBTIQAA++ rights, and mentioned the name of one of its male members who was a friend of Sarah as well, and the name of the actual organization that Sarah volunteered for.

Technologically; because of the nature of her work and personal relationships, Sarah was careful with her devices and communications; she didn't have any material proof of her working with this organization, nothing except an email that she used, logged in from her computer which was always with her, and if it wasn't it was locked by a password that only she knew. Her mobile had lots of data, personal and professional, and it was locked by a pattern.

After Sarah's denial of her knowledge of the organization, her mum, who is a communication engineer, working for one of the mobile and internet service providing companies; told her to grab her mobile. She [Sarah] took her phone from her room, told her sister to tell her emergency contact to *delete everything*; went to the bathroom and performed a phone reset. The reset procedure took a long time, so her mum found out, and within the course of two hours, her mum managed to retrieve every single shard of communication, messages, media files that was performed on that sim card of her daughter. She skimmed them all from the most recent going back. The information retrieved included nude photos of her, her friends, chats about her exes whom her mum had known as her friends. Her mum who was shocked to all that unraveled, started screaming at her, shaming her for being "a deviant"; then she commanded her uncle to beat her up. During the painful as strategic way of beating that her uncle performed, being of a military training; her mum reached the folder

where the porn movies were placed, and she vocally outed that, which led to her uncle beating her even more. Sarah recalled that the ironic thing was that during their growing up, the children have always known that *this* uncle in specific had had very similar porn movies on his mobile all the time, which they watched when she sneakily took his phone. I felt compelled at that point to ask her, if it was usual for her mother to fetch into their stuff, knowing that notions and mechanisms or personal spaces varied greatly from one household to the other; she replied that her mum was a very curious person in general, so if she had a doubt about something, she would go and fetch in their closets or belongings, she said: “*A’shan tettamen*” (translate: to make sure everything is going well), however, she asserted mobiles were *never* part of this. After the beating up session, she was left in her room, and went out for the bathroom sporadically, while her uncle left, and her mother went out to work out solutions to this catastrophe over the phone with her uncle

The following events of that day onward were hazy in Sarah’s memory. She said, at one of the times I went out of the room and heard her mum telling her uncle that they would circumcise her. When she heard that, the sole thing that mattered to her was her university, and she stated she wasn’t emotionally stable at that period, and was on medications previously; so went back to her room and attempted suicide by overdose. She remembered satirically, that she found out later that all of this gets digested, hence, this was not how one committed suicide. Her family found out shortly after, and she was rushed into the hospital, however, as this was not the first time this month that she attempted suicide, she had to be admitted to a psychiatric facility. At that point all she knew, was second hand narrative from her sister, and fragments of her memory. She knew that they called her sister’s therapist, who was also Sarah’s professor, to ask her for guidance in the institution; and that professor

told her mother everything about her daughter's LGBTIQAA++ activism on campus, which was the moment she felt her privacy was truly invaded. Sarah went out of the hospital half awake, and she didn't know that she was going to be admitted into a psychiatric facility until she was there.

In the facility, her older sister went with her to meet a doctor, while her mother was filling out the papers for her admittance. The sister started saying what happened to the doctor, telling him that we need to cure her, not from depression and suicide (which was the reason she was referred to from the first hospital), but from Bisexuality. In order for her, an adult, to be admitted to a psychiatric facility, she had to agree to that personally; this didn't happen. Her mother signed instead, after she refused to sign her own incarceration in. That was the last time she saw her mother for the following month, through which she spent in a homophobic facility. After her admittance, Sarah was having lectures and exams that she couldn't risk missing; so she used to go daily from the university to the institution, until she was ushered out.

Currently, her family knows about her sexual orientation, her mother knows that she still works for LGBTIQAA++ rights but not in an organization, and they fight and argue about; however, she didn't take any aggressive actions. Her mother stopped using the word "Deviant" to refer to homosexuality. Also they reached a middle ground, that whether or not they agreed on the righteousness of homosexuality and homosexuals in religion and society, they should not be arrested, tortured, incarcerated based on their sexual orientation. The event of her hospitalization left a toll of social anxiety, she felt that no one has ever talked about sexuality. Digitally wise, this was a life altering experience, she deleted everything before walking into the house, she uses encryption and Virtual Private Networks (VPN) to congeal her communication. She believed that her mum found this strategy of knowing

information productive, so, there could be a possibility for her to ask for her phone again, however; at that point, Sarah said she will instantly attempt to destroy the phone and its hardware content; since she knows that her mother is capable of retrieving anything she needed by accessing the sim card.

