Impact of TV terrorism news on Egyptians' perception of national security measures and civil liberties: A cultivation study

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Impact of TV Terrorism News on Egyptians’ Perception of National Security
Measures and Civil Liberties: A Cultivation Study

A Thesis Submitted to the
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts

By Reham Gamal
Under the supervision of Dr. Amani Ismail

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My work is dedicated to
my precious family
my dear parents and
beloved sisters.
This study aims at examining the role of terrorism-related TV news content in cultivating terrorism risk perceptions among Egyptians in the aftermath of the June 30, 2013 events. The study also attempts to explore in-depth how and why terrorism threat perceptions correlate with the Egyptian people’s tolerance for more restrictive government measures regarding privacy and security. Previous studies found that heavy exposure to terrorism-related news can breed threat perception and fear of victimization. Further, citizens who feel under threat tend to be more willing to trade off their civil liberties. In this sense, the theoretical framework of this study is the Cultivation theory. The researcher employed the qualitative research method, involving twenty in-depth interviews conducted with expert and non-expert participants. According to the findings of this study, most of the research participants are light viewers who are affected by terrorism. The study also found that most research participants trust the official statements regarding the level of terrorism and the endorsed security-oriented measures. Based on this, participants expressed their willingness to compromise their civil liberties under the threat of terrorism.
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Chapter One

Introduction

On January 25, 2011, Egyptians took to the streets to topple the 30-year rule of Mubarak’s regime calling for ‘Bread, Freedom, and Social Justice.’ Two years later, on June 30, 2013, they rebelled again to achieve the main demands of the January 25 Revolution. This time it was to remove the Muslim Brotherhood administration. As a result, the military deposed Mohamed Morsy, the former Egyptian president, and new presidential elections were held that ended with the victory of Abdul Fatah El-Sisi, currently serving as Egyptian president. Today some of the demands of the January 25 Revolution (such as freedom) are being called into question due to the existence of the terrorism threat.

The concept of terrorism in the current era has changed the way we see war and conflict. Today, war on terror has taken different shapes, where battlefield encounters are absent and both military interventions and strategizing are no longer adequate to defeat the enemy. Terrorists in the 21st century are alert and mobile, the better to engage in unpredictable attacks that target civilians and aim at breaking governmental and social structures (Branscomb, 2004 cited in Christian, 2015). In response to this alarming phenomenon, countries around the world have taken strict measures that increase the government power at the expense of civil liberty rights (Ackerman, 2006; Hardin, 2004; Holmes, 2007; Posner, 2006 cited in Dragu, 2011). In a similar vein, the current Egyptian government has had to adopt anti-terrorism policies that grant extraordinary powers to law enforcement personnel to safeguard the nation from both internal and external threats.
"Threats" has become a common term that is a staple feature in the Egyptian TV news media. In light of internal threats featured on TV news such as the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist acts and external ones facing the state such as Daesh (ISIS) and Al Qaeda, security measures have been magnified and portrayed in the Egyptian news media as a welcome salvation to eradicate terrorism and ensure safety.

In this respect, when an assassination attack targeted Egypt’s Attorney General, Hesham Barakat, causing his death on June 29, 2015, TV programs and evening talk shows clamored for urgent trials for those Muslim Brotherhood (MB) leaders held in prison, and for the immediate arrest of all other MB members. Many other demands in the media called for raising a state of emergency in order to combat terrorism. Under international law, governments may restrict certain freedoms such as the right to express opinion, assemble, and demonstrate during a state of emergency. Although these rights are usually distant from the everyday experience of a regular citizen, in certain contexts, civil liberties can contribute to the people’s general feeling of well-being (Gibson, 1989, Gibson & Bingham, 1985, Gibson & Gouws, 2000 cited in Davis & Silver, 2004).

Context is an important aspect that can shape mass perceptions of principles such as freedom and security. Media in this regard can create contexts that increase the level of support either for democratic principles or the level of personal security (Gibson, 1987, Peffley, Knigge, & Hurwitz, 2001, Sniderman et al., 1996 cited in Davis & Silver, 2004). The media can portray openness and freedom as major factors that contribute to the planning and execution of terrorist attacks, or, in contrast, create a context where terrorism is a result of restricting freedoms.

In addition to creating contexts, media can have a significant influence on its audiences; it can either alleviate the perceived threat and report reality as it is or exaggerate the situation and
increase threat perception among the public (Esses, V., Medianu, S. & Lawson, A., 2013). Esses (2013) noted that in times of threats and insecurity, media can make use of its power to turn threats into a mental catastrophe in order to achieve certain political ideologies and agendas. For instance, when a terrorist attack took place on June 30, 2015, targeting several military checkpoints in El-Sheikh Zowayd in North Sinai, the media reported the event in a misleading way; for example, Elmasry Elyoum, El Youm 7, Shabket Rassd online newspapers, and Aljazzeratv channel reported incorrect information that exaggerated the number of deaths and injuries on the armed forces’ side, causing widespread panic among Egyptians.

According to the abovementioned newspapers and TV news channel, the number of deaths of military personnel totaled seventy-five; in addition, it was reported that terrorist elements had captured a number of Egyptian officers, soldiers, missiles, and weapons. In response, an official statement issued by the Defense Ministry showed that this information was misleading since the actual number was seventeen fatalities and thirteen injuries, while the number of terrorist elements neutralized by the Egyptian forces totaled a hundred. In this regard, Marin (2011) noted that over the past few years the role of media in endorsing the fear of terrorism has become evident. Altheide (2007) as well as Freedman and Thussu (2012) added that TV news reports developed the narrative of “War on Terror” in the discourse of fear and introducing the politics of risk.

The role of media in influencing people and their attitude toward supporting tighter security measures in times of emergency is not only limited to developing countries, but extends to the developed and more democratic countries as well. In this regard, heavy media coverage of the Nice terrorist attack, including publishing videos of the dead bodies of the victims, spurred the French people represented in the French parliament to adopt heightened security measures,
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declare a state of emergency, and approve a draft law restricting civic freedoms. Such a law expands the police power in terms of search, seizure, and detention without judicial approval.

It is significant that the Nice attack took place on Bastille Day, July 14, 2016, and led to the death of eighty four innocent people as well as the injury of two hundred others.¹ In this regard, the debate over national security versus civil liberties is not only limited to developing countries since in time of emergency restrictive security measures are often adopted by most developed countries.

Within this framework, this study attempts to explain the relationship that exists between TV terrorism news viewership and terrorism risk perception among Egyptians post-June 30, 2013, as well as provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics between terrorism threat perceptions and tolerance for more restrictive government measures.

Objective

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of TV news content in cultivating terrorism risk perception post-June 30, 2013 events among a purposive sample of viewers. It also aims at probing how terrorism threat perceptions correlate with Egyptians’ tolerance for more restrictive government measures regarding privacy and security.

In this sense, this study offers insight into Egyptians’ attitudes toward two highly controversial aspects, privacy and security, in light of domestic and international terrorist attacks.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

Theory Overview

The Cultivation theory was developed by George Gerbner in the 1960s and is deeply rooted in the field of sociology; however, it is used in many other fields and disciplines. The theory mainly explains the role of TV in shaping the social reality of viewers.

The main assumption of the Cultivation theory is that TV in particular and media in general cultivate images and facts about social reality that do not match real life. Moreover, media depictions have a stronger impact on heavy viewers than light viewers; in this sense, the theory differentiates between heavy and light viewers in terms of their TV exposure. The impact of TV goes beyond planting ideas and beliefs in people’s minds to include the process of reinforcing and consolidating such ideas.

It is worth mentioning that cultivation analyses have produced several findings regarding repetitive images in media over time, amongst which is the ‘Mean World Syndrome’; this posits that viewers who are frequently exposed to media depictions are more likely to perceive the world as a harsh and dangerous place, in comparison to medium and light viewers.

Furthermore, fake TV realities cultivate images at odds with real life among heavy viewers; hence, heavy TV viewers are more likely to perceive falsified TV depictions as a reflection of social reality which can cause a misconception of such a reality. In this regard, violent content has become a consistent topic of interest to cultivation researchers owing to the fact that 60% of television programs contain violence (National Television Violence Study, 1997)
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In addition to the impact of violent content, several research findings showed that cultivation can have an impact on cultural identity, social learning and modeling, and desensitization, potentially leading to fear of victimization which is connected with the Mean World Syndrome. Due to media depictions of violent content, heavy viewers tend to feel more threatened by becoming victims of real-life crimes. Such fear perceptions can make heavy viewers more worried and cautious when it comes to offering help or communicating with strangers.

Cultivating Fear and Terror Perceptions

Researchers have employed the Cultivation theory as a base to study the impact of media depictions - which are usually vicious and mean - on the perception of threat and fear (Nellis & Savage, 2012; Rubin, Haridakis, Hullman, Chikombero & Porpsakulvanich, 2003); this phenomenon is especially evident in the United States where media coverage are full of conflict and violence (Ridout, Grosse and Appleton, 2008). It is worth noting that fear is an emotional reaction which results from exposure to painful events and distressing news stories in addition to uncertainty (Nellis & Savage, 2012; Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003; Rubin, Haridakis, Hullman, Chikombero & Porpsakulvanich, 2003).

On examining the cultivation effect of TV news coverage of terrorism on threat perception, Rubin, Haridakis, Hullman, Chikombero and Porpsakulvanich (2003) found that cultivation can have a short term rather than long term effect with young adults in the surveyed sample, all of whom exhibited a marked tendency to mistrust others. Moreover, Americans are frightened of terrorism more than ever before; according to Gallup polls, one out of three people think that they or their family members will fall victim to terrorism (as cited in Nellis & Savage, 2012).
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In the same context, there are other variables that may spur or curb cultivation and its effect on threat perception such as audience demographics, behavior, and lifestyle. Moreover, exposure to frequent coverage of war on terrorism and news stories dealing with killings, beheadings, and similar incidents over an extended period of time may cultivate the belief that a possible terrorist attack will take place in the future, thus increasing the perception of danger. The strength of such beliefs depends on the amount and frequency of exposure, attention paid to such news, and the individual’s credulity upon perceiving such presented information (Nellis & Savage, 2012; Ridout, Grosse & Appleton, 2008; Rubin, Haridakis, Hullman, Chikombero & Pornsakulvanich, 2003).

Within the same framework, Romer, Jamieson, and Aday (2003) conducted a survey on 2,300 Philadelphia residents to measure whether or not TV news cultivates the perception of fear. It was found that national coverage of crime and terrorism in news raises security concerns and cultivates a sense of fear and even terror. News coverage increases personal risk perception, especially when it deals with events occurring on a local level. This could be attributed to the individual person’s feelings that he/she is more likely to encounter such events in his/her daily life.

It is worth noting that Gerbner and his colleagues modified the Cultivation hypothesis to highlight the importance of news resonance which intermediates the effect of exposure (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorelli, 1980 cited in Nellis & Savage, 2012). In this regard, Nellis and Savage (2012) conducted a telephone survey among 532 participants living in New York and Washington DC respectively which found that media exposure and fear are connected. Moreover, TV news stories about terrorism increase risk perception among audiences since such stories include disturbing depictions that cultivate a sense of fear and uncertainty.
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In this respect, different media content can cultivate various degrees of fear; for instance, political, economic, and social issues in news content lead to a higher degree of threat perception and thus greater support for punitive laws as well as interventionist military policies in comparison to infotainment news (Ridout, Grosse & Appleton, 2008; Sotirovic, 2001). In this regard, Grimm and Andsager (2011) added that TV news wields great power in affecting attitude and beliefs, especially when it tackles social problems and terrorism-related issues (as cited in Ridout, Grosse & Appleton, 2008).

Accordingly, the researcher used the Cultivation theory as a theoretical framework to explain the relationship between TV terrorism news consumption and perception of threat, as the theory postulates.
Chapter Three

Literature Review

Perception of Threat

In order to explore how TV terrorism news affects threat perceptions and how threat perceptions shape Egyptians’ attitude toward privacy and security, it is important to provide a clear definition that explains threat perception. Stein (2013) stated that ‘threats’ are understood through the perception of the individual. In this regard, psychologists defined ‘perception’ as the mental process of understanding, sensing, learning, and recognizing that triggers an action when exposed to stimulus. Stein added that the mental process of perception includes three main elements: arousing state, information process, and creation process of assumptions as well as inferences. In this sense, ‘threats’ are constructed socially through a general mood of communicated understanding and emotions of experts, political leaders, and public conversations that are broadcast within the media.

Accordingly, a threat can be regarded as the ability of an individual, organization, association or entity to impose an unconstructive, harmful impact on others (Rousseau, 2007; Stein, 2013). ‘Threats’ can be two kinds: one which includes personal threat that aims at the individual while the second is group threat that is directed toward mass audiences. In this sense, news media are centered on the second type which is presented in the form of security, economic, military, religious, cultural, social, and gender threats. Conversely, personal threats can be presented in the form of something that has a negative impact on an individual; this includes personal security, income, beliefs, and value threats. It is worth noting that news media can create a group threat that can also represent a personal threat (Rousseau, 2007). For instance, an Egyptian working in the textile production field may consider
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exports from China a group threat against Egypt and a personal threat against his/her income (Rousseau, 2007).

Threats can be a political tool that is employed by securitizing actors. Waever (1995) postulated the theory of securitization; he defined securitization as an extreme type of politics that is viewed as a failure to cope with events of “normal politics” (as cited in Taureck, 2006). Waever (2004) added that security is an act of speech that labels an event, object, or situation as a security threat. Based on such labeling, securitizing actors claim a right to endorse certain measures to guarantee the survival of the labeled object, event, situation, etc. (as cited in Taureck, 2006). This labeled issue is then elevated beyond the rules of the regular political game to enter the sphere of emergency political situation. In urgent situations, it becomes normal and justified to address issues without following democratic procedures (as cited in Taureck, 2006). Waever (2004) outlined three major steps towards a successful securitization: (1) detection of threat; (2) emergency measures; and (3) impact on target audience. Accordingly, securitization acts to rationalize emergency measures in order to address the alleged threat (as cited in Taureck, 2006; Skidmore, 1999).

In this regard, it can be argued that individuals can perceive security as well as military and economic power as a threat. Consequently, power can use threat or reward as a function, where power is the ability to get someone to perform a particular action or do something that he/she did not originally intend to. Additionally, power can be broadened to include shaping people’s preferences to match particular agendas, ideologies, and so forth (Rousseau, 2007; Stein, 2013).

Stain (2013) argued that threat can be imposed either verbally or physically. Verbal threat can come in the form of well-constructed statements that impose harm on others or aim at discouraging people from performing particular acts; for instance, if you do not follow the instructions, a particular harm will befall you. Politicians usually use verbal threats as they may take actions such as imposing
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emergency law, withdrawing ambassadors from other countries, and increasing border troops (Rousseau, 2007; Stein, 2013).

