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The Lives of Egyptian Women Between Continuous Trauma and Everyday Resistance: A Feminist Analysis of Narratives of Five Survivors in the Context of 2011 Revolution and its Aftermath

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Abstract

This paper investigates how the socio-political context shapes women's exposure to traumas and influences women's perceptions of and responses to these traumas. Narratives of five Egyptian trauma survivors were examined to explain the modes of victimization of, and resistance by these women in the context of Egypt post-2011 revolution. The paper focuses on sexual and political violence as two forms of gendered traumas that are tightly connected to socio-political changes after the 2011 revolution and the following military coup of 2013. Applying the interpretative phenomenological analysis and employing a feminist contextual lens, five themes emerged highlighting (a) the survivors' gendered readings of the context in which their traumas occurred, (b) how the construction of stereotypical femininities and masculinities shaped the five women's exposure and response to trauma, (c) their everyday practices of resistance, (d) their actions of resistance during the traumatic events, (e) and finally their sense of victimization versus sense of agency. The analysis underlines the necessity for women's experiences of traumas to be read as manifestations of the wider gendered context and to be considered through a sociopolitical lens. As the paper captures contextual factors that contribute to the differences and similarities in the five women's experiences, it challenges the traditional psycho-medical understanding of trauma and suggests different premises for trauma interventions.

Keywords Women's Resistance · Victimization · Women's Trauma · Political Violence · Sexual Violence

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Introduction

Using a feminist analytical lens, this paper presents a contextual reading and analysis of the narratives of Egyptian women trauma survivors concerning two types of gendered traumas, namely, sexual violence and political violence, that were tightly connected to the socio-political changes that happened in Egypt following the Egyptian revolution of 2011 and the 2013 military coup that followed.

In examining early accounts of trauma within psychology and beyond, feminist scholars have emphasized how women's experiences of trauma have been misread under the influence of the dominant patriarchy (Griffiths, 2018). Such early readings isolated women's suffering from their social and political contexts and ignored the systemic patterns of violence that make women more prone to interpersonal traumas. This has led to women's voices being silenced for decades, their narratives distorted, their suffering normalized, and the significance of their resistance ignored (Griffiths, 2018; Webster & Dunn, 2005).

On the other hand, over the last decades, cultural and feminist critiques have been increasingly highlighting the limitations of the medical approach to trauma. They mainly addressed the fact that the medical approach is centered around the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a diagnostic category, basing its analysis on an oversimplified assumption of specific homogenous acontextual patterns of responses to threatening events (Muldoon et al., 2021). Consequently, it was argued that the frameworks and methods used in studying trauma should consider the uniqueness of the living realities of survivors, represent their histories, and echo the meanings they ascribe to their experiences while reflecting the specificity of the contexts in which the traumatic experiences have occurred (Allsopp et al., 2019; Webster & Dunn, 2005).

A growing body of research has been accentuating the centrality of socio-political factors in shaping trauma and its aftermath (Muldoon et al., 2021). An established example of this perspective is Harvey's ecological framework of women's victimization, through which she unpacked the interrelationships between the individual and the community. Harvey emphasized how features of the environment, including community values and attitudes, serve as mechanisms to promote violence against women, shaping trauma consequences, while facilitating or hindering recovery (Harvey, 1996; Koss & Harvey, 1991). Meanwhile, Crenshaw (1991) has advocated for employing an intersectionality lens that considers the multiple interrelating dimensions of women's identities that shape women's social locations. This intersectionality lens helps achieve two objectives: (a) investigating how these factors act together to determine women's positions of power within the social structure, shaping their living realities, including their exposure to violence; and (b) examining how the interaction among these factors influences women's perception of violence, while contributing to the psychosocial consequences thereof (Heberle et al., 2020; Stewart & McDermott, 2004).

Sexual and Political Violence Against Women as Gendered Traumas

The narratives of women trauma survivors reveal how violence against women is a set of structured systemic abuses. They highlight as well how these abuses constitute a socio-political phenomenon that should not be treated as private, isolated, or random occurrences (Griffiths, 2018). In this line of research, sexual violence (SV) was explicitly conceptualized as a gendered trauma and a socio-political issue that is systematically produced within a binary gender system, relying on hegemonic socio-political powers (Conner et al., 2017). Therefore, to understand or treat SV traumas, psychological research needs to incorporate the socio-cultural representations of gender roles and their associated contextual and historical factors.

Brownmiller (1993) emphasized for instance how rape was historically used as a tool for establishing the foundations of patriarchy and reinforcing the hierarchy of power. Several feminist accounts posited rape and other types of SV as clear manifestations of sexism that are used to maintain the gender status quo of male domination, support the conventional construction of femininity and masculinity, and protect against women who threaten the status quo when behaving in a counter-stereotypic manner (Conner et al., 2017; Hermen, 1984).

On the other hand, the feminist writings on trauma challenge the traditional conceptualization of women's resistance to SV beyond the masculinist notion of physical resistance during violent events, to acknowledge other forms of symbolic resistance to male domination and gender-based violence (GBV). Within this perspective, recognizing all forms of the everyday personal and political acts of resistance that aim to protest or challenge the hegemonic patriarchy that underlies hegemonic gender norms is necessary when examining women's responses to SV (Burstow, 1992).

Beyond SV, a number of scholars used a gendered lens to examine other types of women's traumas including political violence (PV), which includes, forms of violence perpetrated by the State, such as arrest and violence by the police or the military against protestors. Bardall et al. (2019) presented a framework on State PV against women through which they identified three elements: (a) the gendered motivation, i.e., maintaining the dominance of patriarchal gender norms over the public sphere; (b) the gendered forms, such as sexual assault, and sexualized online attacks against women in politics; and (c) the gendered impact, as women may interpret, construct narratives and meanings, and respond to PV differently, in light of their understanding of the feminine gender role. Within this line of research, feminist scholars called for collecting and analyzing narratives on women's engagement in the public sphere, specifically in moments of political tension or conflict, to highlight how this engagement, and its consequences, are colored by the foundations of gender roles (Burdryte, 2010).

