

Sur/Sous-Veillance from Hashtags to Headlines
News Virality and Cyberfeminism in Framing Violence Against Women in Egypt

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Sur/Sous-Veillance from Hashtags to Headlines: News Virality and Cyberfeminism in Framing Violence Against Women in Egypt

This study examines the news virality of violence against women incidents in Egypt, identifying the event-related triggers of news virality, demonstrating how news virality is associated with framing incidents of violence against women in Egypt on a structural, tonal, message feature, and problem-solution levels, and illustrating how different media platforms can in turn shape the framing of incidents of violence against women in Egypt. Additionally, this study explores how cyberfeminism goals namely, documentation, education, and mobilization manifested in framing posts on social media and how echoes of cyberfeminism are found in the framing of viral news as opposed to non-viral news to reflect patterns of surveillance and/or sousveillance. A mixed-methods approach was adopted where a quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis of 248 non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt, as well as 233 X posts and 256 viral news articles covering 13 high-profile incidents of violence against women in Egypt were conducted. The findings illustrated that the more visible an incident is, and the more a medium affords engagement, the more personal, emotion-focused, victim-centered, solidarity-fostering, solution oriented, sensitive reporting, and the more it enacts bottom-up the resistance (sousveillance) to patriarchal narratives is. The goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) manifested in the X posts, and the study added a fourth goal namely, solidarity/support. News articles covering viral incidents of violence against women were to be the middle ground between X posts (most visible) enacting sousveillance and news articles covering non-viral incidents (least visible) enacting

surveillance; viral news articles combined both surveillance and sousveillance, creating what this study coins as ‘meso-veillance’.

Keywords: news virality, violence against women, cyberfeminism, surveillance, sousveillance, thematic analysis, framing

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I dedicate this dissertation to my home country, Egypt – my source of safety, belonging and pride: You will forever be ‘مصر أم الدنيا’. To my dearest cousin, Hisho, I hope we’ve made you proud, as you watch over us with all our loved ones from heaven. To every woman who has been silenced and blamed for the violence she suffered, I hope that this work contributes, even in the smallest way, to their visibility and to the ongoing fight for equality and safety for all women.

DEDICATION

“Solidarity between women can be a powerful force of change, and can influence future development in ways favourable not only to women but also to men.”

— Nawal El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*

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Introduction

Violence against women is a human rights violation that has been well defined in existing literature (WHO, 2021). Scholars opt to broaden the definition of the term to not only include acts of physical violence, but to also include psychological and emotional acts of abuse (Tjaden, 2004). Moreover, the United Nations offers a definition of violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (UN, 1993).

The public discourse surrounding violence against women, which is often perceived to be a taboo, can be represented on a spectrum that ranges from offering support to the victims and spreading awareness, to impunity, victim blaming and societal shaming (Posetti, Aboulez, Bontcheva, Harrison, & Waisbord, 2020). Moreover, with the emergence of social media, that public discourse has moved to online platforms, where the level of freedom of expression is perceived to be higher than other forms of communication, thereby producing what is often called a “cyber discourse” (Mohamed, 2007). Nonetheless, this discourse differs when situated in different political, social, and cultural contexts (Posetti et al., 2020).

Egypt is an Arab country witnessing declining political and civil liberties, as well as a growing economic recession under a military-dominated regime (Dunne, 2020). The country has a hybrid liberal-conservative culture, where despite the reformist social policies, women are still experiencing social inequalities and ascribed stereotypical gender roles (Abdou & Zaazou, 2013; Ahmed & Gielen, 2017). Religious rhetoric also plays a significant role, when it comes to the gender inequality discourse in Egypt (Bassiouney, 2017; Reda & Amin, 2020).

Moreover, even though the constitution advocates for equal rights and equal opportunities to all, women still face discrimination and violence both in private and in public

spaces (Freedom House, 2020). The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (2005) categorizes violence against women in Egypt to include, "violence committed by institutions of the state, domestic violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), and structural violence that deprives women of equal participation and a chance to change the conditions that perpetuate the other forms of violence" (p.1). Furthermore, forms of violence against women such as rape and sexual assault often get downplayed within the media and the public discourse and are instead coined as '*taharrush* تحرش' or '*sexual harassment*'. Even the term 'sexual harassment' was up until recently considered to be a problematic term, highlighting the societal discomfort with issues pertaining to gender and violence (Safeworld, 2015).

News media outlets in Egypt – which are mostly state-owned/monitored - tend to either ignore incidents of violence against women altogether, to award them a superficial attention, and/or to attack victims of gender-based violence (El-Ibiary, 2017). In addition, the framing and stereotyping of women by the media as being submissive, passive, and oppressed plays a role in exacerbating the gender-based violence problem in Egypt both in public and private spaces (Allam, 2008). However, the social media discourse of violence against women in Egypt (e.g., Cyberfeminism) has been growing recently as evident by the rise in social media hashtags sharing sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape and honor killing incidents ("Egypt's public prosecution", 2021a). The social media discourse compelled the news media to cover incidents of violence against women in Egypt that went 'viral' on social media, in order to avoid igniting public outrage (Amar, 2011).

The term 'viral news' or 'news virality' can be generically defined as the spread of news in a relatively short period of time, the way a virus spreads (Nahon & Hemsley, 2014). This viral spread of news occurs when news travel across different networks and different platforms (Luchessi, 2018). However, the probability of news virality is difficult to predict (Xu & Qian, 2023). Many incidents are covered daily in news media and debated on social

media platforms, yet few of these stories ‘make the cut ’to virality. Hence, the study at hand aims to explore the nuances of the concept of news virality.

Scholars conceptualized the notion of newsworthiness as being related to news value. It is a combination of factors, such as proximity, emotion, and conflict, that determine whether a news story is worthy of being published from a journalistic viewpoint (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Östgaard, 1965). Moreover, recent studies have looked at the factors of newsworthiness from the audience’s standpoint engaging with news content online (Weber, 2014; Ziegele, Breiner, & Quiring, 2014). Trilling, Tolochko, and Burscher (2017) have extended the concept of newsworthiness to shareworthiness, where the public determines whether a news story is worthy of being shared online.

Furthermore, there are inconsistencies between incidents that get news media attention (i.e., that are considered newsworthy) and those that garner social media attention (i.e., that are considered shareworthy), where not all incidents of violence against women reported on the news get the social media users ’attention. There are also inconsistencies between the attention warranted to different incidents of violence against women in Egypt on news media outlets.

Previous studies of news virality have focused on people’s motivations to share or not share news, on factors related to the shareworthiness of the content such as proximity, negative or positive emotions, and conflict. They also focused on elements of newsworthiness when it comes to digital journalism and how they affect journalistic routines, as well as on the political context and how that affects the shareability of news content (Al-Rawi, 2017; Al-Rawi, Al-Musalli, & Fakida, 2021; Dos Santos, Lycarião, & De Aquino, 2019; Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013; Kim & Ihm, 2020; Mathews, Bélair-Gagnon, Lewis,

2022; Lycarião, Santos, & Leite, 2021; Solvoll & Larsson, 2020; Trilling, Tolochko, Burscher, 2017; Van Der Meer & Brosius, 2022).

Little has been known about how incidents that have gone ‘viral’ are associated with the framing that news media and social media give to these incidents, in comparison to incidents that have not gone ‘viral.’ In other words, do incidents of violence against women in Egypt that share elements of newsworthiness such as proximity, emotion, and conflict receive equal attention by news media outlets? What is different about the news stories that get a one-time mention in the crimes section of news websites, compared to others that receive extensive coverage for weeks, months or even years? What triggers news virality? How are these incidents framed in the news media and on social media?

The study at hand doesn’t stop at analyzing the triggers and framing of viral and non-viral news incidents, it looks at Cyberfeminism, which refers to a feminist movement generated by virtual media users, and how its goals (i.e., documentation, education, and mobilization) manifest in social media posts (Lee, 2025; Tazi & Oumlil, 2020; Khamis, 2013). Additionally, the study examines how Cyberfeminism, which represents bottom-up resistance and monitoring (i.e., *sousveillance*), shapes news virality in terms of using news framing to enact surveillance (top-down monitoring and control) or *sousveillance* (bottom-up resistance and monitoring) that either reinforces patriarchal narratives or resist them (Thomsen, 2020; Fuchs & Trottier, 2015; Mann, 2013). Therefore, the current study incorporates Framing, Cyberfeminism, and Veillance theories in examining news virality of incidents of violence against women, using a longitudinal, cross-platform, relational approach that contextualizes the news virality of incidents of violence against women in Egypt, instead of treating them as ephemeral incidents.

This study conducted a quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis of the framing of viral and non-viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt on an Egyptian news website and the viral incidents' hashtags on X (formerly known as Twitter) over the course of four years (from 2020 to 2024). A stratified sample of 256 viral news articles, 248 non-viral news articles, and 233 X posts was drawn in order to respond to the study's research questions.

Background

The study provides a contextual background of Egypt's socio-political cultural and media landscape. The chapter begins with an overview of the country's contemporary political system of governance as well as recent revolutions and post-revolution transitions reflecting surveillance (top-down monitoring/control) and sousveillance (bottom-up mobilization), followed by identifying women's rights and political participation, exploring the socio-cultural traditions that dictate the existing gender norms, shifting into a discussion of gender-based violence, tracing Egyptian feminist movements, and illustrating the legislations against gender-based violence and cybercrime. The chapter then maps the Egyptian media landscape and reviews the feminist and anti-feminist discourse in Egyptian media.

Egypt: Country Overview

Egypt, with over a five-thousand-year long history, is considered the first modern country in the Arab region. Its political system has been a republic with a semi-presidential, multi-party system of governance, ever since the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 that abolished the Egypt and Sudan monarchy (Bruni, 2012). Prior to the 2011 Revolution, Egypt has been ruled by presidents coming from military backgrounds keeping the country under iron clad

control, starting with Mohammed Naguib (1953-1954), Gamal Abdel Nasser (1956-1970), Anwar Sadat (1970-1981), and ending with Hosni Mubarak (1981-2011) (Islami, 2016).

Egyptian presidents relied on a populist mode of governance trying to appeal to the working classes through populist economic reforms, while trumping any form of dissidence or political opposition in the process (Khan & Milbert, 2012). Even though Egypt enjoys a multi-party system, the power has always been in the presidents' hands, as well as in the political party to which they belonged, and which usually constituted the majority of seats of the People's Assembly (Hasanen & Nuruzzaman, 2013). As for civil liberties and political engagement, they were pretty much non-existent in Egypt, despite holding presidential elections and referendums, civic engagement was very weak, because in the midst of egregious election frauds, there was practically no room for "true" political competition and the re-election of the sitting president was ipso facto (Paciello, 2011).

Furthermore, the only semblance of an organized competition was the Muslim Brotherhood, which was called the "forbidden group" by the regime at the time, because under the Egyptian constitution, religious parties were prohibited from participating in the political arena (Stacher, 2008). Nevertheless, during Mubarak's rule, he unofficially allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to secure a few seats in parliament to maintain a façade of political diversity and democracy, all while subjecting hundreds of members to arrests and torture in prisons (al-Anani, 2015).

In 2011, the January 25th Revolution succeeded the Tunisian Revolution in what looked like a domino effect of revolutions that jolted through the Arab region to topple their tyrants, which was then coined as the "Arab Spring." In Egypt, millions of protesters flooded the streets to Tahrir Square to claim their rights, calling for "bread, freedom, and social justice" and then they chanted: "the people want to bring down the regime," which later

escalated to “the people want to bring down the president” (Puspitasari, 2017). Moreover, women’s involvement in the revolution was crucial. They faced mass sexual assaults by thugs and police. They were also arrested by the military, tortured, and forced to undergo virginity tests. They were stomped on and stripped [the infamous incident of the girl in the blue bra being dragged down the streets by the military is a case in point] (Shaaban, 2011).

After 18 days of peaceful protests despite police and thug altercations, Mubarak stepped down. The 2011 Revolution created a hope for democracy and social justice for the very first time, where the words “the people want” felt like they counted for more than just a cliché populist credo used by tyrants to impose consensus. Parliamentary and presidential elections were met with an unprecedented turnout, and civic engagement was resurrected (Bakr, 2016). The Muslim Brotherhood and other religious parties came into the light and openly participated in politics. The people were looking forward to finally having honest elections and a non-military rule (Puspitasari, 2017).

However, the year 2011 marked the start of political instability in Egypt. There were protests against the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) which temporarily ruled the country until the presidential elections in 2012, where Muslim Brotherhood member Mohamed Morsi was elected president (Abdulla, 2014). People then started to resent the religious rule and extremism, even though the country enjoyed freedom of expression where the regime was constantly and openly criticized, something that the people had never experienced before (al-Anani, 2015). In June 2013, a popular movement called “*Tamarod*” or “*Rebellion*” arose with the aim of collecting 15 million signatures to force Morsi to succumb to demands for early presidential elections after one year of being in office (Monier & Ranko, 2013).

After allegedly collecting 22 million signatures, people who were anti-Morsi protested one more time in Tahrir Square under the protection of the military and police demanding for the president's resignation. This has resulted in the emergence of pro-Morsi protests in Rabaa Adawiya and Al-Nahda Squares (Monier & Ranko, 2013). The Minister of Defence at the time, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi issued ultimatums to the government to appease the protests, which eventually led to the arrest of Morsi at the hands of the military and the massacre in Rabaa Square where hundreds of Morsi supporters were killed to evacuate the square and "reinstate stability." Demands for al-Sisi to run for president led to him running and winning the presidential elections (al-Anani, 2015).

That was the start of the rapid decline in democracy, civil rights, and freedoms, as the regime crushed any form of dissent and heavily suppressed freedom of speech and press under the guise of preserving national security, labeling dissidents as traitors and Morsi-/Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers, engaging in arbitrary detentions. Talk show hosts and journalists who dared criticize the government were let go from their jobs, threatened, arrested, and forced to leave the country (Elyachar, 2014). Egypt has always been considered a "not free" state until 2011, when its ranking in terms of political rights and civil liberties moved up to "partly free." In 2014, after the Rabaa Massacre and the appointment of al-Sisi as president, Egypt witnessed a serious blow in political and civil rights offline and online which led to its ranking falling back to "not free" and remained the same to this day (Freedom House, 2020).

Women's Rights and Political Participation

The Egyptian government prior to the 2011 Revolution has taken steps to better women's political representation and to claim their rights, but these steps have been rather feeble and intangible. The country's personal status legislation, which had been a source of

sexism since its inception in the 1920s, has been subjected to reforms, making it possible for women to vote, and have work opportunities (Bernard-Maugiron & Dupret, 2008). However, despite the constitutional guarantee of gender equality, the country's legislation unfortunately does not protect women's rights; it does not protect them from discrimination, sexual harassment, rape, female genital mutilation, unequal share of inheritance, harmful traditional practices such as honor killing, restrictive reproductive rights, and/or domestic violence (Tadros, 2010).

Women's political participation ranging from parliament and local councils to civil society organizations has been based on a quota system. For instance, in parliament, women's representation never exceeded 3% over the period of 15 years until 2010 when the quota system was implemented, where women are allocated a certain number of seats in parliament, making the representation of women reach 13% and reach a peak of 15% in 2015 (Cairo Center for Development and Human Rights, 2015). Similarly, their participation in the local government was subjected to the quota system, where Article 180 of the 2014 Constitution guarantees women a quarter of local government seats, which resulted in an effective increase in women representation in local councils (OECD, 2018).

After the 2011 Revolution, the number of women involved in political parties drastically increased, reaching 30% in the Egyptian Social Democratic Party, and for the first time ever, the Dostour Party elected a female leader in 2011 (Kingsley, 2014). Noticeably, women representation in religious parties tends to be very low and is thought to be merely a fulfilment of legal requirement, the women candidates' photos are not even published, they oftentimes use pictures of flowers instead (OECD, 2018).

The 2011 Revolution has also marked a fundamental increase in Egyptian women's involvement in syndicates and trade unions, and coalitions were formed to protect women's

rights such as the Egyptian Coalition for Women's Participation (Kinoti, 2011). However, after the dust settled on the revolution, women were excluded from participating in the drafting of the constitution. Only seven women took part in the constitutional assembly out of a 100 participants. In addition, conservative voices were calling for returning to Egyptian traditions where women belonged in the home, rejecting women's rights as being a foreign and an "un-Egyptian" concept (Tadros, 2019).

Furthermore, Egypt still assigns stereotypical gender roles to women such as, cooking, cleaning and taking care of the children. The 2020 Global Gender Gap Index shows that Egypt ranks 134 out of 153 countries when it comes to gender inequality, which is rather surprising for a country that strives to promote reformist social policies. In addition, women's employment rates are drastically low (21.93%) in comparison to the men's (70.86%), because of the high costs of childcare, along with the unsafe and non-women friendly work environment (Constant et al., 2020).

Moreover, despite the fact that female genital mutilation (FGM) is illegal in Egypt, according to the Demographic and Health Survey in 2014, 92% of interviewed women (15-49 years old) are circumcised. On the flip side, women's literacy rates are increasing which could foster an economic growth. Additionally, a law banning marriage of minors (younger than the age of 18) has resulted in decreasing the number of child marriages and teenage pregnancies, however, minors are sometimes forced to fake their age in order to get married (Ahmed & Gielen, 2017).

Women & Socio-Cultural Traditions

The concept of "this is a man's world" has always plagued the Egyptian society. The Egyptian discriminatory laws reinforce this notion through not addressing issues such as honor crimes, female genital mutilation which are deemed illegal worldwide, and yet is still

widely practiced undetected and thus, with no penalty (Welchman & Hossain, 2005). Laws addressing marriage and divorce are equally discriminatory; a woman for instance must forsake all her financial rights, in order to divorce her husband without his consent (Bernard-Maurigon & Dupret, 2008). In addition, inheritance laws state that men should get double the women's share of the inheritance in certain cases (Badran, 1995). More attention has been devoted to sexual harassment and FGM recently, while domestic violence is overlooked, since the culture frowns upon discussing marital problems (Reda & Amin, 2020). People believe that religions order women to obey their husbands, giving husbands the right to correct and "discipline" them which translates into violence (Roudi-Fahimi, 2010).

Based on this premise, the laws seldom do not protect women from this kind of violence, and consequently, women have come to accept it as an act of obedience and think that they are bound by religion and traditions (Tadros, 2010). Egypt 2012 Human Rights Report include a survey conducted in 2011 drawing a random sample of 1503 households in Cairo, Minya, Sohag and Alexandria found that 81% of men believed they had the right to beat their wives and daughters, and 50% of women surveyed in Alexandria said that they have experienced physical violence (Roudi-Fahimi, 2010).

The laws are either relying on an interpretation of "Shari'a" or Islamic Law, or on socio-cultural traditions. For instance, the legislation banning FGM has not been easily digested, since many people believe it to be part of the Islamic doctrine and would fiercely fight against it, same goes for domestic violence where many people believe that men must have unrestricted possession and access to their wives' bodies, and even resist the idea of marital rape (Badran, 1995). Apart from the laws, socio-cultural traditions that seem to delineate women's behaviors and beliefs include, curfews. Girls/women tend to live with their families until they are married, if they don't marry then they stay with their families (Fargues, 2005).

It's frowned upon and considered unacceptable by many for a woman to live by herself and would deem such woman as a person of 'loose morals.' When living with their family, girls/women have to abide by strict curfews set by the parent/guardian, they can't leave the house without taking their permission, these curfews tend to be stricter for grown women than they are for young boys, while grown men do not need curfews (Suleiman, 2014). Moreover, within the family, traditions dictate that women/girls are expected to prepare supper for the men of the house (be it husband, father, uncle, brother, or son), clean after them, and tend to their needs. (Hoffman-Ladd, 1987) As for appropriate public demeanor for women, traditions tend to frown upon women/girls laughing or talking loudly in public spaces, they also tend to encourage a low gaze and legs kept close together, since women/girls are expected to be coy (El-Safty, 2004).

Education and labor are seen as secondary if not periphery to women, since their fundamental mission in life should be to serve the men of the house and to procreate (Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). When talking about women getting married, parents/guardians use the word "satr" or "cover" which refers to women being a burden to their families, because they have to be shielded and carefully monitored so that they don't go astray, until they get married and are "covered" and taken care of (Suleiman, 2014). Other cultural expressions include; "needing to live in the shadow of a man" [to feel his protection] and "needing a man to be your [woman] backbone". Women cannot have male friends, nor can they go out with men other than their husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers, or sons, in order to avoid public scrutiny (El-Safty, 2004).

Women/girls are supposed to ignore sexual harassment in the streets, otherwise, they would be encouraging the harasser to keep harassing them. Women should not "dilly dally" while walking in the streets, or they would be perceived to be 'asking for it,' they should walk in a brisk pace (Elsadda, 2019a). Women should not talk or complain about the affairs

happening in their household, nor should they discuss their marital relationships and fights with anyone, which means that women are oftentimes left to suffer alone (Ahmed & Gielen, 2017). Women should not know anything about sex until they are married, or they run the risk of tainting their chastity and purity. Women should accept that men have a larger sexual appetite and are entitled to look at/flirt with/sleep with/marry someone else, while they are not allowed to have a sexual appetite nor are they allowed to glance at anyone (El-Safty, 2001).

Women are expected to abide by a “conservative” apparel in order to avoid harassment. However, the word conservative or appropriate apparel is relatively defined and there’s always a justification for harassment. Whether it is walking the streets at a late hour with no chaperone, wearing an ‘inappropriate’ outfit, walking in an empty street, being accompanied by a man who is not a father, uncle, brother, or son. These justifications are intrinsic to the culture of victim blaming when it comes to sexual harassment (HarassMap, 2014). These patriarchal socio-cultural traditions are generally perpetuated from generation to generation.

Gender-Based Violence: At Home, Work, Streets, Online

Issues of gender inequality and discrimination have always stirred the public opinion and advocates of women’s rights and feminists from Safeya Zaghloul to Nawal El Saadawi who have long fought to eradicate society’s prejudiced perspective of women as the inferior sex (Al-Qaiwani, 2015). Even though the constitution refers to equal rights and equal opportunities to all, women still face discrimination and violence both in private and in public spaces (Freedom House, 2020).

Domestic violence against women is considered common and accepted; the predicament is that women are more inclined to report sexual harassment by strangers than

they are to report incidents of domestic violence, since they perceive it as a “behind closed doors” issue (Martin, 2013). For an abuser to be prosecuted in case of sexual harassment or domestic violence, eyewitnesses have to be called to the stand, but since oftentimes sexual harassment occurs where there are no witnesses, the authorities treat it as a social rather than a criminal matter (Weller, 2009).

A United Nations study investigating the violence that women face found that 53% of Egyptian women face sexual violence and sexual harassment, whereas being assigned stereotypical gender roles and being excluded from the political arena made up 27% and facing domestic violence reached 20% (Badran, 2014). In a ranking of the 10 least safe countries for women in the world, Egypt ranked 6th (Khan, 2016).

HarassMap, a local NGO states that “street sexual harassment is an endemic social problem that harms women both physically and psychologically and violates their basic rights to safety and mobility” (HarassMap, 2015). According to UN Women (2013), 99.3% of Egyptian women say they have faced street sexual harassment at least once in their lives, 49.2% of them say it happens daily and 48% of them say it has been happening more since the 2011 uprising. During the 2011 Revolution, there have been 500 reported cases of mass sexual attacks in Tahrir Square in order to intimidate the protesters (FIDH Report, 2014). If these incidents were linked to the incidents of street sexual harassment by political forces in 2005 and 2010, it was found that violence against women in public offline or online is not always sporadic, it is oftentimes orchestrated to halt women’s political participation and stereotype them to a limited number of roles where they do not compete with men (Posetti et al., 2020). A survey in 2021 demonstrated that physical violence, followed by emotional violence and sexual violence increased from 2015 (Ghania, El-Horbaty, & Albeherly, 2025).

Egyptian Feminist Movements

The history of Egyptian feminist movements is related to socio-political currents. Starting with, the thirty women's periodicals circulated between 1892 and 1920 targeting women throughout the Arab region. In 1909, Nabawiya Musa was the first woman to attend secondary school examination and pass (Abdel-Kader, 1987; Al-Ali, 1997). In the 1910s, women started to be involved in anti-colonial and nationalist movements, demanding rights to education, employment, and inclusion in mosques. The 1920s marked the rise of organized feminism spearheaded by Huda Sha'rawi and Saiza Nabrawi creating the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923. In 1948, Doria Shafik founded Daughters of the Nile Union, and nine years later, Rawya Attiya was the first woman to be elected in parliament (Baron, 1997; Hatem, 1992).

The 1960s saw singer Umm Kulthum becoming a cultural icon. Ten years later, the second wave of feminism emerged, focusing on social, economic, and cultural reforms, fighting against women oppression led by Nawal Saadawi, recognizing the psychological and physical effects of oppression on women (Khater & Nelson, 1988). In 1980, coinciding with the Infitah or the "Open Door" policy, the Arab Women's Solidarity Association was founded by Nawal Saadawi. Then, the New Woman Research Center was created by Dr.Aida Seif al-Dawla, and Daughter of the Earth Society has been formed to protest the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In 1985, the Defense of the Rights of the Woman and the Family was formed (Hatem, 1992).

A more drastic shift in women activists' response to conservatism has ensued in the 1990s. Dr.Aida Seif al-Dawla created the Nadim Center for the Psychological Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence in Cairo. In the 2000s, opposition groups were formed by mothers and

professional women, to protest against the assault of women journalists by thugs or police, and the ECWR is campaigning to stop sexual harassment of women (Kamal, 2016).

Furthermore, despite being stereotyped as passive falling victims to patriarchal oppression enforced by society, Egyptian women have been challenging the misogynistic ideologies that define their lives by organizing themselves. With the emergence of the internet and social media, women started to go online in order to spread their cause through their blogs. The term “third-wave feminist” is used to identify the discourse of female Egyptian bloggers who used strategies different from those that have been described as Islamic feminist (Badran, 2010). Those female bloggers did not relate to any specific ideology, instead they began, using a postmodern term, with their “mini-narratives”, sharing their personal stories about injustice inflicted upon Egyptian women/girls. Having no particular ideology is considered as a strong point in their favor which asserts their uniqueness and originality (Kandiyoti, 1991).