Within this framework, there are four types of threats: realistic, intergroup anxiety, symbolic, and negative stereotypes. Each can be defined as follows: realistic threat is the fear of the in-group members that the out-group members will try to endanger their accessible resources or their existence in power; intergroup anxiety is the panic from the harm that can result from communicating with a particular out-groups; symbolic threat pertains to feeling threatened by the differences in the beliefs of the out-group; and, finally, the negative stereotypes include threats to the in-group that believes in them (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

In this study, realistic threat is what the researcher aims at investigating since the study hypothesizes that media messages make people feel threatened by out-groups whether internal (within the country) or external (foreign threats to the country).

**News Media and Threat**

News media play a major role in people’s life, especially since news has become a main source of information for most people (Marin, 2011; Nellis & Savage, 2012; Sherman, 1999). Such a premise provides an explanation regarding why some people arrive at a certain understanding or perception of threats (Marin, 2011; Nellis & Savage, 2012; Sherman, 1999). People tend to look for in-depth information to make judgments that either support or reject what they have consumed in the news media (Coleman, 1993, Weinstein, 1987 cited in Sherman, 1999).

Nellis and Savage (2012) as well as Sherman (1999) argued that hype media coverage (referring to the considerable amount of airtime given to a particular incident) leads people to develop an optimistic bias regarding such phenomena that are covered intensively in the news reports. Nellis and Savage
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(2012) added that news media hype can increase the risk perception and fear of crime. It is worth noting that fear perception is higher among females and minorities (Christian, 2015; Davis & Silver, 2004; Nellis & Savage, 2012); moreover, Nellis and Savage (2012) found that young adults have a higher level of fear perception than older people. In contrast, Christian (2015) as well as Davis and Silver (2004) found that young people and people with a higher education and income level have less fear perception than their counterparts.

Newsworthiness is the basic element that determines what needs to be covered intensively in the news and threats that are considered highly newsworthy are those that grab the attention of news media. In this regard, scholars put into consideration the exposure impact of mass mediated news, where it is assumed that one major positive effect of news reports is the acquisition of economic, social, and political knowledge. Yet, empirical evidence showed that exposure to news media reports can have a negative impact on the audience (Harris, 2009 cited in Arendt, Steindl, & Vitouch, 2015).

In this respect, heavy news coverage of crime has led to stereotyping images within the American society and fear from the out-group. For instance, the bulk of news crime usually presents African-Americans as offenders, criminals, and the like. Such news depiction has resulted in a repeated research finding that most of the crime perpetrators are perceived as non-white males (Arendt, Steindl, & Vitouch, 2015).

Another negative influence of news media exposure can be seen in the health sector. Chang (2012) argued that 80% of people depend on the news media reports for acquiring information about general health topics. Thus, mass media are considered the main source provider of information about any epidemic disease which can alleviate or increase the health fear. In his study examining the impact of health news exposure on the Taiwanese, Chang (2012) found that covering H1N1 flu news in a threatening frame (which focuses on mentioning the number of deaths or people suffering from H1N1)
augments the perceived fear and vulnerability towards the epidemic without helping in the prevention or treatment of the disease.

**Terrorism Background**

The term terrorism or terrorist was rarely used in the media before 1960s where media practitioners used other descriptive terms such as explosion, hijacking, assassination, to mention just a few (Kavoori & Fraley, 2007 cited in Tahat, 2011). By the early 1970s, such descriptions were replaced by an upsurge in the discussion of terrorism, terror, and terrorists which were used interchangeably to convey a particular political violence; according to Winter (1980), the term ‘terrorism’ was created and developed by the media (as cited in Tahat, 2011). Martin (1985) defined two classifications of terrorism: tactical terrorism (includes abductions, hijackings, explosions, and nuclear threats) and strategic terrorism (includes assassinations, vandalism, and sabotage) (as cited in Tahat, 2011).

In this sense there has been controversy in defining terrorism as it may involve the legitimate use of violence. State and non-state groups can use violence as a means to achieve political ends, which means that each group/party can assert its legitimate right to use violence to achieve its own political goals (Al-ameri, 2013). In the same framework, Sageman (2011, p.15) argued that it is hard to provide a precise definition to terrorism. He explained that “one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist.”

**Scholars’ Definition of Terrorism**

In her book *Terrorism in Context*, Crenshaw (2010, p.4) defined terrorism as a “conspiratorial style of violence calculated to alter the attitudes and behavior of multiple audiences. It targets the few in a way that claims the attention of the many.” Hoffman (2006) defined terrorism as the following:
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The deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. Terrorism is specifically designed to have far-reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or object of the terrorist attack. It is meant to instill fear within, and thereby intimidate, a wider “target audience” that might include a rival ethnic or religious group, an entire country, a national government or political party, or public opinion in general.

Further, Al-ameri (2013) defined terrorism as an illegal action that involves the use of power/violence by any individual or group of individuals, whether representing oneself or in connection with any organization(s). Such acts can be carried out for political, religious, or ideological reasons in order to spread fear among citizens and, in turn, apply pressure on the government to adopt certain procedure or/and policies.

This study will use the Global Terrorism Database definition of terrorism, which defines a terrorist attack as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation” (Global Terrorism Index, 2015).

Terrorism Prominence in News

News media play a significant role in evoking the threat of terrorism and in shaping people’s opinions, perceptions, and behaviors about current affairs as well as policy preferences through simple wording or framing (Ridout, Grosse & Appleton, 2008; Tahat, 2012). People depend on news media to acquire information and explanation of local and international events (Ridout, Grosse & Appleton, 2008). Moreover, people depend on news media for obtaining information on terrorist acts since these are relatively rare phenomena (Komailia, 2004; Nellis & Savage, 2012).
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It is worth noting that terrorism today is no longer a rare phenomenon; we have witnessed the birth of terrorist groups such as ISIS and other armed militants who claim responsibility for many terrorist attacks taking place across the world. According to Global Terrorism Index (2015), the number of deaths from terrorism has increased by 80% in 2014 in comparison to last year; to illustrate, this number jumped from 3,329 deaths in 2000 to 32,685 in 2014.

Media coverage in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States featuring official statements that Al Qaeda had executed the terrorist operation, shaped the public opinion in terms of supporting the ‘War on Terror’ to ward off any potential attack. As a result, the United States was given a valid reason to attack other countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and others (Al-ameri, 2013). Hence, the September 11 attacks, which claimed the lives of about 3,000 people and injured more than 2,000, was a turning point at the domestic and global level that transformed people’s and society’s attitude in general towards different aspects of life (Al-ameri, 2013).

In the same context, the Baseera Center² conducted a telephone survey on 1,214 participants from different demographic areas in Egypt and found that 85% agree on the air strikes performed by the Egyptian air forces against ISIS sites in Libya on February 16, 2015, while 76% support other air strikes to eradicate the roots of terrorism; this air attack came just one day after a video was posted by ISIS showing the beheading of 21 Egyptians in Sirte, Libya. Therefore, media coverage and framing of terrorism in a certain way can serve a certain media agenda that possibly correlates with political agendas and interests (Black, 1977; Klaehn, 2009).

Al-ameri (2013) stated that media tend to expose people almost daily to threats in the form of violence and bloody scenes whether in the news, drama, or any other form of programming which do

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² The Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (Baseera Center) was founded in April 2012 and is privately owned. The researcher translated the obtained data from Arabic into English.
not reflect reality. Such depictions usually result in the emergence of the Mean World Syndrome, according to the Cultivation theory driving this study’s Theoretical Framework. Al-ameri (2013) and Nellis and Savage (2012) found that frequent consumption of media threats can endorse fear and mistrust among people, leading to a distorted worldview.

From this perspective, hyped-up news coverage of terrorism and violent images in conflict areas affect people’s perceptions of conflict and increase the flight rates from such countries. Frequent exposure to acts of violence in news and drama shows can cultivate social fear of victimization, anxiety, anger and readiness to settle with the enemy to end threats, avoidance of public areas, pain, and stereotypical image of other groups such as the out-group (Komaili, 2004; Nellis & Savage, 2012; Shoshani, 2008; Tahat, 2012). It is worth mentioning that media tend to exaggerate fear of terrorism by painting a distorted picture in comparison to reality, where the number of victims of other types of violence, homicide, and accidents in general is more than thirteen times the number of terrorism victims’ (Global terrorism index, 2015).

Framing terrorism as a form of threat can lead to the rise of discrimination and demands for more restrictive government measures to maintain security (such as restricting the flow of immigrants in the United States and Canada) (Al-ameri, 2013; Komaili, 2004; Shoshani, 2008; Tahat, 2012); therefore, the economy can be negatively affected by fear of terrorism due to low travel rates to the country, imposed travel bans, and so on. In short, people tend to adopt and support antiterrorism and military empowerment policies that restrict and infringe on their civil rights and liberties when they feel threatened (Komaili, 2004; Nellis & Savage, 2012; Shoshani, 2008; Tahat, 2012).

Ognyanova and Rokeach (2012) asserted that political systems depend on the media to disseminate their social values and maintain order no matter what kind of political system. It may not be so explicit in democratic countries; yet, media have been considered as a political manipulation tool. The media
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utilize different techniques to propagate the desired political ideas and instigate desired perceptions and behaviors in the public; some of the media’s meticulously-designed propaganda techniques commonly deployed by regimes include exaggeration and cultivating fear appeals among others (Black, 1977; Klaehn, 2009).

The strategy of disseminating threat messages or the fear appeal through the media is especially prominent in times of political dissent or instability, since the aim is to drive people to call for stability and maintain the status quo, which naturally contradicts the characteristics of the post-revolutionary euphoria (Le Bon & Miall, 2004). Carlson (2004) in this regard suggested that terrorism is considered the major source of threat to the American population. According to Gallup polls, one third of the American population perceives their lives or the lives of one of their family members to be at risk (as cited in Nellis & Savage, 2012). According to the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (2002) during the past decade, about 65% of Europeans and 91% of Americans have come to consider international terrorism as a major threat to their countries’ national security (as cited in Al-ameri, 2013).

Surveillance Perception

People’s perception of surveillance is shaped by the media’s intense coverage of issues, including the government’s actions to eradicate terrorism and the degree to which these actions are effective. Such coverage can provide the public with a warped understanding of the regularity of monitoring practices. Furthermore, public perception of privacy affects their compliance in supporting counterterrorism policies; the more people perceive such acts as effective in preventing terrorist attacks, the more they will support and call for implementing restrictive policies (Dinev, Hart, & Mullen, 2008 cited in Christian 2015).
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Egypt's current President Abdul-Fattah El-Sissi in this regard, issued on August 17, 2015 an anti-terrorism act in order to combat the insurgencies taking place in the country in general and North Sinai in particular. Such insurgencies in North Sinai led to the injury as well as death of at least 700 members of Egypt’s security forces from July, 2013 until August, 2015.\(^3\) Moreover, other terrorist attacks targeted the judiciary, where a car bomb attack led to the death of the Egyptian Attorney General on June 29, 2015, in addition to three other judges killed in Sinai on May 16, 2015. Accordingly, the anti-terrorism act enables authorities in case of a declared state of emergency to implement severe measures similar to those imposed by former president Hosni Mubark who declared a state of emergency during his 30 years of rule.\(^4\) The law also protects the law endorsement personnel from accountability when executing the law by preventing journalists and reporters from issuing facts and information that deviate from the official statements.

The issuance of anti-terrorism measures has faced criticism from several Egyptian rights groups (namely, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights) which claimed that they violate the provisions of the Egyptian constitution; moreover, 40 Egyptian rights organizations along with some political parties issued a joint statement rejecting the approval of such a law. The Egyptian press syndicate also opposed one specific Article under this law that obliges journalists to report only the official statements regarding any militant attack. Similarly, the Secretary General of Reporters Without Borders has expressed great concerns regarding the newly adopted law by asserting in a press statement that “Egypt is sinking ever deeper into a terrible despotism that not only wants to control information and detain journalists, but also put them under even more pressure than during the Mubarak era” (Mada Masr, 2015, \textit{para. 4}). The law was opposed by other

\(^3\) \url{http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/egypt-s-anti-terror-law-a-translation}

\(^4\) Amnesty International memorandum: Egypt’s draft law on counter terrorism published on august 2015, index: mde 12/2269/2015
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International entities such as the HRW (Human Right Watch) Organization and Amnesty International which stated that such a law can act as a doorway for curbing some of the civil liberty rights, including the right to hold peaceful strikes and demonstrations. The United States Department of State has added that it could be misused in the future and employed to violate human rights.

On the other hand, some of the state’s institutions supported the endorsement of this law, among which is the Egyptian Trade Union Federation which called for its implementation when peaceful demonstrators protested against the newly adopted civil service law. Likewise, pro-regime citizens demanded wider execution to not only include armed protestors, but also non-violent regime opponents. It is worth noting that the Egyptian parliament in January, 2016 endorsed the law the way it was issued in the presidential decree without adding any amendment to its articles which are listed as below:

1. A terrorist group is defined as a group consisting of “at least three people which aims to commit one or more terrorist crimes, or for which terrorism is one of the means used to achieve its criminal purposes.”

2. A terrorist act is defined as the use of force or violence “for the purpose of disturbing public order, endangering the safety, interests, or security of the community; harming individuals and terrorizing them; jeopardizing their lives, freedoms, public or private rights, or security, or other freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law; harms national unity, social peace, or national security or damages the environment, natural resources, antiquities, money, buildings, or public or private properties or occupies or seizes them; prevents or impedes public authorities, agencies or judicial bodies, government offices or local units, houses of worship, hospitals, institutions, institutes, diplomatic and consular missions, or regional and international organizations
and bodies in Egypt from carrying out their work or exercising all or some of their activities, or resists them or disables the enforcement of any of the provisions of the Constitution, laws, or regulations.”

3. “Incitement to commit a terrorist crime shall be punished with the same penalty as though the terrorist crime was carried out. Penalties for terrorist crimes range include the death penalty, sentences ranging from seven years in prison to life imprisonment (twenty-five years).”

4. Enforcers of the provisions of the law (i.e. security forces) are not “held criminally accountable for the use force to perform their duties...when the use of this right is necessary and adequate to avert the risk.”

5. “Communication with foreign countries or associations with the aim of committing or preparing a terrorist crime in Egypt is punishable by life imprisonment. If the crime is carried out, the punishment is the death penalty.”

6. “Any Egyptians who, without written permission from the relevant authority, cooperate with or enlist in the armed forces of a foreign state, and use terrorism, military training, military arts, combat methods, tricks or skills as means to achieve their objectives in the perpetration or preparation of terrorist crimes shall be punished by imprisonment for no less than ten years, even if the actions of these entities do not target Egypt.”

7. “Promoting a terrorist crime, verbally or in writing, is punishable by five years in prison. Indirect promotion includes promotion of ideas and beliefs inciting the use of violence. Promotion of a terrorist crime inside a house of worship, or among members of the armed or police forces is punishable by seven years in prison.”
8. “Using websites or social media to promote terrorist ideas or calling for the perpetration of terrorist acts or “broadcasting material intended to mislead security authorities, influence the course of justice in any terrorist crime, exchange messages, issue assignments among terrorist groups or their members, or exchange information relating to the actions or movement of terrorists or terrorist groups domestically and abroad” is punishable by no less than five years hard labor.”