In regard to her view of the incident as a violation or not, she felt that her privacy was violated, whether by her professor who knew things from her sessions with her sister that she was not supposed to know, needless to say disclose without permission outside of the sessions' setting. She felt like her private life was completely naked all at once, and for that entire month everyone was talking about, whether in terms of her family, or the doctors in her hospital. In *that* sense, she felt it was a violation.

In Zeina and Sarah's narratives, I would argue that violations of the body were unuttered because they rendered the sense of one's self as a thing, a beast or a machine; they were contrasted with those violations seeped into the everyday, for time in the later is given its space to work on reframing and rescripting memories of violence (Das, 2007, p. 90).

Maha: The Black box of Securitizing the educational institute

Maha is also a university student; her incident was the most recent in all of my interlocutors in this study, and our relation as friends placed me in situations regarding her cyber security at times where she couldn't have access to her devices.

Maha's usage of the internet before this incident included using whatsapp, facebook messenger, and facebook application for person to person communication. She used her university email for all her accounts, not out of lacking a personal account, but out of practicality. Sometimes she exchanged long emails with her friends related to personal and family matters. However, she recently felt instinctly that such topics should not be shared over university emails, so she used whatsapp under the apps allegation of "end – to – end encryption", especially when she started dating girls. She was first introduced to Signal app - a Free and open-source software (FOSS) that guarantees encryption and the auditing on its code from any code auditor in the world – when a friend and a colleague was arrested in one of the protests in late 2016, but she never used it again. As a member of several students activities on campus, Maha was vocal about her opinions that most often than not were not inline with neither the state policy, nor the university administration policies. But it wasn't until 2017, when she became a member in one of the most prominent university periodicals, that she started getting attacked. It was concretized not through her, but her mother, when someone from the university sent her screenshots from her Facebook account. The screenshot was from an on campus secret group, aiming to discuss matters that wouldn't be socially appropriate and might cause them trouble with their parents; it featured a like on a post (which indicates that it was through her account) related to a drinking night, with her friend confirming her intent to participate in it. She said that this person might have probably been monitoring her for

quite sometime, however the mere mention of her in that context was “*such a big deal for him to the extent*” that he decided to take a step and report her to her mother. Meanwhile, this person who she later knew was a friend of her mother, kept on sending her such messages, and told her not only about details of her daughters love life in the present, but also in the past, and including other surveilled students, who got outed in various ways all linked to the university’s administration. Another part of the screenshots included a pre-press version of the upcoming issue of the periodical she was a part of, that included articles she wrote that he viewed as problematic. This version was exchanged between university members of this periodical exclusively. The event that might have sparked such a crackdown on her as well as other students on her campus, she believed, was the Mashrou’ Leila concert (or the Rainbow Flag incident) in September 2017 (Mansour, 2018); where the periodical she was a part of was planning its next issue in response to this event and the overall crackdown on LGBTIQ++ community and the flagrant status of the on going state-level cyber surveillance.

After her mother confronted her, Maha said: “*The fact that I didn’t know the magnitude of what he told her drove me crazy*” because there were parts in her messenger conversations that were most crucial for her sexuality, so it was the anticipation of what he could do with what he had on her; looking back at her archive, she said that they could have said worst, and that it was better in her condition because at that time she was starting a relationship with a male not a female partner. She remembered her reaction was denial at first, then admitting this and standing for her stances saying that it was mainly because she was writing things that was counter-power. Her mother, who is a conservative and religious woman, but also a person who knows the intricacies of the state and its mechanisms of violence due to her political

science background, was partially understanding that it was out of revenge, yet, it was her daughter's actions that she couldn't approve of; she was placed in a paradox, in one way she viewed the perpetration as a violation not only of her daughter's privacy, but the way in which this perpetrator policed her about parenting her daughter was viewed as an invasion of her mother-daughter relation; on the other side, as she knew the intricacies of surveillance politics, she felt she would rather keep him coming with more details about what he knew, than directly rejecting his actions which might lead to harming not only her daughter but herself as well. On Maha's part, the panic related to not knowing; whether not knowing how to deal with her mum, or how much this person has on her, or how much her mother knew but didn't confess; ultimately lead her to outing herself to her mother as a queer person; even though she later knew that he didn't tell her mother about her same-sex relations. On the positive level, the event have shook something inside of her, she started talking with other friends of hers who have been subjected in the very same way, and collectively they started to seek ways to voice this symbolic violence to the other, it was not something she was going to give in to without a proper war. She changed the ways she communicated to more secure ways, and started educating herself as well as the others in her periodical group about secure ways of information sharing; university emails have been learned to be monitored by the university's security department, which featured members in the National Security, hence, they were strictly used in the scope of university related communication. Social Media platforms were dealt with on the premise of them being monitored, hence, not only was she safe listing people to custom, but the material she shared, and she knew her mother received periodically was not a material that she could debate and argue, or that confiscated anymore of her private information.