Although Feminism and Gender studies existed in the last century, by the turn of the century new voices appeared claiming that feminism has varied voices that include: Postmodern feminism, Lesbian feminism, Black feminism and Islamic feminism, as another type of feminism articulated through International Conferences and Cyber-net (El-Masrafy, 2014). In Egypt, Islamic feminism has been introduced by Margot Badran and Omaila Abou Bakr (Lewis, 2012). Islamic feminism essentially refers to a branch that takes Islamic interpretation as a discourse that defends women equality with men. Islamic feminists consider that their achievement is in re-reading and re-interpreting Islamic Text, considering it as a kind of “Islamic Jihad” to reach a current Islamic jurisdiction (Khamis, 2024; El-Masrafy, 2014).

Legislations Against Gender-Based Violence and Cybercrime

A brief glimpse of how the Egyptian legislation tackles the issue of women's rights is needed. Rape for instance is punishable by law with penalties ranging between 15-25 years in prison (Human Rights Report, 2012). The penalty can range from rigorous imprisonment to a life sentence to even a death penalty under certain circumstances (Radwan, 2022). However, the law is oftentimes ignored which discourages women from reporting the crimes.

Additionally, there were until recently no laws addressing domestic violence; the law stated that a physical injury has to persist for 21 days in order for an assault investigation to be open, which drives women to silence and endurance (Said, Abdel Hamid, Hassan, & Abdel-Kader, 2009).

In 2015, Egypt Health Issues Survey (EHIS) found that approximately 9 out of 10 women aged between 15-49 have undergone a circumcision procedure. This statistic is merely 4% lower than the numbers from the survey conducted in 2008. Despite the legislation that sanctions female genital mutilation in 2008, female genital mutilation is still widely practiced in Egypt. Article 242 of the Egyptian Penal Code criminalizes FGM, and the crime is punishable by a 3 month to two-year imprisonment or a fine of EGP 5,000. Nevertheless, the law is obviously ignored due to connecting FGM with traditions and religion ("What is the punishment", 2018).

When it comes to sexual harassment, Article 306 of the Egyptian penal code states that violators of the *verbal* sexual harassment act in private or public spaces will be sanctioned to at least 6 months in prison and fined no less than EGP 3,000 (Egyptian Penal Code, 2014). In addition, Article 306 does not restrict the term verbal sexual harassment to the offline world. Verbal sexual harassment is defined to include stalking, using gestures or words or through modern means of communication (e.g., internet, mobile) or in any other

means through actions that carry sexual hints (El-Rifae, 2014). Repeat offense of violating the anti-verbal sexual harassment law face a punishment of a minimum of one year in jail and a fine of at least EGP 5,000. If the offense is repeated once more, the attacker will face double the fine and double the jail sentence (“What is the punishment”, 2018).

The law in Egypt enforces sanctions on unwanted sexual contact, stating that attackers will face a punishment of at least one-year imprisonment and a fine between EGP 10,000-20,000. In case of sexual harassment in the workplace, be it by a manager or anyone in a position of authority, the attacker would then face a punishment of at least two-year imprisonment and a fine that starts at EGP 20,000, with a maximum of 5 years in prison and a EGP 50,000 fine (HarassMap, 2015). In 2021, amendments to the Penal Code confronting sexual harassment were made to increase the penalties such that the perpetrator would be sentenced to prison for no less than five years, and a fine not less than EGP 200,000, and in case the perpetrator had authority over the victim, the penalty would be no less than seven years in prison, and a fine of no less than EGP 300,000 (Egypt Today, 2021).

The law differentiates between rape, ‘hatk ard’ or هتك عرض, and sexual harassment, where the first signifies a full penetration in the sexual assault, the second refers to non-consensual touching of the private parts or ‘awra’, and the third encompasses sexual assault either verbally, through insinuations, or by touching non-private parts of the body non-consensually (Gafry, 2020).

Overview of the Egyptian Media Landscape

Egypt had the oldest media industry in the Arab region. After the printing presses were brought by French colonization in 1798, 200 newspapers were registered within 15 years, including newspapers that are circulating to this day such as *Al-Ahram* الأهرام.

Resentment of colonialization led to nationalizing radio stations and production (Badr,

2021b). The Egyptian media system was shaped and affected by political and economic conflicts fluctuating between allowing pluralism and the closure of critical newspapers (Khamis, 2011). The Egyptian cinema was a pioneer in the region being introduced in 1896, and then the first fictional film was in 1927, which popularized the Egyptian dialect in the region (Shafik, 2007 ; Shohat, 1983). The 1960s was the golden era for Egyptian cinema in terms of the number of motion pictures produced yearly, acting as a soft power in the Arab world (Shafik, 2007 ; Armbrust, 2000 ; Shohat, 1983).

Television was and still is the most popular medium and considered to be the primary news source. It was monopolized by the state, building the historical, Maspero Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU) building, the first broadcasting building in the region (El Shaer, 2015 ; Attalah & Rizk, 2013). The 1990s witnessed the introduction of satellite channels which threatened the state control because they were out of the ‘jurisdiction’ of the national regulatory institutions (Abdulla, 2014 ; El-Issawi, 2014 ; Khamis, 2011). Egyptians, living in Gulf countries, were the ones who laid the groundwork for many media that emerged from the Gulf. In 1993, the Internet spread in Egypt, where Internet adoption went from 1% to 45% in 2017 (Badr, 2021b).

The Egyptian media witnessed a long history of state control, with short-lived glimpses of freedom (Badr, 2021b ; El-Nahass, 2016). Despite journalism being introduced nearly two centuries ago, it has always been centralized, acting as a mouthpiece for the government, and reinforcing its narratives (El-Gody, 2009 ; Ismail, 2019). The country enjoyed press freedom after the 2011 Revolution, but it quickly backslid into authoritarianism in 2014, a term known as ‘re-autocratization,’ which resulted in legislative constraints, increased surveillance, and a restriction of the public discourse (Hamzawy, 2017).

As for media ownership, it has always been complicated, shaped by conflicts of interest, not to mention non-transparency (Badr, 2021a ; Abdulla, 2013). Since private media was nationalized in 1952, Egyptian journalism was either state-run, patry-run, or privately-run (El Shaer, 2015 ; Attalah & Rizk, 2011). State-run media means that they are subsidized by the government, and consequently, aligned to government policies, reinforcing government narratives (Badr, 2021b). Thus, state-run media suffered financially because of the low circulation, resulting from being over-staffed, corrupt, and lacking autonomy. In contrast, private media have higher circulation/viewership, because they are treated as a business and are perceived to be more credible (Hamdy, 2013 ; Shukrallah, 2013). However, private media, especially in recent years, have become more government aligned to protect their financial and political interests (Badr, 2021a ; Badr. 2021b ; El-Issawi, 2014 ; Khamis, 2011).

Because of the lack of transparency, media acquisitions are difficult to trace, not to mention yellow-taped. Nonetheless, the Egyptian media landscape morphed into concentrated media oligarchies owned by tycoons who strive to protect their interests (Badr, 2021a ; Badr, 2021b ; Roll, 2013). Businessmen and corporations connected to the state intelligence services (e.g., the Egyptian Media Group EMG and United Media Services UMS) acquired multiple media outlets, thereby representing concentrated private ownership, along with concentrated state ownership and the not-concentrated private ownership by businessmen such as Naguib Sawiris and Tarek Nour (Badr, 2021a; Badr, 2021b; Bahgat, 2017).

This overview of the Egyptian media landscape illustrates that Egyptian media are not on a path to break free from the centuries-long state-control, the state is rather tightening up its hold and managing visibility, reducing media's role to stabilizers and reinforcers of political state-aligned narratives (Badr, 2021b).

Anti/Feminist Discourse in Egyptian Media

In a society with deeply rooted misogynistic ideologies, the media naturally reflects these ideologies. The local media in Egypt for instance tends to systematically attack victims of sexual harassment where they resort to victim blaming, holding them responsible (Ibiary, 2017). The unethical and unprofessional stereotyping of women by the media as being submissive, passive, and oppressed plays a role in exacerbating the sexual harassment problem in Egypt both in public and private spaces (Allam, 2008).

This unfair, unbalanced and biased reporting against women when it comes to sexual harassment is defying media ethics. However, on the flipside, the issue of women participation in the political life receives mixed coverage between supporting and opposing women's participation (Abu Youssef, Somach, & AbouZeid, 2009). The stereotypical depiction of women as weak, docile, and subservient is not exclusive to Egypt, it is endemic in the entire Arab region. These negative media portrayals of women not only validate the stereotypes, they help perpetuate them (Arafa, 2013).

Studies have found that Egyptian magazines tend to target women with topics fitting stereotypical gender roles such as: fashion, cooking, cosmetics, interior design, family issues, romantic relationships, and childcare, letting women's social development get the short end of the stick (El-Ibiary, 2017). As for the Egyptian radio, studies have shown that positive portrayals of women were displayed 22 times, mainly revolving around themes of women's perseverance to overcome obstacles, to be independent and to make their own choices, to help friends and family, to counteract their husbands' negative qualities. On the other hand, the negative portrayals were displayed 41 times, where women are portrayed as passive, insecure, dependent, and cannot cope without a man by her side (Allam, 2008).

Furthermore, Egyptian television soap operas portray men as having problems with women's success and their breakthrough from the chains of stereotypical gender roles, they depict them as serving men rather than being their partners (Amany, 2004). When it comes to the movies, Egyptian movies tend to portray women in uncompetitive positions, and to belittle and shame divorced women. Movies depict women as trophy housewives or university students with little interest in education, and only rarely depict them as successful educationally or professionally (Ateya, 2014).

In addition, Egyptian movies tend to sexualize and objectify women, reinforcing the idea that they cannot hold leading positions. Even when they do portray them holding leading positions, they are oftentimes brought down by their romantic interests and willingly sacrifice their successful careers (Zeitoun, 2005). These representations tend to be positively framed, in a romantic, comedic package that attracts the audience and wins their sympathies and support rather than in a way that encourages critical thinking related to challenging gendered stereotypes. Positive representations of women in Egyptian movies include depicting them as kind and affectionate mothers, as highly spiritual, and punctual in their work, whereas the negative representations focus on their body and thirst for money over substance. Women are portrayed using their sexuality to be granted favors by men in 9.7% of the times (Shaaban, 2016).

The literature shows that framing of violence against women in Egyptian mainstream news coverage tends to reinforce harmful patriarchal narratives of women between victim-blaming and portraying them as passive victims (Taha, 2021; Sadler, 2019). The coverage is usually 'reactive' to public outrage, especially when it comes to viral incidents, and the crimes are treated as episodic isolated incidents, giving minimal attention to causes, survivors' rights/voice, legal repercussions, and systemic solutions (Marzouk & Vanderveen, 2021; Taha, 2021; Sadler, 2019). Community violence is found to be more visible than

domestic violence, which is considered a taboo. Coverage of civil society is underrepresented when it comes to violence against women. State-owned news outlets tend to cover incidents of violence against women more consistently than private outlets to emphasize government efforts, treating it as an event as opposed to a human rights issue. On the other hand, Salah Eldin (2020) found that women were visualized as active agents during the 25th of January Revolution in Egyptian mainstream media, as opposed to passive victims.

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the existing literature that contributes to informing the study's research questions, starting with the blurred boundaries of news production and consumption in the age of social media, leading to discussing the changing news lifecycle and breaking news, followed by tracking the news values and newsworthiness which prioritize/marginalize certain events over others. The chapter then explores the concept of news virality in the literature and ends with assessing social media news as tools for democratization, tracing socio-political movements that started on social media, as well as mis/disinformation campaigns that reinforced existing power structures.

News Production/Consumption: *Blurred Lines*

News production has historically gone through several stages before it reached its audience(s) who would consume it, starting with the selection of the events, hierarchy of news values, and ending with editorializing the messages distributed through the media. It was from this process that communication theories such as Agenda Setting, Framing, and Cultivation stemmed. It wasn't until the emergence of the internet with its blogs and chatrooms, followed by the rise of social networking sites that news production/consumption started to drastically change, along with the boundaries of journalism.

Moreover, scholars' evaluation of the social media impact on journalism is paradoxical. While some recognize the ease of access to news, the fact that the audience have become 'producers' of news (producers and users), the interactivity involved in engaging with news content, the diversity of voices, opinions and angles available, and the immediacy of sharing and spreading the news, others argue that the impact of social media is detrimental to the quality of journalism (Bruns & Highfield, 2012; Gillmor, 2006; Johnston, 2016; Newman, 2009; Skoler, 2009).

The lack of awareness of journalistic ethics, of accountability, of social responsibility, of news values, and of proper fact-checking characteristic of some user-generated content, not only risks the spread of mis/disinformation, but also the perpetuation of 'echo chambers'. This selective exposure could decrease thereby content diversity and amplify polarized opinions, with the absence of journalistic attention to fairness, objectivity and balance, all in the midst of a constant struggle for immediacy (Arant & Meyer, 1998; Gensing-Pophal, 2010; Harshini & Madhumidha, 2019; Noci, Smyrniotis, & Valerie, 2015; Johnston, 2016; Mellado, Georgiou, & Nah, 2020; Newman, Dutton, & Blank, 2012; Sambrook, 2012).

Furthermore, social media have made space for citizen journalism where people can reach events in places that traditional media cannot, making user-generated content inevitable for journalists to engage with, to fact-check and to provide context for (Steensen, 2016). Bruns (2018) adds that journalists now act as 'gate-watchers' as opposed to 'gatekeepers' since there is no longer a way to control the information flow, but there are ways to monitor, verify and flag it. This illustrated a shift in power dynamics, where journalists' control over information flow has been decentralized and transformed into monitoring, fact-checking, and visibility, opening the gate to alternative voices to construct and engage with the news on social media called 'gate-crashers' (Peresso, 2023; Bruns, 2018; Deuze & Witschge, 2018; Wallace, 2017; West, 2017). The relationship between journalists and social media users was

described as symbiotic, where journalists monitor those in power, social media users monitor journalists and those in power, and in turn are fact-checked by journalists (Peresso, 2023).

Furthermore, when it comes to violence against women, journalists, working in state-controlled/monitored news organizations, acted as gatekeepers, reinforcing patriarchal narratives that legitimized the regime's control and silenced women's voices (Xia, Huan, & Zhang, 2022; Nadhira & Angeliqa, 2020; Aulia, 2019; Wallace, 2017; Khamis, 2013). However, with the emergence of social media, the role of journalists as gate-crashers fostered the visibility of women telling their own stories on these platforms (Lee, 2025; Peresso, 2023; Tazi & Oumlil, 2020; Wallace, 2017; Khamis, 2013).

Nonetheless, the struggle for clickbaiting has turned news organizations to 'tabloidization', giving the audience what they want and catering to mainstream taste (Balcytiene, Raeymaeckers, & Vartanova, 2011). This has influenced the construction of news, where news is now "produced in a way that can spread virally" (Al-Rawi, 2017).

Moreover, journalists are also faced with the perils of private-public nature of social media platforms, where they often share their personal opinions which contradicts the professional journalistic ethos (Steensen, 2016). Therefore, the journalists' skillset has changed to include social media newsgathering, being tech-savvy, knowing how to incorporate user-generated content into their stories, triangulating the user-generated content with other credible sources to verify the accuracy, as well as becoming 'detectives' especially with the growing amount of mis/disinformation, cheapfakes and deepfakes roaming around social media platforms (Belair-Gagnon, 2015; Harrison, 2010; Hughes, 2011; Johnston, 2016).

Debates surrounding the concerns for the future of traditional journalism have been countered by literature arguing that social media are not replacing traditional news media,

despite the dwindling public trust and loyalty for traditional media (Denisova, 2023; Steensen, 2016; Domingo, 2005; Hartley, 2012). Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, & Logan (2012) note that social media rather provide a space for the public to discuss and interpret the news coming from these traditional news media, thereby filtering the information flowing from mainstream media. However, the author argues that this implies that the flow of information comes from traditional news media to social media, which opposes the premise of the study at hand contending that the flow of information is interactional rather than unidirectional.

Moreover, Esser and Neuberger (2019) state that the focus recently has been on the technological affordances and innovation from immersive journalism, participatory journalism, and constructive journalism to data and robot journalism, still perceiving social media to be the arbiters of democracy, and undermining third-party agendas and power redistribution such as moving from news organizations to platform companies that could compromise social media's autonomy as democratic tools (Nielsen & Selva, 2019; Ekström, & Westlund, 2019).

Breaking News and News Lifecycle

The journalism profession has always been driven by speed (Salcito, 2009). Over time, the competition between news organizations grew fiercer over how fast they can deliver the news and who will be the first to deliver it (Nyhan, 2013). The obsession with speed has resulted in fast news production and consumption. News organizations are compelled to deliver a constant stream of news which in turn sometimes compromises the content in terms of employing the journalistic standards (Chan, 2014; Teves, 2016). The news is delivered faster and more concisely, thereby leading to more superficial coverage or 'soft news' and compromising accuracy, because of the time constraint (Denisova, 2020; Lee, 2014). Farhi (2013) found that news organizations' tendency to "report first, confirm second and correct

third” which exemplifies compromising accuracy and fact-checking for getting the scoop (p.13). Misinformation is on one hand no longer perceived to be as disastrous as it once was, because corrections are now easier and more instantaneous (Lee, 2015). On the other hand, the higher probability of misinformation led to the loss of news credibility and/or the spread of fallacies on social media due to media illiteracy (Alkhodair, Ding, Fung, Liu, 2020; Kroll, 2013).

The concept of ‘breaking news’ has evolved in the digital age, as the time lag between the event, news production, and news consumption, or in other words, when the event occurs, when the news organizations find out about it and publish/post it, and when it reaches the audience keeps shrinking until there was almost no lag time (Reis, Benevenuto, Vaz de Melo, Prates, Kwak, & An, 2015; Stanescu, 2015). Breaking news was defined by BBC’s editorial guideline as “the interruption of the broadcasting with unusual, totally unexpected events” (Stanescu, 2015).

Moreover, breaking news is often mistaken for recent news. However, recency is not the only criterion in order for news to qualify as breaking news. Offering extraordinary information, being considered unique, novel and of general interest, as well as having great impact (Stanescu, 2015). Furthermore, when there is a story that is considered breaking news, the whole newsroom would work on getting updates to keep the story running as long as possible (Stanescu, 2015). Stanescu (2015) added that until recently, very few stories would be classified as breaking news, since for a story to ‘break’, it needs to be running for a while. During the traditional broadcasting era, regular programs would often be ‘interrupted’ to broadcast breaking news, which emphasized the sense of urgency, relevance and importance of news. However, in the age of immediacy and constant high-demand, 10-12 stories break every day, turning into a 24-hour frenzy, which undermines the gravity of the term in the minds of audiences (Watts, 2014).

The rise of ‘news alerts’ has exacerbated the value of news breaking and turned it into constant notifications that people tend to ignore using selective scanning (Lee, 2015). With this growing influx of breaking news comes the pressure to create headlines that would peak the audience’s interest (Stanescu, 2015). Pelau, Pop, Stanescu, & Sanda (2023) found that breaking news headlines in the social media era tend to be perceived as sensational by the audience. They concluded that even though breaking news headlines might peak the audience’s interest at first, but then on the long run, they have a detrimental impact on news credibility and media trust.

The audience is becoming increasingly selective of what they are exposed to in the midst of the overflow of information (Stroud, Peacock, & Curry, 2020). In addition, the time that audiences allocate to consume news is growing more and more limited (Reis et al., 2015). News organizations now deploy push notifications that send a stream of breaking news to the audience’s smart devices which affects their news consumption and blurs the lines between purposeful selective news exposure and incidental news exposure (Stroud, Peacock, & Curry, 2020).

The news lifecycle tends to grow shorter and shorter with the evolution of news production/consumption (Chan, 2014). Castillo, El-Haddad, Pfeffer, & Stempeck (2014) defined the concept of ‘effective shelf-life ’as the period where a news story receives most attention, or in other words, as long as it is popular. They added that the news genre as well as its appeal play a role in a news story’s expected shelf-life. For instance, stories that have an emotional/dramatic appeal tend to have a longer shelf-life, while sports news tends to have a short life span. Castillo et al. (2014) classified news engagement as either increasing, steady, decreasing, or rebounding on the news lifecycle. The term ‘rebounding ’refers to ‘expired ’news that starts experiencing an increase once again, either because of being used as a link to similar stories or when there are updates.

News popularity which predominantly determines the life span of a news story, has been studied in previous works in order to predict the popularity of a story either prior to its break through analyzing the story features, or early on through analyzing how the audience engages with the story (Bandari, Asur, & Huberman, 2012). Some of the criteria that are associated with news popularity and its predictability include; context, network properties, and content. Furthermore, Bandari et al. (2012) found that while the news source, the news category, the subjectivity of the tone used, and how famous the named entities mentioned in the story are might influence the predictability of a story's popularity, they cannot be considered as the sole predictors. The authors added that stories that did not reach a high level of popularity (virality) should not be overlooked, since they could be tailored and consumed by niche readers.

In social media discourse, users are not just reacting to news coming from traditional media, but news emerge from social media discourse, highlighting the issues and angles the people want to know (Pöyry, Laaksonen, Kekkonen, & Pääkkönen, 2018). The discourse surrounding an event ends, when its popularity declines, when less and less new information is circulating and people move on (Gloviczki, 2015).

News Values and Newsworthiness

The credo of the journalism profession has always been to act as a 'watchdog' and hold those in power accountable, as well as providing the audience with the information they need to actively participate in the democratic process (Caple, 2018). Having a 'nose' for news is an expression that refers to a journalist's ability to determine the newsworthiness of an event based on their instinct or 'news sense' (Mañoso-Pacheco, 2020). How journalists select what news reach the audience has been the subject of a plethora of scholarly works

since the 1960s, from investigations of whether to give the people what they want *versus* what they need to know, to literature on news values and newsworthiness (Caple, 2018).

The concept of news values has been defined as “the often unconscious criteria by which news workers make their professional judgments as they process stories” (Bell, 1991, p.155). Early conceptions of news values and news worthiness can be traced back to mass communication theories that started with the assumption that mass media have great power over the ‘passive’ ‘defenseless’ audience with the *hypodermic needle theory* or the *bullet theory*, which was reflected in propaganda models, where mass media were perceived to have a direct and powerful influence over the often brainwashed audiences (Curran, Gurevitch, & Woolacott, 1982; Severin & Tankard, 2014).

That phase reflects a time when the concept of “newsworthiness” or news values was developed, with the notion that the journalists bear the responsibility of selecting the news for the mass public. Walter Lippmann –who introduced the concept of news values in 1961 - emphasized the importance of journalists’ detachment and objectivity as ideals of news reporting, calling the task of news selection as “one of the truly sacred and priestly offices in a democracy” (Lippmann, 2020, p.15).

Moreover, an event’s newsworthiness is not solely determined by the journalist’s nose, there is a myriad of factors that play into the selection of an event and the assessment of its news values (Mañoso-Pacheco, 2020). News values are considered ‘relative’, since they are not universal nor perennial, they change according to the context, time, and location (Harcup, 2019; Rössler, 2017). The changing face of news production/consumption between media convergence and digitization contributed to the evolution of the concept of news values and how it is studied and theorized; it has also turned news that “succeed in drawing collective attention into a scarce and therefore valuable goods” (Caple, 2018; Mast &

Temmerman, 2021, p.697). Advertisers, social media platforms, governments, officials, editorial policies, journalists 'own prejudices are some of the factors that influence the selection, prominence and framing of news (Bednarek & Caple, 2017; Harcup, 2019; Shoemaker, 2006).

In a social media era, journalists are hardly considered the gatekeepers of news, whereas the audience weighs in on what is newsworthy/shareworthy (Harcup, 2019; Mañoso-Pacheco, 2020). Shoemaker (2017) stated that “the one-to-many unidirectional model has been replaced with a many-to-many network model of communication” (p.5). Instead of giving the people what they need to know or what news organizations perceived the people would want to know, which oftentimes did not align with the actual interests of the public, people now have platforms to share what they want to know and what angles of each unfolding event are of interest to them (Harcup, 2019; Shoemaker, 2017).

Scholars created different categorizations of news values, some of which include dividing them into 12 main factors, eight of which are based on perception namely; frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, and composition. While four factors are related to culture namely; elite nations, elite people, personification, and negativity (Caple, 2018; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Mañoso-Pacheco, 2020). Harcup & O'Neill (2017) found that an event would be deemed newsworthy if it has one or more than one of these 'contemporary 'news values; “exclusivity; bad news; conflict; surprise; audio-visuals; shareability; entertainment; drama; follow-up; the power elite; relevance; magnitude; celebrity; good news; and news organizations 'agenda” (p.1482).

Another classification was made by Wilson and Maceviciute (2013) who listed the criteria of news worthiness to include; impact, timeliness, prominence, unexpectedness, proximity, currency, and human interest. Shoemaker (2017) stated deviance, proximity and

scope, timeliness, partisanship, importance, objectivity, and immediacy as news values that not only can differ from one medium to another, but also from one platform to another. For instance, social media tend to focus on immediacy and human interest in order for users to identify and deem the story newsworthy/shareworthy (Rössler, 2017; Trilling, Tolochko, & Burscher, 2017; Turner, 2021). Bad news is one value that has been found popular in evaluating an event's newsworthiness in print and its shareworthiness on social media alike, while sensationalism and clickbaiting have been found to be specific to social media (Bazaco, Redondo, & Sánchez-García, 2019; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017; Kilgo, Harlow, García-Perdomo, & Salaverriá, 2018; Wischniewski, Bruns, & Keller, 2021). Newman (2011) stated that the shareworthiness of a story is determined through "stuff that makes you laugh and stuff that makes you cry" (p.24).