Women's Narratives on Trauma

Feminist scholarship showed the great academic, and social value of relying on women's understanding of their victimization and resistance and integrating survivors' voices into the study of violence and gendered traumas (Koss, 1985; E. Cole, 2009). This scholarship challenged the dominant epistemological and methodologi-

cal approaches in psychology, highlighting how these approaches adopted restrictive perspectives concerning the nature and purpose of psychological research and marginalized women's lived experiences for the purpose of "objectivity-maximizing" or generalization (Harding, 1992). Instead, feminist theorists argue for centering the lives of women, as a starting point, in the heart of psychological knowledge, integrating the subjective perceptions of their social realities, and relying on their narratives to understand responses to a traumatic experience.

The narrative approach was thus advanced as an adequate tool that conveys both empirical values and ethical and political commitment. On one hand, it may facilitate the meaning-making of traumatic experiences through the act of storytelling, helping trauma survivors in developing a sense of ownership over their lives. This potentially contributes to the process of trauma healing. On the other hand, the narrative approach may contribute to social justice by restoring the visibility of women's lived experiences and integrating women's narratives on interpersonal violence into public knowledge (E. Cole, 2009; De Haene et al., 2010). This would be a necessary step to challenge the patriarchal understanding of GBV, subsequently moving toward social actions that aim at ending it (Hermen, 1992).

Context of the Study

In January 2011, a popular revolution broke out in Egypt calling for political and social reforms. After 18 days of massive protests and sit-ins, former Egyptian president Mubarak, who had remained in power for 30 years, was deposed (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Egypt entered a phase of political instability, during which waves of State and social violence occurred. In June 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist opposition group, came to power through presidential elections. A year later, a military coup supported by populist demonstrations removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power, after a brutal crackdown on their supporters. Since the coup of 2013 to date, Egypt has been living under an extremely oppressive political and social environment. Arbitrary arrest, forced disappearance, torture in detention centers, and unjust trials are extensively used against opponents of the regime, including civic and human rights activists and members of the secular opposition (Amnesty International, 2022). In this sense, PV in Egypt's post-2011 revolution has created an environment of continuous traumatic stress (Matthies-Boon, 2018).

Looking particularly at women's situation, the 2011 revolution brought significant challenges while opening up opportunities. During and following the revolution, Egyptian women gained new spaces of engagement which was reflected in the emergence of new gender politics and roles (Biagini, 2019). Through their massive involvement in the protests and other channels of mobilization, women challenged the patriarchal structure of power and negotiated with a wide range of socio-cultural and political oppressing forces (Hafez, 2014). Many newcomers, especially young women from social and geographical peripheries, became engaged in emerging political and social movements or were organized in social and feminist initiatives. Women's involvement in the public sphere contributed to breaching silence about established practices of violence against women and motivated more women to speak

up and resist, creating a public debate on GBV, particularly SV (Zaki & Abd Alhamid, 2014).

Meanwhile, accompanying and following the 2011 revolution, a massive rise in SV was documented (Abdelmonem, 2015). Zaki and Abd Alhamid (2014) described how SV is a daily reality of women in Egypt, making them largely vulnerable to a wide range of threats (such as verbal harassment, sexual assault, and rape). They underlined specifically the emergence of new forms of violence, such as gang rape and mob sexual assault, which took place primarily during protests and mass gatherings. Yet, SV in Egypt is not a post-2011 phenomenon. Several reports from women's rights organizations have underscored the massive prevalence of SV against women prior to 2011 in both the private and public spheres (McRobie, 2014). In a 2005 report by the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR), 83% of Egyptian women reported exposure to sexual harassment, and 46.1% reported experiencing it on a daily basis (Shoukry et al., 2005). Many other forms of violence against Egyptian women in the private sphere have been documented by both the Egyptian civil society and the Egyptian State over the past decade. This includes female genital mutilation (FGM)[1]. According to the 2014 Egypt Demographic Health Survey, 92% of ever-married women between the age of 15 and 49 have been subjected to FGM (Rossem et al., 2016).

In parallel, many reports highlighted how Egyptian women since 2011 have been exposed to gendered forms of PV, which increased in relation to the massive crackdown on the public sphere after the 2013 coup. In addition to the systematic targeting of women human rights defenders and female political activists, Egyptian women were exposed to several gendered forms of PV by state actors. These forms include virginity tests, forced pregnancy tests, sexual harassment and assault, threats of rape during detention, and defamation campaigns that leverage women's personal choices to stigmatize them, especially when these choices deviate from dominant social norms) (Amnesty International, 2011; CEWLA, El Nadeem, & WILPF, 2019). Against this backdrop, this paper adopts a notion that the 2011 revolution and its aftermaths directly contributed to Egyptian women's victimization, especially for those who were directly engaged in political or social movements following the revolutions, while at the same time opening spaces for them for resistance.

Relying on the narratives of women trauma survivors, this paper investigates how the socio-political context shapes women's exposure to, perception of, and responses to traumas. The paper focuses on SV, including rape and sexual assaults, and gendered PV as two forms of gendered traumas that are tightly connected to the political and social changes after 2011. The narratives of five Egyptian survivors are employed to examine women's modes of victimization and resistance in the context of post-2011 Egypt. This approach constitutes a foundation for producing more culturally relevant understanding and therapeutic interventions, as well as initiating more grounded engagements with the calls and efforts for social change.

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[1] The practice of cutting parts of external female genitalia, mostly happening to girls between the age of 8 and 12.

Method

This paper adopts a qualitative approach by collecting and analyzing the narratives of five Egyptian women SV and PV trauma survivors. The objective is to identify common themes in women's perception of the context and nature of their traumas and their psychological responses to those traumas.

The narrative approach to trauma is concerned with the meaning-making of lived experiences through a storytelling process (van Manen, 2002).This narrative construction is a collaborative process between the narrator and the listener (De Haene et al., 2010). In this interactive process, many factors influence the narrative construction. This includes features of the data collection context, the researcher's subjectivity, and the participant's perception of the researcher's positionality (Bishop & Shepherd, 2011).

Researchers' Positionality

This study was carried out at a moment of intense political polarization in Egypt that was marked by significant tension between the supporters and opponents of the incumbent regime as members of diverse opposition groups were facing high risks of arrest and detention. The study was implemented at El Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, an Egyptian opposition civil society organization, established in 1993 to support GBV and PV survivors and provide them with psychological and psychiatric interventions and legal aid, in addition to documenting and mobilizing against State violence and GBV.