9. “Hacking government affiliated websites to obtain, erase, or falsify data is punishable by no less than ten years hard labor. “

10. “Publishing or promoting false news or statements on terrorist acts or counter-terror operations contrary to official Ministry of Defense statements shall face a fine ranging from 200,000 to 500,000 Egyptian pounds. Anyone convicted will be prevented from practicing their profession for up to one year if the crime is a breach of ethics of their profession.”

11. “In the event of danger terrorist crimes, the President can issue a curfew for a period of up to six months. The decree must be approved by the House of Representatives within one week. In the absence of an elected House of Representatives, the responsibility falls on the cabinet. The curfew may be extended upon parliamentary approval.”

Understanding the articles of such regulations or any other law is in itself problematic, as it includes legal jargon that can only be explained by experts (Christian, 2015; Papastamous, Prodromitis & Iatridis, 2005 cited in Zeigler, 2010). Christian (2015) and Wolfendale (2006) stated that ordinary citizens do not typically understand anti-terrorism legislations which are usually vague, dense, and long-winded, hence the need for a clear explanation by the authorities as well as the media. The latter, in this regard, wield significant power in shaping people’s attitudes toward accepting or rejecting anti-terrorism measures, through the way they choose to present threats. More specifically, TV news has a
positive impact on increasing public support for policies that aim at restricting civil liberties while newspapers have a negative impact (Christian, 2015; Wolfendale, 2006; Zeigler, 2010).

**Civil Liberties vs. Security**

Nader (2015) pointed out that terror attacks which took place globally in the first three months of 2015 are equal to the entire number of attacks which occurred in 2014, supporting the author’s claim that the media emphasize the concept of terror and threat (Christian, 2015). Feelings of threat and danger can induce different behaviors ranging from conformity to calling for change (Christian, 2015). Such an assumption raises the question of whether fear of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack outweighs fears of sacrificing some of civil liberty rights, including privacy rights.

In examining the connection between public value for privacy and security, Christian (2015) found that as people’s threat level (whether personal or socio-tropic) increases, so does their willingness to trade off their civil liberty rights in exchange for more restrictive security measures. Personal threat in this regard can be defined as “perceived risk of terrorism to oneself or family members” (Huddy & Feldman, 2011 cited in Christian 2015 p. 458), while Socio-tropic terrorist threat is the “perceived risk of terrorism to the nation and national resources” (Davis & Silver, 2004 cited in Christian 2015). Other studies showed that people are willing to compromise privacy rights in exchange for security. In 2007, a survey was conducted in Kansas on 2000 adults showed that the majority of the surveyed sample support policies that aim at diminishing their privacy rights in exchange for security (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2007 cited in Zeigler, 2010 p. 319).

Within this framework, the Baseera Center conducted a telephone survey on 1,964 participants from different demographic areas in Egypt to measure the acceptance average of the issued Protest Law to regulate the process of holding demonstrations and strikes. The survey found that 62% of the surveyed sample agree on such a law; it is worth noting that this law requires a three-day notification
before demonstrating and stipulates that no demonstration should be held without obtaining the approval of the Interior Ministry, which has the right to cancel, delay, or move the protest in case a serious breach of security or actual danger was reported.\(^5\) Wolfendale (2006) in this regard explained that in time of insurgencies, security seems to be more appealing than the right to life. In this sense, security and civil rights are vital for all within the current advanced and more developed world (Opoku, 2011). Measures taken by the government, including monitoring people’s behavior, activities, and communicated messages as well as call logs, could help in detecting those who pose a threat to the state, albeit at the expense of the citizen’s civil liberty rights (Christian, 2015).

In contrast, Coleman (2006), Dragu (2011), and Wolfendale (2006) stated that counterterrorism policies and reducing the protection of privacy may not prevent potential terrorist attacks. Moreover, these policies present greater danger and threat compared to terrorism itself; the number of victims from such policies exceeds the number of terrorist victims. In addition, such policies cultivate fear of terrorism across the whole nation unlike terrorism itself which cultivates fear among victims and their families, who do not represent a big proportion of the society (Coleman, 2006; Wolfendale, 2006).

Although US constitution guarantees the right of civil liberties, including the right to privacy, the emergence of new technologies and an evolving social landscape necessitate modifications to the 4th Amendment in order to accommodate such changes (Christian, 2015). Today, terrorist organizations have become highly proficient in the use of the Internet and social media to recruit youth. Tuttle (2016) found that terrorist organizations such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda have developed new marketing strategies and ways to reach the target audience whom they wish to recruit (mainly, Western males and females) through websites, blogs, social networks, and gaming sites; although such groups create highly effective online marketing strategies, the effect is minimal due to government control over

\(^5\) http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/87375.aspx
online platforms and assessments of terrorist propaganda techniques in addition to the counter-terrorist messages adopted by the media and state (Tuttle, 2016).

Several scholars examined the relationship between government trust and supporting hawkish policies as well as tolerance for more restricted measures. In this regard, Wood (2011) stated that counterterrorism policies and measures can either increase or decrease the popularity and trust of the ruling administration, even if it enjoys wide support.

In addition, Davis and Silver (2004) conducted a national survey immediately after the September 11 attacks to examine people’s willingness to sacrifice civil liberty rights in exchange for their personal safety and security. They found that the more people trust the ruling government, the more they are willing to give up their civil rights, regardless of their fear level. The study showed that liberals and African-Americans are less willing to sacrifice their civil liberty rights in comparison to Whites or Latinos. This disparity could be explained in light of the hardships suffered by African-Americans in order to win their rights, making them all the more precious (Davis & Silver, 2004).

Christian (2015) and Davis and Silver (2004) indicated that females, the less educated, low-income groups, and seniors highly value security over privacy. Furthermore, people with higher education and young individuals are less likely to trade off their civil liberty rights for security and are more supportive of the norms of democracy. In the same context, Siegel (2013) argued that regular social network websites users such as Facebook are less likely to be persuaded by security concerns raised by the media and to give up their privacy right. Coleman (2006) added that surveillance of citizens’ communication, even if it was for preventing potential acts of terrorism, is an inexcusable violation of the people’s right to privacy and can be misused and implemented for other purposes.
Sacrificing civil liberty rights in exchange for security is also supported from the psychological perspective, as explained in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs as shown below:

This model theorizes that human beings from a psychological perspective have particular needs to meet in a hierarchical sequence. The basic needs in the lower stage in the pyramid must be met before considering other needs as we go up. Basic needs include the psychological one, which is sleeping, breathing, eating, and drinking. The second level in Maslow’s hierarchy represents the safety and security needs, the third is love and belonging, which is an individual’s social life and relationships (friends, family, intimacy with other gender). The fourth level is esteem, which is earning social respect, achievement and success, therefore, confidence. Finally, the fifth level is self-actualization that represents creativity and innovating thinking as well as morality (Christian, 2015). In brief, human beings will highly value safety/security before meeting other needs such as belonging and morality.

In this sense, the aim of this research study is to add value to the existing literature tackling the concept of political tolerance for more restricted government measures.

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6 (Christian, 2015)
Chapter Four

Methodology

In-depth Interview

As this is an interpretive study that seeks to explain the relationship between TV news viewership and perceived terrorism risk perception among Egyptians post-June 30, 2013, as well as provide in-depth understanding of the dynamics between terrorism threat perception and tolerance for more restrictive government measures, it used the qualitative method of analysis as it was the most suitable method to answer the question of ‘How’ and ‘Why’ rather than ‘What’. For the sake of gaining deeper insight into the terrorism threat perception and tolerance for more restrictive security measures, this study used the in-depth interview method.

In-depth interview is a qualitative research method that involves conducting intensive interviews with a relatively small sample size to investigate the respondents’ perceptions, thoughts, and behavior regarding different aspects in life (Boyce & Neale, 2006). In-depth interview can be defined as a conversation with the purpose (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003) of adding to the theoretical and conceptual knowledge by exploring issues in-depth, as it provides not only the respondents’ answers, but also the reasons behind the given answers; by seeking to explain the respondents’ opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences, and feelings, it offers a more comprehensive picture of the topic under investigation (Boyce & Neale, 2006; DiCiccoBloom & Crabtree, 2006; Lavelle, 2014; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

In-depth interviews have many advantages, among which are the flexibility to investigate sensitive topics (that is, political topics as in authoritarian regimes) because people may feel more relaxed and willing to have a conversation with the researcher as opposed to filling out a survey.
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It also enables the researcher to collect more detailed and accurate information which can later be used to develop the quantitative survey method. Moreover, it allows the researcher to compare between beliefs, values, and attitudes of different groups that exist in the society, thus revealing how different experiences can shape people’s behavior (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Lavelle, 2014; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Within the same framework, Merriam (1998, p. 1) stated that employing a qualitative methodology is advantageous because “research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base” (as cited in Clarke, 2006, p. 10).

In this sense, the researcher chose the qualitative method to investigate the Research Questions, given that cultivation analysis employs qualitative findings to support quantitative findings (Masiba, 2016). In addition, most of the published studies that tackled threat perception and tolerance for tightened security measures have been overwhelmingly quantitative in nature. According to Gingras (2015), most of the published research papers that examined the impact of media on people’s health perception, responses to terrorism, and formation of social reality over the past five years, employed survey as their research methodology. Therefore, in-depth interviews were used to obtain different perspectives of TV news exposure and tolerance for stricter security measures.

**Defining the Universe**

A qualitative research study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with twenty respondents affiliated to the TV media industry, and academic programs in mass communication, political science, and psychology, in addition to a doctor working in psychiatric hospital and citizens from different social segments who watch TV news. Faculty from the field of Mass
Communication, Political Science, and Psychology were drawn purposively from both governmental and private universities. Moreover, the psychiatrist was selected from a private psychiatric health hospital. In addition, media professionals were selected from an Egyptian private TV channel and Egyptian state TV.

The researcher selected both governmental and private universities, as well as private and government media outlets, to unpack different experiences and outlier beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes among faculty staff members and media professionals who work in the same field but under different systems. Furthermore, the researcher selected a private psychiatric hospital due to its highly qualified body of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. In this sense, the selection of universities, media channels, as well as hospital came within the rationale of producing more solid data and providing better indicators of a cross range of marital status, age, and gender.

**The Sample**

In qualitative research a sample size of twenty respondents is considered satisfactory in obtaining sufficient information for analysis (Boyce & Neale, 2006; Neuendorf, 2002 cited in Gingras, 2015). Thus, for the purpose of this study, twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with TV viewers, psychiatrists, TV media professionals, and faculty staff members, all of whom are PhD holders, as they boast a higher degree of knowledge and have extra years of expertise.

The researcher selected political science professors as this study examines major concepts in political science which are civil liberties and security. In addition, mass communication professors were also chosen as they play a key role in shaping the minds of the future media practitioners. Moreover, media professionals were selected to identify the degree of differences or
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similarities in the perceptions of mass communication professors as compared to mass media practitioners already working in the field. Furthermore, TV viewers were included since the core of this study is the relationship between TV news exposure and threat perception among regular TV news viewers. According to the findings of the literature review, TV news viewers are strongly affected by TV news coverage of terrorism; thus, it is highly important to examine the thoughts, perceptions, and behavior of TV news viewers themselves. Finally, the psychology professors and the psychiatrists were included to support or reject the literature review findings which showed that in times of insecurity people from the psychological perspective are more willing to sacrifice their civil liberty rights for safety.

Utilizing the qualitative approach, (1) psychology, (2) political science, as well as (2) mass communication professors were interviewed from both governmental and private universities. Moreover, (1) psychiatrist in addition to (12) TV viewers were interviewed.

**Research Questions**

**RQ1:** How and why does TV terrorism news consumption affect terrorism threat perception among Egyptians post-June 30, 2013?

**RQ2:** (a) How and why does perceived terrorism threat affect Egyptians' willingness to sacrifice civil liberties?

**RQ2:** (b) How and why does the level of trust in government affect Egyptians' willingness to sacrifice civil liberties?
RQ3: How does information collected in RQs 1 and 2 enhance our understanding of the contemporary cultivation role of television as regards the terrorism threat-government trust-civil liberties triad?

Operational Definitions

Privacy: refers to a citizen’s freedom from government intrusion, oversight, surveillance, as well as the right of each citizen to have his/her information safeguarded from external organizations and bodies. (Pavone & Esposti, 2012 cited in Christian 2015). Moreover, surveillance can be defined as censoring people’s activities for protection purposes and is usually connected with the prevention of terrorism. In this study the concept of privacy will often be associated with the term civil liberty term as both indicate freedom from government oversight over communication and behavior and have the same desired end.

Civil liberty can be defined as the citizen’s right to exercise certain freedoms without the interference of the government (Zeljak, 2004 cited in Christian, 2015). It is worth noting that encroaching civil liberties can comprise activities such as detaining and questioning any suspected citizen believed to have connections to terrorism, searching the belongings of citizens, and doing extra monitoring over communication such as recording phone calls on cell phones, electronic mail, and so on (Christian 2015; Davis & Silver, 2004; Wolfendale 2006).

Security: is the responsibility of government to take measures that aim at safeguarding the state and its citizens from any potential threat whether internal or external (Relyea, 2002 cited in Christian 2015). According to Wolfendale (2006), security can be regarded as the absence of threat to fundamental aspects such as “life, bodily integrity, health, and property.”
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Additionally, government trust can be defined as the degree to which a citizen thinks the executive authority in service works for the interest of its people and will take the right decision (Davis & Silver, 2004).

Light, medium and heavy TV viewers: Gerbner et al. (1977, 1978) divided TV viewers’ into three segments: light, medium, and heavy viewers (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990 cited in Belden, 2010). Light TV viewers are defined as those who consume less than 2.5 hr/day (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999 cited in Mullings, 2012). Medium viewers watch about 2.5 to less than 3.5 hr/day (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999 cited in Mullings, 2012). Heavy viewers watch TV more than or equal 3.5 hr/day (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999 cited in Mullings, 2012).

This categorization roughly matches the definition provided by Barwise and Ehrenberg (1988), which indicated that light viewers watch less than 2.2 hr/day (15 hr/week); medium viewers 2.2- 3.5 hr/day (16 – 25 hr/week), and heavy viewers more than 3.5 hr/day (26 or more hr/week). It is worth noting that there are two other segments that were added: non viewers (0 hr/day) and extreme viewers (+8 hr/day) (Hirsch, 1980 cited in Mullings, 2012).

Heavy viewers of terrorism content can be defined as those who are regularly and on a daily basis are exposed to terrorism content; medium viewers are exposed several times/week; and marginal viewers are those who are hardly exposed to such content (Patterson, 2007).