Moreover, newsworthiness/shareworthiness can be assigned to recent events and/or older events alike, according to the combination of news values present in such events (Harcup, 2019). Kepplinger (2008) found that after a 'key event' occurs, other similar incidents can reach the status of being newsworthy. Despite the different classifications in existing literature, most newsworthiness/shareworthiness criteria share common values. These news values have evolved to consider the changing media ecosystem, taking into consideration economic, social, cultural, and political context (Al-Rawi, Al-Musalli, & Fakida, 2021).

News Virality

The term 'virality – 'the spread and popularity of events/information in a short time - has evolved through the years before reaching its current connotation, from the early notions of word of mouth, leading to the theory of diffusion, viral marketing and the emergence of social media platforms (Goel, Anderson, Hofman, & Watts, 2016; Hendrayati & Pamungkas,

2020; Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010; Xu & Qian, 2023). Virality has been defined by Nahon & Hemsley (2014) as “a social information flow process where many people simultaneously forward a specific information item, over a short period of time, within their social networks, and where the message spreads beyond their own (social networks) to different, often distant networks, resulting in a sharp acceleration in the number of people who are exposed to the message” (p.16).

Luchessi (2018) defined news virality as “the kind of news that goes from the social networks to the newsroom and sets a disruptive agenda” (p.37). The author of the study at hand argues that viral news doesn’t necessarily travel from social media to traditional news media, nor does it set a disruptive agenda, viral news flows reciprocally between social media and traditional media.

Virality is a term that has often been contested in the existing literature, not only for its negative association to disease/infection, but also because some scholars perceive the term to be reductive of human agency to select and share content, making the process of information diffusion technologically-laden and deprived of human agency (Denisova, 2020). Jenkins, Ford, & Green (2013) proposed the term ‘spreadable media ’as an alternative to ‘virality ’in order to emphasize that the process of selection and spread of media content is performed by an active audience that consciously decides what content is spreadable.

On the other hand, Denisova (2023) coined the term ‘viral state of mind ’which refers to the decreasing audience attention as a result to virality, leading them to rely on headlines to form their opinions instead of the whole story. In a social media era, incidental news exposure falls on a continuum, driving some users to the belief that ‘news finds them ’ through their social networks and news feeds, while others still actively seek news and read

the full story (Denisova, 2020; Mitchelstein, Boczkowski, Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hayashi, Villi, & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2020; Zúñiga, Strauss, & Huber, 2020).

The author of the study at hand argues that while the virus analogy is perceived to be reductive of human agency, humans are the ones who have the power to spread or stop viruses. Therefore, it is that 'either-or' perspective that is reductive, users can be both active as well as passive depending on context and individual differences. Moreover, the term 'shifting audience' refers to the way audience shifts from one medium to another and how they can be active or passive when dealing with different media/platforms (Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012).

The consequences of news virality are not always favorable, fake news and mis/disinformation can become viral especially during times of crisis, where fact-checking and verification are not able to keep up with the spread of rumors/wrongful information, as evidenced by the constant mis/disinformation during the pandemic (Jha & Sarangi, 2022; Kümpel, Karnowski, & Keyling, 2015; Silverman, 2016). The 'virus analogy' has yet to find a 'vaccine' to stop the spread of mis/disinformation, media literacy was found to be the supplement that can boost users' immunity against the repercussions of mis/disinformation (Denisova, 2020; Polanco-Levicán & Salvo-Garrido, 2022).

Hewett, Rand, Rust, & van Heerde (2016) noted that in viral marketing, the volume and valence of news stories about an event on traditional media translates into more news stories about the event on social media and vice versa creating 'brand buzz'. News virality among users on social media platforms is often regarded as a form of marketing activism (Castells, 2007; Penney, 2014). Moreover, the news lifecycle or the half-life of each viral event varies, where some spread really fast and are forgotten just as fast, and others span

longer, thereby making the operational definition of what a viral event is relative (Pöyry, Laaksonen, Kekkonen, & Pääkkönen, 2018).

Scholars measure and predict news virality through quantifying the audience which is a traffic-driven measurement of audience metrics or the number of views, likes, comments, clicks, shares and retweets an event/news story gets using human or computer-assisted content analysis and other machine-based data mining software for virality prediction (Al-Rawi, 2017; Anderson, 2011; Hoang, Lim, Achananuparp, Jiang, & Zhu, 2011; Kim, 2018). However, the exact workings of how news spreads and goes ‘viral ’are still unclear and not always foreseeable, to the point where some studies deem virality to be random (Goel et al., 2016; Xu & Qian, 2023; Zhou, Xu, Trajcevski, & Zhang, 2021).

Social Media News: *A Magic Wand for Democratization?*

Winner (1980) explains that every new technology that emerges is thought to be the ultimate tool for democratization, and for world salvation, liberating its people like never before. For instance, Boorstin (1978) praised television for “its power to disband armies, to cashier presidents, to create a whole new democratic world- democratic in ways never before imagined, even in America” (as cited in Winner, 1980, p.122). There is inherent authoritarianism in humans ’relationship with technology, one in which humans are using technology to achieve their goals, and in return, technology ‘enslaves ’humans (Winner, 1980).

Social media – as an emerging technology- have been generating immense academic attention since the last decade. Burgess, Marwick, and Poell (2018) define social media as “those digital platforms, services and apps built around the convergence of content sharing, public communication, and interpersonal connection” (p.1). Papacharissi (2015) has argued against the term “social media,” which –in her opinion- implies that some media are social

while others are not, or that there might be media that are anti-social which would be an illogical notion. She argues that “we have always been social, and we always will be social” (p.1).

Therefore, being social is not an affordance restricted to social media, and this assumption would likely invite debates over which medium is more or less social than the other, falling into an “affordances” contest. However, the world falls under a social media paradigm, where social media are constantly evolving, shaping and re-shaping the world, which is why it is difficult to coin a term for a vague and fluid concept (Burgess, Marwick, & Poell, 2018).

boyd (2010) conceives of social media as networked publics, which offer ‘new ’ affordances namely, persistence, referring to the process of recording and archiving of content; replicability, referring to the possibility for content to be duplicated; scalability, referring to the extent and scale of visibility of content between the networked publics; and searchability, referring to the accessibility of the content through searching (p.46). Applying the arguments discussed above about affordances, terms such as “new affordances” need to be used warily, since these affordances did exist in other media, but maybe in variant degrees and scale.

Social media are considered to be ‘facilitators ’rendering social transactions less demanding, they facilitate interactions as well as self-expressions (boyd, 2010; Ellison & Vitak, 2015). Social media platforms encourage personalization through making personal connections and sharing content; they also promote virality through sharing and retweeting (Poell & van Dijck, 2018).

Bazarova and Choi (2014) studied self-disclosure on social media, which they found varied according to the users ’self-disclosure goals and the social media platform’s

affordances. boyd (2010) discusses how content disclosed on social media that goes viral is often “the funny, the crude, the embarrassing, the mean, and the bizarre” (p.48), adding that those who share the content do not have power over what goes viral and what does not, it is rather the collective’s choice.

Nonetheless, boyd’s chapter was published in 2010, arguably prior to many ensuing events, which re-defined social media as platforms for self-and political expression, one of which being the Arab Spring in 2011. However, the 2008 U.S. Presidential electoral campaigns also took advantage of social media, which revealed their power in persuasion and mobilization, and was considered to be participatory, inviting users’ contribution to the content (Baldwin-Philippi, 2019).

Nonetheless, social media in the “Facebook election” were used to supplement the existing offline electoral strategies, while during the Arab Spring, they were considered the prime mobilization tools (Lee & Weinthal, 2011). This perspective has been prevalent in scholarly work over the past decade; it engages in ‘soft ’determinism where social media are perceived to have caused instead of facilitated the Arab Spring (Hirst, 2012). Prior to these events, Mackay and Gillespie (1992) and Winner (1980) perceived technology to be not just social but political as well, acknowledging the power and authority it possesses.

During the Arab Spring in 2011, social media were used to share activist content such as photos, videos, hashtags, and evidence from Tahrir Square between millions of users. This has inspired future protests in different countries such as Spain, the US, Italy, Turkey, Hong Kong, Brazil, and others to utilize social media for mobilization and organization. The Arab Spring has marked the transformation of the organization of social movements and activism, which have become reliant on social media platforms as mobilizers of mass users (Poell & van Dijck, 2018).

In Egypt, a Facebook page called "كلنا خالد سعيد" or "We are all Khaled Said" created in late 2010 was considered one of the instigators of the Egyptian Revolution. This page started as a protest to killing Khaled Said, who was beaten to death by security forces, a leaked graphic photo of his face post-mortem that shows his injuries, riled up the public. It then became a platform for users to share and comment on incidents of police brutality, and injustices committed by the Mubarak regime (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari, & Mazaid, 2011; Poell & van Dijck, 2018).

Moreover, sharing and commenting on activist content gives the users a platform for self-expression and self-validation. Social media have also created a sense of solidarity between the users which helped them overcome their fear – bear in mind that these are authoritarian countries that have been threateningly discouraged from political expression for decades- this solidarity also gave them hope for a democracy (Poell & van Dijck, 2018).

In addition, social media platforms 'afforded' the users the option of accelerated real-time sharing, in order to show the world what was actually happening, in response to the pro-regime biased news discourse in traditional media (Khan, 2018). Protestors were also sharing instant information about the protest to coordinate, as well as feelings about the events unfolding for support (Poell & van Dijck, 2018). Velasquez and Rojas (2017) discuss the motivations behind sharing on social media, where they found it could be to show friends and followers how informed the person is, or for the purpose of wanting to make social change.

The precedent conversations were reflecting how social media platforms were considered to be tools for democratization. However, it is important to recall that social media were not initially created for the purpose of realizing democratization, social movements, and political expression. They were created with a commercial profit-oriented

purpose in mind, to foster targeted advertising, as well as provide a platform for social bonding and networking.

As a result, social media platforms responded to being used for political activism – and still often do - by deactivating accounts and pages of activists and removing posts and tweets, as well as giving the governments access to the users' information (Gillespie, 2018). Gillespie (2018) elaborates on social media content moderation and inequalities, by saying that the process of content moderation for non-English speaking users tends to overlook the local contexts and language. In some cases, social media platforms fail to recognize hate speech and abuse in non-English languages, because they are context-ignorant (Posetti & Shabbir, 2022).

In addition, Silicon Valley's perspective on democracy is realized through a laissez-faire approach to technological innovation (Dotson, 2015). Silicon Valley is both a local and global technological hub, from which most of the social media platforms originated as start-up tech companies (Burgess, Marwick, & Poell, 2018; & Hasinoff, 2017). Silicon Valley operates from the perspective of technological solutionism, meaning that any social or political problem can be solved by innovating technology (Dotson, 2015).

This techno-utopian view of technology in general and social media in particular as tools for democratization, encouraging "permissionless innovation" and libertarian-capitalist ideals, tends to overlook the shortcomings that put a damper on this imaginary of democratization (Dotson, 2015). Silicon Valley's libertarian-capitalist and surveillance-oriented ethos has led to a trend of privatization and individualization, which results in the deterioration of public services and the erosion of the public sphere (Allgaier, 2018).

Moreover, Cambridge Analytica, a political consultancy firm, deployed an algorithm to gain access to millions of Facebook users' profiles, to send targeted advertising specific to

each user's preferences and opinions. Cambridge Analytica's impact is ambiguous when it comes to the 2016 US Presidential campaigns. The firm said that the data collected was to be used for academic purposes, and they sold that data to their consultees which Facebook did not agree to (Boldyreva, Grishina, & Duisembina, 2018).

The scandal raised concerns over privacy, attributing the blame to tech companies for not protecting their users, as well as the users themselves for not reading the terms of service agreements. It also raised concerns over tech companies' power in terms of surveillance and potential influence on social and political outcomes, for instance in the case of elections, they could potentially steer the 'democratic' process to favor the highest 'bidder' (González, Yu, Figueroa, López, & Aragon, 2019).

Another example of social media use that was potentially jeopardizing to the democratic process is Donald Trump's tweets which led to the ensuing events at Capitol building, as well as the polarizing tweets that raised doubts around the electoral process integrity. Twitter in response had no other option but to permanently suspend his account for incitement of violence (Burak, 2021).

Social Media & Viral Feminist Movements

Social media were also used as platforms to negotiate feminist movements such as the #MeToo movement. The movement was started by Tarana Burke in 2006 to help Black women share their sexual violence experiences, helping them perceive themselves as survivors instead of victims (Boyd & McEwan, 2022). The movement went 'viral' in 2017, when actress Alyssa Milano used MeToo as a hashtag on Twitter, opening the discourse up for women of all races to share their experiences (Burke, 2021). The movement on social media received more visibility than the original movement, which contributed to the overshadowing of the original movement and its purpose (Conner, 2018). On the other hand,

the #MeToo movement fostered solidarity and support for a global community of women to share their experiences and spread awareness (Chowdhury, Sawhney, Shah, & Mahata, 2019).

Before the #MeToo movement, there was a viral hashtag during the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 called #BlueBra in response to the police dragging a protester and tearing out her clothes exposing her blue bra, the hashtag went viral as a campaign against gendered violence and it highlighted how women's bodies are used to impose disciplinary power and exert social control (Hafez, 2014). In 2021, the hashtag #RIPAmina became viral in Morocco; it was about the suicide of a girl forced to marry her rapist, who continued abusing her until she committed suicide (Ouassini, 2021).

In 2018, an Algerian feminist Facebook movement known as '#My_place_isn't_in_the_kitchen' emerged in response to a woman getting verbally and physically abused by a man for being out 'at this hour' while she should be in the kitchen cooking dinner, reflecting the patriarchal power structure that wants to restrict women from public spaces. The victim shared a video of her sobbing and telling her story, which went viral (Chaif & Finnerman, 2024; Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018). In that same year, a movement emerged in Saudi Arabia called #women2drive demanding the right for Saudi women to drive (Al-Khamri, 2019).

Social media platforms using the hashtags create what is called 'connective memory' which is a shift from the concept of collective memory. Connective memory refers to connecting memories to a multitude of users across platforms, compared to passing down the memories of a collective group, which is more static. Connective memory is constantly negotiated and shared across these platforms, making it a memory that is co-constructed and interactive, that allows users to form 'emotional communities' around those memories and

share their feelings and experiences (Adriaansen & Smith, 2025; Zvereva, 2025; Peláez Rodríguez, 2021; Askanius, 2018; Jimeno, Varela, & Castillo, 2015; Hoskins, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that informs the study's research questions and analysis. It starts with exploring the Framing Theory illustrating how news frames are constructed to convey certain meanings and interpretations, followed by discussing Cyberfeminism, offering a lens to understand the use of digital media to express feminist ideologies and resist patriarchal narratives. Finally, Veillance Theory is reviewed to delineate the direction of visibility; top-down (i.e., surveillance) or bottom-up (i.e., sousveillance), reflecting the power dynamics.

Framing Theory

McCombs and Shaw's 'Agenda Setting Theory' purports that the media shape what the audience thinks, when an issue is salient in the media, meaning that for instance the time spent on that specific issue, the amount of information shared, and the story's position in the news, reflect the importance of that issue in relation to other issues on the public agenda. The Agenda Setting Theory has been through many phases and updates, where the original question changed form 'who sets the public agenda?' to 'who sets the media agenda?' which led to developing approaches such as '*Intermedia Agenda Setting*' and '*Two-Way Agenda Setting*' (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Stern, Livan, & Smith, 2020).

'*Framing Theory*' is considered to be an evolution from Agenda Setting. It focuses on the 'essence of the issue' and is perceived to tell the audience how to think about an issue. Bateson was the first to coin the idea of framing in his book 'The Steps for Mind Ecology' in 1955, then, Tuchman developed the concept in his book 'Making News' in 1978, as well as

Gitlin's *The Whole World is Watching* in 1980, and Entman, introduced the concept to media studies (Samsudin, 2020; D'Angelo & Shaw, 2018).

The Framing Theory describes how communicators use 'frames' to select or highlight aspects of a news story or event, making them salient to illicit certain interpretations (Entman, 1993). Furthermore, studies have found that the way news are framed could be implicitly and/or explicitly biased, by redacting and omitting certain voices, while highlighting others (Sámelová, 2014; Reese et al., 2001).

Framing was originally conceptualized as uni-directional, where news media shaped how the audience thought about an issue. However, with the emergence of social media platforms, the flow of information is no longer linear or uni-directional. Even studies that examine the time lag between the breaking of news and the shaping of public opinion in traditional mass media do not hold in the current networked media environment. The lines between who makes the frames and who consumes them have become blurry (Baresch, Hsu, & Reese, 2010; Watt, Mazza, & Snyder, 1993).

Some scholars examine the framing competition of events between social media and news media or between different social media platforms (Guggenheim, Jang, Bae, & Neuman, 2015). This study compares the framing of incidents of violence against women in Egypt on social media and news websites.

Furthermore, this study looks at framing using Snow and Benford's (1988) problem-solution approach, classifying frames into diagnostic and prognostic frames. Heijkant, van Selm, Hellsten, and Vliegthart (2021) studied news framing of pension reform in traditional and social media through these two frames, where the former identifies and formulates the problem as well as attributing blame, and the latter identifies the solution and attributing responsibility to those who are supposed to solve it. The reason why the author

adopted these frames and adapted Heijkant et al.'s (2021) hypotheses for this study is that the problem of this study (i.e., violence against women in Egypt), much like Heijkant et al.'s, a crime, which warrants a problem-solution approach.

The study examines the frames through the message features of the news article/X post in terms of information versus emotion focus. These two features were studied by Tellis, MacInnis, Tirunillai, and Zhang (2019) to understand virality in brand marketing and how information and emotion can influence the spread of information online. In addition, studies have shown that news organizations and journalistic standards ideally opt for factual coverage, as opposed to tabloidization and sensationalism which often plague social media (Balcytiene et al., 2011; Chan, 2014; Teves, 2016). Another method of framing deployed in this study is tone, which is usually studied in terms of valence, meaning whether the voice used is positive, negative, or neutral. Tone is considered to be part of the second-level agenda setting (Sheafer, 2007). Nonetheless, the tone was found to evolve from being personal when the event first occurs to impersonal as time passes and the event can be evaluated objectively (Evers, 2016; Odmark, 2018).

In addition to tone, message features, and problem-solution frames, there are elements that are part of the framing components. Studies found that framing is not just about content, it's about how that content is structured/packaged which contributes to shaping salience and interpretation (Aldrete & Ardevol, 2023; Brüggemann, 2014; Lim & Bae, 2009; Tankard, Jr., 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Entman, 1993).

Tankard, Jr. (2001) stated that there are eight dimensions in news framing namely, the journalist's gender, news placement (e.g., front page), morality orientation of the news article, use of certain terms. Other structural elements include headlines, repetition, subheads, photos, photo captions, quote selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics, concluding paragraphs,

the gender of the journalist and the gender of the sources, graphic elements (Sitanggang, Putri & Romli, 2025; Samsudin, 2020; Hänggli, 2012; Lim & Bae, 2009).

Entman (1993) explained that frames are not merely built by the journalist; they exist in at least four places namely, the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Framing is manifested in problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (Pröll & Magin, 2022; Matthes & Kohring, 2004; Entman, 1993). The nature of the event itself is considered a factor, a ‘trigger’, that influences frame building (zaklama, 2025).

Framing Violence Against Women

Studies applying the Framing Theory to media coverage of violence against women included frames of rape myth acceptance, which refer to “false but persistent beliefs and stereotypes regarding forced sexual intercourse and the victims and perpetrators of such acts” (Khalor & Eastin in Webb, 2020, p.5). Rape myths framing includes, victim-blaming, where the victim is blamed for provocation, seeking attention, having ‘loose morals’, being ‘familiar’ with the perpetrator, being intoxicated, being passive, the way she’s dressed, and for not being alert (Yusri, Almaida, Rahmadani, Aisyah, Awalya, & Idhma, 2025; Flusberg, van der Vord, Husney, & Holmes, 2022; Webb, 2020; Gravelin, 2017). Rape myth acceptance frames also include not believing the victim’s ‘allegations’ (Webb, 2020). In news framing, journalists make linguistic choices that reinforce and/or contest these frames (Webb, 2020; Potter, 2017)

Victims and perpetrators are often held against a moral lens and are evaluated through the news linguistic choices, which affects their perceived culpability, and potentially ends up blaming the victim and absolving the perpetrator (Pagliaro & Pacilli, 2025; Ziada, 2022; Taha, 2021; Pollino, 2020; Sadler, 2019; Abdelmonem, 2015). On the other hand, feminist

protests and violence against women were sometimes framed by alternative news sites and social networking sites in celebration and support of the feminist movement(s), the frames would trace causes and rationales, as opposed to individualizing gender issues. In this context, gender-based violence frames were used by describing crime details, highlighting the prevalence of impunity, corruption, and injustice (Santillana, 2024).

Another frame used is solidarity reporting, which is journalism that involves the humanization of marginalized communities, “shifting the focus from the relatable individual to the contours of systemic factors that affect entire communities” (Varma, 2020, p.2). Solidarity refers to “a commitment to social justice that translates into action” (Varma, 2020, as cited in Varma, 2025, p.408). Chaif & Finnerman (2024) demonstrated using diagnostic frames to increase awareness against sexual harassment, prognostic to suggest long-term solutions, and motivational frames to encourage supporters and call them to action (Chaif & Finnerman, 2024).

Furthermore, in the context of femicide, studies on news framing tend to emphasize the graphic details of the murder, use photos, discuss the main topic of the story, blame the victim’s ‘loose morals’, sympathize with the perpetrator, and blame/responsibility attribution (Aldrete & Ardevol, 2023). There are other elements that are specific to the crime such as, identifying the type of crime, covering what happened, mentioning the names of the victims and perpetrators (full name, first name, nickname, etc.), as well as the number of victims and perpetrators, the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, identifying ‘stigmatized’ occupations, legal status, and socio-demographics, authorities’ actions, and legal consequences (e.g., prosecution) (Aldrete & Ardevol, 2023; Pröll & Magin, 2022).

The study at hand culled, refined, omitted/added, and categorized these elements into, trigger attributes and framing components. Trigger attributes refer to the crime-related

elements such as, the type of crime, the criminal motive, the crime's legal consequence, the number of victims and perpetrators and their socio-economic status, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, whether the crime was public or private, whether there were witnesses, the location of the crime, and the city where the crime was committed.

Framing components are divided into, (a) tone (personal/impersonal/both), (b) message features (information-/emotion-focused/both), (c) problem-solution frames (diagnostic/prognostic/both/none), and (d) structural elements (length of the news article, gender of journalist, main focus of the news article/X post, number of sources, type of sources, gender of sources, use of photos, videos, and links, and whether they were used before, mention of the victim/perpetrator's name, the number of times their names were mentioned, use of sensational label, mention of other similar incidents, and graphic description).

Cyberfeminism

In a post-colonial country such as Egypt, feminism cannot be taken out of its specific socio-political and cultural context (Raway, 2024). Egypt, as previously mentioned, is an authoritarian liberal-conservative country with a relatively frail civil society, which explains the rises and falls of its feminist movements (Hassan, 2024; Raway, 2024). Post-colonial Egypt strived to express its support for women and their rights despite the restrictive authoritarian environment and deeply embedded patriarchal structures, which impact the tools available to feminist movements, albeit these movements yielding achievements (Raway, 2024; Elsadda, 2019b).

Post-colonial feminism as studied by Mohanty and Spivak sheds a light on colonial histories and how cultural imperialism influences women in non-Western countries (Hassan, 2024). Egypt, with its complicated colonial history, witnesses a paradox between the colonial

influences of Western constructions of feminism and Islamic interpretations of feminism (Hassan, 2024; Shalaby, 2018).

Exploring feminism in the context of simplistic binaries such as Western and non-Western, colonizer and colonized, Global North and Global South, or liberal and conservative can be reductive (Mustonen, 2024). Therefore, examining feminism with respect to the intersecting identities of women provides a more nuanced perspective that goes beyond these binaries and contextualizes the history, political, social, cultural, and economic environment.

Intersectionality as constructed by Kimberlé Crenshaw looks at the different social identities such as religion, class, race, and sexuality and how they merge and affect women's positionalities (Moharram, 2025; Hassan, 2024). In Egypt, there are power asymmetries that reflect intersectionality in gender, religious beliefs, class, race and cultural traditions, which present unique challenges for women and influence their opportunities in terms of access to education, employment, healthcare, political engagement and technology, within an oppressive patriarchal political environment (Moharram, 2025; Hassan, 2024).

Cyberfeminism is a social movement that emerged in the 1990s, grounded in the premise of women possessing privileged access to technology, in reaction to male dominance over cyberspace (AbdIgalil, 2018). It centers around women using technologies to achieve gender equality and empowerment (Amboy & Basid, 2025). Cyberfeminism came out of the contemporary third-wave feminist movement, following the second-wave feminism in the 1970s which centered around gender equality, and first-wave feminism in the early 20th century, which revolved around women suffrage (Consalvo, 2002).

The term 'Cyberfeminism' was coined by Sadie Plant in her book *'Zeroes + Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture'* in 1997 (Lee, 2025; Raine, 2023). VNS Matrix, an artistic group, also coined the term 'cyberfeminism' using it to advocate for women's

agency in the cyberspace, inspired by Donna haraway's '*A Cyborg Manifesto*' (Rai, 2017; Hall, 1996). Haraway used the term 'cyborg' to resist gender and human/machine binaries, challenging essentialism and naturalism and calling for a hybrid, fluid, politically strategic posthuman feminist identity (Toto & Scarcini, 2021).

Rai (2017) defined cyberfeminism as "an ideology created by users on the virtual world, it is a movement raised and managed by users of virtual media with a bend of feminism" (p.5). The Internet is considered a liberating non-oppressive space, where women could challenge the patriarchal structures (Amboy & Basid, 2025). Haraway emphasized the need for women to be tech savvy, not merely accessing and/or using technology, to be able to interrogate the power structures within these technologies, 'the Informatics of Domination' (Consalvo, 2002).