The main question that Maha's story poses is the notion of *anticipation* of attack. In communicating her incident with people she met from her work, Maha was told by a prominent journalist that this indeed was part and parcel of their everyday, not only as journalist, or political opposition, but as everyone who was shoved in the margin; however, they still stood up for themselves, knew more about what to share and *what to share elsewhere*, but their lives did not stop from being eventful, just because the hounds were barking behind surveillance cameras and keyboards. It is indeed this anticipation and descent to the ordinary that protrudes the quality of violence while producing a normalization by erasure (Das et al., 2004, p. 70).

Sarah and Maha's narrative poses the usage of cyber security knowledge and connections to the entrepreneurs of violence, and specialists in deployment of violent means (Tilly, 2003, p. 30) such as police and national security; while at the same time not being in line with the national policies, as a formulation of the subject as a Chimera that on one side can either be a perpetrator of violence, or a cyber activist. A Chimera that elaborates the real subsumption of surveillance culture, and the establishment of the subject as a "super-panopticon" (Savat, 2013, p. 14), this notion of super panopticon as Poster has posited, establishes the interconnectedness of our digital databases not only as a mode of expression, preservation, and documentation, but also as a disciplinary machine. A person who genuinely care about the affairs of their household members, to the extent of incarcerating them, relinquishing their privacy and agency. This in itself, opens up the blurriness of lines between the four cultures of internet in the informational society; the technomeritocratic culture (or the techno-elites), the hackers culture, virtual communications and global business culture, who each have separately and combined developed their own technologies usually by morphing elements developed by others or finding novel uses for

technology other than that they were originally developed for (Stalder, 2006, p. 24). To clarify this, I refer to the use of Sarah's mother of her connections in the telecommunication company to acquire knowledge of her daughter's account, a mechanism that should only be allowed under a court order, by a government official; yet, not only is this obviously applicable to government and non-government persons, it is also imbued in the service provided by telecom companies called "Family Lines" which enables the owner of the lines packages to acquire the history of activity in his or any other member of his package on demand. Such a *service* as much as it acts in the financial benefit of the people who subscribe to it, it creates a chain reaction of commodification: the subscribers to the national security services (which applies to all services provided by telecom companies), and subscribers by effect of their social (or family) hierarchies.

Overall this study have elaborated on how possession of ICTs devices such as mobiles, laptops, PCs extended their place in our lives as a commodity, to be part and parcel of the conceptualizations of our personal privacy, security, and well-being. The symbolic, systematic or flagrant breaching of its information acts as an overlay of contentious identities, subjectivities, and the making and unmaking of *life* and the politics involved. This violence by breaching is what creates divisions and connections that indicated the risks humans impose upon each other, and as Das has argued the ways in which people responded to these violations, is not transcendence but a "*descent to the everyday*" (Das, 2007).

In relation to losing one's material documents and the risk implied, versus the loss of one's possession over their hardware and/or software whether by various acts of cyber-violence or by simply forgetting, poses an increasing importance of the digital print. Our digital print, is simply our data shadow that constitute our cyber

entity, this print is in constant process of evolution and contest. From the ways in which we develop our modes of expression online, to the ways in which the economy is based on our data, whether we approve of it, refuse it, or basically not know about it; our data, our thoughts, our identities are bought and sold in a market to establish businesses, to establish a tailor made experience of the surroundings online and offline. The very same technology is used as a benign and a malignant tool, the same platform that enhances our network and sense of belonging in ways that could have never been done otherwise, is also the ways in which acts of revenge, policing, surveillance are done. Therefore is it mandatory that every social science and/or advocacy related study views the intersectionality not only of our online/offline personas and how one has the right for privacy and the obliteration of their data on demand (what is known as *the right to be forgotten*) but also within the scope of how social science, advocacy, and computer science intersect. The aforementioned stories also posited the general contestation of naming violence as a challenge between the sectarian, communal, and the state-sponsored (Das, 2003, p. 293) that constitutes the imagery of the self, life, and otherness. In short, the *new normals* that are in constant process and are experimented in the utterance that violence is, or is not, raise the doubts not about the forms life could take but the *notions of life itself* (Das, 2007, p. 90), and where ruptures of violence created a zone where the brutality of law and hence of the social *dis/order* in itself was brought to utterance.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

In the previous chapters I have explored the various definitions upon which people identify Cyber Violence. Literature showed that such topic is very understudied especially when it comes to Egypt. Yet, it is widely practiced; CMCs especially these depending on the internet, has proven that it is not the same for every individual, nor for every country. In her explanation of infopolitics, Victoria Bernal has stressed on the importance of the placement of the politics of knowledge, as well as power, and violence at the center of Internet analyses.