Terrorism-related news and programs on TV includes TV broadcasting related to terrorism that is presented in any of the following formats: newscasts, news programs, talk shows, and current affairs programs.
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In-depth Interview Questions

The interview begins with (2) warm up questions about age and the average hours respondents spend watching terrorism-related news and/or current affairs programs on TV.

RQ1: How and why does TV terrorism news consumption affect terrorism threat perception among Egyptians post-June 30, 2013?

Research Question I was investigated through (7) questions which measure why and how. Some questions were posed to the entire sample, while others were asked only to the concerned respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Interviewed participant</th>
<th>Reason for selection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How is the amount of time spent watching TV terrorism news material related to the viewer’s perception of terrorism threat?</td>
<td>• Psychology professor • Mass communication professors • Media professionals • Psychiatrist</td>
<td>To examine how the perception of citizens is affected by terrorism threat from a psychological perspective. Another aim was to explore whether media professionals as well as mass communication professors are aware of the importance of TV news coverage of terrorism and its impact on citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To what degree do you believe TV terrorism coverage affects people’s general feeling of safety?</td>
<td>• Entire sample</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you consider terrorism a problem that affects your decisions? Why/ Why not? When you think about terrorist attacks in Egypt, do you feel concern for your own</td>
<td>• Entire sample</td>
<td>To investigate the problem of terrorism and its impact, especially since the problem of terrorism affects all citizens without differentiating between people. Also, exploring the terrorism</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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4. How much do you trust the information TV news media provide about the level of terrorism threat? Please elaborate.

5. Some argue that TV-portrayed terrorism threats are exaggerated based on a government agenda to enhance the public’s terrorism threat perception. Explain your take on this argument.

6. How do certain individuals and groups arrive at certain understandings or perceptions of threats?

7. What are the pull and push factors that calibrate a sense of terrorism threat?

RQ2: (a) How and why does perceived terrorism threat affect Egyptians' willingness to sacrifice civil liberties? Research Question (2A) will be explored through (9) questions.

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Under different conditions of heightened terrorism threat as presented in TV news, might people compromise their civil liberties?</td>
<td>Entire sample except media professionals</td>
<td>To examine the perceptions of ordinary citizens towards different concepts relating to political science, psychology,</td>
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<tr>
<td>liberty rights (this should include their right to express their opinion, criticize the government, hold demonstrations, and right to privacy) for security? If so, what determines the extent to which they are willing to compromise? and mass communication, which justify the selection of the aforementioned respondents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Does the use of social network websites affect people's willingness to sacrifice their civil liberties?</td>
<td>Mass communication professors, Political science professors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How do high alarm terrorism threat frames alter the public’s perceptions of our responses to government policies on terrorism and security?</td>
<td>Entire sample except non-expert participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Does a sense of threat influence the type of policies that citizens prefer and the type of political leaders whom citizens want to represent them in times of national security crisis?</td>
<td>Mass communication professors, Psychology professor, Political science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To examine concepts related to the media field (i.e. frames), political science (i.e. security and government policies), and psychology (i.e. perception).

To obtain in-depth information from different perspectives including those from the field of political science, psychology, and mass communication.
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Does a threatening environment lead people to support more punitive types of policies?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | **professors**  
|   | • Psychiatrist |
|   | **Psychiatrist** |
| 6 | Are terrorism threat-feeling citizens more open to acceptance of security-oriented government policies than citizens unconcerned about a looming threat? |
|   | **Psychology professor**  
|   | • Psychiatrist |
|   | To provide more solid explanations from the psychological perspective which therefore enhance our understanding of research question 2A. |
| 7 | When does fear-driven threat perception lead to risky behavior (i.e. immigration)?  
And when does fear-driven threat perception lead to retreat and risk-averse behavior? |
|   | **Political science professors**  
|   | • Psychiatrist |
|   | To fully explain and provide thorough understanding of each concept from both psychological and political perspectives. |
| 8 | Are terrorism threat-feeling citizens likely to generally support any policies offered by politicians or are they more likely to support only policies they believe will protect them from future harm? |
|   | **Psychology professor**  
|   | • Psychiatrist |
**IMPACT OF TV TERRORISM NEWS**

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<th>Reason for selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How much do you trust government rhetoric on the level of terrorism threat and consequent security measures and policies? Please elaborate.</td>
<td>• Entire sample</td>
<td>To compare between the responses of the sample which include professional respondents and regular ones to determine how different/similar professional respondents are from ordinary laymen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To what degree do you find it acceptable that such security measures and policies possibly infringe on civil liberties?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What factors determine public trust in government?</td>
<td>• Political science professors</td>
<td>To boost our understanding and the way we view government trust.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ2:** (b) How and why does the level of trust in government affect Egyptians' willingness to sacrifice civil liberties? Finally, Research Question (2B) will be examined through three main questions.
Moustakas (1994) offered two methodological approaches to data analysis in qualitative research: Van Kaam and Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen methods of data analysis (cited in Johnson, 2014). For the purpose of this study, the data were analyzed manually by using Van Kaam’s method of data analysis as modified by Moustakas (1994) (cited in Johnson, 2014). In this regard, Moustakas (1994) argued that the data of every interview should be transcribed for analysis right after each interview (cited in Johnson, 2014). Therefore, data analysis started during data collection through using (2) major methodological approaches: incessant transcription and writing field notes in order to capture sensitive tones of voices, awkward and uncomfortable silences, confusion, amusements, etc. (Charmaz, 2006 cited in Lavelle, 2011).

For interviews conducted in Arabic, the researcher transcribed the entire interviews verbatim from the audio recordings as well as translated the transcription from Arabic into English. Each translated transcription included the participant’s age and profession (Johnson, 2014). The researcher listened to each audio recording twice while transcribing in order to ensure that every word was included in the transcription to add to the trustworthiness of the study. Each sentence of the transcription were carefully examined to code possible themes, connect information, establish relationships among themes, and identify negative cases to extend the analysis (Gubrium et al., 2012, Merriam, 2009, Ryan & Bernard, 2003 cited in Lavelle, 2011; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009 cited in Johnson, 2014). Unclear answers or sentences were also included and noted, in addition to field notes which included information that the audio recording did not pick up on; field notes enable the researcher to get engaged in the narrative by taking notes of things related to the interview experience (i.e. how the interview had gone) and identify themes to look at in future interviews (Silverman, 2006 cited in Lavelle, 2014). In this sense, the
transcripts were reviewed for analysis using the coding methods commonly used to detect specific themes.

In the coding process, each sentence of the interview transcript was evaluated and coded with relevant themes. After coding each interview, the data scrutinized collectively and the transcripts examined twice in order to connect the interviews with each other and clarify emerging themes as well as specific meanings (Moustakas, 1994, Smith et al., 2009 cited in Johnson, 2014; Lavelle, 2014). All the themes that were repeated in the interview transcripts were integrated together to create the major ideas of the study (Johnson, 2014; Lavelle, 2014). The researcher employed emergent coding; that is, categories and themes were not determined a priori but rather emerged from the actual data (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011)

It is worth noting that the modified model of the Van Kaam data analysis method as outlined by Moustakas (1994) includes six steps (cited in Johnson, 2014) which were used for the purpose of this study as follows:

1. The participants’ statements about their life experiences, point of views, etc. were audio recorded.

2. The participants’ statements were carefully analyzed. Overlapping as well as recurring statements were removed. Vague statements were clarified.

3. The participants’ constant phrases were joined together and categorized into themes.

4. The participants’ phrases were validated by comparing it with the original interview transcripts and those phrases that were not relevant to or reflective of the experience of the participant were removed.
5. Direct quotes were employed from the interview to support the phenomena.

6. A narrative of the participants’ experience were written where such experience examined and compared in order to understand the research questions and were included in the findings of this study.

The researcher drew upon Geertz’s (1973) "thick description" with regards to qualitative writing; that is, to illustrate, describe, provide examples, read between the lines, and explain the significance of findings.

**Reliability and Validity**

There are two vital aspects in the research field which are required in any research type whether qualitative or quantitative (Mullings, 2012). Wimmer and Dominick (2011) stated that preliminary testing is essential for using any scale to guarantee reliability and validity. Thus, a measurement must include both qualities to produce good quality data that gives indicators to the phenomena of interest. Yet, reliability and validity have different implications for the qualitative method; the quantitative method uses specific and well-defined ways to measure reliability and validity which cannot be used in qualitative research. In this regard, Hammersly (1992) indicated that validity can be achieved when the provided explanation of the observed behavior and perception accurately illustrate what was actually observed (as cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). It is worth noting that reliability and validity in qualitative research methodology indicate the quality, trustworthiness, and thoroughness of the information (Golafshani, 2003 as cited in Johnson, 2014).

Within the same framework, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) outlined four ways that contribute to constructing trustworthiness and credibility: multiple methods, audit trail, member
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checks, and research team. Another method was added by Creswell (2007) which is debriefing (as cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the member checks method. In this technique, research respondents were asked to read the researchers’ remarks and conclusions and state if the researcher has correctly depicted what he/she was told (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). The researcher used member checks right after each interview.

Institutional Review Board

Like any research that involves human subjects, this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of American University in Cairo (approval number 2016-2017-040) before preliminary the data collection. The IRB approval helped in protecting the privacy and rights of respondents. The researcher worked on maintaining the trustworthiness of the information by applying the interview protocol, keeping high level of professionalism, abiding by the 60 minutes time frame (as stated on the participants’ consent form), asking only the questions that were approved by the IRB (follow-up questions were not included), and asking for clarification to ensure my full understanding of the respondents’ answers.

Participant Selection

For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted twenty in-depth interviews with Egyptian citizens representing a diverse range of occupations, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The researcher used pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of participants based on the IRB consent form. The sample consisted of (8) experts including the following:

- Maha Sharaf, 49, mass communication professor and vice dean of students affairs at a governmental university.
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- Hussein Salama, 46, mass communication professor at a governmental university.
- Nezar Galal, 46, talk show presenter at a private TV channel
- Samy Farag, 57, TV reporter at state TV channel
- Merna Badr, 52, political science professor at a private university
- Salwa Mamdouh, 41, political science professor at a private university and career diplomat at a government ministry
- Salma Ahmed, 68, psychology professor at a private university and Director of a psychological health and human development center
- Toson Fakhry, 35, psychiatrist at a private psychiatric health hospital

In addition to the (8) expert participants the researcher selected twelve non expert citizens.

- Karim Khaled, 18, college student at a governmental university
- Mariam Reda, 23, real estate sales agent at a private company
- Samya Hazem, 28, bank accountant at a private bank
- Nada Gomaa, 35, employee at a government ministry
- Omar Nawaf, 48, judge
- Elfiky Ahmed, 49, office assistant at a state TV channel
- Rashad Lotfy, 32, employee at a governmental company
- Mahmoud Elattar, 50, secretary at a private company
- Lily Fathy, 50, housewife (bachelor of commerce)
- Madlen Tamer, 53, business woman working in the real estate
- Ragheb Malek, 60, retired military officer
- Hanan Morsy, 70, housewife
Chapter Five

Analysis and Discussion

By utilizing Moustaka’s (1994) model for coding themes and protocols, the results of this study are presented following each Research Question. The interview responses from the twenty participants were examined for similarities, differences, and common themes. Each Research Question was analyzed by extracting themes from the participants' answers to each of the sub questions that relates to the question. Research Question (3) had no sub questions and was answered through analyzing the participants' answers on Questions (1) and (2), respectively. In this sense, themes and participants' quotes were presented to answer each of the (2) Research Questions.

In response to Research Question (1) how and why does TV terrorism news consumption affect terrorism threat perception among Egyptians post-June 30, 2013?, four themes emerged: exposure to terrorism news as a double-edged sword, personal decisions and lifestyle, Egypt is safe and secured, credibility of state TV channels versus private TV channels.

**Viewership of Participants:** The researcher labeled professors, psychiatrists, and media practitioners as experts, while citizens were labeled as non-experts. The researcher conducted the interviews with twelve non-experts and (8) experts. The viewership of the selected participants is: (7) experts and (5) non experts are light viewers; (0) experts and (3) non experts are medium viewers; (1) expert and (4) non-experts are heavy viewers.
Exposure to Terrorism News as a Double-Edged Sword

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

The psychiatrist, the psychology professor, the Mass Communication professors, and TV Media practitioners all agreed that the amount of exposure to terrorism-related news will negatively affect the psychological state of the viewers on the short and long term. Salma Ahmed, a psychology professor at a private university, said that “Watching detailed news stories about the terrorism-related news can have a negative impact on the psychological state of the viewer. She added that watching the headlines about terrorist attacks will not have the same impact as watching the details of each news story.” Moreover, there was a consensus among the aforementioned participants that heavy viewership of violence and bloody images increase the fear level. Toson Fakhry, a psychiatrist at a private psychiatric health hospital argued that, “If the person is exposed to violence and terrorism-related news intensively, he/she would suffer from anxiety, phobias, and tension that could lead to certain stages of frustration, depression thus high levels of negativity. Hence, spending many hrs watching terrorism or violence related material on TV affects the body function of the viewer (i.e. the person’s ability to sleep).” In this regard, Salwa Mamdouh, a career diplomat and part-time political science professor at a private university said, “I barely watch this kind of news because it really comes on my nervous system and hurts me psychologically to the extent that I may not leave home out of fear.”

Both the psychiatrist and the psychology professor stated that heavy and frequent exposure to terrorism-related news can lead to secondary symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which are panic and being pessimistic that something bad will happen. In this regard, Ahmed affirmed that “Secondary symptoms of PTSD eventually lead to the state of numb [ness] which eventually leads to depression.” Building on the same argument, Nezar Galal, TV
presenter at a private TV channel, explained that “Heavy exposure to terrorism-related news make the label of terrorism a normal thing to watch, hear, and read about on the long term. Consequently, the effect of heavy exposure to terrorism-related news leads to apathy, dullness, and depression due to getting used to this type of news.” However, heavy exposure does not necessarily impose the same impact on all viewers where “some people will be more affected than others because they were born with high basic anxiety levels, therefore their exposure to any kind of terror would make them extremely anxious and worried. On contrary, other people may spend even more hrs watching such kind of news, yet they will not be affected the same way as those who have high basic anxiety levels”, said Fakhry.

**Awareness**

Heavy viewership of terrorism-related news increases the awareness of terrorism as a problem; increasing the awareness of terrorism has a positive impact on the perception, attitude, and behavior of viewers. “The more people are exposed to news related to terrorism material, the more they will be aware of this problem and its negative impact, thus the more they will realize the importance of confronting it”, said Hussein Salama, Mass Communication, professor at a governmental university. Galal added that, “Heavy coverage of such news could have a positive effect in terms of rejecting terrorism as well as extremism and willingness to support the government institutions in countering terrorism.”