Cyberfeminism purports that women are 'naturally suited' to using the Internet, that they can acquire the necessary expertise and become fluent in virtual communication, and that not only can they learn about the embedded power structures in these technologies but to find ways that feminists can dismantle these structures and create social change (Raine, 2023; Toto & Scarcini, 2021)

The medium (i.e., Internet) changed the process of dissemination of messages, the immediacy, the viral effect, and the impact of these messages, allowing more women to participate. It has also allowed women to assemble in virtual communities, promoting inclusivity, expressing their sexuality freely, calling for action, and demanding accountability (Lee, 2025; Rai, 2017).

Abdlgalil (2018) stated that the Internet is more suited for women's activism, because cyberspace doesn't succumb to the traditional cultural and institutional norms. On the other hand, cyberfeminists argue that technologies are not neutral and that the patriarchal power

structures are embedded within them; they also highlight intersectionality which often extends to marginalization online (Lee, 2025). Therefore, Cyberfeminism aims to dismantle patriarchal norms, promote inclusivity, and protect online activism (Lee, 2025; Mowafy, 2024).

Common critiques of Cyberfeminism include that it has a utopian outlook on technologies as liberating spaces, while being blindsided by the risks of surveillance, misogyny, hate and criminalization that women encounter online, especially with the rise of far-right wing in digital spaces (Luna & Crystal, 2024; Toto & Scarcini, 2021). Digital divide, access and mastering the use of the technology alone are not enough to yield gender equality (Consalvo, 2002). Khamis (2013) found that feminist activists are no longer adopting the ‘old cyberfeminism’, which was criticized for its utopian perspective of women not being constrained by their physical body in online spaces and challenging patriarchal structures. Instead, feminist activists are looking at the ‘new cyberfeminism’ which “confronts the top-down from the bottom-up” (Fernandez et al., 2003, in Khamis, 2013, p.568).

Cyberfeminism involves three strategies namely, *mobilization* which refers to raising awareness of how salient an issue is, *documentation* which refers to being the ‘eyewitness’ and sharing evidence online, and *education* which refers to educating women about their rights, as well as educating society about patterns of violence against women and how to stop them (Lee, 2025; Tazi & Oumlil, 2020; Tazi, 2020; Khamis, 2013). The author of the study at hand argues that raising awareness fits better under education of rights, of legal penalty for crimes, etc. while mobilization refers to calling people to action to fight for women’s rights.

The study at hand explores how the cyberfeminism goals (documentation, education and mobilization) are manifested in the X posts of the hashtags of the viral incidents of violence against women, by finding the emerging themes and determining whether they fit under the aforementioned goals.

Veillance, Surveillance and Sousveillance

The concept of surveillance has been theorized in multiple disciplines. In order to comprehend the term, it needs to be broken down into its origins; ‘sur’ which is French for ‘over’ and ‘veillance’ derived from the French verb ‘veiller’ which means ‘watching’, hence surveillance means oversight, or to watch over. On the other hand, the term ‘sousveillance’ which is an antonym to surveillance can be broken down into; ‘sous’ which means ‘under’ or ‘below’ in French and ‘veillance’, hence meaning watching from below (Mann, 2013).

Mann (2013) defined surveillance as “observation or recording by an entity in a position of power or authority over the subject of veillance,” and sousveillance as “observation or recording by an entity **not** in a position of power or authority over the subject of the veillance” (p.3). Therefore, the concept of veillance is hierarchical and dependent on the position of the ‘veilleur’ or the ‘watcher’ in the hierarchy and the direction of the veillance (up, down, and lateral) (Mann, 2013). Sousveillance can be considered a way of resisting surveillance that could take the form of demonstrations, petitions, and advocacy groups (Rudschies, 2022).

Mann (2004) divided sousveillance into personal sousveillance, which refers to an individual recording an event that they are part of from their own perspective without political agenda, and hierarchical sousveillance, which refers to a recording that involves legal and/or political motivation. Personal sousveillance can turn into hierarchical sousveillance in some instances.

Michel Foucault used the notion of the ‘Panopticon’ in surveillance studies in 1977, which was originally used by Jeremy Bentham. The panopticon is an architectural design of a prison that was circular, and each cell was only visible to the ward from above, while invisible to the prisoners. Foucault connected the notion of the panopticon to top-down, unilateral surveillance and disciplinary power, where the prisoners would have to self-discipline since they don’t know when they are being watched.

Foucault expanded that institutions tend to disseminate knowledge, such as the fact that the ward is watching the prisoners at any given time in order to legitimize the institutions’ power, ‘normalize’ the watched, and create hegemony (Rudschies, 2022; Foucault, 1977). Bakir (2015) added that *sousveillance* is “watching from a position of powerlessness” (p.13). Möller & Nowak (2019) added that legitimate and illegitimate surveillance are connected to power, and that not only is surveillance often invisible to the users, but it has also become a normalized culture (Fuchs & Trottier, 2015).

Scholars opposed the idea of surveillance as a top-down action enacted by a totalitarian watcher upon the helpless and passive watched. It’s no longer ‘only a few are watching the many’, with the development of modern technologies, the many are also capable of watching the few (Rudschies, 2022). In addition, Thomsen (2020) argued that the definitions of surveillance and *sousveillance* are reductive and superficial, confined only to the position of the watcher and the watched.

Surveillance is originally an ethically neutral concept, despite the fact that it is usually considered morally bad, as opposed to *sousveillance*, since there is a gap in power and structural visibility between the watcher and the watched, surveillance is characterized as surreptitious and *sousveillance* is characterized as open (Thomsen, 2020; Fuchs & Trottier, 2015). Thomsen (2020) stated that surveillance needs to be intentional and not a mere

observation that happened coincidentally. Rudschies (2022) added that in the digital world, there are three determinants for power in surveillance: 1) resources especially with modern technologies acting as mediators of surveillance; 2) the actors' position in the social hierarchy, and 3) influencing the conversation and controlling how it is framed to decide what is important and what is not.

Furthermore, counterveillance refers to preventing veillance. Equiveillance refers to when both surveillance and sousveillance are equally employed, with accountability and transparency. Coveillance is when people are watching each other (lateral or horizontal watching). As for metaveillance, it refers to watching the watchers, expanding on the concept of 'reciprocal transparency', where both the acts of surveillance and sousveillance are monitored which facilitates mutual accountability (Bakir, 2015; Mann, 2013). Social media surveillance refers to techno-social surveillance where different identities (consumer, political, and personal) converge into a unified profile which facilitates control and targeting (Fuchs & Trottier, 2015).

A shift from physical sousveillance to digital sousveillance was explored by Ceccato (2019), where they found that unlike physical sousveillance, where in-person presence is crucial for recording the event and taking action, digital sousveillance can involve one person recording an event and sharing it digitally and action can be taken by people who were not present, thereby diffusing the responsibility and making it voluntary.

Bucholski (2016) examined how Facebook is engaging in surveillance using its policies and algorithms to collect users' data and target them, while giving them a platform for sousveillance where they can uncover institutional inefficiency and voice their dissent. However, Mann's (2013) concerns, of sousveillance being surveillance in disguise, since sousveillance feeds into the same centralized systems that do the surveillance, and that

sousveillance therefore doesn't guarantee resistance unless the system allows for 'reciprocal transparency', were correct. Bucholski argued that Facebook being a platform for sousveillance is giving users a false sense of empowerment that is limited by institutional control.

Giovanelli & Ostertag (2009) studied 'fat female depictions' on TV; they found that women are under a 'permanent state of surveillance' by the media, where TV acted as a panopticon enacting disciplinary power by manifesting the patriarchal beliefs in women's physical appearance and apparel, implying that women who do not fall into these beliefs are going to be subjected to discrimination, resulting in a culture of self-discipline among women.

In the context of authoritarian regimes, where media tend to be state-owned, state-controlled, or state-aligned, media can be considered surveillance tools, where frames are used to support hegemonic narratives that justify control, to align public opinion with regime policies, to reinforce regime legitimacy, and to discourage dissent (Khamis, 2013). Bakir (2015) added that media can simultaneously act as the fourth estate as well as 'condone' surveillance.

The study at hand explores the concept of veillance (surveillance and sousveillance), since most mainstream news organizations in Egypt are either state-owned and/or state-aligned, they are used as tools for surveillance to frame events in ways that legitimize power. As for the X posts in the hashtags of the viral incidents of violence against women, they are considered as cyberfeminist efforts, and thereby, a tool for sousveillance. Therefore, the concepts of surveillance and sousveillance are explored in the context of how cyberfeminism shapes news articles of viral and non-viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt, by

finding the emerging themes and determining whether they fit under the aforementioned concepts.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review and theoretical framework, the current study integrates news virality, its triggers, its framing, Cyberfeminism and sur/sousveillance to investigate what event-related elements trigger visibility and how visibility affects framing, as well as to look at how feminist ideologies are manifested on social media, reflecting surveillance and sousveillance in the framing of viral and non-viral news.

Scholars found that the nature of the event itself is considered a factor, ‘trigger’, that influences frame building (zaklama, 2025). Some of these triggers in the context of violence against women include the graphic details of the crime, use of photos, the main topic of the story, blaming the victim’s ‘loose morals’, sympathizing with the perpetrator, and blame/responsibility attribution, along with other crime specific elements (Aldrete & Ardevol, 2023; Pröll & Magin, 2022). Therefore, the first research question measures the association between trigger attributes and news virality.

RQ1: How are trigger attributes associated with the news virality (viral/non-viral news articles) of incidents of violence against women in Egypt?

The literature illustrated that there are elements that affect the news framing such as, the journalist’s gender, photos, the gender of the sources, and graphic elements among other structural elements (Sitanggang, Putri & Romli, 2025; Samsudin, 2020; Hänggli, 2012; Lim & Bae, 2009; Tankard, Jr.; 2001). The literature also found that information and emotion frames, tone, and problem-solution frames can influence the spread of information online (Heijkant, van Selm, Hellsten, & Vliegenthart, 2021; Odmark, 2018; Evers, 2016). Hence, the second research question examines the association between news virality and framing.

RQ2: How is the news virality (viral/non-viral news articles) of incidents of violence against women in Egypt associated with the framing components (a) structural elements, b) tone, c) message features, and d) problem-solution frames)?

The literature demonstrated that the viral spread of news occurs across platforms (Luchessi, 2018). As previously mentioned, studies illustrated how structural elements, tone, message features, and problem-solution approach can influence the spread of information (Sitanggang, Putri & Romli, 2025; Heijkant, van Selm, Hellsten, & Vliegthart, 2021; Samsudin, 2020; Odmark, 2018; Evers, 2016; Hänggli, 2012; Lim & Bae, 2009; Tankard, Jr.; 2001). The third research question examines the association between the medium (news website and X hashtags) and framing.

RQ3: How is the medium (X posts/news articles) of viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt associated with the framing components of these incidents (a) structural elements, b) tone, c) message features, and d) problem-solution frames)?

The literature has shown that cyberfeminism has three goals; documentation, education, and mobilization and that it is used to confront top-down patriarchal structures from the bottom-up (Khamis, 2013). Therefore, the fourth research question looks at the goals of cyberfeminism and X posts covering viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt.

RQ4: How were the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) manifested in the X posts when it comes to the viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt?

Studies investigated how sousveillance (bottom-up) can be motivated/mobilized on social media, engaging in cyberfeminism, while surveillance (top-down), often invisible to others, is used to legitimize institutional power (Bucholski, 2016; Bakir, 2015; Fuchs &

Trottier, 2015; Mann, 2004). Hence, the fifth and final research question investigates the interplay between news virality, cyberfeminism and surveillance/sousveillance.

RQ5: How does cyberfeminism shape the viral news articles, compared to non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance?

The research questions are examining associations not causations. They are not claiming cause-and-effect relationships, rather they are investigating framing patterns and themes. The study is not trying to determine whether an incident is viral or non-viral; the news virality parameters were established and the viral incidents identified, as well as the media outlets (news website/X hashtags) prior to the analysis.

Method

Overview

In order to answer the study's five research questions, the author conducted a quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis of the framing of viral and non-viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt on an Egyptian news website and the viral incidents' hashtags on X (formerly known as Twitter) over the course of four years (from 2020 to 2024). The period under study was selected based on the year that the #MeToo Movement started in Egypt. In summer 2020, an anonymous Instagram page called Assault Police was created to call out sexual predators against women (Walsh, 2020). Nadeen Ashraf created that page on July 1, 2020, as a platform for Egyptian women to join the #MeToo movement and give them a voice (Marzouk & Vanderveen, 2021). Therefore, the timeframe of the sample starts from July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2024.

The study analyzes an Egyptian news website and not a print newspaper, because of the feasibility and ease of access to this news website's archive. The Egyptian news website

selected for this study is called Youm7 (اليوم السابع). The news website was selected based on the following criteria: its popularity (Similarweb, 2023), its archive accessibility, and being published in Arabic (Badr, 2021; “Egypt Media Guide”, 2023).

Incidents Selection and Sampling

In order to set the parameters of this dissertation, a pilot study was conducted with the aim of (1) operationally defining virality, and (2) determining which incidents of violence against women in Egypt went viral over a period of four years (2020-2024). For the pilot study, the author selected another popular Egyptian news website based on its high traffic namely Al-Ahram (الأهرام), other than the Youm7 news website used for the study’s sample and scanned all the news stories related to violence against women in Egypt in the crimes section over the designated timeframe (2020-2024). Each news story was coded for how many times it showed up and the date of each news story. This coding identified the incidents that got the most attention. It also shaped the operational definition of virality used in this study (*further explained on p.75*).

Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted in order to identify the study’s sample parameters, helping to define virality and determining which incidents and hashtags to include. Al-Ahram news website was chosen for the pilot study. The author selected a website that is *not* the selected news website, in order to avoid contamination; there is scholarly consensus that the pilot study sample should be excluded from the main study in quantitative studies (William-McBean, 2019; Ismail, Kinchin, & Edwards, 2018; Peat, Mellis, Williams, & Xuan, 2002; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Nonetheless, the two news outlets share features such as their reach and popularity, which makes the list of viral incidents similar in both outlets. Al-Ahram news website is state-owned; it is also the oldest news website in the region that still

has relatively high following (Allam & El Gody, 2023). Al-Ahram focuses mainly on internal affairs and international news, which could be indicative of the relatively low number of articles on incidents of violence against women in Egypt (Badr, 2021).

The author looked only at the crimes section of Al-Ahram news website over a period of 940 days, starting with 1 July 2020 and ending with 31 December 2024. In 2020, there were 64 news stories related to violence against women in Egypt. In 2021, there were 83 news stories about violence against women in Egypt. In 2022, there were 107 news stories covering incidents of violence against women in Egypt. In 2023, there were 74 news stories covering incidents of violence against women. In 2024, there were 107 news stories covering incidents of violence against women.

The author determined the parameters of violence against women in this study in terms of physical violence, sexual violence, and/or psychological violence, such as rape, sexual harassment/assault, honor killing, guardianship, beating/disciplining, sextortion, non-consensual taking and sharing of photos/videos, and domestic violence, where the perpetrator(s) are men and the victim(s) are women. Thus, it excludes; non-gendered motivations of violence such as, crimes related to thefts and robberies, crimes committed against prepubescent children (less than 13 years of age) such as FGM, and crimes perpetrated by women and/or women and men.

After reviewing the news articles over the period of four years, *thirteen* viral incidents of violence against women were found (see Appendix for viral incidents profiling). In order to define what incidents were considered ‘viral,’ the author counted the number of times each incident was mentioned over the period of analysis and cross-checked these incidents on X to find whether these incidents had hashtags associated with them or not. Some incidents were excluded because no hashtags were found for these incidents, or the incidents’ labels were

too vague, so the hashtags found were not talking specifically about these incidents (e.g., Maadi Harasser hashtags were not covering the incident that the news website was talking about). Other incidents were eliminated because they were covering prepubescent children (younger than 13 years of age), covering incidents where the perpetrators were not men and/or the victims were not women, or because they did not have a gendered-motivation (such as robberies and thefts).

After counting the incidents, it was found that the ‘viral’ incidents of violence against women in Egypt were mentioned between 2 to 9 times over the period of analysis in the crimes section in Al-Ahram news website. Nonetheless, the author attempted to relate virality to giving the incident a ‘sensational label’ (e.g., Mansoura Girl, Ismailia Bride), and identifying the victim’s/perpetrator’s name and cross-checked these incidents on X.

Therefore, the pilot study helped the author identify not only the viral incidents of violence against women, it also aided in determining the operational definitions of virality and violence against women in Egypt, thinking about what to include and what to exclude and thereby, sharpening the study’s focus.

Quantitative Content Analysis

A quantitative content analysis of 256 viral news articles, 248 non-viral news articles, and 233 X posts from the viral hashtags was conducted. The author used Qualtrics for the coding and SPSS for the statistical analysis.

Viral Incidents Sampling

With the codebooks (see Table 1 and Table 2), which were created and tested through the pilot study, a quantitative content analysis of the incidents of violence against women that were found viral from the pilot study on the Youm7 news website were conducted. The name

of each incident was inserted into the search engine of the Youm7 news website which gives you the total number of stories for this incident.

The sample was drawn by first summing up the populations of news articles of all 13 viral incidents which was $N = 725$. Using a sample size calculator (Calculator.net), at a confidence level of 95%, margin of error of 5%, population proportion of 50%, population size of 725, the total sample size calculated for all viral incidents was 256. Then, the proportion of news articles for each incident was calculated by dividing the population of news articles in each incident by the total sum of populations of all incidents (N of each incident/725).

These proportions (N of each incident/725) were multiplied by the sample size of all viral incidents 256, to create a stratified sample using a stratified sample calculator (Coda.io), where the sum of populations of all incidents, the sample size of all viral incidents and the proportions of each incident were inserted into the calculator, which calculated the sample size of each incident. The reason for using a stratified sample was to have each incident represented in the sample proportionately according to the population of articles for each incident of violence against women.

Next, the author used a systematic random sampling method to find the interval to identify which articles to analyze within each incident. The population size of each incident (N) was divided by the sample size for each incident (n) to find the interval, with the caveat of instead of randomizing the starting point, the author is analyzing the first article that mentions each incident (see Table 3).

Hashtags Sampling

There is a hierarchy for the platforms that is constantly changing with the media environment, where Facebook occupies the highest rank for pushing stories, while X

(formerly known as Twitter) scores high on followers' loyalty (Denisova, 2020). X is also considered a popular news source among users, who rely on it for getting breaking news first (Houston, McKinney, Thorson, Hawthorne, Wolfgang, & Swasy, 2018; Tandoc & Johnson, 2016). Additionally, X was the birthplace of the #MeToo hashtag in 2017, thereby positioning the social networking site as a platform for social movements, especially when it comes to gender-based violence (Syamili & Rekha, 2021; Goel & Sharma, 2020).

The hashtags of the incidents of violence against women in Egypt that have been classified as 'viral' from the pilot study were culled from X (formerly known as Twitter). Most viral incidents had multiple hashtags, so the author selected a single hashtag for each incident, the one with the most posts/tweets. There were updates in X's policies¹ which restricted scraping tweets. Therefore, the author drew the sample from the top posts/tweets for each hashtag and analyzed them through quantitative content analysis and thematic analysis. A total of 233 X posts/tweets were analyzed. A systematic random sample of the violence against women X posts was drawn from the hashtag of each incident, by first counting the population of X posts for each hashtag and using a sample size calculator to determine the sample size for each viral violence against women incident's hashtag (see Table 3).

Non-Viral Incidents Sampling

Non-viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt were analyzed in the Youm7 news website over the period of four years (starting July 1st 2020-until December 31st 2024). The author used keywords to identify the number of articles about violence against women in Egypt. The keywords used in the Youm7 news website were: *harassment, rape, murder of a*

¹ Since July 2023, the policies of X, formerly known as Twitter, have been changing, starting with enforcing restrictions to limit the tweets that users can read. In order to control web scraping and web crawling, they limited verified users to only 10,000 tweets/day, and unverified users to only 1,000 tweets/day ("Elon Musk says Twitter", 2023).

daughter, murder of a wife, murder of a woman, assault on a wife, assault on a daughter, assault on a woman, threat to a daughter, threat to a woman, threat to a wife. After using these keywords, a total of 1,543 news articles were found on the website.

By adding up the populations of the articles for each keyword and using a sample size calculator (Calculator.net), at a confidence level of 95%, margin of error of 5%, population proportion of 50%, population size of 1,543, the total sample size calculated for all non-viral incidents was: 308. Only 248 were analyzed and 60 articles were excluded. Then, the proportion of news articles for each keyword was calculated by dividing the population of news articles under each keyword by the total sum of populations of all keywords (N of each keyword/1,543).

These proportions (N of each keyword/1,543) were multiplied by the sample size of all keywords 308, to create a stratified sample using a stratified sample calculator (Coda.io), where the sum of populations of all keywords, the sample size of all keywords and the proportions of each keyword were inserted into the calculator, which calculated the sample size of each keyword.

The reason for using a stratified sample is to have each keyword represented in the sample proportionately according to the population of articles for each keyword of violence against women. Then, the author used a systematic random sampling method to find the interval to identify which articles to analyze. The population size of each keyword (N) was divided by the sample size (n) for each keyword to find the interval, with the caveat of instead of randomizing the starting point, the author is analyzing the first article in the time frame starting July 1st, 2020 (see Table 4).

The search capabilities on the Youm7 news website does not allow for refined searches, such that some articles may overlap or may not be relevant (e.g., not an incident of

violence against women). In case of an overlap or irrelevance, the article was excluded and the next relevant article that does not overlap and is not irrelevant was analyzed. The same applies to the X posts on each hashtag, some posts using the viral violence against women hashtag may overlap or may not be relevant and in that case, they were excluded and the next relevant post was analyzed.

The unit of analysis in the case of the news website is the single article. The author analyzed only news articles from the crimes section, thereby excluding commentary, interviews, investigation, caricature, etc. (Badr, 2021). The unit of analysis in case of the hashtags on X is the single X post/tweet, with the exclusion of posts shared by news media outlets, and irrelevant posts (i.e., posts that use the hashtag but are not about an incident of violence against women in Egypt or merely use the hashtag).

Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis of 256 viral news articles, 248 non-viral news articles, and 233 X posts was conducted. As the author was conducting the quantitative content analysis, she took qualitative notes for each article/post. After the coding was done, an in-depth reading of the qualitative notes was performed, which helped extract the main themes in news articles of viral and non-viral incidents of violence against women and X posts of the hashtags of the viral incidents of violence against women.

The themes were color-coded, and ChatGPT was used to extract each color-coded theme and its incidents. The main themes and their color codes were listed, for instance ‘graphic description,’ one of the themes, was coded red, and the qualitative data where this theme came from was shared (i.e., hashtags, viral news or non-viral news) on ChatGPT. Then, ChatGPT was prompted to match the data to the color-coded themes, while identifying

the connected incidents to the data. So, all the data related to graphic description for example were coded red, while mentioning the incident that data was extracted from.

It was interesting that ChatGPT could read *Arabizi*, which refers to colloquial Arabic written in Latin alphabets and numbers. Nonetheless, the author was checking the themes constantly to see if the program misinterpreted or misconstrued any of the meanings and context. Then, each color-coded theme was broken down into sub-themes. These themes and sub-themes were analyzed to find how they fit under the goals of cyberfeminism, as well as, the concepts of surveillance and/or sousveillance.

Operational Definitions

Violence Against Women (VAW): refers in this study to physical violence, sexual violence, and/or psychological violence, such as rape, sexual harassment/assault, murder, beating, sextortion, non-consensual taking and sharing of photos/videos, and domestic violence (guardianship, disciplining, and honor killing), where the perpetrator(s) are men and the victim(s) are women. Thus, it excludes; non-gendered motivations of violence such as, crimes related to thefts and robberies, crimes committed against girls who are prepubescent (less than 13 years of age) such as FGM or crimes labeled as child rape/assault, and crimes perpetrated by women and/or women and men.

News Virality: refers in this study to the popularity and spread of an incident of violence against women in Egypt on news websites and on social media. It is defined by the prerequisite existence of three variables namely, *a*) the coverage of a specific ‘identifiable’ incident of violence against women 2 or more times on the news website, *b*) the existence of hashtag(s) dedicated to this same incident on X, and *c*) the ‘sensational label’ that the incident gets on the news website, which refers to giving the incident an identifiable name

either by calling it by the place where the crime occurred or calling it by the victim/perpetrator's name (e.g., Mansoura Girl or Nayera Ashraf).

Trigger Attributes: refer in this study to the event/crime features that could act as contributing triggers to virality such as; the type of crime, the criminal motive, the crime consequence, the number of victims/perpetrators and their socio-economic status, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, whether the crime was public or private, whether there were witnesses, the location of the crime, and the city where the crime was committed.

Structural Elements: refer in this study to the elements related to the structure of the news article/X post of such as; length of the news article, gender of journalist, main focus of the news article/X post, number of sources, type of sources, gender of sources, use of photos, videos, and links, and whether they were used before, mention of the victim/perpetrator's name, the number of times their names were mentioned, use of sensational label, mention of other similar incidents, and graphic description of the crime/perpetrator/victim.

Tone: refers in this study to whether the content of the article/X post covering an incident of violence against women in Egypt uses a personal and/or an impersonal voice (e.g., using the pronoun "we", 'our daughter' *versus* "they", 'the girl').

Message features: refer in this study to whether the content of the article/X post covering an incident of violence against women in Egypt uses information-focused frames and/or emotion-focused frames.

- a) *Information-Focused Frames:* refer in this study to frames within the article/X post that cover incidents of violence against women in Egypt that provide facts and arguments (e.g., who the perpetrator/victim are, where the crime took place, when, etc.)