The first author, who conducted the interviews, is a secular Egyptian woman, trained feminist clinical psychologist, and human rights activist. During the Egyptian revolution of 2011, she actively took part in the protests and mobilization. Since the rise of sexual violence during demonstrations, she participated in the feminist movement in response to the assaults, particularly providing emergency psychological interventions to women survivors.

The political position of the first author, the profile of the hosting organization, and the relationship between the organization and the researcher were made clear to the participants. It was particularly stressed that the researcher does not work for El Nadeem, but rather, El Nadeem is hosting her during the research. It is believed that clarifying the political positions of El Nadeem and the researcher helped gain the trust of the participants in such a highly threatening political environment.

The second author is a white, Belgian male professor of clinical psychology. His areas of expertise include emotional regulation and trauma, including trauma in the context of political violence, on both research and practice levels. The role of the second author was discussed with the participants, stressing that he will have access only to the translated transcripts and that he will take part in the analysis process.

Ethical Considerations

The study conforms to APA ethical standards on the treatment of research participants, including the rights to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and the avoiding

harm policy (APA, 2017). EL Nadeem's psychiatric board reviewed and approved the study protocol and its ethical considerations. The principles of voluntary participation were explained to the participants, including their right to refuse participation, withdraw from the study, refuse to answer specific questions or refuse the use of their data, with no consequences on their relationship with the hosting organization, ensuring that they will be still able to receive support by El Nadeem staff if they withdraw from the study at any phase. A detailed informed consent form was discussed and signed prior to the interviews. The form included a briefing on (a) the study purpose and procedures; (b) the relationship between the researcher and El Nadeem Center; and (c) risks associated with the possibility of activating traumatizing memories and triggering heavy emotions. Following the interviews, all participants were offered to join a brief trauma intervention by the first author. Alternatively, they were offered the option of receiving further psychological support sessions from El Nadeem or being referred to an external therapist to receive free-of-charge therapy sessions. All five chose to join the trauma intervention[2] offered by the first author.

Procedures

Semi-structured in-depth individual interviews were carried out in a private room at El Nadeem. After screening interviews to ensure the participants' compatibility with the study criteria and briefing the participants about the study, the narrative interviews were implemented. The narrative interviews were conducted in one or two sessions of 90 to 120 min. The flexible approach in conducting the interview sessions (duration and structure) was intended to allow a deep understanding of each participant's experience, in addition to allowing time for catharsis.

Recognizing the political polarization surrounding the stance towards the Egyptian authorities and the extreme sense of threat felt by individuals opposing the regime, including the five participants, the researcher invested effort to establish an atmosphere of trust and shared understanding during the interviews. This was achieved by openly acknowledging the highly oppressive environment and the severe civil and human rights violations committed by the regime and experienced by all study participants. This enabled the establishment of a bond between the participants and the researcher due to common political and ethical positions, which has likely reduced the participants' sense of isolation, and facilitated storytelling.

The interview guide was designed in light of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) principles of data collection (Smith et al., 2009), and the feminist literature on trauma. Each interview covered the following aspects: (a) background

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[2] The trauma therapy that followed this study is a tailored version of Narrative Exposure Therapy that adapted the intervention modality based on a feminist analysis of the participants narratives. The intervention specifically employed the extracted five themes to help the participants process their traumatic experiences and reach a better self-appreciation. The intervention consisted of 90 to 120-minute individual sessions held weekly, with the total number of sessions ranging between 0 and 12 for each participant. The intervention started with an initial psychoeducational session on trauma, PTSD and intervention techniques. Subsequent sessions consisted of narration and in-depth discussions of each traumatic event indicated by the participants, with a purpose of reaching habitation and constructing a coherent narrative and post-trauma meaning.

information; (b) the participant's perception of prototypical gender roles, perceived changes in gender roles after the revolution, and the participant's own definition of gender roles (c) history of SV, including the most significant traumatic event; (d) possible gendered traumatic events associated with 2011-revolution and its aftermaths, including the most significant traumatic event; (e) psychological consequences of traumatic events; (f) meanings ascribed to traumatic events; (g) coping techniques used to confront adversity; (h) participant's perception of her overall agency/sense of control (i.e., her sense of power and ability to practice control over her living context (Haffejee & Theron, 2019).

Participants

Six women initially volunteered for this study after reading a recruitment communication on Facebook, and five volunteered after learning about the study through El Nadeem Center. After briefing about the study, all 11 women were proposed a screening questionnaire to ensure their compatibility with the study inclusion criteria: (a) being above 21 years old which is the legal age in Egypt; (b) having experienced at least one major traumatic event during adulthood that can be classified as SV or gendered PV; (c) being engaged in the 2011-revolution political or social movements; (d) having not received structured therapy prior to the study. Among the 11 women, seven met the study inclusion criteria, two withdrew for time constraints, and five completed the research project.

Aisha[3], who is in her twenties, hails from a religiously-conservative middle-class family. Her first trauma was a sexual assault when she was a young child. During the wave of mass arrests of Islamist opponents after the 2013 coup, she was arrested and imprisoned for a few months under false allegations of being affiliated with an Islamic group. During imprisonment, she was exposed to threats of rape, verbal insults, and dehumanizing treatment. She identified being forced to carry out a pregnancy test as the most traumatic moment. She was able to maintain a sense of control over the prison environment until she collapsed after being transferred to a much harsher prison. Since her release, she has been suffering from depressive symptoms, maladjustment, and significant personality changes.

Mariam, who is in her twenties, was born in a less privileged family, in a semi-urban region. Her father has been physically abusive to her, her sisters, and her mother since her early childhood. She underwent FGM and several instances of sexual assault and rape during her childhood. She lived her high school and university years under extreme financial hardship. When the Egyptian revolution started, she decided to join the protests, after which she got involved in political activities. In her early twenties, her father started to repetitively sexually assault her and her sisters. The assaults continued for two years until she managed to confront him. A couple of months later, she reported him to the police to end the assaults against her mother and sisters. Although the police authorities resisted filing a case, and everyone around her was pressuring her to drop the charges, she insisted on going on and managed to put an end to the father's assaults. Shortly after, she left the family house, found a job,

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[3] All names were changed to pseudonym to protect the participants privacy.

and became fully independent. Since then, she has been experiencing symptoms of depression and PTSD, accompanied by very low self-esteem, a sense of guilt, and self-blame.