Merna Badr, political science professor at a private university, argued that increasing the awareness of terrorism is crucial and could be one of the positive impacts of TV news coverage on terrorism. She explained that the mushrooming of extreme ideologies poses a great threat that exceeds the effect of terrorism itself; extreme ideologies lead to terrorism because terrorist organizations employ such methods to recruit young adults, thus depriving the society of human
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capital, the main resource of any nation. In this respect, the real threat does not only persist in being physically attacked, but in the spread of extreme ideologies and beliefs which lead to terrorism. Fakhry provided a possible psychological reason in terms of the positive impact of TV news coverage on terrorism; he said that, “Regardless of the impact of heavy exposure on nervousness, a certain amount of anxiety is natural and healthy. In addition, it can drive people to change and become more cautious.”

Mean World Syndrome

Taking a different tack, the two Mass Communication professors argued that heavy exposure to TV cultivates the perception of the audience toward different aspects of life. Maha Sharaf, Mass Communication Professor at governmental university, explained that, ‘Heavy exposure leads to cultivation effect which means that the messages and images which are transmitted through TV will be cultivated in the viewers’ mind.” Moreover, the viewer will perceive such depictions as a reflection of reality and view the world as a mean place full of crimes, terrorist attacks, vandalism, and terror. Samy Farag, TV reporter at state TV channel, reiterated that, “Heavy exposure to terror news increases the viewers’ perception of being a victim to any of those incidents.” Within the same framework, Salama provided an example on how global media cultivated negative messages about Egypt and how such messages affected the tourism sector by asserting that, “We are suffering from the cultivated messages about Egypt; global media tend to present Egypt as a dangerous place full of terrorists who will attack any foreigner walking down through the Egyptian streets.” Giving another example on the cultivation effect, Salama further stated that, “The coverage of TV news media regarding the bombings and explosions that take place in Iraq cultivated the perception that Iraq is a very dangerous place to visit.”
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Ahmed added that it is not only the global audience who are negatively affected by cultivation, but also Egyptians, particularly in the aftermath of the June 30, 2013 events. According to Ahmed, “People did not leave their home or take transportation because of the media coverage back at that time. This can be explained that the media cultivated messages that led to the secondary symptoms of PTSD, due to the coverage of outrageous events that people could not tolerate, deal, or cope with.” In this sense, Ahmed said that “Media messages can calibrate a sense of threat through shaping the threat schema within the minds of audiences”. Fakhry argued that each person has a threat schema that affects his/her perception regarding perceived dangers. “Americans may perceive an Arab man as a source of threat due to the threat schema that was cultivated by global media messages (i.e. all Arabs are terrorists)”, stated Ahmed. It is worth noting that the influence of the Mean World Syndrome can spread among people just like an infectious disease described by Fakhry as “the feeling of threat [that] can be manipulated by others through sharing stories and terror events. The transmission of such stories could lead to rumors which are the second factor after the media that calibrates the sense of terrorism threat.”

Personal Decisions and Lifestyle

Mass Communication and Psychology professors, media practitioners, as well as psychiatrists agreed that exposure to terrorism-related news affects the viewer's decisions and lifestyle. Sharaf said that, “Heavy exposure to terrorism-related news material affect people's decisions and perceptions regarding traveling to certain countries, leaving home, and so on” while Ahmed noted that such exposure TV exposure, regardless of the amount, can affect the decisions as well as lifestyle of people in terms of not leaving home, going on holiday, or taking public transportation.
The impact of terrorism-related news on personal decisions and lifestyle was explained by Galal, Farag, Ahmed, Fakhry, Sharaf, and Salama who all agreed that exposure to terrorism-related news can increase the sense of insecurity among people, in turn, affecting the decision-making process. In this regard, Salama said, “Coverage of terrorism-related news affects the person’s general feeling of safety which is a common impact even in the most developed countries.” Moreover, the intensity of covering violent events or terrorist attacks can shape the perception of people in terms of their own and their family’s safety, and will thus negatively influence their decisions in different matters (i.e. their living place). Giving an example of this influence, Mamdouh said she had to move from her apartment downtown in 2014 due to the increased number of terrorist attacks in her district, explaining that, “There were bombs everywhere, so I decided to close my apartment even though it was magnificent and close to my work. I rented a small apartment in the suburbs to keep my kids safe until I felt things got better, then I moved back to it.” Similarly, Sharaf added that “TV news coverage of terrorism affect the general feeling of safety. TV news exposure makes people more frightened because they will relate what they saw in TV news to their real life”. In this sense, Nada Gomaa, employee at a government ministry, said terrorism affects her decisions, especially that current affairs are having a negative psychological impact on her, admitting that, “My decisions are greatly affected by my psychosocial state. Moreover, any tension or disturbances in the country affect my ability to make any decision related to me or to my family. We used not to leave home particularly after the 30th of June revolution because we felt that the threat was very imminent and real.”

Building on the same argument, Fakhry explained that the impact of terrorism-related news on people's feeling of safety differs from one person to another; the coverage of TV terrorism-related news does not have the same impact on all people, adding that the extent of
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either pessimistic or optimistic feelings in the person can mediate the effect of exposure. “The interpretation of terrorism-related news depends on the personality traits of each person. Some people may interpret a terrorist attack as an incidental thing that could happen to anyone, while others may exaggerate and feel threatened because of one incidental attack”, said Fakhry. Both, Fakhry and Ahmed supported this argument by stating that there are other variables that mediate the impact of news media messages such as the individual’s demographics, personality traits, income, gender, age, and so on.

Figure 1 Impact of terrorism on people's general feeling of safety, decisions, and fear of becoming a terrorism victim

According to Figure 1, terrorism is considered a problem that affects the decisions of 95% of the interviewed sample (n=20). Mamdouh said that terrorism always affects her decisions, explaining that:

I am a diplomat, so I travel all around the world so when we come to the choice where to be posted I always take the safest place and this is because I am a mother so I have great responsibilities toward my kids. Furthermore, if my work offered me anyplace where I
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think there’s a 10% possibility of being exposed to a terrorist attack, I say, no sorry even if this place is supposed to be wonderful.

In addition, there was consensus among the expert participants that terrorism coverage affects the decisions of certain segments more than others; Sharaf explained this point by stating that, “As an investor, I will check the findings of global terrorism index before deciding to invest in any country.” Madlen Tamer, Egyptian real estate investor, added that “the coverage of terrorism prevents me from going to certain areas which are presented as unsecured districts.” Ragheb Malek, retired military officer, mentioned a different aspect in terms of how terrorism affects his decisions by stating that “Once the security situation stabilizes, so do other sectors such as tourism, investment, etc. This is relevant to me because when the tourism sector is damaged, so does the national income and this will be reflected on my income and standard of living. In this sense, terrorism greatly affects my decisions directly and indirectly.”

Within the same framework, Elfiky Ahmed, an office assistant at a state TV channel said: “Of course, the problem of terrorism affects the decisions of everyone. For instance, if I don’t feel secured my decisions will be affected in terms of staying home and not sending my kids to school.” Omar Nawaf, who serves as a judge, said “I think one million times before making any decision. I did not use to think that much or take all of these precautions before January 25th revolution.” Rashad Lotfy, an employee at a governmental company, also added “I always feel that I am under threat and this feeling makes me very worried and tense. I always take wrong and irrational decisions because the threat of terrorism put my life at risk.”
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Egypt Is Safe and Secure

Even though 80% of the interviewed sample (n=20) said when they think about terrorist attacks in Egypt, they also feel concerned for their safety and their family’s safety, most of the study participants said they feel safe regarding living in Egypt. In addition, more than half of the sample (55%) does not think they could be victims of a terrorist attack. Most of the study participants explained that the security situation has greatly improved and the toll of terrorist attacks has decreased in comparison to the period following the events of June 30, 2013. They added that most of the terrorist attacks do not take place in the twenty-seven governorates of Egypt, but are only limited to the Sheikh Zowayd region in North Sinai governorate.

Believing in God’s will and fate was another common explanation provided by many of the study participants, who asserted that “… we do not control our lives, living or dying depend on God’s will. In this sense, I do not think I could be a victim of such incidents especially that terrorist attacks only occur in North Sinai and our security forces are working on countering these attacks; Egypt is secured and even safer than any other country”, stated Nawaf. “I could become a victim of a terrorist attack, especially that I live downtown and I have witnessed a bomb explosion, but I am not that scared of death because it’s simply a matter of fate”, stated Karim Khaled, freshman student at a governmental university; “anyone could be a victim of such incidents but I always believe that this depends on the God’s will”, said Samya Hazem, accountant at a private bank.

In addition, Galal argued that “terrorist attacks seldom occur in Egypt and terrorism exists only in an area that does not exceed 1% of the total size of North Sinai.” This is in line with Mamdouh’s statement that:
Egypt is safer than other countries and I feel so much secure now. This could be because the toll of incidents decreased or could be because the propaganda or the media stopped talking much about this or because I don’t watch it that much, I really do not know. But I think at the time being things had become so much better in Egypt and the security has greatly improved.

According to Badr, “We always consider statistics and that’s why we do not feel terrorism can approach us here in Egypt.” Moreover, Ahmed and Salama agreed that even if they feel scared, they do not think they could fall victim to terror attacks because Egypt is secure and protected by a strong army. “If I will be a victim of a terrorist attack it will not be in Egypt but any other country as I travel a lot through USA, Germany, and France. I think I could be a victim in any of those countries especially that Egypt is more secure than ever before”, said Ahmed.

In contrast, Fakhry and some of the non-expert participants said anyone could become a victim of a terrorist attack, especially since terrorism is treacherous and does not differentiate between good and bad. According to Farag, “Terrorist attacks can occur anytime, there are no standards as I could be walking down the street and suddenly crash into a solid material that could kill or hurt me. So I could be a victim to a great extent.” Similarly, Lotfy divulged that, “Whenever I go to work, I feel that I will be the next victim of a terrorist attack. I feel scared to death of the idea of terrorism and that it could hurt me.” In the same context, Lily Fathy, housewife, expressed her concerns regarding the current economic circumstances which she believes could increase the toll of terrorist attacks, stating that “… anyone could be a victim, so why wouldn’t I be? I believe that the current economic circumstances can trigger people to be criminals or terrorists.”
According to the psychiatrist and psychology professor, the level of trust and credibility of TV news media are an essential factor that leads to threat perception. It is worth noting that the entire study participants said they trust the official statements and reports which are broadcast through TV state media. However, 60% of the interviewed participants perceive TV state channels as a credible source of information; in this sense, the study participants were divided between the credibility of TV state media coverage and the official statements. In the same context, 65% participants claimed that private TV channels are usually driven by the agenda of their owners and do not work for the interest of the nation.

Further, many non-experts and experts, including Galal, argued that the information regarding terrorist attacks cannot be manipulated and most of the fabrication, as well as exaggeration are presented in the news analysis. “I totally trust the official statements of the ministries of the interior and defense, in addition to the statements of the public prosecutor. Yet, I do not trust the analysis as well as explanation provided by some experts includes exaggeration, intimations, and sometimes underestimations of the events. Furthermore, I think most of the analysts are not well informed and lack experience”, said Galal. Other participants explained that they trust what they believe and see in reality, an idea that was elaborated by Farag’s statement that, “We do not need to watch TV news to trust the information provided about the level of threat as we already live in this threat. So I trust the information provided because I have already witnessed this event as a citizen.”

In this respect, many of the non-expert participants had the same opinion as media practitioners, as explained in the following statements:
“I trust the information and news provided in TV state channels because terrorism is alive and we already witnessed such threat in our daily life. Yet, most of the fabrication and exaggeration are presented in the news analysis. In addition, I believe that private TV channels tend to exaggerate in order to boost the ratings”, said Gomaa.

“I trust the information provided in the state media because it reflects on the official statements. Yet, I believe the state TV channels need to enhance their performance to cope with the 21st-century technology. On the other side, I have many doubts regarding the credibility of the private TV channels which I think are driven by the agenda of their owners”, said Nawaf.

“I trust the information presented in the state media because I perceive it as a credible source of information that aims at developing the society. On the other side, I do not trust the private channels because they have interests other than developing the country”, stated Lotfy.

“I trust the coverage of TV state channels which I think reflect reality because they do not have any interest in fabricating or exaggerating the events”, said Malek.

“I trust the information that is logic and reflects what we already experience in real life”, stated Hazem.

The situation was no different for the professors, all of whom had similar views as the non-expert and media practitioner participants.

“There are some considerations on the coverage of TV state media; the coverage is very narrow and not inclusive. However, I trust the information provided by the state media even more than private media; the coverage of private TV channels are usually biased and depends on the owner’s agenda”, said Salama.
Mamdouh’s expressed his attitudes towards media sources by explaining that:

Recently I started to trust the governmental media more than the private. I work for the government so I believe that the government has been developing its performance and endorsing the policy of being credible to a great extent. It’s very hard to think of people as idiots, particularly with the emergence of satellite TV. Viewers can simply change the channel and turn to other global media if they feel the media is not being credible, particularly that credibility is no longer a luxury, it is a must. Viewers have many sources of information, thus they can turn their back on you. In this sense, I trust the government more than private TV channels which I think seek benefits, mainly financial ones. In this sense, once you start to set money as a target, you lose your credibility and objectivity because you seek to highlight the news that will attract the biggest number of audience. Yet, the problem with the governmental media is that in some cases it lacks the facilities (international correspondents) but I would rather prefer to suffer from lack of information because I can tell there is a lack of information, rather than suffering from misleading information.

Conversely, some participants said they do not take any information for granted and they have to double check the information through the internet. Other participants asserted that they do not trust the information provided on TV state channels due to their misleading coverage of the January 25 Revolution, which affected the credibility of such channels. In this regard, Fakhry said that we are trapped between the exaggerated coverage as in private TV channels and lack of coverage as in state TV channels. Thus, we seem to be “living in uncertainty; we do not know what to believe or trust anymore”, said Fakhry. Badr also added that she barely watches TV state media because it is neither sufficiently attractive nor up to date. She argued that in cases where
there are terrorist attacks, citizens will need a channel that is more mobile than governmental channels.

Based on this, some of the participants (n=6) said the coverage of terrorism on both private and state TV channels is based on a government agenda. Two participants think that the government tends to exaggerate the coverage of terrorism-related news to endorse certain measures through stirring fear and a sense of insecurity while four participants believe that the coverage is based on the government agenda to increase public awareness regarding terrorism threat.

Conversely, most of the sample (n=14) think the coverage of terrorism reflects reality, adding that such coverage will work against the interests of the country. Terrorism-related news conveys negative messages about the security state within the country, and thus will affect tourism, investment, and many other sectors of the society, a perception which raises the following doubts voiced by Mamdouh:

Do you think that any government is not smart enough not to broadcast news about terrorism so at least it will leave the impression to its people and foreigners that everything is safe in its country? Which of both trends is smarter increasing threat perception to increase awareness for the sake of economy, tourism, and public order or try to limit this kind of news to give the impression that the place is safe and attract people to visit the country and people could go to work and so on?

In summary, to identify the differences and similarities between the expert and non-expert participants, the researcher identified (5) main ideas from the answers of participants on the sub-questions related to Research Question 1 which are: impact of terrorism on safety concerns and
decisions, fear of victimization, credibility of state TV channels, credibility of private TV channels, and the reliance of terrorism TV news coverage on government agenda.