- b) *Emotion-Focused Frames*: refer in this study to frames within the article/X post that cover incidents of violence against women in Egypt that use emotive words that reflect anger, awe, fear, sadness, sarcasm, hope, etc. (e.g., describing how people are feeling/reacting to the crime).

Problem-Solution Frames: refer in this study to whether the content of the article/X post covering an incident of violence against women in Egypt uses diagnostic frames and/or prognostic frames.

- a) *Diagnostic Frames*: refer in this study to frames that tackle problem formulation according to the news website and to social media users. In other words, frames that point out the factors that are the culprit in violence against women incidents in Egypt. The pilot study conducted found the following frames treated as problem identifiers namely, lack/weakness of faith, culture of guardianship/discipline, leniency of violence against women laws, and the corrosion of values.
- b) *Prognostic Frames*: refer in this study to frames that tackle solution identification according to the news website and to social media users. In other words, frames that point out the possible solutions for violence against women incidents in Egypt. The pilot study conducted found the following frames treated as possible solutions namely, adhering to faith, increasing punishment, and changing violence against women policies.

Variables and Statistical Procedures

The study at hand had three independent variables namely, ‘trigger attributes’ (crime-related elements), ‘news virality’ (viral and non-viral news), and the ‘medium’ (news article/X post). News virality and the medium were treated as nominal variables, since viral

incidents were already identified and the medium was already known. Trigger attributes, as an independent variable, was present only in news articles to describe crime-related variables; some elements of this variable were nominal and some were ratio. There were two dependent variables namely, 'news virality' (viral and non-viral news), and '*framing components*' which includes: *a*) structural elements (such as, mention of the victim/perpetrator's name, use of sensational label, etc.), *b*) tone (personal and impersonal), *c*) message features (information-focused and emotion-focused), and *d*) problem-solution frames (diagnostic frames and prognostic frames). Intercoder reliability was measured by training a coder with both codebooks and giving them a sample of the articles and X posts (10%) to code. The author used SPSS to obtain both descriptive and inferential statistics such as crosstabs, t-test, chi-square, and Multinomial Logistic Regression in order to test the study's research questions.

Results

The results were divided into quantitative content analysis results and thematic analysis results, which were broken down according to the study's research questions. The first research question (*RQ1*) examined the association between trigger attributes and the news virality (viral/non-viral news articles) of incidents of violence against women in Egypt. The second research question (*RQ2*) examined the association between the news virality of incidents of violence against women in Egypt and the framing components of these incidents on a news website in terms of structural elements, tone, message features, and problem-solution frames. The third research question (*RQ3*) measured how the medium (news articles vs. X posts) was associated with the framing components of these incidents on news websites in terms of structural elements, tone, message features, and problem-solution frames.

The fourth research question (*RQ4*) looked at the how the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) were manifested in the X posts when it comes to hashtags of viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt. Finally, the fifth research

question (*RQ5*) tackled how cyberfeminism shapes viral news articles, compared to non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance.

Quantitative Content Analysis Results

A quantitative content analysis was conducted for 256 viral news articles, 248 non-viral news articles, and 233 X posts in order to respond to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 (see Table 3 & Table 4). The quantitative content analysis results are divided by research questions into three parts namely, trigger attributes and news virality, news virality and framing components, and medium and framing components.

Trigger Attributes & News Virality Results

RQ1: How trigger attributes are associated with the news virality (viral/non-viral news articles) of incidents of violence against women in Egypt

In the first research question, there are two main variables namely, trigger attributes (independent variable) and news virality (dependent variable). The results for the viral and non-viral news articles were merged on the same SPSS spreadsheet to be able to perform the descriptive and inferential statistics. The trigger attributes, which refer to the crime-related elements, include: types of crime, criminal motive, crime consequence, victim-perpetrator relationship, number of victims, number of perpetrators, victim's socio-economic status (SES), perpetrator's socio-economic status (SES), governorate of the crime, crime location, public/private crime, and crime witnesses (see Table 5).

Types of Crimes:

The types of violence against women crimes in viral news articles include: murder (38.6%), sexual harassment (17.5%), sexual assault (11.7%), sextortion (6.8%), and *hatk ard*² (6.5%). In non-viral news articles, the types of violence against women crimes include: murder (30%), sexual harassment (23.4%), beating (14.3%), rape (10.6%), and sexual assault (2.9%).

A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and *murder* as a violence against women crime $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 12.07$, $p < .001$, *rape* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 12.37$, $p < .001$, *beating* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 31.74$, $p < .001$, *sextortion* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 11.07$, $p < .001$, *improper photography/non-consensual* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 4.43$, $p = .035$, *cyberflashing* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 14.23$, $p < .001$, *hatk ard*² $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 11.78$, $p < .001$, *sexual assault* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 23.78$, $p < .001$.

Criminal Motives:

The criminal motives in the viral news articles include: unknown/not mentioned (60.8%), love rejection (25.4%), drug use (14.45%), and both women threatening/reprimanding men and women's 'loose behavior' (5.86%). The criminal motives in the non-viral news articles include: unknown/not mentioned (34%), quarrels (25.81%), women's loose behavior (12.5%), culture of guardianship/discipline (6.8%), and women threatening/reprimanding men (5.65%). A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and criminal motives $\chi^2(5, N = 504) = 151.75$, $p < .001$.

² The term '*hatk ard*'/هتك عرض: refers to touching and/or showing someone's private parts without their consent.

Crime Consequences:

The crime consequences in viral news articles include: arrested (37.5%), on trial (26.8%), and death penalty (9.8%). The crime consequences in non-viral news articles include: arrested (42.3%), convicted (12.2%), and on trial (10.8%). A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and being *charged* as a consequence to the crime $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 18.90, p < .001$, *convicted* as a consequence to the crime $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 26.01, p < .001$, *death penalty* as a consequence to the crime $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 13.04, p < .001$, *getting killed* as a consequence to the crime $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 5.21, p = .022$, going to *trial* as a consequence to the crime $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 54.60, p < .001$.

Victim-Perpetrator Relationship:

In the viral news articles, the relationships between the perpetrator and the victim includes: colleague (28.7%), admirer (27.3%), stranger (16.1%), and husband (13.7%), while in non-viral news articles, the relationships between the perpetrator and the victim includes: husband (27%), stranger (17.7%), father/stepfather (11.3%), and unknown/not mentioned (10.6%).

A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and *husband* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 10.05, p = .002$, *admirer* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 120.85, p < .001$, *colleague* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 112.29, p < .001$, *father/stepfather* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 36.45, p < .001$, *acquaintance* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 21.50, p < .001$.

Number of Victims:

The results show that 90.6% of the viral articles had 1 victim, 8.6% had more than 3 victims, 0.4% had 2 victims, whereas 90.7% of the non-viral articles had 1 victim, 5.6% had 2 victims, and 2.8% did not mention the number of victims. A chi-square test of

independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the number of victims in the incident of violence against women $\chi^2(4, N = 504) = 35.92, p < .001$.

Number of Perpetrators:

As for the number of perpetrators, results show that 77% of the viral articles had 1 perpetrator, 16% had 2 perpetrators, and 7% had more than 3 perpetrators, whereas 89.1% of the non-viral articles had 1 perpetrator, 4.8% had 2 perpetrators, and 2.4% had more than 3 perpetrators. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the number of perpetrators in the incident of violence against women $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 32.13, p < .001$.

Socio-Economic Status of Victims:

In the viral news articles, 35.5% of the articles didn't mention the SES of the victim, 30.9% of the victims had high SES, 30.5% had low SES, and 3.1% had middle SES. In the non-viral news articles, 48% of the articles didn't mention the SES of the victim, 36.3% of the victims had low SES, 9.7% had middle SES, and 6% had high SES. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the SES of the victim $\chi^2(3, N = 504) = 144.42, p < .001$.

Socio-Economic Status of Perpetrators:

In the viral news articles, 41% of the articles didn't mention the SES of the perpetrator, 24.6% had middle SES, 18% had low SES, and 16.4% had high SES. In the non-viral news articles, 49.6% of the perpetrators had low SES, 33.5% of the articles didn't mention the SES of the perpetrator, 14.9% had middle SES, and 5.2% had high SES. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the SES of the perpetrator $\chi^2(3, N = 504) = 73.44, p < .001$.

Governorate of the Crime:

The governorates where the crimes occurred the most in viral news articles include: Dakahliya (36.3%), Cairo (32.4%), not mentioned (11.3%), and Sharqiah (5.5%). The governorates where the crimes occurred the most in non-viral news articles include: Cairo (29.8%), Giza (23.8%), Qalyubia (7.7%), and Sharqiah (6.5%). A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the governorate where the crimes were committed $\chi^2(20, N = 504) = 223.58, p < .001$.

Crime Location:

The locations where the crimes occurred the most in viral news articles are: his property (26.6%), school/college (25.9%), unknown (12.6%), and her property (6.6%). The locations where the crimes occurred the most in non-viral news articles are: unknown (26%), his property (24.4%), street (11.8%), and her property (8.7%). A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the *school/college* as a crime location $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 83.00, p < .001$, *random property* as a crime location $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 5.91, p = .015$, and *unknown* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 10.65, p = .001$.

Private/Public Crime:

In the viral news articles, 36.7% of the crimes were committed in private, 34.4% were committed in public, and 28.9% of the articles did not specify whether the crimes were committed in private or public. In the non-viral news articles, 37.1% of the crimes were committed in private, 21% were committed in public, and 41.9% of the articles did not specify whether the crimes were committed in private or public. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and whether the crimes were committed in private or public $\chi^2(2, N = 504) = 13.84, p < .001$.

Witnesses to the Crime:

In the viral news articles, 48.4% of the crimes had witnesses, 13.7% did not have witnesses, and 37.9% of the articles didn't mention whether there were witnesses to the crime. In the non-viral news articles, 29.4% of the crimes had witnesses, 4.4% did not have witnesses, and 66.2% of the articles didn't mention whether there were witnesses to the crime. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and whether there were crime witnesses $\chi^2(2, N = 504) = 42.81, p < .001$.

Trigger Attributes & News Virality Results Recap

In response to *RQ1*, after conducting the inferential and descriptive statistics and reporting the results, it was found that trigger attributes are significantly associated with news virality in terms of:

The *type of crime* where viral news articles were more likely to cover incidents of murder, sextortion, improper/non-consensual photography, cyberflashing, *hatk ard*³ and/or sexual assault, while non-viral news articles were more likely to cover rape and/or beating.

The *criminal motive* where viral news articles were more likely to be associated with an unknown/unmentioned motive, love rejection, drug use, and/or women threatening/reprimanding men, while non-viral news articles were more likely to be associated to quarrels, women's loose behavior, and/or culture of guardianship/discipline as criminal motives.

The *crime consequence* where viral news articles were more likely to cover news about the perpetrator(s) being charged, on trial, and/or on death penalty, while non-viral news articles were more likely to cover news about the perpetrator(s) being convicted and/or killed.

³ The term '*hatk ard*'/هتك عرض: refers to touching and/or showing someone's private parts without their consent.

The *victim-perpetrator relationship* where viral news articles were more likely to cover crimes with the perpetrator(s) being colleagues and admirers, while non-viral news articles were more likely to cover crimes with perpetrator(s) being the husbands, fathers/stepfathers, and acquaintances.

The *number of victims* and the *number of perpetrators* where viral news articles were more likely to have more victims and perpetrators than non-viral news articles.

The *victim's socio-economic status (SES)* where viral news articles were more likely to cover victims with higher SES, whereas non-viral news articles were less likely to mention the victims' SES.

The *perpetrator's socio-economic status (SES)* where viral news articles were less likely to mention the perpetrators' SES than non-viral news articles, which were more likely to cover perpetrators with lower SES.

The *governorate of the crime* where viral news articles were more likely to cover crimes occurring in Dakahliya, Cairo, or they would not mention the governorate, whereas non-viral news articles were more likely to cover Giza, Qalyubia and Sharqiah.

The *crime location* where viral news articles were more likely to cover crimes occurring in random property and schools/colleges, while non-viral news articles were less likely to mention the location of the crime.

Public/private crime where viral news articles were more likely to cover public crimes than non-viral news articles, which were less likely to mention whether the crime was public or private.

The *crime witnesses* where viral news articles were more likely to cover crimes that include witnesses than non-viral news articles, which were less likely to mention whether there were witnesses to the crime.

News Virality & Framing Components Results

RQ2: How the news virality (*viral/non-viral news articles*) of incidents of violence against women in Egypt is associated with the framing components; *a)* structural elements, *b)* tone, *c)* message features, and *d)* problem-solution frames

In the second research question, there are two main variables namely, news virality (independent variable) and framing components (dependent variable). The results for the viral and non-viral news articles were merged on the same SPSS spreadsheet to be able to perform the descriptive and inferential statistics. The framing components include; *a)* structural elements, *b)* tone, *c)* message features, and *d)* problem-solution frames,

The structural elements are broken down into article's length, gender of the journalist, mention of victim's name and the number of times the victim's name was mentioned, mention of perpetrator's name and the number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned, use of photos and links, use of videos, number of sources, gender of sources, type of sources, main focus of the article, sensational label, mention of previous incidents, graphic description/image/video (see Table 5).

a) News Virality & Structural Elements

Article's Length:

The results show that the length of the article (i.e., word count) in viral news articles ($M= 383.9$, $SD= 710.46$) and in non-viral news articles ($M= 207.11$, $SD= 93.12$). An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare article length between viral and non-

viral news articles. The t-test results show that there is a statistically significant difference between viral and non-viral news when it comes to the length of an article $t(502) = 3.87, p < .001$, 95% CI [86.86, 265.62].

Gender of the Journalist:

The gender of the journalist in the viral news articles was predominantly male (75%), followed by both female and male (10.5%), and female (8.2%), compared to non-viral news articles where males scored 85.9%, females scored 10.9%, and both female and male scored 0.8%. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the gender of the journalist $\chi^2(3, N = 504) = 27.82, p < .001$.

Mention of Victim's Name:

In viral news articles, the full name of the victim(s) was mentioned 74.6%, the victim's first name and last name initial/vice versa was mentioned 10.8%, only the initials were mentioned 0.8%, and there was no mention of the victim's name in 14.1% of the viral articles. In non-viral news articles, the full name of the victim(s) was mentioned 8%, the victim's first name and last name initial/vice versa was mentioned 9.7%, only the initials were mentioned 21%, and there was no mention of the victim's name in 61.3% of the non-viral articles. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and mentioning the name of victim(s) $\chi^2(3, N = 504) = 254.87, p < .001$.

Number of Times Victim's Name was Mentioned:

In viral news articles, the number of times the victim's name is mentioned ranges between 0 and 9 ($M = 3.47, SD = 2.91$), while in non-viral news articles, the number of times a perpetrator's name is mentioned ranges between 0 and 7 ($M = .58, SD = 1.05$). An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare number of times a victim's name was mentioned

between viral and non-viral news articles. The t-test results show that there is a statistically significant difference between viral and non-viral news when it comes to the number of times a victim's name was mentioned $t(502) = 14.74, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [2.5, 3.27]$.

Mention of Perpetrator's Name:

In viral news articles, the full name of the perpetrator(s) was mentioned 51.2%, the perpetrator's first name and last name initial/vice versa was mentioned 2.7%, only the initials were mentioned 1.2%, and there was no mention of the perpetrator's name in 44.9% of the viral articles. In non-viral news articles, the full name of the perpetrator(s) was mentioned 4.8%, the perpetrator's first name and last name initial/vice versa was mentioned 10.9%, only the initials were mentioned 21.8%, and there was no mention of the perpetrator's name in 62.5% of the non-viral articles. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and mentioning the name of perpetrator(s) $\chi^2(3, N = 504) = 163.55, p < .001$.

Number of Times Perpetrator's Name was Mentioned:

In viral news articles, the number of times the perpetrator's name is mentioned ranges between 0 and 7 ($M = 1.29, SD = 1.74$), while in non-viral news articles, the number of times a perpetrator's name is mentioned ranges between 0 and 4 ($M = .54, SD = 1.25$). An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare number of times a perpetrator's name was mentioned between viral and non-viral news articles. The t-test results show that there is a statistically significant difference between viral and non-viral news when it comes to the number of times a perpetrator's name was mentioned $t(502) = 5.51, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.48, 1.01]$.

Use of Photos/Links:

As for the use of photos and links in news articles, all viral and non-viral articles used photos and links. In viral articles, results show that 92.6% of the links were used before compared to 44% in non-viral articles. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the link being used before $\chi^2(2, N = 504) = 145.25, p < .001$.

Use of Videos:

The use of videos in viral articles scored 16.4% and non-viral scored 2.8%. A statistically significant association between news virality and the use of videos in news articles was found using chi-square where $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 26.48, p < .001$. Furthermore, all the videos used in the non-viral articles were never used before, while 1.56% of the viral articles were used before. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the video being used before $\chi^2(2, N = 504) = 26.84, p < .001$.

Number of Sources:

The number of sources used in both viral and non-viral news articles ranges between 0 and 10. In viral news articles, 19.5% of the articles didn't use sources, compared to 33.9% in non-viral news articles. The Means and Standard Deviations for the number of sources used in viral and non-viral articles were respectively; $M = 2.21, SD = 2.25$ and $M = 2, SD = 2.26$. An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare number of sources between viral and non-viral news articles. The t-test results shows that there is no significant difference between viral and non-viral news when it comes to the number of sources $t(500) = .93, p = .35, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.21, .58]$.

Gender of Sources:

The gender of the sources used in viral news articles is 56.3% male, 12.5% more males than females, and 5.1% female, while in non-viral news articles, the gender of the sources used is 46% male, 9.3% more males than females, and 6.9% female. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the gender of sources used $\chi^2(5, N = 504) = 16.44, p = .006$.

Type of Sources:

The types of sources used in viral news articles include: law enforcement (36%), witness (9.3%), family/friend of victim (6.8%), perpetrator's lawyer (6.5%), perpetrator (5.9%), and victim (3.1%). The types of sources used in non-viral articles include: law enforcement (40.4%), victim (10.8%), perpetrator (6.3%), family/friend of victim (4.5%), witness (2.8%), and perpetrator's lawyer (1.7%).

A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and using the perpetrator's lawyer as a source $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 11.66, p < .001$, using the victim as a source $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 11.10, p < .001$, using a witness as a source $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 15.75, p < .001$, and using an expert as a source $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 3.91, p = .048$.

Main Focus of Article:

The main focus of the viral news articles includes: the arrest/questioning/trial (40.1%), what happened (14.6%), court decision (14.3%), and tribute to the victim (5.6%). In the non-viral news articles, the main focus includes: the arrest/questioning/trial (38%), what happened (32.7%), court decision (21.3%), and investigation/collection of evidence (6.1%).

A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and *what happened* as the main focus of the article $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 41.90, p < .001$, the *court decision* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 9.18, p = .002$, the *execution of the court decision* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 7.875, p = .005$, *collecting witnesses opinions* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 3.91, p = .048$, *religious discourse* $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 4.89, p = .027$, and *tribute to the victim* as the main focus of the article $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 18.08, p < .001$.

Sensational Label:

In the viral news articles, 76.6% of the articles used a sensational label(s), while in the non-viral news articles, 10.1% of the articles used a sensational label(s). A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and whether articles used a sensational label(s) $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 226.13, p < .001$.

Mention of Previous Incidents:

In the viral news articles, 12.9% of the articles mentioned previous incidents, whereas 0.8% of the non-viral news articles mentioned previous incidents. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and whether articles mentioned previous incidents $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 28.47, p < .001$.

Graphic Description/Image/Video:

In the viral news articles, 68% of the articles included graphic description/image/video, while 78.2% of the non-viral news articles included graphic description/image/video. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and whether the articles include graphic description/image/video $\chi^2(1, N = 504) = 6.73, p = .009$.

b) News Virality & Tone

In the viral news articles, 69.1% of the articles were impersonal, 27.7% were both personal and impersonal, and 3.1% were personal. As for the non-viral news articles, 89.9% of the articles were impersonal, 9.3% were both personal and impersonal, and .8% were personal. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the tone of the article $\chi^2(2, N = 504) = 33.28, p < .001$.

A multinomial logistic regression test was performed. The first set of coefficients, representing comparisons between impersonal tone (coded as 0) and both personal and impersonal tones (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = 1.36, SE = .26, p < .001, OR = 3.89$. In the model, virality was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in virality, the odds of having both personal and impersonal tones would increase in comparison to impersonal tone by 3.89.

The second set of coefficients, representing comparisons between impersonal tone (coded as 0) and personal tone (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = 1.62, SE = .80, p = .042, OR = 5.04$. In the model, virality was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in virality, the odds of having a personal tone would increase in comparison to the impersonal tone by 5.04.

c) News Virality & Message Features

In the viral news articles, 56.6% of the articles were information-focused, 39.5% were both information- and emotion-focused, and 3.9% of the articles were emotion-focused, whereas in the non-viral news articles, 80.2% of the articles were information-focused, 19.8% were both information- and emotion-focused, and none were emotion-focused. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the message features of the article $\chi^2(2, N = 504) = 36.39, p < .001$.

A multinomial logistic regression test was performed. The first set of coefficients, representing comparisons between information-focused articles (coded as 0) and both information- and emotion-focused articles (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B= 1.04$, $SE= .21$, $p < .001$, $OR= 2.83$. In the model, virality was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in virality, the odds of having both information-focused and emotion-focused articles would increase by 2.83.

d) News Virality & Problem-Solution Frames:

In the viral news articles, 45.7% of the articles used diagnostic frames, 39.8% used no frames, 11.7% used both prognostic and diagnostic frames, and 2.7% used prognostic frames. As for non-viral news articles, 54.4% used diagnostic frames, 27% used no diagnostic/prognostic frames, 10.9% used both prognostic and diagnostic frames, and 7.7% used prognostic frames. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between news virality and the articles' frame diversity $\chi^2(3, N = 504) = 14.11$, $p = .003$.

A multinomial logistic regression test was performed. The first set of coefficients, representing comparisons between using prognostic frames (coded as 0) and using no diagnostic/prognostic frames (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B= 1.42$, $SE= .47$, $p = .002$, $OR= 4.13$. In the model, virality was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in virality, the odds of an article using no diagnostic/prognostic frames would increase by 4.13 over using prognostic frames.

The second set of coefficients, representing comparisons between using prognostic frames (coded as 0) and using both diagnostic and prognostic frames (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B= 1.10$, $SE= .52$, $p = .032$, $OR= 3.02$. In the model, virality was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in virality, the odds

of an article using both diagnostic and prognostic frames would increase by 3.016 over using prognostic frames.

Another set of coefficients, representing comparisons between using diagnostic frames (coded as 0) and using no diagnostic/prognostic frames (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B=.56$, $SE=.20$, $p=.005$, $OR=1.76$. In the model, virality was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in virality, the odds of an article using no diagnostic/prognostic frames would increase by 1.76 over using diagnostic frames.

News Virality & Framing Components Results Recap

In response to *RQ2*, after conducting the inferential and descriptive statistics and reporting the results, it was found that news virality is significantly associated to the framing components; a) structural elements, b) tone, c) message features, and d) problem-solution frames in terms of:

a) Structural Elements:

The *article's length* where viral news articles were found to be lengthier than non-viral news articles.

The *gender of the journalist* where viral news articles were more likely to be written by female journalists (female only or both female and male rather than just male), whereas non-viral news articles were more likely to be written by male journalists only.

Mention of victim's name where viral news articles were more likely to mention the victim's full name, while non-viral news articles were more likely to mention the victim's initials only or not to mention their name at all. As for the *number of times the victim's name*

was mentioned, viral news articles mentioned the victim's name more than non-viral news articles.

Mention of perpetrator's name where viral news articles were more likely to mention the perpetrator's full name, while non-viral news articles were more likely to mention the perpetrator's initials only, first name and initial, or not to mention their name at all. As for the *number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned*, viral news articles mentioned the perpetrator's more than non-viral news articles.

The use of links and videos where viral news articles were more likely to repeatedly use the same links than non-viral news articles. Viral news articles were also more likely to use videos than non-viral news articles and to use the same videos multiple times.

The number of sources where viral news articles were more likely to use more sources than non-viral news articles.

The gender of sources where viral news articles were more likely to use male sources, whereas non-viral news articles were more likely to use female sources.

The type of sources where viral news articles were more likely to use witnesses, the perpetrators' lawyers, or/and experts as sources, while non-viral news articles were more likely to use the victims as sources.

The main focus of the article where viral news articles were more likely to mainly focus on the court decision execution, collecting witnesses' opinions, religious discourse, and/or tribute to the victim, while non-viral news articles were more likely to predominantly focus on what happened and/or the court decision.

The sensational label where viral news articles were more likely to use sensational labels than non-viral news articles.

Mention of previous incidents where viral news articles were more likely to mention previous incidents than non-viral news articles.

Graphic description/image/video where viral news articles were less likely to include graphic description/image/video than non-viral news articles.

- b) Tone: Viral news articles were more likely to be personal or both personal and impersonal than non-viral news articles, which were more likely to be impersonal.
- c) Message Features: Viral news articles were more likely to be emotion-focused or both information- and emotion-focused, while non-viral news articles were more likely to be information-focused.
- d) Problem-Solution frames: Viral news articles were more likely to either use both diagnostic and prognostic frames or not to use diagnostic nor prognostic frames at all, whereas non-viral news articles were more likely to use diagnostic frames only or prognostic frames only.

Medium (News Articles/X Posts) & Framing Components Results

RQ3: How the medium (X posts/news articles) of viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt is associated with the framing components of these incidents; a) structural elements, b) tone, c) message features, and d) problem-solution frames

In the third research question, there are two main variables namely, the medium (independent variable) and framing components (dependent variable). The results for the news articles and X posts of the 13 viral incidents were merged on the same SPSS spreadsheet to be able to perform the descriptive and inferential statistics. The framing components include; a) structural elements, b) tone, c) message features, and d) problem-solution frames.