Nour, who is in her thirties, was born to a middle-class conservative family, which has a high social status in the local community and adopts restrictive traditional social and gender norms. Her main childhood trauma was undergoing FGM. She was sexually assaulted during childhood. After the 2011 revolution, she became engaged in several political activities during which she expanded her social network. She was raped in her twenties by a sixty-year-old man whom she considered a godfather and mentor. A year later, she separated from her family and moved to Cairo. Until the interview, she was unable to process the rape incident, she was describing it as a minor sexual assault that had a small impact in comparison to her other prior traumas. Meanwhile, she was suffering from depression and PTSD symptoms.

Hala, who is in her twenties, was born to a middle-class family in a Cairo suburb. She received her university studies in a male-only technical department of car mechanics after convincing the institute administration to accept her. During adolescence and early adulthood, she experienced an incident of sexual assault and recurrent sexual harassment. Her brother was arrested and prosecuted in the context of a peaceful protest after the coup of 2013. Throughout the few months of her brother's detention, she was exposed to severe adversity during her biweekly visits to him at the prison. She considered the inspection before prison visits, i.e., the searching of her private body parts, as one of the main traumatizing assaults. During the imprisonment of her brother, she was fully occupied with handling legal and logistical issues related to his detention while suppressing all her negative feelings. After her brother's release, she started to experience anxiety and depression symptoms.

Mona, who is in her forties, comes from an upper-middle-class family. She is a political activist and a single mother, who divorced after an abusive marriage. She has a history of drug abuse. During adulthood, she experienced rape by a male friend, threats of arrest, and several harassments by the police to pressure her to stop her political activism. A few weeks before the interview, she was kidnaped and raped by a taxi driver. Immediately after he let her go, she headed to the police and reported. The offender was arrested, yet he was released after failing to prove the rape claims as no "clear signs of resistance" were found by forensic authorities. Since then, she has been experiencing symptoms of PTSD and depression. She had completely withdrawn from all her social responsibilities and quit her job.

Data Analysis

IPA was chosen for its suitability to the study's purpose, which is understanding how participants make sense of the multiple traumas they experienced, interpret their responses to them, and read the context in which they occurred.

The five interviews were transcribed by the first author and the parts that directly related to the study questions were translated from Arabic into English. IPA was applied by the first author using the original transcripts. The analysis commenced by thoroughly reading each transcript multiple times. Initial exploratory notes were added to capture the semantic content of each participant's accounts. Subsequently,

emergent themes were developed to reflect the meanings associated with each account, progressing from subthemes to summarizing into broader and more analytical themes. This process was repeated with each of the five cases. The search for the patterns across cases led to the development of common themes, which were reflectively revised several times until reaching a more analytical formation of themes. Aiming at limiting possible biases in the first author's interpretation, the second author extracted themes using the translated version of the transcripts. The themes extracted showed high consistency between the two examiners.

Results

Key themes emerged from the survivors' narratives reflecting the elements underlying the participants' exposure to, perception of, and response to traumas. Themes (i) and (ii) address the participants' exposure to trauma, their perception of the underlying gendered features of their traumas, and the contexts in which their traumas happened. The other three themes highlight the participants' responses to traumas including modes of victimization and resistance.

2011: A Moment of Personal and Global Change in Gender Politics

When asked whether recent changes took place in normative gender roles and their self-construed femininities, all five participants agreed that there were major changes in their own position as women reflecting mostly on their direct environment, as well as women's situation in general, in Egyptian society. They attributed these changes to the 2011 revolution and its socio-political aftermaths. Yet, they differed in the way in which they evaluated these changes.

Capturing how the revolution changed gender norms and expectations, Nour stated "With the revolution, things changed completely. It is not just me who became independent in my hometown. Many other girls also left their families, many took their headscarves off, and many started to travel alone […]. People started to accept that women could be engaged in politics. Even my mother told me that I should join a political party […]. With the revolution, many established certainties have fallen. We broke a taboo when we forced Mubarak to step down, so other taboos started to fall as well".

For Hala, 2011 revealed the unfairness of women's situation. Women in her opinion were encouraged by the revolution to speak up and fight for their presence and rights, but in the end, the reality did not change much. "When the revolution happened, ugly things started to appear on the surface" she said. "I was shocked by how ugly things are, but I was also happy that many people are trying to change them. […] I feel that men got scared, and any woman who tries to do something atypical now is being crushed". Meanwhile, Mona evaluated the post-2011 changes concerning women's situation negatively. She stressed the marked rise in SV, specifically sexual harassment and assaults in the public sphere. "It was never like that before. Men became much more aggressive".

Reflecting on her circle of Islamist community who were the main target of the regime, Aisha considered subsequent political and social changes were more significant than the revolution itself. "A change happened to many women from my circle due to the political situation" she explained. "Women suddenly found their husbands forcibly disappeared, arrested, or killed, and in a day, they were forced to solely carry the responsibility of the family [...]. I heard many stories of women who used to be housewives, and suddenly had to work, to be able to get some money to cover the expenses of their detained husbands [Such as lawyer fees, external sustenance provisions], or just to feed their children".

While Mona was a political activist before the revolution, Mariam, Nour, Hala, and Aisha's interest in politics and engagement in activism started as a consequence of the revolution. The four saw 2011 as a moment of significant personal change. They described how the revolution made them politically and socially engaged, more grounded, and more conscious about women's issues. They also stated that the revolution helped them gain more agency, personal freedom, and self-confidence. "2011 had a huge influence on me, and on how I see myself," Mariam stated. "I did not know before that I am capable of doing such things [...]. I started to learn how to defend my rights, and how to say no [...] I was always against things around me, but I was not able to speak up. For me, that was a chance to say no to so many things, including my father's abuse".

Her Traumas are Gendered

The second key theme reflected the participants' consciousness of the gendered nature of their traumatic experiences, specifically how their gender roles influenced their victimization, and how political and socio-cultural representations of traditional femininity and masculinity shaped their traumas and their consequences. Moreover, their narratives reflected an intersectional perspective, highlighting how their multidimensional identities, such as socioeconomic status and tribal affiliation, shaped their positions of power during and after the traumatic experience.

Out of the five participants, three identified their main traumatic events during adulthood as rape or sexual assault, whereas the other two gave prominence to traumas that were political in nature, highlighting how these experiences were shaped by their gender roles. Furthermore, all five participants identified several other sexual traumas during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (such as sexual abuse and FGM, in addition to everyday street sexual harassment).