According to Figure 1, the answers of the expert and non-expert participants regarding the impact of terrorism on them were relatively similar; 87.50% expert and 75% non-expert participants said when they think about terrorist attacks in Egypt, they feel concerned for their safety. They explained that terrorism is a serious problem that makes them very anxious and worried not only about themselves, but also about their family’s safety. Furthermore, both the expert and the non-experts generally agreed that terrorism affects their decisions and lifestyle where 87.50% expert and 100% non-expert participants argued that terrorism affects their daily life routine and their decisions in terms of going on holiday, leaving home at night, investing, sending their children to school, going to work, etc. In addition, more than half of the expert and non-experts said they perceive the coverage of TV state channels as credible, adding that TV state channels need to enhance their performance to meet the viewers’ requirements in the 21st century. Moreover, both the expert and non-expert participants agreed that the coverage of private TV channels is not as credible as the state TV coverage where they claimed that the coverage of private TV channels is driven by the agenda of its funders. In addition, the main target of private TV channels is to increase viewership, hence the tendency to exaggerate events.

On the other hand, there were differences relating to the feeling of becoming a victim, where 58.30% non-experts think they could be victims of a terrorist attack in comparison to 25% experts. Therefore, there were differences in terms of whether the threat of terrorism could actually touch them. In addition, a total of 41.6% non-experts think the coverage of terrorism-related news is based on the government agenda; some of them explained that the coverage is based on the government agenda to increase awareness, while two non-experts argued that it is
only a way to endorse certain measures and policies. In contrast, 12.50% experts think that the coverage of terrorism-related news is based on government agenda. It is worth noting that 62.50% experts perceive private TV channels as a credible source in comparison to 8.30% non-expert participants who do not trust the coverage of such channels.

Figure 2 Differences and similarities between experts and non-experts

The researcher looked for similarities and difference between light, medium, and heavy viewers. According to Figure 3, light, medium, and heavy viewers all perceive terrorism as a threat that affects their general feeling of safety and decisions. Moreover, most of the participants (light, medium, and heavy viewers) do not think the coverage of terrorism is based on government agenda. In addition, they do not trust the news coverage of private TV channels. Many of them explained that TV news coverage of private channels is based on the funder’s agenda. Yet, both light and medium viewers showed a fairly low percentage in reported fears of becoming a victim to a terrorist attack as opposed to 60% of heavy viewers who think they could be victims. Both
heavy and medium viewers perceive TV state media as a credible source in comparison to 33.3% of light viewers.

![Figure 3 Differences and similarities according to viewership](image)

Most of the research participants are light viewers, a factor which could have two explanations: the first is related to the low credibility levels, particularly among non-expert participants; 90% of the light non-expert viewers in comparison to 0% light expert viewers think the coverage of terrorism-related news is based on government agenda. In addition, 20% of the light non-expert viewers perceive TV state media as a trusted source of information and 0% of them trust the information provided in the private media. The second explanation could be due to the increasing popularity of technology (i.e. booming of 4G, online streaming, etc.) leading people not to rely on TV as their main source of information or it could be that they are using their computers as TV sets.

It was also noticed that light viewers are more affected than the medium and heavy viewers in terms of their decisions, fear of victimization, and safety concerns. This was explained by Fakhry who stated that lack of terrorism-related news exposure has a negative impact that
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surpasses the effect of exaggerating the coverage of terrorism-related news. He explained that the lack of terrorism coverage increases anxiety levels and sense of insecurity due to the spread of rumors and misleading information that people could be sharing by word of mouth, social media, and the internet. Another possible explanation is related to human nature, as people usually fear what they do not have enough information about (i.e. the unknown). This means that non-expert light viewers are particularly affected because they have neither the full picture nor enough information to help them grasp the real situation.

In response to Research Question (2A) (How and why does perceive terrorism threat affect Egyptians’ willingness to sacrifice civil liberties?), two main themes emerged: prioritizing civil liberties versus national security: determinants and nuances as well as effects of perceived reality of terrorism threat on Public Response.

Prioritizing Civil liberties Versus National Security: Determinants and Nuances

TV news media can play a compelling role in urging people to trade off their liberties for security by presenting terrorism as an imminent threat. Fakhry contended that in time of war or threat people ask for nothing more than getting rid of the enemy. If people believed what is being presented in terms of being under national security threat, they will be willing to sacrifice even their liberties. He explained that the sense of security is a basic human need that overrides any other. In this regard, Ahmed made reference to a common theory in psychology which is Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs, explaining that there are basic human needs we have to meet before achieving any other needs and safety ranks as the top priority of the model.

In addition, Mamdouh reiterated that when the country is under threat, priority is given to national security which is something that exists in politics and is a fact of life. She supported her
argument by quoting David Cameron, former prime minister of the United Kingdom, as saying that, “When the national security is threatened, do not ask me about human rights.” This rearticulated quote came as a part of his speech in response to the riots the United Kingdom witnessed in August, 2011. Mamdouh further added that there are three fundamental goals for any country which acknowledged accepted in the area of political science: the first and main goal for any country in the world is survival, the second is freedom, and the third is economic luxury. “If the survival of the nation is threatened by terrorism it is very logical that the government endorses specific tough measures in order to confront this threat (i.e. imposing a state of emergency or curfew). People will, therefore, accept such measures because they have the same target which is survival”, claimed Mamdouh. In the same context, Salama noted that people become more willing to sacrifice their civil liberties for security when TV news media (this includes the news coverage and analysis) concentrates on the worst case scenario if terrorism spreads throughout the state. “When talk show presenters frequently broadcast images and footages about other countries suffering from terrorism such as Syria or Libya, etc. people become very affected, therefore, they become more willing to sacrifice their civil liberties”, stated Salama. Sharaf added that the June 30 events offer a clear example of ordinary people’s willingness to sacrifice anything to feel secure, pointing out that, “We as Egyptians were united on June 30, 2013 to get rid of the Muslim Brotherhood who represented a real threat and danger to the state. In this sense, people sacrificed their civil liberties for security back then and are still sacrificing just to feel secure.”

The case was no different among the non-expert participants where the majority confirmed that restricting freedoms and civil liberties for security is a normal and accepted reaction under terrorism threat. Many non-experts contended that having civil liberties will neither counter terrorism nor guarantee the basic need in life, which is survival. Moreover, many argued that
survival is as important as other basic human needs (i.e. eating and drinking) while other participants expressed their concern at other people’s refusal to compromise their civil liberties for security. Mariam Reda, sales agent at a private company, stated that, “I think whoever insists on his liberties under an imminent threat of terrorism is an ignorant citizen who does not realize the amount of danger that will emerge if we did not take part in countering terrorism through sacrificing some or even all of our liberties.”

On the other hand, some non-expert participants said freedoms should be granted provided it does not lead to chaos or vandalism. Several others argued that restricting freedoms could have as negative an impact as terrorism itself, a point which is explained by Fathy as follows:

There are many things that took place in the country such as the rise of prices which created a state of rage among citizens. In this perspective, if the government did not allow citizens to express their opinion regarding such economic policies, there would be a negative effect that is no different than the effect of terrorism. Therefore, we should allow people to express their opinion as long as they are not violating the law.

Some expert and non-expert participants asserted that civil liberties do not contradict with maintaining security. Terrorism is a problem that faces many countries in the world, thus there are well-defined counter methods that do not infringe on freedoms. Within the same framework, Badr warned that it is very dangerous to compromise civil liberties for security, advising that, “We need to find balance and reform the security system so that it can secure us without compromising our civil liberties.” The same argument was put forth by Fathy who claimed that “I do not see any contradiction between having security along with our civil liberties.” Building on the same argument, Tamer agreed that “security does not contradict with having our freedoms; the government has to allow people express their opinion to know what is going on and therefore
enhance its policies as well as procedures.” However, she warns that “people have to respect the rule of law and to express their opinion in a way that does not lead to chaos or public disorder.”

In this sense, many experts as well as non-experts confirmed that they are willing to compromise some of their civil liberties so long as there is no infringement on their humanity, right to privacy, and freedom of expression. Some of those expert and non-expert participants observed that freedoms should enable the government to function more efficiently and adopt better policies, since “Constructive criticism should be a guide to any rational government to function better”, according to Hanan Morsy, a housewife.

Most of the interviewed participants said there are major factors that control the extent to which people are willing to compromise their liberties. One of the most common answers was related to the level of people’s fear, which means that the more people feel threatened, the more they will be willing to compromise. The belief in the existence of a real threat was also another common answer. Mamdouh stated that when people are convinced that they are under severe threat, they become more willing to compromise their liberties and to cooperate. This is in line with Fakhry’s statement that, “The extent in which people become willing to compromise depends on the existence of a compelling event (i.e. occupation); occupation does not only deprive people of their freedoms but also their dignity.” In addition, awareness was mentioned by many participants who believe that when people are aware of the consequences of the threat, they will be more willing to trade off their liberties. Sharaf said that the media should increase the people’s awareness in terms of threat with evidence and statistics, explaining that “Awareness is very important and the media’s role is to prove the existence of a threat.”

Within the same context, Lotfy argued that the extent of compromising depends on the quality of services that the government provides (i.e. security, food, commodities, etc), pointing
out that “If the government is providing me with basic needs which include food commodities, security, job opportunities, etc. I will be more willing to compromise.” Other non-expert participants said that the willingness of sacrificing civil liberties depends on how much people trust the government’s measures and policies in countering terrorism. Tamer provided a different explanation, explaining that the extent to which people are willing to trade off their civil liberties depends on how much they fear the security forces, arguing that “the more people are intimidated by the security forces, the more willing they will compromise.”

Based on this, Ahmed said sacrificing civil liberties depends on the amount of responsibility of each person, illustrating that “if a father knows that people who demonstrate are sent to jail, he will think twice before demonstrating because he has commitments towards his family.” Badr and Ahmed agreed that willingness to trade off liberties is affected by gender and age. As explained by Badr:

Older people, as well as women, will be keen on compromising their civil liberties because they are family oriented and have responsibilities. Yet, youth will be less willing to compromise their civil liberties for the sake of security because they are more impulsive thus keener on their civil liberties. Consequently, the more you get older the more you get attached to securitization.

Ahmed further elaborated that, “age has a great role in affecting the willingness to compromise because the elder are more rational in terms of considering the consequences of their actions.”

Salama, Badr, and Sharaf all agreed that users of social network websites will also be less willing to sacrifice their civil liberties with both Salama and Sharaf providing two possible explanations regarding this issue. According to Salama, “people now use social media as their
only mean of expressing their opinion freely without any considerations of being censored, thus they will be less willing to accept infringing their civil liberties” while Sharaf asserted that “people usually share gossips and rumors through social media in which they trust. Moreover, the information provided through social network websites are not credible or complete. Therefore, social media users are less likely to sacrifice their civil liberties because they are less informed and are less aware of the situation on the ground.”

Effects of Perceived Authenticity of Terrorism Threat on Public Response

All expert participants agreed that when different media channels raise the alarm in terms of terror threat, it affects the perception, attitude, and behavior of people. High alarm loses its effect when it is raised regularly as it will act as a false alarm. In this sense, the repetitive alarm of threat make people unable to differentiate if the alarm was real or fake, thus rendering it ineffective in the case of a real imminent threat. In addition, the repetitive alarm of terrorism threat raises skepticism about the effectiveness of the endorsed security-oriented policies by the government. Mamdouh said if this was the first time that people start to face terrorism similar to the recent terror acts in Europe then people will not receive the alarm as a negative demonstration of the government policy. If this alarm continued for an extended period of time, however, people will start to ask, according to Mamdouh, “What the hell are you doing, we have been facing this for years and if you can’t stop it or control it, then you are simply not taking effective measures.” From the psychological perspective, Fakhry argued that, “Terrorism threat alarm does affect the citizen’s responses on the short term only. The problem starts when the citizen does not see a threat in real life and that no one is actually fighting so he/she will rebel against these measures.”
Furthermore, Salama argued that high alarm of terrorism threat stimulates the sense and perception of insecurity and fear among people. The expert participants unanimously agreed that under high alarm people become more willing to compromise their civil liberties. Ahmed said that high alarm increases the perception and sense of insecurity, thus, the more people are unsecure, the more they will regress. She explained that such insecurity leads to the prevalence of emotional rather than rational thinking due to the heightened anxiety; that is, emotional levels dominate the ability to think rationally, leading to behavioral regression.

There was consensus among the expert participants that under high alarm of threat people will accept and support any measures or policies taken by the government. Ahmed explained that high alarm of threat leads to anxiety, fear, and apprehension, building up to a state of compliance to any suggested solution. Galal added that people usually support the state if the alarm was for national rather than media mobilization, explaining that media mobilization can be likened to a propaganda technique that is not based on a real threat unlike national mobilization that aims at achieving a particular development objective. Noting that people are smart enough to differentiate between national and media mobilization, he pointed out that “When the Egyptians felt that there was terrorism threat, they took to the streets in compliance to the president’s speech where he asked the Egyptians to give him permission to counterterrorism.” Pursuing the same line, Mamdouh explained that “If the alarm is real and the government has high credibility, people will be responsive to the government policies.”

Moreover, terrorism threat alarm affects the type of policies people prefer. Fakhry, Ahmed, and Salama argued that people under different types of threat would prefer the kind of punitive and restrictive policies to bring about a speedy outcome. In the same context, Mamdouh stated that, “Under threat, people will think that the best solution is to adopt hard and tough
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policies, especially with criminals who are threatening me and my kids. Every time you see the victims of Kerdasa Police Station, you feel like you want to get even with those terrorists."

In addition, Ahmed explained that a threatening environment leads to the vicious circle of anxiety, fear, and depression. Therefore, people will become vulnerable to any suggested policy which is presented as a kind of salvation to ward off any potential risk or harm. Sharaf also added that terrorism in the 21st century is different than that of other historical eras; terrorist organizations use highly advanced technologies and techniques to recruit youth in addition to planting latent cells among one’s neighbors, colleagues, and so forth. In this sense, “Many people would support martial laws to reach speedy solutions and to deter any individual intending to cause harm to others. Moreover, when people experience threat and witness terror events, they will be more supportive to securitization”, said Sharaf. In this respect, Mamdouh addressed the impact of the flagged war against terrorism which was adopted by the Bush administration in the aftermath of the Sept 11 attacks, saying that:

I would refer you to the poll conducted by some American media research centers on the American invasion of Iraq, which found that 70% of the Americans accepted the invasion of Iraq because the republican government was very smart in marketing the idea that invading Iraq is very much related to its war against terrorism and that the invasion would prevent any potential attack against the US. Although the Americans suffered heavy losses from this invasion, they supported the idea because they thought this would protect them, therefore, they re-elected Bush [administration] for a second term.