The structural elements are broken down into main focus of the article/X post, use of photos, use of videos, use of links, mention of victim's name and the number of times the victim's name was mentioned, mention of perpetrator's name and the number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned, sensational label, mention of previous incidents, graphic description/image/video (see Table 5).

The trigger attributes were not measured in association with the medium, since both the news articles and the X posts are looking at the same 13 viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt, and the X posts don't always mention all the details of the crime (number of victims/perpetrators, criminal motives, etc.).

Some of the structural elements were excluded: length of article, number of sources, gender of sources, and source types. The reasoning behind this is that for X posts, the gender of the person posting cannot be accurately identified, X users don't often use sources nor are they bound by the ethical nor professional guidelines of journalism. Also, since the X posts are word/character restricted (140 characters, formerly, now 280 for free users), they cannot be compared to the length of news articles, also a reason why trigger attributes were not coded for. X users don't often use the platform to give a full report of every detail of the crime the way a news article would. The author also coded for the name of the incident in news articles and X posts in order to measure which incidents of the 13 incidents were more prevalent in each medium.

In the hashtags of the viral incidents of violence against women, the means and standard deviations of the length of the X posts ($M= 26.62$, $SD= 13.78$), of likes ($M= 63.49$, $SD= 328.65$), of retweets ($M= 22.33$, $SD= 177.72$), of comments ($M= 5.69$, $SD= 30.12$), and of views ($M= 5241$, $SD= 6590.90$) could not be compared to the length of the viral news articles.

Name of Incident in News Articles:

In the viral news articles, *Nayera Ashraf* (murdered by colleague) was the highest viral incident of violence against women (35.5%), followed by a tie between *Shaimaa Gamal* (murdered by husband) and *Habiba El-Shama'a* (attempted kidnapping by uber driver) who scored 15.6%, *Ahmed Bassam Zaki* (sexual harassment and rape) who scored 7.8%, *Salma Bahgat/Sharqiah Girl* (murdered by colleague) who scored 5.5%, then, a tie between *Ismailia Bride* (beat up by husband) scoring 3.9%, and the *Fairmont Case* (gang rape and non-consensual photography) scoring 3.9%, *Mitghamr Girl* (sexual harassment and assault) scoring 3.1%, *Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi* (rape) scoring 2.7%, and a tie between *Airport Harasser* (non-consensual photography) and *Metro Harasser* (sexual harassment) scoring 2%. Lastly, a tie between *Shady Khalaf* (rape) and *Port Said Girl* (murdered by colleague) scored 1.2% of the viral news articles.

Name of Incident in X Posts:

In the hashtags on X, there was a tie between *Ahmed Bassam Zaki* (sexual harassment and rape) and *Airport Harasser* (non-consensual photography) scoring 10.7%, followed by *Metro Harasser* (sexual harassment) scoring 9.9%, the *Fairmont Case* (gang rape) scoring 9%, *Mitghamr Girl* (sexual harassment and assault) scoring 8.6%, the *Ismailia Bride* (beat up by husband) scoring 8.2%, *Port Said Girl* (murdered by colleague) scoring 7.7%, *Salma Bahgat/Sharqiah Girl* (murdered by colleague) scoring 7.3%, and a tie between *Habiba El-Shama'a* (attempted kidnapping) and *Shaimaa Gamal* (murdered by husband) scoring 6.9%. *Nayera Ashraf* (murdered by colleague) scored 6%, *Shady Khalaf* (rape) scoring 4.7%, and *Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi* (rape) scored 3.4%.

a) Medium & Structural Elements

Main Focus of Article/X Post:

In the viral news articles, the arrest/questioning/trial scored the highest as the main focus of the article (40.1%), followed by what happened (14.6%), court decision (14.3%), and tribute to the victim (5.6%). In the hashtags on X, the main focus of the posts were: what happened (12.3%), court decision (11.6%), reflection on societal issues (9.8%), and the arrest/questioning/trial (6.2%). A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and the *arrest/questioning/trial* as the main focus of the article/X post $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 84.54, p < .001$, the *investigation and collection of evidence* as the main focus of the article/X post $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 9.48, p = .002$, and *reflection on societal issues* as the main focus of the article/X post $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 51.80, p < .001$.

Use of Photos:

All of the viral news articles included a photo, whereas in the X posts, 37.8% used photos. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and the use of photo(s) in the news article/X post $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 226.47, p < .001$. In the viral news articles, 52.7% of the photos were used before, while 29.55% of the X posts used the same photos before. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and whether the photos in the news article/X post were used before $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 237.26, p < .001$.

Use of Videos:

The X posts used less videos (11.2%) than the viral news articles (16.4%), and 15.38% of the videos were used before in X posts, while none of the videos in the viral news articles were used before.

Use of Links:

All of the viral news articles used links, while only 33.91% of the X posts used links. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and the use of link(s) in the news article/X post $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 246.98, p < .001$. Moreover, 92.6% of the viral news articles used the same links before, while 24.36% of the X posts used the same links before. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and whether the link(s) were used before in news articles/X posts $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 359.47, p < .001$.

Mention of Victim's Name:

In the viral news articles, 85.55% of the articles mention the victim's name, while 47.64% of the X posts mention the victim's name. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and mentioning the victim's name in the news article/X post $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 79.88, p < .001$.

Number of Times Victim's Name was Mentioned:

As for the number of times a victim's name was mentioned in a viral news article, it ranges between 0 and 23, where 14.5% of the articles never mentioned the victim's name or mentioned the victim's name 3 times, while 13.7% mentioned the victim's name once or 4 times in the article. In the X posts, the number of times a victim's name is mentioned ranges between 0 and 4, where 51.9% of the posts never mentioned the victim's name, and 31.8% mentioned the victim's name once in the post.

The means and standard deviations of the number of times the victim's name was mentioned in the viral news articles and X posts are respectively, $M = 3.47, SD = 2.905$ and $M = .68, SD = .847$. An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare number of times a victim's name was mentioned between viral news articles and X posts. The t-test

results show that there is a statistically significant difference between viral news articles and X posts when it comes to the number of times a victim's name was mentioned $t(487) = -14.105, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-3.17, -2.40]$.

Mention of Perpetrator's Name:

In the viral news articles, 54.69% of the articles mention the perpetrator's name, while 30.47% of the X posts mention the perpetrator's name. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and mentioning the perpetrator's name in the news article/X post $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 29.16, p < .001$.

Number of Times Perpetrator's Name was Mentioned:

As for the number of times a perpetrator's name was mentioned in a viral news article, it ranges between 0 and 14, where 44.9% of the articles never mentioned the perpetrator's name, 20% of the articles mentioned the perpetrator's name once, and 17.2% mentioned the perpetrator's name twice in the article. In the X posts, the number of times a perpetrator's name is mentioned ranges between 0 and 9, where 69.5% of the posts never mentioned the perpetrator's name, and 17.2% mentioned the perpetrator's name once in the post.

The means and standard deviations of the number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned in the viral news articles and X posts are respectively, $M = 1.30, SD = 1.74$ and $M = .52, SD = 1.04$. An Independent Samples t-test was conducted to compare number of times a perpetrator's name was mentioned between viral news articles and X posts. The t-test results show that there is a statistically significant difference between viral news articles and X posts when it comes to the number of times a perpetrator's name was mentioned $t(487) = -5.81, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.02, -.50]$.

Sensational Label:

In the viral news articles, 76.6% of the articles used a sensational label, while all of the X posts used a sensational label. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and using a sensational label in news articles/X posts $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 62.25, p < .001$.

Mention of Previous Incidents:

In the viral news articles, 12.9% mentioned previous incidents, while 18.88% of the X posts mentioned previous incidents. All of the hashtags mentioned previous incidents in their posts except in the incidents of *Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi* (rape) and *Ismailia Bride* (beat up by husband). *Nayera Ashraf* (murdered by colleague) was the incident that mentioned previous incidents the most in the hashtags (18.18%), followed by *Salma Bahgat* (murdered by colleague) (13.64%), and *Mitghamr Girl* (sexual harassment and assault) (11.36%) in the hashtags. In the viral news articles, *Habiba El Shama'a* (attempted kidnapping) (84.85%), the *Fairmont Case* (gang rape) (6.06%), *Nayera Ashraf* (murdered by colleague) (6.06%), and the *airport harasser* (non-consensual photography) (3.03%) were the only incidents that mentioned previous incidents.

Graphic Description/Image/Video:

In viral news articles, 68% of the articles used graphic description/image/video, while 33% of the X posts used graphic description/image/video. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and using graphic description/image/video in news articles/X posts $\chi^2(1, N = 489) = 59.54, p < .001$.

b) Medium & Tone

In viral news articles, 69.1% of the articles were impersonal, 27.7% were both personal and impersonal, and 3.1% were personal. In the X posts, 48.5% of the posts were impersonal, 34.8% were personal, and 16.7% were both personal and impersonal. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and tone in news articles/X posts $\chi^2(2, N = 489) = 82.41, p < .001$.

A multinomial logistic regression test was performed. The first set of coefficients, representing comparisons between personal tone (coded as 0) and both personal and impersonal tones (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = 2.91, SE = .42, p < .001, OR = 18.43$. In the model, the medium was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in the medium, the odds of having both personal and impersonal tones would increase in comparison to personal tone by 18.43.

The second set of coefficients, representing comparisons between personal tone (coded as 0) and impersonal tone (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = 2.76, SE = .39, p < .001, OR = 15.86$. In the model, the medium was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in the medium, the odds of having an impersonal tone would increase in comparison to the personal tone by 15.86.

c) Medium & Message Features

In the viral news articles, 56.6% of the articles were information-focused, 39.5% were both information- and emotion-focused, and 3.9% were emotion-focused. As for X posts, 66.1% of the posts were emotion-focused, 17.6% were information-focused, and 16.3% were both information- and emotion-focused. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and the message features of the news articles/X posts $\chi^2(2, N = 489) = 212.53, p < .001$.

A multinomial logistic regression test was performed. The first set of coefficients, representing comparisons between emotion-focused posts (coded as 0) and both information- and emotion-focused posts (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = 3.71$, $SE = .38$, $p < .001$, $OR = 40.93$. In the model, the medium was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in the medium, the odds of having both information-focused and emotion-focused news articles/X posts would increase by 40.93.

The second set of coefficients, representing comparisons between emotion-focused news articles/X posts (coded as 0) and information-focused news articles/X posts (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = 4.00$, $SE = .37$, $p < .001$, $OR = 54.46$. In the model, the medium was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in the medium, the odds of having information-focused articles/posts would increase in comparison to the emotion-focused articles/posts by 54.46.

d) Medium & Problem-Solution Frames

In the viral news articles, 45.7% of the articles used diagnostic frames, 39.8% used no diagnostic/prognostic frames, 11.7% used both diagnostic and prognostic frames, and 2.7% used prognostic frames. As for the X posts, 39.48% of the posts used both diagnostic and prognostic frames, 33.05% used diagnostic frames, 21.03% used prognostic frames, and 6.44% didn't use diagnostic/prognostic frames. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant association between the medium and the diversity of frames in news articles/X posts $\chi^2(3, N = 489) = 135.17$, $p < .001$.

A multinomial logistic regression test was performed. The first set of coefficients, representing comparisons between using diagnostic frames (coded as 0) and using no diagnostic/prognostic frames (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = 1.50$, $SE = .31$, $p < .001$, $OR = 4.48$. In the model, the medium was found to be a significant

predictor where for every one unit increase in the medium, the odds of an article/post using no diagnostic/prognostic frames would increase by 4.48 over using diagnostic frames.

The second set of coefficients, representing comparisons between using diagnostic frames (coded as 0) and using both diagnostic and prognostic frames (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = -1.54$, $SE = .26$, $p < .001$, $OR = .22$. In the model, the medium was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in the medium, the odds of an article/post using both diagnostic and prognostic frames would increase by .22 over using diagnostic frames.

The third set of coefficients, representing comparisons between using diagnostic frames (coded as 0) and using prognostic frames (coded as 1), was found to be statistically significant, $B = -2.36$, $SE = .43$, $p < .001$, $OR = .09$. In the model, the medium was found to be a significant predictor where for every one unit increase in the medium, the odds of an article/post using prognostic frames would increase by .09 over using diagnostic frames.

Medium & Framing Components Results Recap

In response to *RQ3*, after conducting the inferential and descriptive statistics and reporting the results, it was found that the medium is significantly associated to the framing components; a) structural elements, b) tone, c) message features, and d) problem-solution frames in terms of:

a) Structural Elements:

The *main focus of the article* where news articles were more likely to focus on the arrest/questioning/trial and/or investigation and collection of evidence, whereas X posts were more likely to focus on reflecting on societal issues.

Mention of victim's name where news articles were more likely to mention a victim's name than X posts. As for *the number of times a victim's name was mentioned*, news articles mentioned the victim's name more than X posts, which either never mentioned their name or mentioned it once.

Mention of perpetrator's name where news articles were more likely to mention the perpetrator's name than X posts. As for *the number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned*, news articles mentioned the perpetrator's name more than X posts, which either never mentioned their name or mentioned it once.

The use of photo, video & links in article/tweet where news articles were more likely to use more photos and links than X posts, and to use those same photos and links multiple times. News articles were also more likely to use more videos than X posts, but X posts were more likely to use the same videos multiple times.

The sensational label where X posts were more likely to use sensational labels than news articles.

Mention of previous incidents where X posts were more likely to mention previous incidents than X posts.

Graphic description/image/video where news articles were more likely to use graphic description/image/video than X posts.

- b) Tone: News articles were more likely to be impersonal or both personal and impersonal, while X posts were more likely to be personal.
- c) Message features: News articles were more likely to be information-focused or both information- and emotion-focused, while X posts were more likely to be emotion-focused.

- d) Problem-solution frames: News articles were more likely to use diagnostic frames only or neither diagnostic nor prognostic frames at all, while X posts were more likely to use both diagnostic and prognostic frames or prognostic frames only.

Thematic Analysis Results

CONTENT WARNING: The description of the crimes may be disturbing

Please make sure to take some time away, if overwhelmed

A thematic analysis of 256 viral news articles, 248 non-viral news articles, and 233 X posts was conducted in order to respond to *RQ4* (how the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) are manifested in the X posts when it comes to the viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt) and *RQ5* (how cyberfeminism shapes the viral news articles, compared to non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance). The thematic analysis results are divided into two sections: cyberfeminism goals, which comprises of a thematic analysis of the hashtags, and cyberfeminism, news virality, and sur/sousveillance, which comprises of a thematic analysis of viral news articles, and a thematic analysis of non-viral news articles.

Cyberfeminism Goals

RQ4: How the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) manifested in the X posts when it comes to the viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt.

Building on *RQ1*, *RQ2*, and *RQ3*, which examined how news virality is triggered, how news virality shapes framing, and how the medium shapes framing of the same viral incidents using content analysis, the fourth research question conducted a thematic analysis to

understand how the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) manifested in X posts of the viral hashtags, by identifying the emerging themes.

Thematic Analysis of Hashtags

A thematic analysis of 233 X posts of the viral hashtags was conducted to identify recurring themes in the data. There were nine emerging themes which included a graphic description of the crime/ perpetrator(s), discussing the efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system, raising awareness, supporting/paying tribute to the victim(s), mentioning similar incidents, using religious rhetoric, blaming and sharing on social media, suggesting solution/advice, and expressing frustration/sarcasm.

Theme 1: Graphic Description of the Crime/Perpetrator(s)

The graphic description included in the X posts of the viral hashtags refers to using vulgar (swear words), gory and/or sexual description of the crime/perpetrator(s). All the viral incidents in this study used graphic description in their news articles except for the incidents of Habiba El-Shama'a, Shady Khalaf, and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi. The graphic description ranges from describing how the crime happened, and providing sexual details of the crime, to using profanity.

The incidents of the Fairmont Case, Nayera Ashraf, Port Said Girl, Shaimaa Gamal, and Sharqiah Girl described how the crime happened, the victim's reaction during the crime, and the perpetrator's actions/threats leading up to the crime.

"She [victim] was drugged, gang raped, filmed, blackmailed, left with signatures on her body" – Fairmont Case

"Dr.Basma Ali was run over by a military officer 4 times with his car" – Nayera Ashraf

“Quoting the perpetrator: If you [Nayera’s sister] marry someone else, I will slaughter you” – Nayera Ashraf

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki (rape/harassment/assault), Fairmont Girl (gang rape), Mitghamr Girl (gang harassment/assault), and the Metro Harasser (sexual harassment) provided sexual details of the crime, blaming the perpetrator.

“Quoting the perpetrator: Call me now u fuckin hoe...call again...what’s wrong with u” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“Quoting the victim: He [perpetrator] sent me unsolicited nudes” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki (rape/harassment/assault), the Airport Harasser, Ismailia Bride (beating), Mitghamr Girl (gang harassment/assault), and the Metro Harasser (sexual harassment) used profanity to describe the crime/perpetrator/victim and/or to express the poster’s own frustration:

“Does it get any lower or filthier than that?” – Metro Harasser

“Let the country be rid of pigs” – Metro Harasser

“This should make any piece of disgusting trash like him [perpetrator] think a million times” – Metro Harasser

“Those filthy men have to go to prison to become an example” – Mitghamr Girl

“You deserve to be hanged you jerk” – Airport Harasser

Theme 2: Efficiency/Inefficiency of the Judicial System

The efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system in the X posts of the viral hashtags refers to praising the efficiency and/or criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system when

it comes to handling the viral crimes. All viral incidents included the recurring theme of efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system except for Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi's incident. This theme ranges from criticizing the sentence for not being commensurate with the crime, and for acquitting the perpetrator(s) from charges, praising the efficiency of the judiciary.

The sentence was criticized for not being commensurate with the crime in the incidents of the Metro Harasser and Shady Khalaf:

"Why was the perpetrator put 3 days in jail while being investigated and not 4 or 15 days?" – Metro Harasser

"He [perpetrator] raped 7 girls and got 3 years, Mohamed El-Amin hatk ard⁴ 7 girls at an orphanage and got 3 years, Abdel-Monem Aboulfoutouh got 15 years for criticizing the regime" – Shady Khalaf

"He [perpetrator] got pardoned after being sentenced 3 years and doing half the time only" – Shady Khalaf

The incidents that acquitted the perpetrator(s) included the Fairmont Case, Ismailia Bride, and Mitghamr Girl:

"My blood is boiling over letting the perpetrators go for lack of evidence 'hahaha emoji'; despite having more than 40 witnesses and a year to investigate" – Fairmont Case

⁴ The term 'hatk ard'/هتك عرض: refers to touching and/or showing someone's private parts without their consent.

“People were angry when she was quiet [victim], and when she did something, the judge accepted the perpetrator’s appeal and the groom is coming home safely” – Ismailia Bride

“Cursing the judiciary in Egypt for being incompetent” – Mitghamr Girl

The incidents that praised the efficiency of the judiciary included Ahmed Bassam Zaki, the Airport Harasser, Nayera Ashraf, Sharqiah Girl, and Shaimaa Gamal:

“Appreciation of the Egyptian public prosecutors for labeling him [perpetrator] as a harasser officially” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“Faith in the Egyptian judicial system after the 3-year sentence of the perpetrator ‘Egyptian flags emoji’” – Airport Harraser

“Thank you to Egyptian judiciary for making the heart of a mother happy for getting justice for her daughter; long live justice, Egypt is ruled by law” – Shaimaa Gamal

Theme 3: Religious Rhetoric

The religious rhetoric used in the viral hashtags refers to the use of the name of God and religious evidence in the context of the viral crimes. Most of the incidents included the recurring theme of religious rhetoric except for the incidents of Shady Khalaf, and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi. This theme ranges from using verses from the Quran, Dua’a and/or Hadith⁵ to condemn the perpetrator(s)/crime, praying for the victim(s), and praying for divine justice, to criticizing incitement to violence.

⁵ Dua’a refers to an informal and personal prayer to God in Islam, and Hadith refers to reports of the sayings and practices of Prophet Mohamed in Islam and contributes to Sharia law (Islamic law).

Incidents using verses from the Quran, Dua'a, Hadith, and other religious rhetoric to condemn the perpetrator(s)/crime included Shaimaa Gamal, Sharqiah Girl, Nayera Ashraf, Port Said Girl, and the Metro Harasser:

"What is between you and God that he would reveal your satr [sins you have been concealing] so hideously and atrocitly" – Shaimaa Gamal

"Those who set a bad example take the blame for it and for those who follow their footsteps until Judgment Day – Hadith" – Sharqiah Girl

"God take vengeance from Mohamed Adel [perpetrator]; he is not beyond your power" – Nayera Ashraf

"Satan, my friend, you have completed your mission with great devotion, to the point where even you can't live in this era" – Metro Harasser

Incidents that prayed for the victim(s) included Habiba El-Shama'a, Mitghamr Girl, Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Ismailia Bride, Sharqiah Girl, and Port Said Girl:

"May God grant these victims peace and rest" – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

"I pray to God that we don't hear your [victim] name in the news" – Ismailia Bride

"God have mercy on her, forgive her, and give her family and loved ones solace and patience" – Sharqiah Girl

Incidents that prayed for divine justice included the Fairmont Case, Port Said Girl, Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Habiba El-Shama'a, and Mitghamr Girl:

"God make these rapists suffer" – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

"God take vengeance from them" – Habiba El-Shama'a

“God is sufficient for me and is the best disposer against every oppressor” – Mitghamr Girl

Incidents criticizing incitement to violence included the Airport Harasser, Habiba El-Shama’a, Sharqiah Girl, and Nayera Ashraf:

“Abdallah Roshdi [Muslim preacher] and the likes of turban-wearing men are inciters against our girls/women...connect every accident to their terrorist comments, if you want to create change” – Nayera Ashraf

“The sympathizers of Mohamed Adel [perpetrator], what is your justification now, you pigs? I hope that ‘muscles’ [referring to Abdallah Roshdi] is happy. Years of incitement, this is the natural consequence” – Sharqiah Girl

“We made her[victim] wear a hijab for you Haj Mabrouk Attia [Muslim preacher]. There is no hair flying on the cheeks and yet she got killed in cold blood, and in a more hideous way than Nayera” – Sharqiah Girl

Theme 4: Raising Awareness

The raising awareness theme used in the X posts of the viral hashtags refers to educating and providing the readers with information in the context of viral crimes. The incidents that included the recurring theme of raising awareness were the Airport Harasser, Fairmont Case, and Nayera Ashraf. This theme is divided into raising awareness of the legal penalty for the crimes (e.g., raising awareness that taking a photo of someone without their consent/permission is a crime that is punishable by law), and of what to do in reaction to these crimes (raising awareness of the help numbers/hotlines to report crimes).

Theme 5: Supporting/Paying Tribute to the Victim

Supporting/paying tribute to the victim was used as a theme in the X posts of the viral hashtags, referring to showing how family/friends/public supported the victim and/or paid tribute to her. Most incidents included the recurring theme of supporting/paying tribute to the victim except; the Fairmont Case, Ismailia Bride, Shady Khalaf, and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi. This theme is divided into praying for the victim, showing public solidarity/sympathy for the victim, praising the victim's bravery, and memorializing the victim.

The incident of Sharqiah Girl used praying for mercy and forgiveness for the victim, and for patience and solace for her family and loved ones as an expression of support and tribute for the victim.

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Airport Harasser, Mitghamr Girl, Shaimaa Gamal, Port Said Girl, Sharqiah Girl, and the Metro Harasser showed public solidarity for the victim:

"Yes, girl! We hear you, we believe you, we are proud of you, and you are not alone"

– Ahmed Bassam Zaki

"Congratulations for Basant [victim] for winning the trial against the perpetrators' lawyers, hoping for the same outcome for the perpetrators" – Mitghamr Girl

"You [victim] have social media pressure and the solidarity of the people on your side...you are not alone (two heart emojis)" – Metro Harasser

The incidents of the Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Mitghamr Girl, Habiba El-Shama'a, and the Metro Harasser praised the victims for their bravery. In the incident of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, the victim was thanked for speaking up and filing a report (with two heart emojis). In

the incident of Mitghamr, the victim was praised for insisting on telling her story despite the threats and fighting for one and a half years under hideous conditions. In the incident of Habiba El-Shama'a, the victim's reaction of jumping out of the car was validated and supported. In the incident of the Metro Harasser, the victim was called a heroine for recording the perpetrator.

The incidents of Nayera Ashraf and Port Said Girl memorialized the victim by ensuring that the victims are not forgotten and apologizing to them:

“Reacting to an episode on the incident of Nayera Ashraf: so that we don't forget what happened and how painful it was” – Nayera Ashraf

“Apologizing to the victims: We are sorry, please forgive us, society is retarded and backward” – Port Said Girl

Theme 6: Mentioning Similar Incidents

Mentioning similar incidents was used as a theme in the X posts of viral hashtags, referring to identifying similar crimes to the viral incidents. All incidents included the recurring theme of mentioning similar incidents except for Ismailia Bride and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi. The incidents that mentioned similar incidents were; Ahmed Bassam Zaki (mentioning Fairmont Case and the Harasser Youssef Yasser), Airport Harasser (mentioning Russian Train Harasser and Maadi Harasser), Fairmont Case (mentioning Ahmed Bassam Zaki and Menna Abdel-Aziz), Habiba El-Shama'a (mentioning African Girl who jumped from a moving car, and girl who argued with an Uber, and he scared her with a bottle), Mitghamr Girl (mentioning Maadi Harasser, Fairmont Case, and Mitghamr Girl), Nayera Ashraf (mentioning Dr. Basma Ali, Nayera's sister, and someone who committed suicide because of blackmail), Port Said Girl (mentioning Nayera Ashraf, Salma Bahgat/Sharqiah Girl, and Amany El-Gazzar), Sharqiah Girl (mentioning Nayera Ashraf, Salma

Bahgat/Sharqiah Girl, and Bodour El-Sayed), Shaimaa Gamal (mentioning Nayera Ashraf, Zakazik Student, Shaimaa Gamal, and Fatma Saeed), Shady Khalaf (mentioning Khaled Youssef), and Metro Harasser (mentioning Maadi Harasser).