Nour highlighted that her position as a young woman from a conservative family shaped the power relationship with her rapist, the 60 years old mentor who was her gateway to a more open world and a wider social circle of intellectuals and political activities which she was trying to be part of after the revolution. With this intersectional consciousness, she emphasized how the norms associated with her tribal affiliation, e.g., her fear for her life if her family knew that she was raped, affected her victimization and her healing attempts afterward. She felt compelled not to cry for help during rape, to confront her rapist thereafter, to share her story, or to seek support from others. Moreover, Nour highlighted that rape by her mentor was a "punishment" for her rebellious gendered conduct. She specified that she was perceived as a

non-conformist woman by others in her circle including her rapist, and he used that to justify his crime. Recounting a phone call with her rapist that took place immediately after the incident, "I see how nervous, angry, and aggressive you are all the time, and I thought doing this would calm you down," he told her.

Through her narration, Mariam portrayed her overall anger regarding what she experienced throughout her entire life since her childhood, till she was able to break the cycle of violence and put an end to her father's abuse. She stressed that her position as a less privileged girl who suffered from severe financial hardships, and who lived in a suburban conservative context with restrictive patriarchal gender norms, contributed to her traumas. In addition to multiple sexual assaults by different perpetrators, FGM, physical assaults, and economic deprivation, she always had to live with a stigma of being a "wayward girl", because of her non-conformity to the restrictive gender norms of her community. This contributed to her isolation, lack of self-confidence, and a constant sense of fear. Concerning her main traumatic event, she highlighted how the police authorities, her family, and the community reacted when she reported her father's abuse, and how these reactions revealed the contribution of traditional gender norms to women's victimization. "The police officers refused to file a case in the beginning, they did not believe me until they asked my mother and my sisters […]. After that, the prosecutor refused to hear the complete story saying he could not stand listening to inappropriate details […]. Later, everyone was pressuring me to withdraw the report, they even organized a family meeting, with all the family men including my father himself, to convince me to drop the case, but I refused".

Reflecting on the extent to which her rape trauma was shaped by the socio-political and legal contexts, Mona described how the release of the taxi driver who raped her, when the forensic authorities reported not finding signs of resistance on her body, was a second trauma for her. It showed her how, despite her effort to bring her rapist to justice, he eventually got away with his crime because of the juridical definition of rape, which for her is part of the rape culture.

Hala and Aisha also provided a gendered reading of their political traumas. Hala described how inspection procedures during her visits to her brother in prison, including the touching of her private body parts, were the most emotionally intense moments, and she linked them to her many sexual harassment and assault experiences. Aisha described how forcing her to take a pregnancy test during her transfer from one prison to another, was the peak of her fear. "I was very upset, and I felt completely crushed," she said. "I did not know how the test would be done and I was terrified that someone would see my private parts, what if they would ask a man to do it […] It was killing me".

Pushing the Boundaries of Gender Norms: A History of Everyday Resistance

When asked how they perceive gender norms, all five participants expressed a sense of anger, consciousness of unbalanced gender power relations, and awareness about systematic GBV. Stressing her anger, Mariam, who survived her father's abuse, said: "They want a woman to be silent, passive, to stick all the time to the specific scenarios assigned to her. If she dares to break the pattern, they try to crush her. I have been having a big problem with all of that since a very early age. I used to get mad

when someone was telling me what I should or should not do. […]. I see they also give men a position that makes them entitled to harass and assault women. They think because they are men, they have the right to do whatever they want".

The narratives of all participants showed how, prior to their main traumatic events, they had been pushing the boundaries of the gender socio-cultural expectations through everyday acts of resistance as well as through direct confrontations they chose to enter to gain more space. Moreover, they were aware of the conflict they were facing, and the prices they had to pay, due to their nonconformist behavior and their everyday acts of resistance.

Mariam described how since her early adolescence she chose a lifestyle different from what was accepted in her community, for example, to dress more openly and have multiple romantic and social relations with the opposite sex. This gave her a socially stigmatized image of a "wayward girl", exposing her to extreme social pressure and family conflicts. One clear example of Mariam's resistance to the traumatizing environment, in which she was raised, is her successful prevention of her family subjecting her younger sister to FGM, after being subjected to it herself. This illustrates her early resistance which extended beyond protecting herself, to protecting other girls around her and pushing for a transformation in the social norms within her family.

Nour, challenging the restrictive gender norms of her family and tribe, decided to study, and later work, in another city far from her family, aiming to gain independence and build a different life. Mona chose to be a single mother and an outspoken political activist while living a lifestyle that is significantly different from the normative social norms. This exposed her to strong social criticism and a serious risk that the political regime could use information about her private life and personal choices to blackmail her.

Though having a religiously conservative background, Aisha portrayed herself as a young girl different from any other in her community, being assertive and a high achiever, competing with male peers and having a high sense of agency, while extremely restricting her emotions. Finally, Hala emphasized how she successfully changed the system of a technical institute to study car mechanics in a male-only department. Later, she worked for a short period in a car workshop in an isolated area outside Cairo, which is something very unusual for a girl. She quit the job after a sexual harassment incident, and this was for her the point at which she was confronted with all the consequences of her nonconformity and the prices she was paying for challenging gender norms.

She Kept Resisting Even in Situations of Extreme Victimization

In addition to everyday resistance to unfair socio-cultural contexts, other signs of resistance during the traumatic events emerged. The survivors varied in their ability to recognize their resistance and appreciate its significance. Aisha for example described how she was able to protect herself from being abused during the first phase of her imprisonment by suppressing her emotions of fear and vulnerability, creating a strong, in-control, and confrontational persona in dealing with guards, officers, and other prisoners.

Mariam's narrative of her battle against her father, who used to have complete social and financial authority over her; her success in putting an end to his harm; and her persistence to pursue the case against him despite the social pressure to withdraw, are clear examples of her capacity to resist in a context of extreme victimization, even with limited resources. Unlike Nour and Mona, she was aware of the significance of her resistance and strength in this experience specifically, portraying this battle as her main life achievement.

Mona and Nour mentioned that they were aware that physical resistance, screaming, or calling for help during rape might have put them in greater danger of being killed or severally injured. Yet, they were both fixated on their inability to stop the offense, reflecting feelings of guilt and self-blame. After being beaten up by her rapist, Mona described how she figured out that she would not be able to stop him, and she would have been killed had she resisted. Nour recounted that all she was thinking about was her family's reaction if they knew that she had been visiting a man who lived alone at his place, and she was raped by him. As the rape took place in the offender's apartment, located in the same neighborhood where most of her tribe lived, she was not able to cry for help, knowing that they would kill them both if they became aware of the incident.