In this sense, people under terrorism threat will be more open to any endorsed policies that aim at protecting them. Fakhry added “We can apply this to any sort of threat that may not be related to terrorism. For instance, the phenomenon of kidnapping children makes the public opinion toward
the kidnapper totally negative and gives rise to calls for punitive policies such as applying death penalty against the aggressor. Therefore, threat makes people more amenable to restrictive and punitive measures.” However, this is not always the case where Ahmed argued that accepting any policy depends on education, social status, and culture. For instance, some social segments (i.e. the rich strata) have their own safety measures; hence, they will be less likely to accept things without scrutinizing them, unlike the poor who will be keener on securitization.

Nevertheless, Badr contended that under terrorism threat people will demonstrate opposing beliefs: some will not believe that securitizing is the solution to fight extremism and tolerate difference, while others will think that the only solution is through securitization. Badr further elaborates that:

Securitization is effective in the short term but in the long run too much securitization leads to terrorism and there are many who advocated this idea, it’s even more advocated in the media and movies. I used to give the example of The Yacoubian Building movie, the scene when Taha Elshazly went to his mentor after he was in prison telling him that he was sexually abused and he is going out to take revenge.

It is worth noting that The Yacoubian Building, by the novelist Alaa Al Aswany, tackles the social instabilities, such as corruption and sexual harassment, which have become rampant in Egyptian society. Badr concluded that “Securitization is important but how you deal with securitization and how you mechanize it by developing the system in order not to deal with eroding civil liberties is what really matters.”

Finally, terrorism threat alarm affects the behavior of people. According to Fakhry, threat can be a very effective tool that can be used to change the behavior and perception of others,
added that, theoretically speaking, “People do not change unless something threatens their life”; the result is that people may move towards self-improvement because of this threat feeling. Conversely, the threat could lead to a negative behavior; as Ahmed explained:

Under threat perception, people may make irrational decisions which could include risky or retreating behavior...both actions taken by an individual who has high levels of fear and wants to get rid of such a threatening feeling. The first could get rid of threat feeling by being more aggressive and impulsive while the other will try to escape from this feeling by retreating due to being incapable of countering the situation. In this sense, when a decision is taken under threat feeling, it will lead to depression because threat makes people more hesitant and irrational.

Fakhry concluded that coping with threat perception differs from one person to another as it depends on the personality traits of each individual.

Within the same framework, Fakhry argued that nothing can persuade someone to change or to do anything in life as much as his safety. The label of terrorism makes the majority of people more responsive and easily convinced. Badr, Ahmed, and Mamdouh also believed that high terrorism threat level leads to a greater persuasion of the security-oriented measures. “Threat gives the politicians a very good argument to persuade the public about security-oriented measures or any other policies”, said Mamdouh. In addition, “When politicians provide factual and accurate information in a caring tone under threat conditions, people will likely be persuaded”, argued Ahmed. Yet, Mamdouh asserted that any utter failure in the outcome of such policies will greatly affect the ability of politicians to persuade the public about further security oriented measures. Ahmed added that, even under threat, intervening variables can affect the degree of persuasion such as the credibility and communication skills of political leaders.
According to Badr, people under threat are willing to justify the existence of authoritarianism and become susceptible to the romanticized image of a benevolent dictatorship. She supported her argument by saying “a decade of a fair tyrant is better than a day in chaos. For instance, many Iraqis consider the Saddam Hussein era better than the situation now in Iraq.” In contrast, Ahmed, as well as Fakhry, said that in national crises people will not choose a tyrant who will spark their fears which are already high due to the existence of a threat. Therefore, Mass Communication and the psychology professors, psychiatrist and Mamdouh all concurred that people would prefer the type of moderate decisive leader who has a charismatic and strong personality with the ability to take speedy actions without any hesitation, in addition to reassuring the public through his speeches. Moreover, he should be creative in providing bold solutions, as when “…the government decided to bombard ISIS locations in Libya only hours after ISIS elements slaughtered twenty-five Egyptians. This was a highly decisive move that was made by a strong leader”, argued Mamdouh. It is worth noting that, on February 12, 2015 ISIS posted a TV report on Dabiq (their online magazine) showing the slaughtering of twenty-five immigrant Egyptians in Sirte, Libya.

In response to Research Question (2B) (How and why does the level of trust in government affect Egyptians’ willingness to sacrifice civil liberties?), two main themes emerged: Determinants of public trust in government and weighing civil liberties against national security.

Determinants of Public Trust in Government

Many non-expert participants made a reference to the government trust when they talked about their willingness to sacrifice their civil liberties. Mamdouh posed the following rhetorical question: “If the government is functioning well and providing public services, what else will build their trust?” She then explained the meaning of functioning well, which is achieving the
three fundamental goals: survival, freedom, and economic luxury. “If the government is capable of protecting me and my family and if I have freedom and can have the basic needs (i.e. I can send my kids to school, find products at stores) what else I would ask for? Subsequently, I will feel that this government is functioning well and I will give it my trust”, argued Mamdouh. On the other hand, Badr had a different approach where she argued that transparency, credibility, and accountability are the main pillars that build government trust, pointing out that the level of government credibility is currently not very high as the government does not achieve many of the aforementioned pillars. Yet, this lackluster performance is considered acceptable as citizens cannot realistically expect things to work out perfectly during transitional periods.

In the same context, most of the research participants said they trust the government rhetoric on the level of the terrorism threat. In addition, most of the participants trust the endorsed security oriented measures and procedures; they explained that such measures were efficient and have led to great improvements in the security situation and in maintaining the public order. There was a consensus among the interviewed sample that the endorsed measures led to positive outcomes, one of which is the decreased number of terrorist attacks which has declined in comparison to the toll right after the events of June 30, 2013. Many participants added that Egypt is now totally safe with the exception of a small region located in the North Sinai governorate. “Having our daily life routine is an indicator that the government is functioning well and I can trust it”, stated Mamdouh. Yet, most of the non-expert participants said they need more security measures and policies to prevent any possible terrorist attack. As Malek pointed out, it is practically impossible for any government in the world to offer its citizens 100% security protection. It is worth mentioning that many respondents said they have great confidence in the armed forces which they referred to as their ‘shelter and backbone’.
“I trust anything related to the government, including policies, actions and statements. We have a rational government that scrutinizes any policy before endorsement”, said Ahmed

“I totally trust anything related to the government whether statements or measures because our government always set the citizen as a main priority and because it works for the interest of people. The procedures are already very effective and led to the declining of terrorist attacks”, said Lotfy.

“I totally trust the endorsed measures and we already started to see the decline in the toll of terrorist attacks, which reflects the effectiveness of the adopted measures. Moreover, I am sure that very soon north Sinai will be announced a terror-free zone free because our military troops are covering our back”, asserted Malek. “I totally trust the official statements, yet I do not really trust the adopted policies because I don’t think security measures are the only solution to counterterrorism. There must be a comprehensive system to fight religious extremism and extreme ideologies. This system should include various political parties, economic reform plans, and strong media system; this system is still under construction in Egypt and, unfortunately, we’re not doing much to combat extremism at the moment”, stated Galal.

According to Figure 4, the experts (100%) and non-experts (91.60%) said they trust the government statements regarding the level of terrorism. Moreover, the same respective percentages expressed their trust towards the adopted security-oriented measures. They clarified that such policies were very effective and have led to great improvements in the security situation.
Figure 4 Government’s trust among experts and non-experts

Weighing Civil Liberties against National Security

Many of the interviewed participants stated that security should precede any other right (i.e. civil liberties). Moreover, the survival of the nation should be a priority, “I accept to compromise my civil liberties and freedoms because if we lost our homeland, we will have nothing left and will cease to exist”, stated Reda. Some expert participants warned that allowing freedoms under national security threat will lead to chaos. According to Sharaf, “Practicing our civil liberty in Egypt that has high illiteracy rates will lead to chaos and public disorder, thus will negatively affect the security situation.” She added that civil liberties will lead to fragmentation and polarization which are not needed in times of threat and transitional periods. Farag added asserted his willingness to “accept any policy as long as it aims at protecting me and my family from any potential threat. In this sense, my security should precede my freedom which will be meaningless if I am dead,” Galal argued that he is willing to trade off his civil liberties under terrorism threat, adding that, “Egypt is now safe and secure, hence trading off my civil liberties would be proportional to the real rather than the perceived threat”. Following the same reasoning, Fakhry said:
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I do not want to trade off any of my liberties, but if there is a compelling and urgent event, we should all unite and shoulder responsibility. In fact, people under threat should acquiesce to the more experienced [ruler] who has the knowledge to counter any potential threat. Up till now, I do not see any positive actions taken by the state towards the phenomenon of terrorism so I will assert my right to criticize the measures and procedures taken by the government.

In the same context, many non-expert participants said we have to shoulder responsibility and support the government in the war against terrorism. Nawaf asserted that “We have to join the security forces in countering such a looming threat through supporting any policy that aims at protecting us even if this policy would restrict our liberties. We should always remember that national security is a top priority that should precede any other right.” Many other non-expert participants explained that people have to allow the government safeguards the nation through delegating it in countering terrorism. “I accept that security-oriented policies curtail my liberties as long as it would secure me, my family, and the whole nation”, said Lotfy. “I accept trading off my civil liberties as long as the endorsed measures will protect me and my kids from such a looming threat. Moreover, I hope everyone accepts such measures in order to be more protected”, said Gomaa.

Yet, some of the expert and non-expert participants argued that there must be a certain boundary which no government should breach even when there are infringements upon the civil liberties. Salama stated that there is a positive relation between allowing freedoms and building a strong country, adding that freedom of expression should never be prohibited by any rational government as it enhances the decision-making process and leads to effective outcome. In addition, Malek argued there are basic rights that he cannot trade off, such as the right to vote in
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elections, in his view, increases the sense of belonging to our country. In the same context, Tamer argued that under heightened threat, she would accept sacrificing some of her civil liberties but for a well-defined period of time:

If there is a looming terrorism threat and the government wants to control such a threat, I could sacrifice my civil liberties, but there must be transparency; the government has to disclose a time frame enabling it to control the situation. Moreover, I have to see the effectiveness of these policies because it does not make sense to sacrifice my liberties for an undefined period of time without seeing any tangible outcome. Therefore, the government should not ask people to make sacrifices when it is unable to protect us. It is worth noting that the government should take tough measures with those who are not doing their job properly in terms of protecting the people.

In the same context, other participants said they do not want to sacrifice their civil liberties as they believe that there is no contradiction between having strong effective security measures and civil liberties. Fathy asserted that “I don’t see any contradiction between endorsing effective security measures and having my civil liberties but in general, there are rights that I will never compromise such as my right to be respected as a citizen and my right to express my opinion” while Badr explained that she would not “not accept infringement of... civil liberties because such a thing is a counter measure that will harm the security system in the long term.”

In summary, most of the expert 62.50% and non-expert 50% participants said they acknowledge that security measures curtail their freedoms. Most of them explained that under terrorism threat, security should be the main priority. On the other hand, 50% non-expert and 25% expert participants said they can only sacrifice some of their civil liberties. Most of the non-experts and some of the experts explained that there are some rights they could never trade off
such as the right to express their opinion and right to privacy. Finally, 12.50% of the experts and 0% of the non-experts said they do not see any contradiction between having both security and civil liberties; thus, they will not accept any infringement of their civil liberties.

![Bar Chart: Infringing on civil liberties for security](chart.jpg)

Figure 5 Infringing on civil liberties for security

In response to Research Question (3) how does information collected in RQs 1 and 2 enhance our understanding of the contemporary cultivation role of television as regards the terrorism threat-government trust-civil liberties triad? The answer to this question emerged from the participants' answers on questions (1) and (2).

Even though the Cultivation theory dates back to the 1960s, the role of cultivation in the 21st century has never been more robust. Sharaf explained that TV news coverage on terrorism has cultivated the perception of threat and led to the Mean World Syndrome. The effect of cultivation in the 21st century can affect different segments. As shown in Figure (6), TV had the same cultivation effect on both heavy expert and non-expert viewers. It was found that heavy expert and non-expert viewers are affected by terrorism; the heavy expert viewer and 75% of the non-expert viewers said terrorism affects their general feeling of safety. In addition, the entire heavy
viewer participants said that terrorism affects their decisions. Further, 50% heavy non-expert and expert viewers expressed their fear of victimization.

Accordingly, Sharaf said that TV news media can use different techniques to cultivate depictions that may or may not match reality. To exemplify this point, Mamdouh mentioned the Aljazeera coverage technique of shooting from a particular angle to convey messages that meet the interest of their agenda, elaborating that “Some private TV channels tend towards exaggeration in the coverage of news; in fact, many of which are doing this very professionally. The TV news coverage of Aljazeera is a clear example of manipulation as the cameras usually shoot from certain angles to convey images that do not exist in reality.”

The cultivation role of TV in the 21st century can affect the security, economy, and politics of any country. The tourism, investment, and many other sectors in any country can be greatly affected by TV terrorism-related news coverage which cultivates the perception that a particular country is unsecure. In this respect, Sharaf said “Muslims who are living in the western societies have become victims of Islamophobia due to the cultivation effect, particularly in the United
States which witnessed the rise of Islamophobia in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks.” Salama added that the tourism sector in Egypt is also suffering due to the global media coverage which shaped the perception of global viewers that Egypt is an unsecure country to visit.

TV in the 21st century is more powerful and dynamic than ever before. This is due to the development of technology where people can now see the event live as it unfolds, with round the clock coverage, HD cameras, satellite coverage, online streaming, etc. The development of technology has increased the TV cultivation role as people can be exposed to ongoing news analysis and coverage. People can have access to information anytime and anywhere through online streaming which is provided by many TV news channels. In this sense, cultivation is not limited to TV, but extends to include the World Wide Web. Therefore, it may not matter if people are using their computer as a TV set because the impact will be the same. From this perspective, Badr argued that people nowadays do not sit and watch TV as in the 1990s; on the contrary, they follow their favorite program, TV talk show, or even news bulletin through YouTube.

Based on this, most of the study participants are light viewers of TV news content. Yet, they are greatly affected by terrorism. The majority of the interviewed sample (95%) stated that terrorism affects their decisions and lifestyle. Moreover, 80% said that they feel concerned for their own safety. This gives an indication that cultivation in the 21st century may not be limited to the coverage of TV due to the emergence of the internet as a new and more dynamic as well as compelling medium. Therefore, threat perception could have been caused by the messages and information circulated through the internet. It is worth mentioning that, according to Sharaf, social media users usually share rumors and inaccurate information which cultivate the sense of insecurity and threat perception. Fakhry then explained that when people believe rumors to be
truth, they become more vulnerable, threatened, and greatly affected; he added that the effect of such information could exceed the cultivated impact of exaggerating news coverage.