Theme 7: Social Media

Social media were used as a theme in the X posts of the viral hashtags to explain how social media are used to share stories/videos related to/of the crime(s), to show support the victim(s) are getting on social media, and to blame unethical use of social media. The incidents that included the recurring theme of social media were; Ahmed Bassam Zaki, the Airport Harasser, and the Metro Harasser.

In the incident of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, the X posts criticized not officially mentioning the perpetrator's name, despite the fact that his name was all over social media. In the Airport Harasser incident, the victim shared a video of her crying while saying what happened. In the incident of the Metro Harasser, the victim shared a video of the harasser touching himself on social media, showing how social media are used to share stories related to the crime.

In the Airport Harasser incident, X posts expressed how social media are not trivial nor ripping people of their consciousness, they are the best way for women and children to achieve justice. In the Metro Harasser incident, X posts expressed that social media and public solidarity create pressure, showing the support the victim(s) are getting on social media.

The Airport Harasser incident X posts condemned the harmful use of social media such as using social media to defend harassers and/or undermining the gravity of the crime:

“Anyone who defends a harasser is a harasser themselves”

Theme 8: Solution/Advice

Solution/advice was used as a theme in the X posts of the viral hashtags, referring to suggesting a solution and/or advice in the context of the viral crimes. All incidents included the recurring theme of solution/advice except for Shady Khalaf and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi. This theme is divided into demanding legal and policy reforms, spreading social awareness and advocacy, and calling for/taking action against crimes of violence against women.

In the incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Airport Harasser, Port Said Girl, Sharqiah Girl, Metro Harasser, and Shaimaa Gamal demanded legal and policy reforms:

“The second reason [for rape and harassment] is stagnant laws, judicial corruption, and protecting the perpetrators from punishment” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“There must be a law to make a man think a million times before committing this crime” – Port Said Girl

“The country needs to have harsher punishments for harassers, even for the justifiers or sympathizers with murderers and harassers” – Sharqiah Girl

In the incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Fairmont Case, Nayera Ashraf, Mitghamr Girl, and Metro Harasser spread social awareness and advocacy:

“Never let an asshole tell you your personal life decisions are a reason for someone to provoke and violate you” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“The reason for rape and harassment is completely on the harasser not the woman” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“It’s not about what she wears, there are women wearing niqab⁶, myself included, and we’ve been through disasters” – Metro Harasser

“In response to the perpetrator’s statement ‘we are a family and it’s normal to hit our girl’: Normalizing hitting leads to normalizing killing” – Ismailia Bride

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, the Airport Harasser, the Fairmont Case, Habiba El-Shama’a, Mitghamr Girl, and the Metro Harasser called for/took action against crimes of violence against women:

“Guys they are making us shut up about Ahmed [perpetrator] you piece of shit, you dog...Get the hashtag trending again” – Ahmed Bassam zaki

“I URGE you if you’re one of his victims, report your story to this number” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“I hope the people who have the video [of the gang rape] and are afraid that God plants courage in their heart to send the evidence even without saying their name” – Fairmont Case

“Calling on women to be active and keep the hashtag alive...otherwise this would give rapists/harassers the chance to do this to anyone...we could all be in this position” – Mitghamr Girl

“Since men are unashamed, girls need to be too, it’s the only thing that works, talk...scream...fight...these assholes will run” – Metro Harasser

⁶ Niqab refers to face veil that some Muslim women wear covering everything but the eyes.

“Advice to every girl, your mobile is with you, be ready with your camera, photograph any harasser and share for fast response...expose a harasser” – Metro Harasser

Theme 9: Frustration/Sarcasm

Frustration/sarcasm was used as a theme in the X post of the viral hashtags, referring to expressing frustration and/or sarcasm in the context of the viral crimes. All the incidents included the recurring theme of frustration/sarcasm. This theme is divided into frustration from constant gendered fear, calling out the perpetrators and apologists, frustration with the country, frustration with the judicial system, sarcastic rhetoric to shame perpetrators and sympathizers, and frustration with inaction and/or the outcome.

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Airport Harasser, Mitghamr Girl, and Port Said Girl expressed frustration from the constant gendered fear by highlighting that the crimes are redundant and normalized and that they are a result of violent toxic masculinity:

“Tired of seeing me tweet about rape and harassment, I don’t give a fuck, imagine how tired I am of being scared to walk or be alone in public, I’m tired of knowing that no matter how oversized my outfit is it won’t stop anyone...tough” – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“No use, new tragedy, new victim murdered for the same reason of refusing to marry a murderer. Why is this happening, the same issue time and time again, who is the next victim?” – Port Said Girl

“It has become terrifying for a girl to refuse to continue in a relationship...This is the third victim of false concepts in a patriarchal society” – Port Said Girl

“New Nayera [referring to Nayera Ashraf] joining the victims of violent masculinity”

– Port Said Girl

The incidents of the Airport Harasser, Ismailia Bride, Metro Harasser, and Shaimaa Gamal expressed frustration by calling out the perpetrators and apologists:

“Letting her [victim] marry the one who hit her is more hideous than what he [perpetrator] did...welcome to the dirtiest east [instead of Middle East]” – Ismailia Bride

“Male kills girl for telling him ‘no’, male kills girl for asking for divorce after being fed up from the hell of living with him, and male kills girl for working” – Shaimaa Gamal

“If you were really men not harassers, you would know the difference between scratching and someone sitting in front of you staring at you with dirty looks and scratching” – Metro Harasser

The incidents of Airport Harasser, Fairmont Case, Port Said Girl, Sharqiah Girl, Port Said Girl, Mitghamr Girl, Nayera Ashraf, Shaimaa Gamal, and the Metro Harasser expressed frustration with the country:

“The Arab World is the most dangerous place for any girl to live, that is if she lives to begin with” – Sharqiah Girl

“You know how they say ‘enter Egypt in peace’, it makes me feel like I’m in danger and my safety and security as a woman are compromised” – Airport Harasser

“Shame, shame...We were the country of civilization when history was crawling” – Airport Harasser

The incidents of the Airport Harasser, Fairmont Case, Mitghamr Girl, Habiba El-Shama'a, Shady Khalaf, and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi expressed frustration with the judicial system:

"The harasser was fired...What about the 10 other men standing there and denying there were photos of the victim on his [perpetrator] phone?" – Airport Harasser

"I am against torture but why didn't they torture them to confess?" – Fairmont Case

"In sexual assault and rape cases, perpetrators are sentenced to only a few years in prison despite the fact that the law is clear" – Mitghamr Girl

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Airport Harasser, Fairmont Case, Habiba El-Shama'a, Ismailia Bride, Mitghamr Girl, Shaimaa Gamal, and the Metro Harasser expressed frustration using sarcasm to shame perpetrators and sympathizers:

"What can guarantee your right [in case of sexual harassment]: Walk with 5 witnesses in your pocket" – Mitghamr Girl

"Groom saying he was adjusting her dress (with photos of him hitting her and her fainting and laughing emoji)" – Ismailia Bride

"Criticizing the reaction of men to the incident: What...we want to take our penis out in the street as we like!" – Metro Harasser

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Fairmont Case, Mitghamr Girl, Nayera Ashraf, and Sharqiah Girl expressed frustration with inaction and/or with the outcome:

"AUC boys are exchanging nudes on WhatsApp groups and no one is talking about it" – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

“The criminals were let go despite being recorded...What use is the hashtag? Who still has hope that we are useful? Who has hope again after this, seriously? –

Mitghamr Girl

“What is hidden is even greater...Not all girls’ parents can share and talk on social media despite the tragedy and bitterness of death. There are parents who consider this to be scandalous, journalists will not have access to them...what did these girls do to get killed at the prime of their lives” – Sharqiah Girl

Cyberfeminism Goals Results Recap

In response to *RQ4*, after conducting a thematic analysis and extracting the themes from the X posts of the viral hashtags, it was found that the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) manifested in the X posts when it comes to the viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt.

Under documentation, which refers to being a witness through archiving incidents of violence against women, four themes emerged namely, the graphic description of the crime/perpetrators(s), highlighting the injuries and sexual details, praising the efficiency of the judicial system through celebrating and documenting the achievements, mentioning of previous incidents of violence against women, and social media by explaining how they are used to share stories/videos related to/of the crime(s).

Under education, which refers to educating women and society about women’s rights and patterns of gendered violence and how to stop them, four themes emerged namely, raising awareness by sharing information about the crimes and their legal penalty, religious rhetoric used to condemn perpetrator(s)/crimes/sympathizers, social media by highlighting their unethical use, and solution/advice by educating women on how to stand up for themselves.

Under mobilization, which refers to calling people to action as well as calling out inaction/inefficiency, five themes emerged namely, the graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) through providing crime details and/or using profanity to mobilize the public, criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system for acquitting the perpetrator(s) and/or giving them a sentence that is not commensurate with the crime, mentioning of previous incidents to highlight the patterned gender-based violence, solution/advice by demanding accountability and reform, and expressing frustration/sarcasm to mobilize action.

Based on the emerging themes, a fourth goal was identified, solidarity/support. This goal encompassed three themes, which were namely, religious rhetoric by praying for the victim(s) and their families and for divine justice, supporting/paying tribute to the victim by praising the victim's bravery and memorializing them, and social media by illustrating the support the victim(s) get on social media.

Cyberfeminism, News Virality, & Sur/Sousveillance

RQ5: How cyberfeminism shapes the viral news articles, compared to non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance.

Building on *RQ4*, which examined how the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, mobilization, and solidarity/support) manifested in X posts of viral hashtags, the fifth research question conducted a thematic analysis to understand how cyberfeminism shapes viral news in comparison to non-viral news of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance. In order to answer *RQ5*, the emerging themes within the viral news articles as well as the non-viral news articles were identified using a thematic analysis.

Thematic Analysis of Viral News Articles

A thematic analysis of 256 viral news articles was conducted to identify recurring themes in the data. There were 12 emerging themes which included a graphic description of the crime/the perpetrator(s), discussing the efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system, raising awareness of the definitions of terminologies and/or legal penalty for the crimes, victim blaming, sympathizing with the perpetrator(s), blaming the perpetrator(s), supporting/paying tribute to the victim(s), mentioning similar incidents, undermining the gravity of the crime, using religious rhetoric, mentioning social media, and suggesting solution(s)/advice.

Theme 1: Graphic Description of the Crime/Perpetrator(s)

The graphic description included in the viral news articles refers to using gory and/or sexual description of the crime, perpetrator(s) and/or victim(s). All the viral incidents in this study used graphic description in their news articles except for the Airport Harasser (non-consensual photography) incident. The graphic description ranges from identifying the injuries of the victim(s), and describing how the crime happened, to providing sexual details of the crime.

The incidents of Nayera Ashraf (murder), Sharqiah Girl (murder), and Habiba El-Shama'a (attempted kidnapping) identified the victims' injuries in detail, such as the number of stabs they got and information from the forensics report.

"The victim was stabbed in deadly parts of her body 'top left of her chest and her neck' and in other scattered parts of her body that reached 17 stabs" – Nayera Ashraf

The incidents of Ismailia Bride (beating), Port Said Girl (murder), Shaimaa Gamal (murder), Shady Khalaf (rape/assault), Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi (rape/assault), and

Nayera Ashraf (murder) described how the crime happened, the victim's reaction during the crime, the perpetrator's actions/threats leading up to the crime, and the state in which the victim was found.

"Quoting the perpetrator: You deserve this...I swear on my faith that I will slit your throat...You will meet your end at my hand" – Nayera Ashraf

"Quoting the victim: He's choking me...help me" – Port Said Girl

"The killer used the back of a gun to hit her on the head, then used a scarf to choke her, and poured acid on her corpse to maim her" – Shaimaa Gamal

The incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki (rape/harassment/assault), Fairmont Girl (gang rape), Mitghamr Girl (gang harassment/assault), and the Metro Harasser (sexual harassment) provided sexual details of the crime.

"He was kissing her and touching all parts of her body...He assaulted her 'hatk ard' without force or threat in his residence by touching her private parts 'awra' making it possible for her to have sex with him" – Ahmed Bassam Zaki

"They were engraving their names on her body and taking turns to rape her" – Fairmont Case

"They wanted to 'get her honor'...and for her to succumb to them...they put their bodies on her body" – Mitghamr Girl

Theme 2: Efficiency/Inefficiency of the Judicial System

The efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system in the viral news articles refers to praising the efficiency and/or criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system when it comes to handling the viral crimes. All viral incidents included the recurring theme of efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system. This theme ranges from criticizing the sentence

for not being commensurate with the crime, and for acquitting the perpetrator(s) from charges, praising the speed of the trial/sentence, the efficiency of the arrest and/or investigation, to expressing trust in the judicial system and defending the integrity and impartiality of the Egyptian judiciary and public prosecutors.

The sentence was criticized for not being commensurate with the crime in the incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki (8 years for *hatk ard*⁷ of 3 girls and sexual harassment), Habiba El-Shama'a (went from 15 years for attempted kidnapping, forgery, and drug use to 5 years for possession and drug use), Shady Khalaf (3 years for assaulting 7 girls), and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi (3 years for raping a girl).

The incidents that acquitted the perpetrator(s) included Ahmed Bassam Zaki (the perpetrator was acquitted from charges of drug use and possession, despite finding drugs in his system), Habiba El-Shama'a (the perpetrator was acquitted from attempted kidnapping), Fairmont Case (one of the perpetrators was acquitted from charges of gang rape and drug use for lack of evidence), and Ismailia Bride (the perpetrator was acquitted from the crime of detaining and torturing his wife with no reason given).

The incidents that praised the speed of the trial/sentence included the Airport Harasser (the court decision came out 48 hours after the incident), Nayera Ashraf (it took 48 hours from the incident to the trial and 8 days to the verdict), and the Metro Harasser.

"I'm happy...I couldn't imagine how fast and deterrent the verdict against him was" – Metro Harasser

"The verdict was a victory to a state where the rule of law prevails" – Nayera Ashraf

⁷ The term '*hatk ard*'/هتك عرض: refers to touching and/or showing someone's private parts without their consent.

The incidents that praised the efficiency of the arrest and/or investigation included the Airport Harasser (the perpetrator was suspended, his phone was confiscated and he was investigated and arrested), the Fairmont Case (3 perpetrators were caught after they fled the country), Sharqiah Girl (promoting the efficiency of the investigation and securing the perpetrator), Port Said Girl, Mitghamr Girl, and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi (he was caught and tried in Egypt after committing the rape/assault in Qatar).

In the incidents of Nayera Ashraf and Habiba El-Shama'a, the families of the victims expressed that they trust the efficiency of the judicial system and that they won't accept condolences for their daughters until justice is served. As for the incidents that defended the integrity and impartiality of the Egyptian judiciary and public prosecutors, Nayera Ashraf's incident was described as a public opinion incident and the judiciary said that they won't be swayed by the public opinion, and even issued a gag order.

Shaimaa Gamal's news articles blamed social media and the Muslim Brotherhood for spreading 'rumors and lies' and the accusations of corruption (because the perpetrator was a member of the judiciary), and engaged in nationalist rhetoric:

"Egypt doesn't cover corruption or deception as the rumors, propagated by the Muslim Brotherhood, the terrorist banned group, claim...the rumors and lies were planted with malicious intent to give the impression that the investigations were not fair due to the nature of the perpetrator's job [member of judiciary]. This is false, inconceivable, and legally punishable for whoever promotes it...there will be no hesitation in pursuing and taking legal action against them."

Shaimaa Gamal's news articles also defended the integrity of public prosecutors against claims of bias and favoritism towards the perpetrator, by reinforcing the mission and doctrine of public prosecution:

“The mission and doctrine of the Public Prosecution is to represent with complete and guaranteed impartiality, without discrimination, bias, or favoritism, in order to achieve justice and consolidate the desired national and social security under the rule of law and the constitution”

Theme 3: Religious Rhetoric

The religious rhetoric used in the viral news articles refers to the use of the name of God and religious evidence in the context of the viral crimes. Most of the incidents included the recurring theme of religious rhetoric except for the incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Fairmont Case, Mitghamr Girl, Shady Khalaf, Metro Harasser, and Sharqiah Girl. This theme ranges from showing that the victim(s) and/or perpetrator(s) are religious, using verses from the Quran and/or Hadith to condemn the perpetrator(s)/crime, praying for the victim(s), and praying for divine justice, to calling to adhering to religious teachings.

The incidents that showed the victim(s) as religious included Habiba El-Shama’a (including photos of the victim in pilgrimage ‘Hajj’ wearing hijab and voice notes of the victim saying du’aa/praying), and Nayera Ashraf (including photos of the victim’s room where there are multiple Qurans and prayers). As for the incidents that showed the perpetrator(s) as religious, Habiba El-Shama’a’s news articles included photos of the perpetrator holding a Quran and taking the oath, and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi’s news articles included photos of the perpetrator reading Quran before the trial starts.

Incidents using verses from the Quran and/or Hadith to condemn the perpetrator(s)/crime included Port Said Girl (*those who call for evil bear more guilt than those who commit it – Hadith*) and Shaimaa Gamal (*There is life for you in retaliation, O people of understanding, so that you may refrain – Quran 2:179*).

Incidents that prayed for the victim(s) included Habiba El-Shama'a (*the victim's family was praying for her and reading Quran*), and Nayera Ashraf (*may she receive mercy and forgiveness from God to immortalize her memory, may God grant her a place in his spacious heavens, may it be a chill night for Nayera in her grave, family and colleagues visiting her grave and reading Quran, making an Umrah 'small pilgrimage' in her name, and making ongoing charity/donations in her name*).

Incidents that prayed for divine justice included Nayera Ashraf (*God will punish you [the perpetrator]; God will bring her justice...he is mightier than anyone; he [perpetrator] will be tortured in the other life – victim's father*), and Shaimaa Gamal (*with God's will he will be executed since you are defending murderers and serial killers – the victim's mother*).

Incidents calling to adhering to religious teachings included the Ismailia Bride (*the Prophet never treated his wife that way, a husband needs to be a source of support, backbone, and protection, and not someone who causes scandals and reveals awra*), Habiba El-Shama'a (*the victim's father is leaving everything up to God and has trust in divine justice*), and Nayera Ashraf:

"Religious expert's reaction to Mabrouk Attia's [Muslim preacher] comment 'If you want to protect yourself, wear a basket 'offa' when you go out': You [directed at Attia] need to advise and instruct, not to focus on what the victim is wearing. That is not why she [victim] was killed...connecting harassment and murder to hijab is forbidden 'haram' in religion...excuses are a crime"

Theme 4: Raising Awareness

The raising awareness theme used in the viral news articles refers to educating and providing the readers with information in the context of viral crimes. Most of the incidents included the recurring theme of raising awareness except for the incidents of Ahmed Bassam

Zaki, Mitghamr Girl, Shady Khalaf, Metro Harasser, and Port Said Girl. This theme ranges from raising awareness of legal terminologies, legal penalty for the crimes, rights and duties, to explaining trial scenarios and outcomes.

Incidents that included raising awareness of legal terminologies were; Nayera Ashraf (the difference between the concepts of insistence and premeditation, as well as the difference between final and irrevocable ruling, and the definition of murder crimes and their danger to society), and the incident of the Airport Harasser provided a definition of sexual harassment.

Incidents that included raising awareness of the legal penalty for the crimes were; the Airport Harasser (the legal penalty of sexual harassment in a public vs. a private place, sexual insinuations, stalking and being armed), the Habiba El-Shama'a (the legal penalty of driving under the influence, causing death, and the penalty for kidnapping, drug use, and forging documents), Nayera Ashraf (the legal penalty for murder, for leaking a video on social media, and for taking a video of a corpse in the morgue), and the Sharqiah Girl (the legal article that would send a case to the mufti⁸).

Incidents that included raising awareness to rights and duties were; the Fairmont Case (the need to perform civil duty, and the rights to anonymity when becoming a witness/providing evidence for a crime), Ismailia Bride (who has the right to sue depending on whether the beating is light or severe), and the Sharqiah Girl (who gets to attend the perpetrator's execution).

Incidents that included explaining trial scenarios and outcomes were; Nayera Ashraf (explaining the rules and procedures of execution, the three scenarios for the appeal, what happens after the death sentence, the reasons for appealing, the reasons for a death sentence),

⁸ Mufti refers to a Muslim legal expert who is empowered to give rulings on religious matters.

Sharqiah Girl, Shaimaa Gamal (explaining the different prison attires, and the different stages that a death sentence goes through in Dar al-Ifta⁹), and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi.

Theme 5: Victim Blaming

The victim blaming theme used in the viral news articles refers to explicitly and/or implicitly pointing fingers to the victim in the context of the viral crimes. Most of the incidents included the recurring theme of victim blaming except for the incidents of the Airport Harasser, Sharqiah Girl, and Shady Khalaf. This theme ranges from blaming the victim(s) for not speaking up, blaming the victim(s) for being aggressive, blaming the victim(s) for misunderstanding, and blaming the victim(s) for using the perpetrator(s), to blaming the victim(s) for ‘loose morals.’

Nayera Ashraf was the only viral incident that had blaming the victim for not speaking up as a recurring theme, where the dean of Mansoura University said that the victim should have spoken up and reported the perpetrator to the university, and they would have intervened.

The Ismailia Bride and Nayera Ashraf had blaming the victim(s) for being aggressive. The Ismailia Bride news articles stated that the wife [victim] raised her voice to the husband’s [perpetrator] sister, and the victim blamed herself for being too moody, because of wedding jitters. Nayera Ashraf’s news articles stated that the victim cursed the perpetrator, threatened him, sent thugs to beat him up, was going to kill him, and that he was just defending himself.

Habiba El-Shama’a and Metro Harasser incidents had blaming the victim(s) for misunderstanding as a recurring theme. Habiba El-Shama’a’s news articles said that the

⁹ Dar al-Ifta refers to one of Egypt’s centers for Islamic legal research; it plays a significant role in giving fatwas on the religious rulings in all matters as well as is consulted by the judiciary to reinforce/refute its ruling e.g., in death sentences.

victim got paranoid and frantic and jumped from the car for no reason, that the perpetrator had no intention of kidnapping her, and that he was just spraying perfume in the car. The Metro Harasser news articles stated that the perpetrator was just adjusting his clothes; he was not touching himself.

The incidents that included blaming the victim(s) for using the perpetrator(s) were; Nayera Ashraf (for using the perpetrator by asking him to help her with her school project, confiding in him, and letting him spend his money on her, then rejecting him), and Shaimaa Gamal (for using the perpetrator by asking him to make the marriage public ‘they were married in secret’, and extorting him for money or she would reveal his incriminating secrets).

The incidents that included blaming the victim(s) for loose morals were; Fairmont Case (the victim was doing drugs; she wasn’t drugged, and engaged in consensual sexual intercourse; she wasn’t raped), Mitghamr Girl (the victim was wearing a ‘sexy outfit’ and was walking the streets at night, and no one saw the assault in the street camera), and Nayera Ashraf (the perpetrator had photos of the victim that would violate her modesty and they never said whether the photos were taken consensually or non-consensually).

In the Port Said Girl incident, the perpetrator was overly jealous, controlling, and suspicious of the victim’s behavior. In the Metro Harasser incident, the victim was the only girl on the subway in a mixed cart. Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi [the perpetrator] invited the victim over to celebrate his birthday, and the sexual intercourse was consensual; they both agreed to engage in sexual activities, and in the Ahmed Bassam Zaki incident:

“The assault ‘hatk ard’ happened under no threat or coercion, the victim went to his house and he was touching her private parts ‘awra’, giving her a chance to have sex with him”

Theme 6: Sympathizing with the Perpetrator

Sympathizing with the perpetrator(s) was used as a theme in the viral news articles, referring to implicitly making the perpetrator(s) seem innocent and/or that he had no choice in committing the crime. Most of the incidents included the recurring theme of sympathizing with the perpetrator except for the incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, the Airport Harasser, Mitghamr Girl, Sharqiah Girl, Shaimaa Gamal, and Shady Khalaf. This theme ranges from diffusing the blame, implying that the crime is uncharacteristic of the perpetrator, showing support for the perpetrator, questioning the mental stability of the perpetrator, to devictimizing the victim.

The incidents that included diffusing the blame as a recurring theme were; Habiba El-Shama'a (blamed the crime on speeding, drug use, and Uber), Ismailia Bride (blamed the crime on the culture of Upper Egypt 'it's an Upper Egyptian thing' and normalized violence against women 'every house has its problems', also blamed the crime on the evil eye, and social media for blowing things out of proportion), and Nayera Ashraf (diffused the blame from the university where both the victim and the perpetrator went).

The incidents that included implying that the crime is uncharacteristic of the perpetrator were; Habiba El-Shama'a (the perpetrator has been working for Uber for years and never had any complaints, he is married and has 3 kids, he is in the grinder, like all youth, working, picking up his kids, and working again), Nayera Ashraf (the perpetrator was smart; he was the top of his class for two years), Port Said Girl (the perpetrator did not intend to kill the victim), and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi.

The incidents that included showing support for the perpetrator were; Fairmont Case (celebrities congratulating the perpetrator for being released from jail and the perpetrator smiling and taking photos and videos saying 'I miss you' to his followers), Nayera Ashraf

(there were people supporting and sympathizing with the perpetrator on social media), and Metro Harasser (few people were supporting the perpetrator on social media and asking the victim to cover for him ‘ostori aleh’).

The incidents that included questioning the mental stability of the perpetrator were; Nayera Ashraf (the perpetrator broke down while giving his statement in court, his mental stability was checked, he was worried and shocked and was looking down and crying after the verdict), Port Said Girl (the perpetrator was in a bad state during the trial, it was obvious from his face and the tone of his voice, so they let him out of the cage, and checked his mental stability), and the Metro Harasser (the perpetrator presented a medical report saying that he is ‘psychologically disturbed’).