Both Mona and Nour highlighted representations of resistance following the rape. Mona narrated that directly after the rapist let her go, she headed directly to a police station to report. She described how she endured long hours in the police station, having to recount what happened over and over to the officers while still in a state of shock, and then having to undergo forensic investigation to reach justice. "Without thinking about it, I found myself telling the Uber I took from the offender's place to take me to the nearest police station. At that point, that seemed the normal thing to do, but now I realize how heavy that was. I needed him to be punished. I was ready to do anything to make this happen, but all was in vain". For Mona, seeking justice had been her route to recovery and the fact that her claims were denied contributed to her trauma.

A False Dichotomy of Agency and Victimization

The narratives highlighted how the five women were able to practice control and negotiate the boundaries of their environment, despite that they had little resources. The narratives also emphasized how a high sense of control was a main coping technique allowing the participants to keep going despite extreme adversity. On the other hand, this sense of control hindered the survivors' ability to process the situation of victimization in which their ability to control was restricted.

Despite Mariam's long-term history of abuse, she managed to make decisions and build a life that is completely different from her social circle and cultural background. She was able to achieve financial independence and confront her father, putting an end to the cycle of abuse. Throughout her brother's imprisonment period, Hala assumed full responsibility for him. She was visiting him in prison twice a week, facing harsh treatment and humiliation by police guards, and spending the remaining days arranging for the next visit, following up with lawyers, and leading a large support group of his friends.

Nour explained that she chose a completely different path from what was expected from a woman of her background. She particularly highlighted that other women around her were getting married to an affluent man from the same tribe, soon after finishing their education, and in some cases even before. Subsequently, they would start families with two or three children and live within their local community. She instead opted for political activism, traveled to the capital to secure a job, and built an independent life away from her family. She stressed how her sense of uniqueness in comparison to other girls in her context, and her sense of ability to control her life were the main motives that helped her to keep going despite adversity.

During her imprisonment, Aisha adopted a persona of a strong, confident, and confrontational woman. This protected her for some time from potential violence by other prisoners who usually target younger prisoners perceived as weaker. Finally, Mona highlighted her strong and in-control personality before her recent rape trauma. Being a working single mother and an outspoken activist, in such a threatening political environment like Egypt, were for her a source of pride and a motivation to keep going.

On the other hand, the narratives echoed the survivors' inability to accept the fact that they lost control during the traumatic event. Accordingly, they were not able to process the negative emotions associated with victimization such as vulnerability, fear, and helplessness.

Aisha explained that her main coping technique during imprisonment was to reclaim control over the prison environment, and her emotions of fear and vulnerability. "I changed my personality completely from a kind and calm person to someone strong who shouts at others and threatens them. I did so to be able to deal with criminal prisoners and guards. I knew that they had this image of political prisoners as inexperienced people whom they could abuse or control, especially for someone like me, at my age and with my background. […] So, I created this persona to make them scared of me, not to dare to touch me. And I was successful".

Despite all threats and violence since her arrest, Aisha's highest moment of fear was after being transferred to a harsher prison, when she started to realize she was not in control over her environment anymore. Subsequently, she started to lose control over her emotions, show vulnerability in front of others, and experience symptoms of extreme anxiety and depression. She identified this moment as the peak of her fear.

Hala, who also had a high sense of agency since childhood, identified her worst fearful moments to be when she lost control over the situation. She highlighted the fact that she was able to deal with severe hardships as long as there was a possibility "to do something about it", for instance, to exercise control in relation to her brother's imprisonment. She identified her extreme moments of fear were when she was being inspected, having her private parts touched by guards, before each visit to her brother in prison, and being unable to raise objections in order not to expose her brother to punishment. As this moment yielded a feeling of helplessness and lack of control, it was for Hala one of the heaviest and most triggering memories.

In the same context, Mariam and Nour are two examples of refusing the victim role by constructing a distorted narrative about their traumatic events. Mariam used to have a strong feeling of guilt, shame, and self-blame about her early rape experience that happened at the age of 11 by her "boyfriend" who was 12 years older. She

narrated the story with much shame and guilt portraying herself as someone who had a sexual encounter at an early age, which for her was an early sign of "indecency" and "waywardness".

In the case of Nour, she labeled her rape trauma at the beginning of the interview as an attempt of sexual assault that did not leave much impact. Yet, when she started to tell the details she mentioned that she realized she was not able to deal with this specific incident because she was not able to process that she was raped by someone she trusted and considered a "godfather". She explained that she downplayed the event and its effects to avoid placing herself in the role of a victim, consequently escaping the emotions of vulnerability.

Discussion

The narratives of the five survivors corroborate the premise that each of the traumatic events investigated can only be understood within the wider socio-cultural political context, and in relation to the survivors' reading of that context. On the one hand, the traumatic experiences these women lived were produced by the socio-cultural and political context in Egypt, in which women were highly exposed to structured GBV. On the other hand, the notions each survivor holds regarding gender roles shaped her appraisal of the trauma and determined its aftermath. This corresponds to the feminist approach to trauma, which emphasizes how women's traumatic experiences are products of women's living context and representations of the gender norms and relationships of power dominating this context (Webster & Dunn, 2005).

Furthermore, we argue that the early realization each survivor had regarding the gendered representations of her traumatic experience, and how the patriarchal norms shaped her victimization, contributed to early non-conformist behavior and rebellious attitude, and instigated strong resistance to the foundational conditions of victimization. This corresponds to key feminist accounts that emphasize how women's resistance to violence can take the form of "disobeying the patriarchy" (Burstow, 1992) which can be expressed through explicit or implicit acts that aim to challenge the restrictive boundaries of the gender scripts ascribed to women (Bem, 1993; Butler, 2005).

On the other hand, the participants portrayed the 2011 revolution and its aftermath as moments of fluidity in gender norms. They associated this fluidity with women's increased engagement in the public sphere, the undermining of the patriarchy represented by the political regime itself, and economic and political changes following the coup of 2013 that pushed many women, especially Islamist women, to be the breadwinners of their families after mass arrests and killings of their husbands. This echoed the emphasis of several studies on changes in gender roles and gender politics in Egypt following the 2011 revolution, particularly in relation to women and femininities (Amar, 2011; Biagini, 2019).