In this regard, governments around the world use TV news media to shape the citizen’s perception regarding different matters. Some of the interviewed sample argued that TV terrorism news coverage is based on the government agenda to endorse certain measures and policies. Furthermore, some other participants asserted that such coverage is based on the government agenda to raise public awareness of the problem of terrorism. Fakhry and Ahmed explained that when people are threatened, they become more willing to accept any suggested policy. “TV news coverage which includes bloody images of the victims as well as injured people increase threat perception, in turn, leading to acceptance and compliance”, said Fakhry. In addition, threatened citizens are more open to persuasion and acceptance of security-oriented policies. In this sense, cultivation can be used as a main pillar in the government agenda to endorse certain policies, measures, and procedures through cultivating threat perception. Moreover, TV news coverage of terrorism can cultivate the perception of viewers regarding the performance of government. By broadcasting messages about the achievements of the government in countering terrorism, media can shape the public opinion regarding the effectiveness of the endorsed policies. Based on this, the entire heavy expert and non-expert viewers of TV terrorism-related news said it is acceptable for security-oriented measures to curtail their civil liberties under national security threat. In addition, 75% heavy non-expert and expert viewers said they trust the government security-oriented measures and statements regarding the level of terrorism.

In summary, cultivation in the 21st century can have both a direct and indirect impact on the perception, attitude, and behavior of viewers. TV terrorism coverage can have a direct impact such as threat perception which then leads to the indirect impact (i.e. compliance). Furthermore,
“threat perception affects the willingness of people to sacrifice their civil liberties for security”, according to Ahmed. Terrorist organizations also use the internet and TV to cultivate their extreme ideologies and recruit Youth. To emphasize the point previously mentioned, Galal argued that “heavy exposure to terrorism-related news can have a positive impact in terms of rejecting terrorism as well as extremism and willingness to support the government institutions in countering terrorism.”
# IMPACT OF TV TERRORISM NEWS

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<td>18</td>
<td>College student at a governmental university</td>
<td>Light viewer (1hr)</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Mariam Reda</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Real estate sales agent at a private company</td>
<td>Light viewer (1-1.50hrs)</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Samya Hazem</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Bank accountant at a private bank</td>
<td>Light viewer (2hrs)</td>
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<td>Nada Gomaa</td>
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<td>Employee at a government ministry</td>
<td>Light viewer (2hrs)</td>
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<td>Omar Nawaf</td>
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<td>Judge</td>
<td>Heavy viewer (6hrs)</td>
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<td>Elfiky Ahmed</td>
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<td>Office assistant at a state TV channel</td>
<td>Heavy viewer (4hrs)</td>
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<td>Employee at a governmental company</td>
<td>Heavy viewer (5hrs)</td>
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<td>Mahmoud Elattar</td>
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<td>Secretary at a private company</td>
<td>Light viewer (1-1.50hrs)</td>
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<td>Housewife (bachelor of commerce)</td>
<td>Medium viewer (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Madlen Tamer</td>
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<td>Business woman in real estate</td>
<td>Heavy viewer (3-4hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ragheb Malek</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Retired military officer</td>
<td>Medium viewer (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Hanan Morsy</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Medium viewer (3hrs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Six

Conclusion

This study aims at investigating the role of TV terrorism news content on cultivating terrorism risk perception post-June 30, 2013 events. Moreover, it attempts to explore in-depth how and why terrorism threat perception correlates with the Egyptians’ tolerance for more restrictive government measures regarding privacy and security. The contribution of this study lies in investigating the perceptions of a relatively diverse cross-section of Egyptians in terms of two highly controversial aspects, privacy and security, within the context of a terrorism battleground.

The researcher conducted twenty in-depth interviews with expert and non-expert participants in order to examine and compare their experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The sample included twelve non-experts to investigate the cultivation effect of TV news coverage. Data derived from the psychology professor and psychiatrist supported past literature which indicates that, if feeling threatened, people become more willing to sacrifice their civil liberties. In addition, mass communication professors as well as media practitioners were interviewed to unpack the role of cultivation and TV news exposure on viewers post-June 30, 2013 events. Finally, political science professors were included to investigate the determinants of government trust and how this can influence people’s willingness to trade off their civil liberties.

According to the expert participants, heavy exposure to terrorism related news can have both positive and negative impact on viewers. Expert participants argued that heavy coverage of terrorism-related news could have a positive effect in terms of rejecting terrorism as well as extremism and willingness to support the government institutions in countering terrorism. On the other hand, negative impact of heavy exposure to terrorism-related news can lead to secondary symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD eventually leads to the state of
IMPACT OF TV TERRORISM NEWS

numbness that causes depression. In this sense, heavy exposure will ‘normalize’ terrorism as an everyday happening that people see, hear, and read about. Yet, the impact of heavy exposure to terrorism-related news differs from one person to another depending on the anxiety levels of each individual. In fact, 95% of the interviewed sample said terrorism affects their personal decisions and lifestyle, with many attributing this to the extent to which terrorism news heightens their feelings of anxiety.

Experts said heavy exposure to terrorism-related news cultivates depictions that do not match reality and helps create the Mean World Syndrome. For instance, the tourism sector was severely affected due to global media’s coverage of Egypt, which cultivated the image that Egypt is an unsafe place to visit. Some experts said the coverage of TV news media during and after the January 25 revolution cultivated the sense of insecurity which resulted in the rise of ‘community watch’; the latter refers to a group of civilians living in the same neighborhood who are voluntarily devoted to fight crime and vandalism. Based on the findings of this research, 85% said they feel concerned about their safety and 45% have high fears of victimization. It is worth noting that 60% of heavy viewers have greater fears of victimization in comparison to light and medium viewers.

According to the expert participants, the level of trust and credibility of TV news media are essential factors that lead to threat perception. It is worth noting that 100% of the respondents expressed their trust in the official statements and reports which are broadcast through TV state media. In addition, 62.50% experts and 58.30% non-experts perceive TV state channels as a credible source of information while 62.50% experts and 8.30% non-experts perceive private TV channels as credible. In the same context, 65% participants explained that private TV channels are usually driven by the agenda of their owners rather than national interest.
In psychological terms, people under security threat are more willing to sacrifice and give up many of their civil liberties for the sake of survival. Accordingly, three elements are conventionally considered top priorities for any nation – survival, freedom, and economic luxury. Consequently, 55% of the interviewed sample expressed their willingness to trade off their civil liberties under terrorism threat. 30% stated that they are willing to compromise only some of their liberties; 30% explained that security measures should not infringe on their right to privacy or to express their opinion. This finding correlates with Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, which indicates that human beings prioritize safety/security over other needs.

The expert participants explained that government trust is a main factor that affects willingness to compromise civil liberties for security with 95% expressing their trust in the official statements regarding the level of terrorism threat as well as the endorsed security oriented measures, respectively. This indicates that securitizing moves probably convinced the target audience that an emergency situation exists, after which securitizing actors implemented emergency measures to counter the labeled threat.

To conclude, light exposure to TV news coverage can have the same effect as heavy exposure to TV news coverage. Most of the research participants were found to be light viewers as they have lost confidence in private TV channels due to what they see as misleading and exaggerated coverage of various events taking place in Egypt; they also expressed dissatisfaction with unsophisticated coverage by state TV media whose technological dimension is outdated. Therefore, the overall news coverage of Egyptian TV has led to uncertainty among Egyptians who have lost the ability to distinguish between real and fake threat. Even though 45% expressed their fear of victimization and 85% feel concerned for their safety, they trust the government's ability to counterterrorism and the adopted security-oriented policies, generally viewing Egypt as
a safe country. Under such conditions, uncertainty could pose as disconcerting a threat as terrorism, since both may lead to the same outcome of compromising freedoms.

**Limitations of the Study**

One study limitation was that given the topic’s political sensitivity, many non-expert participants seemed rather tense while answering various interview questions. The researcher felt that some of their answers could have been more elaborate had the topic been less controversial.

Furthermore, we also need to be cautious about the findings’ generalizability since only 20 participants constituted the study sample, even while bearing in mind the level of depth pursued in designing the interview questions.

Finally is a limitation that involves the act of data interpretation, inherent in any research project. For, while researchers ideally try to remain as true to the essence of data meanings as possible, the process of interpretation itself carries the possibility that researcher bias will enter.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

Future studies could pursue the current study’s objectives except using quantitative research methodology, in order to measure the impact of terrorism news coverage on viewers' threat perception and to investigate the effect of threat perception on public tolerance for national security measures that may curtail civil liberties.

We would also do well to replicate this type of research using a larger and even more diverse sample that includes social media users to account for how terrorism news consumption on social media may breed cultivation effects, in comparison to and contrast with television.
References


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http://galeauth.galegroup.com/auth/capmAuthentication.do?userGroupName=aucairo&origURL=http%3A%2F%2Flink.galegroup.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FA280302791%2FOVIC%3Fsid%3Ds.ummon%26u%3Daucairo%26authCount%3D1%26isCookieCheckDone=false


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www.baseera.com.eg

www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf

Appendices
Appendix A

IRB approval
Appendix B

CAPMAS approval
Appendix C

Consent forms
**Project Title:** [Impact of TV news content on the viewers’ perception]

**Principal Investigator:** [Reham Gamal Ahmed Salem Omar – Teaching assistant]

*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to investigate the role of TV news content in cultivating terrorism risk perception post-30 June, 2013 events. It also aims at exploring how terrorism threat perception correlates with the Egyptians’ tolerance for more restrictive government measures regarding privacy and security. The findings will be presented as a part of Master of Arts thesis.

**The expected duration of your participation is 60 minutes.**

**There will be no follow-up questions**

The procedures of the research will be as follows: the researcher will use qualitative method of analysis where 20 in-depth interviews will be conducted with media practitioners, professors from the faculties of mass communication, political science, and psychology, in addition to regular citizens from different social segments who watch TV news.

*There will not be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research.

*There will not be benefits to you from this research.

*The information you provide for purposes of this research is confidential

*Questions about the research should be directed to Reham Gamal 01060123046

*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.**

Signature __________________________________________

Printed Name _________________________________________

Date _______________________________________________
IMPACT OF TV TERRORISM NEWS

الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة

استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث: (تأثير الاخبار التلفزيونية علي ادراك المشاهد)

الباحث الرئيسي: (ريهام جمال احمد سالم عمر - معيدة بكلية الاقتصاد و العلوم السياسية)

البريد الإلكتروني: rehamgamalahmed@aucegypt.edu

الهاتف: 01060123046

انت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة بحثيةعن

(تأثير التعرض للاخبار التلفزيونية علي ادراك المشاهد).

هدف الدراسة (هو دراسة دور محتوى الاخبار التلفزيونية في غرس ادراك خطر الارهاب ما بعد احداث 30 يونيو، 2013. كما يهدف إلى دراسة كيفية ارتباط ذلك الادراك بتسامح المصريين عن التدابير التي تتخذها الحكومة فيما يتعلق بالخصوصية والأمن).

نتائج البحث ستنشر في رسالة ماجستير في قسم الإعلام بالجامعة الأمريكية.

المدة المتوقعة للمشاركة في هذا البحث (60 دقيقة)

 لن يكون هناك اسئلة ملحقة

إجراءات الدراسة تشمل علي اجراء 20 مقابلة شخصية مع اعلاميين، استاذين من كلية الاعلام وسياسة واقتصاد، وعلم النفس. كما سيتم اجراء مقابلات شخصية مع عدد من مشاهدي الاخبار التلفزيونية من مختلف المستويات الاجتماعية.

المخاطر المتوقعة لن يكون هناك مخاطر أو مضايقات مرتبطة بهذا البحث.

 الاستفادة المتوقعة لن يكون هناك منافع مرتبطة بالمشاركة في هذا البحث.

السرية واحترام الخصوصية: المعلومات التي ستدلى بها في هذا البحث ستكون سرية.

أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة أو حقوق المشاركين فيها يجب أن توجه إلى ريهام جمال احمد 01060123046

إن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ماهي إلا عمل تطوعي، حيث أن الامتناع عن المشاركة لا يضمن أي عقوبات أو فقدان.

ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.

الامضاء: ..........................................................

اسم المشارك: .............................................

التاريخ: ...........................................
Appendix D

Interview guide in English
### First aspect

1. Please specify your age
2. On average, how many hours per day do you spend watching terrorism-related news and/or current affairs programs on TV?
3. How is the amount of time spent watching TV terrorism news material related to the viewer’s perception of terrorism threat?
4. To what degree do you believe TV terrorism coverage affects people’s general feeling of safety? Why?
5. Do you consider terrorism a problem that affects your decisions? Why/Why not? When you think about terrorist attacks in Egypt, do you feel concern for your own safety? How likely do you think you could be the victim of a terrorist attack?
6. How do certain individuals and groups arrive at certain understandings or perceptions of threats?
7. How much do you trust the information TV news media provide about the level of terrorism threat? Please elaborate.
8. Some argue that TV-portrayed terrorism threats are exaggerated based on a government agenda to enhance the public’s terrorism threat perception. Explain your take on this argument.
9. What are the pull and push factors that calibrate a sense of terrorism threat?

### Second aspect

1. Under different conditions of heightened terrorism threat as presented in TV news, might people compromise their civil liberty rights (this should include their right to express their opinion, criticize the government, hold demonstrations, and right to privacy) for security? If so, what determines the extent to which they are willing to compromise?
2. Does the use of social network websites affect people's willingness to sacrifice their civil liberties?
3. How do high alarm terrorism threat frames alter the public’s perceptions of or responses to government policies on terrorism and security?
4. Does a sense of threat influence the type of policies that citizens prefer and the type of political leaders whom citizens want to represent them in times of national security crisis?
5. Does a threatening environment lead people to support more punitive types of policies?
6. Are terrorism threat-feeling citizens more open to acceptance of security-oriented government policies than citizens unconcerned about a looming threat?
7. Are terrorism threat-feeling citizens likely to generally support any policies offered by politicians or are they more likely to support only policies they believe will protect them from future harm?
8. When does fear-driven threat perception lead to risky behavior (i.e. immigration)? And when does fear-driven threat perception lead to retreat and risk-averse behavior?
9. Is there any relation between terrorism threat and the politicians’ ability to persuade the public about certain security-oriented policy measures?

**Third aspect**

1. How much do you trust government rhetoric on the level of terrorism threat and consequent security measures and policies? Please elaborate.

2. To what degree do you find it acceptable that such security measures and policies possibly infringe on civil liberties?

3. What factors determine public trust in government?
Appendix E

Interview guide in Arabic
The first axis:

1. Please estimate your age

2. On average, how many hours do you spend watching TV news segments related to terrorism? This includes TV news segments related to terrorism in the following forms:

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<th>4.</th>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
هل هناك علاقة بين خطر تهديد الإرهاب و قدرة السياسيين على اقناع المواطنين بسياسات و إجراءات أمنية معينة؟

المحور الثالث

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>السؤال</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. كيف تثق في تصريحات الحكومة المتعلقة بدرجة خطر تهديد الإرهاب والإجراءات الأمنية والسياسات المتعلقة بذلك؟</td>
<td>برجة التوضيح</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. إلى أي درجة تقبل أن تتقلل تلك السياسات والإجراءات الأمنية من الحريات المدنية؟</td>
<td>ما هي العوامل التي تحدد ثقة المواطنين في الحكومة؟</td>
</tr>
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</table>