In discovering the intricacies of the violence, or I would rather say by now, Violences (with the capital V and an S at the end) that we faced and crafted as chimeras (a la Haraway) (Haraway, 2004) who represented our many hues as we typed and swiped on our mobile devices; I was also discovering vulnerabilities, strength, ongoing perpetration, attachments and abandonment, marriages and divorces, the back doors of important journalistic investigations and the unspoken – but apparently known- politics of publishing, knowledge of computer engineering that lead to locking up in a psychiatric facility, and the frenzy of measures that right the many wrongs, and by that they highlight the overall fetish of surveillance by the state, and the transmission of this fetish to the social. These enmeshment and intricacies were the reasons that got me interested in carrying out this project.

The reason why I have chosen Egypt – in the fluid term illustrated at the beginning- in particular, was my familiarity to the politics of representations in this cyber sphere, the moralities that transcended places and times, the routes and re-routes that people formed and stepped into, in order to overcome the traumas of an attack, or to run away from the unfathomable probability of such an attack. It was also, my desire to place a start to engage with Egypt apart from, and within the manifolds of

the widely known notions of: Cyber activism, the Facebook revolution, LGBTIQA++, the moral policing on cyber media, the formation of alliances, and digital (or cyber) security and its awareness.

This thesis has engaged with the narratives from nine interlocutors, who established a wide assortment of identities, representations, genders, sexualities, geography, classes, professions and cultures, where all of these elements have played/are playing a role in relation to their experiences with the unpleasant side of CMCs. Each of these interviews had a main question that it engaged with, under the umbrella of the main questions of thesis, which was the definitions of violence, and the enmeshment of the different hue nodes of the gradients. By this engagements the interviews have enabled the thesis to: 1- highlight the ways in which cyber and real worlds are not two separate worlds, that trespass each others territories, and how scholarly, technological, legal and human rights' works and discourses should discuss violence on CMCs with such an approach of blurriness. 2- discuss in details the various premises upon which people formulate their definition of privacy, violence, and moralities of the machine. 3- places these various definitions and *undefinitions* of violence against the commonly known definitions of violence and its relation to technology, whether in scholarly literature or in human rights defense reports, discourses, and jurisdictions. 4- Engage with the gaps and loop holes the legal codes formulated apparently as a way of combating violences of CMCs, while in face they are tools of violence in and of themselves, in the Arendtian perspective. 5- highlight the ways in which cyber ethnography enables the researcher to engage with their interlocutors on various levels, that extends the depth of knowing of and about their in interlocutors vulnerabilities and strengths, to reach levels of being there, with them as the perpetration occurs, to talking them out of suicide, or extreme attachment to the

perpetrators, or being the first person to hear bits and pieces about their utmost fears that they never unraveled to anyone before, or discovering more about their relationship with their perpetrators by actually encountering this perpetrator, and finding, and inspired by the manifolds that people crafted to descend with their violence to the ordinary (a la Das).

By engaging with Cyber-ethnography, violence, technology, and society; this project goes inline with what Sarah Pink highlighted of other means of performing and recording ethnography other than writing and how is it that gender hierarchies, and how patriarchy gets reformulated, even when the male figure is not present (Pink et al., 2016). It engages with the Weberian notion of the state, and the Deleuzian notion of the social. It goes with the Castellan discussion of the networked society, the power and counter-power in digital expressions, the notions of space and time in their multiplicity, and quasi binary approach of being there or not there (Castells, 2010, 2017; Stalder, 2006). It also places the notion posed by Victoria Bernal on 'infopolitics' as opposed to Castells' 'information age', as a notion that highlights the interlacing of politics of knowledge, power, and violence, rather than what Bernal has argued was the misleading position of the issue of access to information as the main problematic of Internet study (Bernal, 2014, p. 16). It is engaging with McLuhan's "medium as the message" as a way of addressing Cyber technology beyond it being merely a tool for communication, but in having messages in this very medium (McLuhan, 1994) and Latour's morals of the machine in the ways there are contested and changing expectations and protocols for online presence (Latour & Venn, 2002). It also goes with Hannah Arendt, Charles Tilly, Veena Das, and Zizek's identification of violence (Arendt, 1970; Das, 2003, 2007; Tilly, 2003; Zizek, 2008), and with Fanon's notion on the psychologies of violence, subversion as a notion that crafts our