Likewise, the participants highlighted how 2011 brought about moments of personal change, through which they gained resources, awareness, and agency. Biagini (2019), focusing specifically on the Muslim Sisterhood activists, emphasized how the intense politicization of Islamist women activists since 2011 has contributed to an

emerging gender consciousness. While the majority of Islamist women activists do not define themselves as feminists, they embrace feminist politics and express a feminist consciousness in their practices, opposing the patriarchal norms of their groups.

In line with Biagini's thesis, which can be extended to non-Islamist women, we argue that 2011, and the massive waves of violence and politicization that followed, shaped a gender consciousness and sharpened the feminist voice among many Egyptian women including our study's five participants. This can be seen in the narratives in their expressed anger towards patriarchal values, their gendered reading of their traumas, and their persisting resistance to normative gender ideologies and roles through which they challenged patriarchal authorities.

The participants' developing consciousness and their awareness of the gendered nature of their traumatic experiences were influenced as well by the rise of GBV following 2011, which many scholars and activists framed as a backlash to the mobilization of women and a tool of punishment to deter efforts towards the emancipation of women (Marcus, 2011). This echoes Kandiyoti's (2013) notion of "masculinist restoration" which refers to a time "[w]hen patriarchy no longer feels secure … it requires a higher level of coercion and the deployment of more varied ideological state apparatuses to ensure its reproduction". This can be expanded to the employment, or condoning, of a wider range of violent acts against women who challenge the patriarchy (Al-Ali, 2014).

Nour's narration of her rape experience and how her rapist tried to justify his crime by claiming it was an attempt to "calm her down" was a concrete example of the use of rape as a tool of punishment for challenging conventional gender norms, corresponding with Brownmiller's (1993) thesis that rape was historically associated with the establishment and reinforcement of male-domination. This is also in line with the ambivalent sexism model, in which hostile sexism, embodied sometimes in sexual violence, can be used against women who demonstrate non-stereotypical performance, including showing assertiveness, competence, and agency (Conner et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, the narratives of the survivors echo Brown's (2008) emphasis on the importance of considering the complexity of the multiple social identities of each trauma survivor, including gender role identity as well as political, socio-cultural, and familial backgrounds. In the same realm, intersectionality can enrich our understanding of the participants' lived experiences, including their exposure to violence and the consequences thereof B. Cole, 2009). The social location of each of the five participants within the structure of power, during and after the traumatic experience, was molded by their multiple categories of identity (Creek & Dunn, 2011). For instance, in the case of Nour being a young woman from a specific tribe with certain social norms and rules meant she could not seek help during her rape experience, or report after, as she was aware that could result in her losing her life at the hands of her own family. Mariam, on the other hand, explained how her socio-economic position directly contributed to her victimization keeping her trapped in the cycle of violence for years due to her complete dependence on the financial support of her offender (her father). Aisha's education in an Islamic school and her familial Islamic background made her susceptible to political violence, especially during a period when the Egyp-

tian regime was targeting individuals affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters, following the military coup.

This multi-layered analysis serves to illuminate the interplay among the more significant identity factors in Egyptian society that shape women's positions of power. As emphasized in the feminist discussions on violence against women, such an analysis is a necessary step toward achieving a coherent understanding of the lived experiences of marginalized individuals in any cultural context. (Buchanan & Jamieson, 2016; Iverson, 2017). This multilayered contextual analysis then be a foundation for designing appropriate social and psychological interventions that aim at helping gender-based violence survivors.

On the level of the wider socio-cultural and political context, Mona highlighted how the societal beliefs surrounding sexual violence against women and the patriarchal legal system restrained her efforts for recovery. She specifically emphasized that denying her rape claims by the forensic and prosecution authorities for not finding "clear signs of resistance', and releasing the rapist after arresting him, were another traumatic event compounding the initial assault. This resonates with what Brownmiller (1993) denoted as the male logic of resistance, which requires material evidence to legitimize rape charges, which she considered one of the main areas that feminist trauma specialists should challenge using survivor narratives.

Although the survivors were generally able to recognize their overall everyday resistance to patriarchy, they markedly varied in their ability to recognize their resistance in the specific moments of their traumatic experiences. Those who experienced rape showed a marked sense of helplessness and guilt. While Mona and Nour were aware that their physical resistance might have cost them their lives, they expressed a significant feeling of self-blame about failing to stop the rapist, ignoring the contextual conditions and the significance of their subsequent strength, e.g., reporting the rape.

Koss argued for considering sexual victimization through a multi-dimensional view, instead of treating it as a dichotomous variable that requires positioning women in the category of a victim (or not a victim), ascribing to them rigid assumptions of strength or vulnerability (Koss & Oros, 1982). Moreover, she emphasized the role of a nexus of contextual factors that shape women's victimization and their evaluation of their victimization (namely, event characteristics, victim-offender relationship, and environment characteristics) (Koss, 1985). The variation in the survivors' sense of victimization, their ability to resist, and their ability to recognize their resistance can be explained by the nexus of factors suggested by Koss. For Nour, her pre-rape relationship with the offender, in addition to environmental characteristics (her worries about her family's reaction), contributed to her victimization. For Mona, the violent nature of the event contributed to her sense of victimization, while environmental factors (denial of legal consideration of her rape) hindered her ability to recognize the significance of her resistance (reporting the rape and challenging the associated stigma).