imaginaries of what our bare life is, and the Manichean Theory (Bulhan, 1985; von Holdt, 2013). On another domain, it was the eloquent intervention of Eckert and Spivak that inspired the engagements with legislation and reroutes my interlocutors crafted to make sure the wounds of ongoing or and past attacks would not ache, or taste that bitter when they recalled them. In this sense, the peripheries, the margins and their politics, definitions, readings and unreadings of laws, all was inspired by Das's writings on the anthropology at the margins of the state (Das, Poole, 2004).

Meanwhile this project has confronted the ways in which yearly reports on the political economy and the accumulation of capital in the domain of telecommunication is premised; also the ways in which numbers are becoming the new science, the facade of knowledge in the information age, which totally obliterates *humans* as an anecdote, as an intricacy, as things that are countless to be subsumed under an identity, needless to say numbers. On another hand, while the human rights defense domain is fighting day and night in order to save what is left of the bare minimum, as its par descends by systemic violations day after day, it is out the mention that in their solutions most of the time comes within the borders of *law*, i.e. it is like the "Truman show" only, Mr. Truman, up until now has not figured out he is indeed still in the bubble. Politics outside the norms of duality of Capitalism/Communism/Anarchism/Socialism, needs to be advocated for, going with no labels, and fighting with no laws to *limit* our struggles is what is criticized. In fighting for human rights by re-iterating the exact same maneuvers upon which violence is premised, and to advocate that people see themselves within these framings, is a violence of language of its own.

On another domain, this thesis, in many points counter-argues parts of Zizek's book on violence: first of all, his critique of the Free and Open Source movements,

and hacker cultures as liberal communism, and his exemplar of Bill gates as the facade of these movements (Zizek, 2008, pp. 17, 21); second of all, is his yet another generalization of gender studies as a post-modernist projects that enforce the binary, as a desire for atony; here, not only did emperical anecdotes of my interlocutors illustrated otherwise, but my own study, all through the past two years, and before, my own identification as a gender non-binary and how I read myself in a multitude of literature, and also how he counter-argued himself later by stating that the world “*lacked intervention of a master-signifier*” which the least it would do is to re-create the Manichean theory. also counter-argues this; third and last point is how he formulated our online behaviors as a virtual simulacra, a monad with no windows onto reality, and a masturbate-athon (Zizek, 2008, p. 34) are all incomplete and false gazes at what online expression is, it is counter Latourian, counter Haraway in her notion of Chimeras; needless to say emperically untrue.

Overall, this research had helped me engage with the manifolds of Cyber violence. Gender, class, geography, moralities and other factors play a big role in the perpetration of violence, in fighting and surviving it, in reshaping one’s life after and before the attacks, in the formulation of counter-power/counter-violence discourses whether by Human Rights defenders or techies. The previous factors also shape how every person has a different definition of what they called – or didn’t call violence- from the impact of several types of online and offline violence, some might see that family imposed violations were not violence, while others didn’t mention violations related to their surveillance, while they explicitly mentioned physical and psychological violence as such. Another dimension is the concept of margin of the state, how people are shoved into this category more and more, and how they reread their own selves, and their legibility and illegibility vis-a-vis the state, its legislation,

and its modes of power, authority and violence. The flexibility of the state-citizen relation is on one side a site of investigation, and on the other side, the focus on the re-appropriation of state-discourses and practices of violence, is one of the main points of interest in this thesis and in further studies, as well as the establishment of ICTs as a bullring for contesting identities, politics of representation, spaces and times. The coupling of state and Capital is one of the highlights that needs to be focused on in further studies, this coupling highlights a lot of the logic of violence imposed not only by the state and its institutions but also replicated among the citizens, and among the imagined scenarios of the way out, the un/violence. Lastly, I would like to go back and stress on the McLuhan gaze of “Medium as the message” in order to see the “keyhole” that various personas of peeping toms find it righteous for them to invade others privacy, under labels of care and/or control, and see how the shape of this Keyhole as an important part of the intertwines of violence, privacy, and technology.

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