Agency, as defined by Haffejee and Theron (2019, p. 686), is the "capacity of individuals to act independently and shape their life circumstances." It encompasses the ability to perceive and analyse environmental requirements and risks, make autonomous decisions, and choose appropriate actions. In this context, it requires an ability

to practice control over one's environment using the available resources. Evidence of a sense of agency emerged from the survivors' narratives, reflecting their ability to reclaim control over their living environments, even with limited resources. At the same time, their narratives highlighted their inability to accept the fact that they lost control, even partially, during their traumatic events. Refusing to accept the victim role has led to the suppression of the emotions associated with victimization (in the cases of Aisha and Hala) and to the construction of a distorted narrative about the traumatic event (in the cases of Nour and Mariam). We argue that this inability to accept the moment of victimization can be explained by having internalized a dichotomous view of agency and victimization. The notion of the constructed false dichotomy of victimization and agency was discussed within the feminist scholarship as one of the false pre-assumptions that dominated academic research, the public understanding, as well as, the social, psychological, and legal practices, concerning violence against women (Mardorossian, 2014). It remained for a long time a main source of tension among scholars, reflecting the adoption of a unidimensional vision of women as victims or in-control agent individuals (Griffiths, 2018; Schneider, 1993). Challenging this dichotomy, Schneider (1986) used expert testimonies on the court cases of battered women to show how both concepts of victimization and agency are overly simplistic, urging researchers and practitioners to consider the complexity of women's living realities and put women's actions in context considering both elements of victimization and agency/resistance in each incident of violence. This study's participants' self-concept is centered around their ability to control their environment. Therefore, we believe, they rejected what they considered to contradict, or threaten, they adopted notion of agency, i.e., losing control during the traumatic event, as it may shatter one's fundamental assumption about the self (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). This insight can be a fundamental starting point in the efforts that aim at treating the psychological consequences of trauma, assisting survivors in integrating their moments of victimization, and processing the heavy emotions associated with them.

Reflexive Account

As mentioned earlier, I, the first author, am an Egyptian, secular, feminist activist who identifies as a member of the opposition to the regime in Egypt. My positionality was discernible to the research participants, which is believed to have facilitated gaining their trust in the tense and politically polarized research environment. Moreover, being perceived as a member of the same political "camp" as the five participants possibly created a shared political identity, which stands in opposition to the dominant political and social powers in the research's context. This identity is possibly imbued with shared meanings and emotions, such as sorrow over the perceived failure of the revolution, the romanticization of collective memories of the revolution, anger towards the incumbent regime and its supporting social forces, a sense of marginalization in the current socio-political context, and fear due to ongoing security threats. On the one hand, this possibly contributed to a sense of understanding and sympathy, bridging the distance between myself and the participants. On the other hand, it also possibly increased the level of politicization of the constructed

narratives, by encouraging and facilitating political readings of the participants' life events.

My feminist identity was less overt to the participants. However, I believe that it was an important underlying factor throughout the different phases of the research. Concretely, this research project pursues a feminist reading of women's traumas. As such, the whole project is based on pre-assumptions concerning the underlying factors of investigated traumas and their consequences. A clear example is the proposed reading of the 2011-revolution as a moment of change in gender politics in Egypt. This core assumption, which was constructed through prior direct observations and readings of the relevant literature, has shaped the interview questions, affected interactions with participants during interviews, and influenced the way in which the narratives were interpreted.

Finally, I identify as a secular woman in a highly religious socio-cultural context. Although that was not explicitly mentioned to the participants, it was still easy to infer from my appearance, behavior, and language. Four of the five participants showed moderate signs of religiosity, and one of them was a very religious young woman who explicitly adopts an Islamist ideology. However, religious emphases were much less present in the narratives than expected in such a context, especially as possible foundations for the meaning-making process. Possible contributing factors to that are both my perceived identity and my subjectivity as a secular woman, which perhaps did not stimulate the potential religious meanings associated with the participants' narratives.

Conclusion and Limitations

Unlike quantitative approaches, which aim for numerical generalizations using large representative samples, a qualitative approach strives for theoretical generalization by placing "subjectivity-in-context". The goal then is to attain a deep understanding of human experiences, by analyzing internal relations and processes of meaning-making that shape a psychological phenomenon (Schraube & Højholt, 2019). From this perspective, the study results give significant insights that may add to our general understanding of women's traumas and resistance.

The study emphasized the potential value of employing a feminist reading of women's gendered traumatic experiences, taking into consideration the socio-cultural and political contexts of trauma, especially when investigating SV and PV traumas that were shaped in the light of the gender roles of the survivors. It concretely highlighted how women who live under structured patriarchal forms of severe violence show persistent efforts for survival, continuous acts of resistance, and a struggle to challenge the oppressive context. As these women push the boundaries of gender roles and challenge traditional gender ideologies, they produce patterns of everyday resistance that change their direct environment, and possibly the larger context as well. Further, as the study adds to our understanding of the specificity of women's traumas and resistance, it provides foundations for designing, implementing, and evaluating effective and adequate trauma interventions that are culturally oriented.

Based on the analysis of the five narratives covered in this study, several directions for better trauma interventions can be recommended: (a) it is crucial to integrate the survivors' own reading of their experiences to reach a better understanding of trauma aftermath; (b) a feminist reading of women's traumatic experiences, taking into consideration the wider contexts and the associated representations of gender constructs, is necessary for grounding our understanding of women's traumas; (c) encouraging women's trauma survivors to integrate a coherent gendered reading of their experiences, helping them to put their trauma into its wider socio-cultural and political contexts, might help them to better recognize the significance of their resistance, mitigate their suffering, and contribute to meaning-making; (d) identifying different layers of resistance during traumatic events, helping survivors recognize these acts, and integrating them in their constructed narratives, may reduce the sense of guilt and shame; and finally, (e) breaking the false dichotomy of victimization-agency which survivors might have been internalized can facilitate the construction of a more coherent narrative on trauma, and ease the processing of negative emotions.

On the other hand, it is crucial to underscore that the nature of the traumatic events experienced by the study participants, which intricately intertwined with the socio-political landscape of post-military coup Egypt, played a defining role in shaping the experiences of the participants, as well as framing the results of the study. Moreover, it is noteworthy that all five participants held a sharp political consciousness and position prior to the implementation of the study. These aspects can be considered as limitations of the applicability of the present results in other contexts and with other populations.

In a less politically charged context, where the experiences of interpersonal violence can differ in nature, and with survivors who are less politically engaged, the analysis conducted might be less applicable. Nevertheless, the primary emphasis of this study remains underlining the importance of relying on survivors' narratives and employing contextual feminist analytical tools. These approaches are crucial for achieving a cohesive understanding of experiences of violence and, consequently, for guiding recovery efforts based on this nuanced understanding.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate The study conforms to the APA ethical standards on the treatment of research participants, including the rights to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and the avoiding harm (APA, 2017). The psychiatric board of the hosting institute in Egypt revised and approved the study protocol and its ethical considerations prior to the implementation of the interviews. A written informed consent statement was discussed and signed with each participant prior to the interviews (more details concerning the ethical considerations are under the methodology section).

Competing Interests No financial or non-financial interests to be disclosed.

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