The incidents that included devictimizing the victim were; Habiba El-Shama’a (the news articles stated that the victim graduated from the British University in Egypt, an elite private university, they stopped calling her victim, and they stopped including photos of her in the news articles), and Ismailia Bride (the photos of the victim showed her smiling and dancing with her husband [perpetrator] at their wedding, she said she was not coerced into the marriage, and that she loves her husband and is happy).

Theme 7: Supporting/Paying Tribute to the Victim

Supporting/paying tribute to the victim was used as a theme in the viral news articles, referring to showing how family/friends/public supported the victim and/or paid tribute to her. The incidents that included the recurring theme of supporting/paying tribute to the victim were; the Airport Harasser (the victim was shown social media support), the Metro Harasser (the victim was empowered by her father and fiancé to record the perpetrator), Habiba El-Shama’a (*in a sad scene, thousands said goodbye to Habiba*).

In the incident of Shaimaa Gamal, the news articles described going to the victim's final resting place, how the family of the victim felt pain that was twisting their hearts, how the mother of the victim held her photos in front of the morgue and in the trial, and how the family showed up all in black to the trial.

In Nayera Ashraf's news articles, her colleagues laid flowers on her grave and where she was murdered, painted her as an angel, and drew a graffiti of her in a wedding dress. Her family said: *"sleep and rest my daughter your 'right' has come back to you, and your honor was washed in front of the whole world...Now, I can hold my head up high."*

Theme 8: Undermining the gravity of the crime

Undermining the gravity of the crime was used as a theme in the viral news articles, referring to implicitly reducing the crime's gravity by using more generic terms that dilute it. The incidents that included the recurring theme of undermining the gravity of the crime were; Ahmed Bassam Zaki (reduced the crime from sexual harassment to teasing/annoyance), Mitghamr Girl (reduced the crime of assault 'hatk ard' to harassment and catcalling), Metro Harasser (reduced the crime from sexual harassment to public indecency), and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi (reduced the crime from rape to assault).

Theme 9: Mentioning Similar Incidents

Mentioning similar incidents was used as a theme in the viral news articles, referring to identifying similar crimes to the viral incidents. The incidents that included the recurring theme of mentioning similar incidents were; Fairmont Case (mentioned Ahmed Bassam Zaki), Habiba El-Shama'a (mentioned a similar incident of a girl jumping from the car, but her injuries weren't grave), and Nayera Ashraf (mentioned a similar incident in Jordan of a girl shot at her university by her colleague because she refused to marry him).

Theme 10: Blaming the perpetrator

Blaming the perpetrator was used as a theme in the viral news articles, referring to implicitly and/or explicitly pointing fingers at the perpetrator in the context of the viral crimes. The incidents that included the recurring theme of blaming the perpetrator were; Habiba El-Shama'a (the perpetrator was called 'specialized in women' because of his other precedents with women, where he smoked while a pregnant woman was in his car, harassed, cursed, and stole from women), Nayera Ashraf (the perpetrator decided to take revenge for his ego; he was acting as if the victim was his), Sharqiah Girl (the perpetrator's perverted thoughts led him to commit the crime out of revenge, because the victim rejected him), and Ismailia Bride:

"The head of the Women's National Council said: Men don't hit women, you're hitting your wife while she is in her wedding dress in the street in public"

Theme 11: Social Media

Social media were used as a theme in the viral news articles to explain how social media are used to share stories/videos related to/of the crime(s), to show the support the victim(s)/perpetrator(s) are getting on social media, and to blame unethical use of social media. Most of the incidents included the recurring theme of social media except for the incidents of Habiba El-Shama'a, Sharqiah Girl, and Ahmed Yasser El-Mohammadi.

In the incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, Airport Harasser, Fairmont Case, Ismailia Bride, Mitghamr Girl, Nayera Ashraf, Shady Khalaf, and Metro Harasser, stories/videos of the crime(s) and/or perpetrator(s) were shared on social media by the victim(s) or other(s).

In the incidents of the Airport Harasser, Mitghamr Girl, and Nayera Ashraf, people showed support for the victim(s), and in the cases of Nayera Ashraf, the Port Said Girl, and

the Mitghamr Girl, some people showed support for the perpetrator(s) on social media; some even attacked the victims/their families.

In the incidents of Ismailia Bride, Mitghamr Girl, Port Said Girl, Shaimaa Gamal, and Nayera Ashraf, social media were blamed for being used unethically. The Ismailia Bride news articles stated that the couple blamed social media for exaggeration, for blowing things out of proportion, and for being quick to convict the husband [perpetrator]. The Mitghamr Girl news articles discouraged people from threatening the victim on social media and urged them to factcheck before spreading rumors, because this is punishable by law.

The Port Said Girl news articles criticized using social media to incite to violence and to sympathize with criminals. In Shaimaa Gamal's incident, a gag order was issued because of the rumors and lies spread on social media about the bias, lack of transparency, and incompetence of the judiciary in identifying the perpetrator and explaining what happened, because of the nature of his job.

Nayera Ashraf's news articles discouraged spreading lies on social media for clout, since it can negatively affect the investigations, urging people to stick to official releases, denying what's said on social media about the incompetence of the court, and ultimately, issuing a gag order. In the case of Nayera Ashraf, a nurse who leaked a video of the victim's body in the morgue on social media was arrested, and the news articles described the penalty for taking/leaking this video on social media.

Theme 12: Solution/Advice

Solution/advice was used as a theme in the viral news articles, referring to suggesting a solution and/or advice in the context of the viral crimes. The incidents included the recurring theme of solution/advice were; the Fairmont Case, Airport Harasser, Ismailia Bride, Mitghamr Girl, Port Said Girl, and Nayera Ashraf. This theme is divided into refraining from

attacking the victim(s) and defending criminals and taking action against crimes of violence against women.

In the incidents of Mitghamr Girl and Port Said Girl, the news articles called for refraining from attacking the victims and defending criminals. Mitghamr Girl's news articles advised against focusing at what women are wearing as a justification of the crime, and against threatening the victim. The Port Said Girl news articles called the victim(s) our daughters and innocent, adding that they don't deserve to be murdered because of their private decisions, and that there needs to be freedom of speech along with respect for women's rights.

In the incidents of the Airport Harasser and Fairmont Case, Ismailia Bride, and Nayera Ashraf, the news articles called for taking action against crimes of violence against women ranging from women speaking up, helping to restore justice, bettering society's values and ethics, and parents needing to advise their children, to making an example out of the criminals and asking to televise death sentences as a deterrent.

"Women need to stand up for themselves and have a voice without fear" – Airport Harasser

"Maybe this verdict can make na example out of you to deter others from doing this"
– *Nayera Ashraf*

Conclusion of Thematic Analysis of Viral News Articles

After conducting a thematic analysis of the viral news articles, 12 themes emerged which included a graphic description of the crime/the perpetrator(s) by describing injuries and details of the crime, discussing the efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system by criticizing it for acquitting perpetrator(s) or reducing their charges or praising them for their efficiency in the investigation process and expressing trust in the system, raising awareness

of the definitions of terminologies and/or legal penalty for the crimes, victim blaming for not speaking up, for being aggressive, for misunderstanding, for using the perpetrator(s), and for 'loose morals,' sympathizing with the perpetrator(s) by diffusing the blame and making excuses for the perpetrator(s), blaming the perpetrator(s) implicitly or explicitly, supporting/paying tribute to the victim(s) by showing support for the victim and her family, mentioning similar incidents, undermining the gravity of the crime by trivializing it using more generic terms, using religious rhetoric by showing that the victim(s)/perpetrator(s) are religious and praying for the victim(s), as well as calling to adhere to religious teachings, mentioning how social media are used to share stories/videos related to/of the crime and showing support for the perpetrator(s)/victim(s), and suggesting solution(s)/advice such as refraining from attacking the victim and defending criminals as well as taking action against crimes of violence against women.

Thematic Analysis of Non-Viral News Articles

A thematic analysis of 248 non-viral news articles was conducted to identify recurring themes in the data. There were six emerging themes which included a graphic description of the crime/the perpetrator(s), discussing the efficiency of the judicial system, raising awareness, diffusing blame, victim-blaming, and undermining the gravity of the crime.

Theme 1: Graphic Description

The graphic description included in the non-viral news articles refers to using gory and/or sexual description of the crime/perpetrator(s). The most graphic descriptions in non-viral news articles were used in stories related to murder, followed by rape, sexual harassment, beating and extortion. The graphic description ranges from identifying the injuries of the victim(s), and describing how the crime happened, providing sexual details of the crime, to using graphic adjectives to describe the crime and/or perpetrator(s).

Some non-viral articles identified the victims' physical injuries in detail using information from the forensics report, especially prevalent in articles related to murders, followed by beating, and rape. Examples of these descriptions included detailing the length of the head wound from a hammer as being *"8 inches-long,"* describing the injuries as *"severe rupture and abrasions all over the body," "third degree burns in 75% of her body," "rupture in the virginity membrane 'hymen',"* and *"neck wound and the arteries were cut."*

Some non-viral articles described how the crime happened, the perpetrator's actions/threats leading up to the crime, and the state in which the victim was found, especially prevalent in articles related to murder, beating and rape. Examples describing how the crime happened included *"husband assaults wife with a wooden staff and knife," "he used scissors and two knives to stab his wife in the neck," "father and brother beat up and electrocuted the girl until she died from her injuries,"* and *"he tortured his daughter, cut her hair, and locked her up."*

As for articles delineating the actions/threats of the perpetrator leading up to the crime, they included husband telling his wife that *"he will not let her go until she dies,"* and *"he kidnapped and raped a housewife non-consensually using a cutter to threaten her."* Examples of how the victim was found is showing a photo of a woman with a black eye after her husband beat her with a large wooden staff *"shooma," "she was found drowning in her own blood,"* and *"she was buried under the house."*

Some non-viral articles provided sexual details of the crime, especially crimes of sexual harassment and rape including; *"an architect who ejaculated on a girl on the escalator at the mall," "entered the ultrasound room with her and touched sensitive parts of her body," "driver held the girl's hand, caressed her back, and pulled up her dress,"* and *"assaulted his daughter with a whip and tied her up, and forced her to have sex with him."*

Some non-viral articles used graphic adjectives to describe the crime and/or perpetrator(s) such as calling the perpetrators “*human wolves*,” “*he was stripped of all mercy and humanity*,” “*like a monster he assaulted her with a wooden staff*,” “*hideous, gory, tragic crime*,” and “*he was deprived of human emotion*.”

Theme 2: Efficiency of the Judicial System

The efficiency of the judicial system in the non-viral news articles refers to praising the efficiency of the judicial system when it comes to handling the crimes. Non-viral news articles used this theme in stories related to murder, followed by sexual harassment, rape, and beating.

The efficiency of the judicial system theme was reflected in praising the efficiency of the arrest and/or investigation (*they were brilliant in solving the mystery of the crime and identifying the two corpses; the killer got a life sentence*), to expressing trust in the judicial system (*celebrity saying that she feels protected by the Egyptian judiciary*).

Theme 3: Raising Awareness

The raising awareness theme used in the non-viral news articles refers to educating and providing the readers with information in the context of the crimes, especially murder, followed by sexual harassment, rape, beating, and extortion. This theme ranges from raising awareness of legal terminologies (e.g., raising awareness of the definition of harassment and its origin, the definition of murder with intent, the definition of a felony, the definition of extortion), legal penalty for the crimes (e.g., raising awareness of the legal penalty of harassment, the conditions of a woman requesting divorce ‘5ol3’, the penalty of rape, hatkard, murder, and taking the wife’s belongings), to explaining trial scenarios and outcomes (raising awareness of the scenarios of appeal, and of the legal article used to send the case papers to the Mufti).

Theme 4: Victim Blaming

The victim blaming theme used in the non-viral news articles refers to explicitly and/or implicitly pointing fingers to the victim in the context of the crimes, especially murder, followed by rape, sexual harassment, beating, and extortion. This theme included; avoiding calling them victim(s)/perpetrator(s), blaming the victim(s) for provocation, and blaming the victim(s) for ‘loose morals.’

Some non-viral articles blamed the victim by avoiding calling them victim(s) and/or perpetrator(s). Some articles never used the legal terms perpetrator, accused, harasser, killer/murder, rapist, defendant, suspect, victim (magni aleha/daheya), and plaintiff. Some articles used other terms along with the legal terms such as; ‘*young man*,’ ‘*old man*,’ ‘*husband*,’ ‘*father*,’ ‘*dangerous registered criminal*,’ and ‘*teacher/doctor/worker/driver/butcher*’ to describe the perpetrator, and ‘*girl*,’ ‘*daughter*,’ ‘*wife*,’ ‘*med student*,’ ‘*doctor*,’ ‘*woman*,’ and ‘*complainer*’ to describe the victim (magni aleha/daheya).

Some non-viral articles blamed the victim for provocation, meaning that it was implicitly/explicitly suggested that the victim provoked the perpetrator to commit the crime by being aggressive and/or not doing what is ‘expected’ of her. Articles blaming the victim(s) for being aggressive included blaming them for starting the fight first: “*she reprimanded the driver for harassing her, so he slapped her on the face*,” “*the wife stabbed him first, before he stabbed her in the neck out of rage*,” and “*his wife was talking back, so he stabbed her*.” Articles blaming the victim(s) for not doing what is ‘expected’ of her included blaming the wife for not giving her husband his shar’i right (i.e., withholding sex from him), the daughter for refusing to marry a man who was approved by the family, and the wife for asking for an increase in the household allowance, and for not cooking and/or cleaning for him.

Some non-viral articles blamed the victim for ‘loose morals’ including; “*the daughter left home for nine months without an acceptable reason,*” “*the daughter was coming home late and going out a lot,*” “*the daughter was studying abroad, having tattoos, and taking off her hijab,*” “*the girl was not coerced, she took the drugs willingly and engaged in consensual sexual intercourse,*” and “*the husband caught his wife naked in the arms of her lover in their bedroom.*”

Theme 5: Diffusion of Blame

Diffusing blame was used as a theme in non-viral news articles, referring to assigning blame to anything other than the perpetrator(s), implicitly making the perpetrator(s) seem innocent and/or that he had no choice in committing the crime. This theme ranges from abstracting blame, implying that the crime is uncharacteristic of the perpetrator, to questioning the mental stability of the perpetrator.

Some non-viral articles used an abstract blame by blaming the crime on culture (e.g., *his wife told him that he is not a man, so he shot her; husband killing his wife said: any man in my place would have done the same; husband was avenging his honor after finding his wife naked in the arms of her lover in their bedroom*), and/or by blaming the crime on the devil ‘shaitan’ (e.g., *the devil possessed the husband and pushed him to kill his wife; in an hour of the devil*).

Some non-viral articles implied that the crime is uncharacteristic of the perpetrator by describing that it was accidental and unintended (*father caused his daughter’s death, he didn’t intend to kill her, he was just disciplining her; The husband didn’t realize what he’d done until he stabbed his wife and saw the blood*), showing the perpetrator’s benevolence (e.g., *the perpetrator intends to make donations to sexual assault survivors*), and/or implying/describing the perpetrator’s character as docile (*the husband was bringing his wife*

medicine for her epilepsy and she screamed at him for being late; the husband shared a good life with his wife).

Some non-viral articles sympathized with the perpetrator by questioning the mental stability of the perpetrator:

“The father raped his mentally challenged daughter and the mother said that he was always mentally unstable”

“An architect ejaculated on a girl and he said that he has a sexual obsession whenever he sees a pretty girl he has to harass her”

“A doctor harassed a student on the microbus and presented a medical report that he has involuntary ejaculation”

Theme 6: Undermining the gravity of the crime

Undermining the gravity of the crime was used as a theme in the non-viral news articles, referring to implicitly reducing the crime’s gravity by using more generic terms that dilute it. The gravity of the crimes were often undermined by reducing them to weaker alternatives, softening the legal language (e.g., reducing rape to slept with her like husband and wife, corruption of morals, assault, *hatk ard*¹⁰; reducing labeling the perpetrator from killer to reckless husband; reducing sexual harassment to annoying/teasing and indecent behavior; reducing assault to quarrels; reducing attempted murder to battery; and reducing extortion to threat).

¹⁰ The term ‘*hatk ard*’/هتك عرض: refers to touching and/or showing someone's private parts without their consent.

Conclusion of Thematic Analysis of Non-Viral News Articles

After conducting a thematic analysis of the non-viral news articles, there were six emerging themes including, a graphic description of the crime/the perpetrator(s) by describing the details of the crime and injuries, discussing the efficiency of the judicial system by praising their efficiency during the investigation process and expressing trust in the system, raising awareness of legal terminologies and legal penalties as well as different trial scenarios, victim-blaming by avoiding calling them victim(s)/perpetrator(s), blaming them for provocation and ‘loose morals,’ diffusing blame by humanizing perpetrator(s) and making excuses for them, and undermining the gravity of the crime by using generic terms to reduce its gravity.

Cyberfeminism, News Virality, & Sur/Sousveillance Recap

In response to *RQ5*, after conducting a thematic analysis and extracting the themes from the viral and non-viral news articles, it was found that cyberfeminism shapes the viral news articles, compared to non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance.

In viral news articles, the findings identified seven themes that reflected surveillance including, the graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) by providing details of the crime, praising the efficiency of the investigation process and expressing trust in the system, religious rhetoric by portraying the victim/perpetrator as religious, blaming the victim for not speaking up, for being aggressive, for using the perpetrator, for ‘loose morals,’ sympathy for the perpetrator(s) by diffusing the blame and making excuses for them, undermining the gravity of the crime by using more generic terms to describe the crime(s), and blaming the unethical use of social media for exaggeration and spreading lies.

In non-viral news articles, the findings illustrated six emerging themes that reflected surveillance including, the graphic description of crime/perpetrator(s) by providing details of the crime, praising the efficiency of the investigation process and expressing trust in the system, raising awareness of legal terminologies and legal penalty for the crimes, victim-blaming by avoiding to call them victim(s)/perpetrator(s) as well as blaming victim(s) for provocation and ‘loose morals,’ diffusion of blame by making excuses for the perpetrator(s), and undermining the gravity of the crime by using more generic terms to describe the crime(s).

Additionally, nine themes emerged from the viral news articles that reflected sousveillance, some of which overlap with surveillance, including, providing a graphic description of the crime, criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system for acquitting the perpetrator(s) and/or reducing their sentence, using religious rhetoric to condemn the perpetrator and pray for the victim, raising awareness to legal terminologies and crime penalties, supporting/paying tribute to the victim(s) by memorializing them and showing solidarity, mentioning similar incidents, blaming the perpetrator(s) implicitly and/or explicitly, using social media to share stories of the crime and express support for the victims, and suggesting solution/advice such as refraining from attacking the victims and defending criminals as well as calling for/taking action against gendered crimes.

Discussion

The study at hand explores how trigger attributes (i.e., crime-related elements) are associated with news virality, how news virality (viral/non-viral news articles) is associated with framing (structural elements, tone, message features, and problem-solution frames), and how the medium (news articles/X posts) is associated with framing. It also looks at how the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) are manifested in the X

posts in the hashtags of the viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt. Finally, it examines how cyberfeminism shapes both viral and non-viral news articles in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance.

After conducting a quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis of 256 viral news articles, 248 non-viral news articles, and 233 X posts, the author employed statistical tests for the quantitative content analysis data to respond to *RQ1*, *RQ2* and *RQ3*, and extracted the main themes as well as sub-themes for the thematic analysis data to respond to *RQ4* and *RQ5*.

This section is divided according to the five research questions into trigger attributes and news virality, news virality and framing, the medium and framing, cyberfeminism goals, and cyberfeminism, news virality, & sur/sousveillance, with concluding remarks for each research question and a synthesis for the entire discussion connecting the five research questions.

Trigger Attributes & News Virality

RQ1: How trigger attributes are associated with the news virality (viral/non-viral news articles) of incidents of violence against women in Egypt

The trigger attributes refer to the crime-related elements in the article and how they are associated with news virality. The trigger attributes include the types of violence against women crime, criminal motive, crime consequence, the victim-perpetrator relationship, number of victim(s)/perpetrator(s) and their socio-economic status, the crime location, the governorate of the crime, whether the crime occurred in public or private, and the crime witnesses.

Type of Murder:

The study at hand found that murder, sexual assault, *hatk ard*¹¹, sextortion, improper/non-consensual photography, and cyberflashing were more frequent in viral vs non-viral news articles. On the other hand, rape and beating were more frequently covered in non-viral rather than viral news articles. Studies found that femicide ranks the top crime covered in Egyptian news media, followed by rape, sexual harassment, physical violence, emotional violence, and non-consensual sexting (El-Sherbiny, Youssef, & Essam, 2023).

This is in line with the study's findings that show that the top crimes in both viral and non-viral news are physical namely, murder, rape, sexual assault, and *hatk ard*. One reason why rape is more common in non-viral news than viral news could be that in viral news, the term 'rape' was often reduced to 'sexual assault' and/or '*hatk ard*'. Another reason could be that rape and sexual assault tend to be under-reported, therefore, are less visible (Gravelin, Biernat, & Kerl, 2024). On the other hand, improper photography, cyberflashing, and sextortion were less common in non-viral news, indicating that non-viral news are more interested in covering 'physical crimes' than 'emotional crimes.'

Criminal Motives:

Criminal motives were unknown/not mentioned in viral news, followed by love rejection, drug use, and women threatening/reprimanding men, while in non-viral news, the motive was mostly quarrels, followed by women's 'loose behavior', and culture of guardianship/discipline. Grabe, Trager, Lear & Rauch (2006) divided criminal motivations into individual and societal level motivations, where in individual motivations such as, revenge, drug abuse, and mental instability, the blame is individualized, while in societal

¹¹ The term '*hatk ard*'/هتك عرض: refers to touching and/or showing someone's private parts without their consent.

level motivations, such as poverty and racism, the blame is assigned to society and its institutions.

In the study at hand, crime motives were either unknown/not mentioned, which could be explained in the case of viral news by the fact that the motive was not identified in each article, or love rejection, drug use, women threatening/reprimanding men, and/or women's 'loose behavior,' which are individual-level motivations. On the other hand, in non-viral news, the motives also include individual-level motives (e.g., quarrels, often without specifying the reason/type of quarrel), and societal-level motive namely, culture of guardianship/discipline. This could be explained by blame being predominantly attributed to individuals, especially in viral news which are widespread, while non-viral news articles are more likely to cover crimes that are societal, since they don't receive as much visibility. Previous literature suggested that individual blame attribution emphasizes a clear 'target' to appease society, thereby avoiding systemic responsibility and/or reinforcing the system's efficiency in solving the problem by catching the 'perpetrator(s)' (De Ruiter & Kuipers, 2022; Hansson, 2015; Catino, 2008).

Crime Consequences:

Crime consequences in viral news were more likely to be about being charged, on trial, and/or death penalty, while non-viral news tend to be about the perpetrator(s) being convicted and/or killed. 'Structural harshness', manifested in the crime penalty and prosecution, has been associated with news virality, where the sentences tend to be harsher with news coverage and high profile cases (Ouss & Philippe, 2016; Grabe, Trager, Lear & Rauch, 2006). In addition, Slakoff & Fradella,(2019) added that the authorities tend to make more effort to solve cases that receive prominent news coverage. Since viral incidents receive

more coverage, there tends to be follow-up stories with updates of the most recent details to reinforce the efficiency of the judicial system.

Victim-Perpetrator Relationship:

The perpetrators in viral news were more likely to be admirers or colleagues of the victim, while in non-viral news, they were more likely to be the victims' husband, father/stepfather, or acquaintance. Unless extreme, crimes involving more familiarity between the victim and the perpetrator have been linked to less news coverage (Wong & Lee, 2021; Slakoff & Fradella, 2019). This could explain that crimes involving husbands, fathers/stepfathers, and/or acquaintances were less likely to be viral, which normalizes violence inflicted by intimate partners and/or family in non-viral incidents, while emphasizing 'stranger danger' in viral news articles and ensuring social control (Iskander, 2024).

Number of Victims & Perpetrators:

Viral incidents had more victims and perpetrators than non-viral incidents in the news articles. Studies show that the higher the victims are in numbers and injuries, the more news coverage they receive (Fox, Gerdes, Duwe, & Rocque, 2021; Silva & Capellan, 2018; Buckler & Travis, 2005). Little evidence exists of the relationship between the number of perpetrators and virality in the literature, but the author argues that similar to the number of victims, the higher the number of perpetrators, the more coverage the incident gets.

Victim(s)/Perpetrator(s) Socio-Economic Status (SES):

Victims in viral news had higher SES than non-viral news. The SES of the perpetrator was also found to be significantly connected to news virality, where perpetrators' SES in viral news was mentioned less than in non-viral news, and when it was mentioned, perpetrators had higher SES in viral than in non-viral news. Studies have linked 'class' to

virality, where victims from privileged middle/upper class receive more news coverage (Slakoff & Fradella, 2019; Bjornstrom, Kaufman, Peterson, & Slater, 2010). Greer (2017) added that the notion of ‘middle-class respectability’, as opposed to coming from a working class status, does contribute to making a story ‘newsworthier.’

Governorate/City of the Crime:

The governorate where the crimes occurred was found to be connected to news virality, where the top governorate in the viral news was Dakahliya, which is mostly a rural city, while Cairo, the capital city, was reported as the top governorate in non-viral incidents. Some studies have found that news tends to give more attention to crimes happening in urban cities than rural cities, while other studies recognized that crimes in rural areas are sensationalized more, because of their ‘unusualness’ in the peaceful environment of a smaller/rural city against the ‘routine’ violence in urban/bigger cities (Ukka, Islam, Marmo, 2019; Baranauskas & Drakulich, 2018; Marsh & Melville, 2010). In addition, these findings could indicate that crimes happening in rural areas go viral because of proximity; they would be perceived to be happening far away from the capital.

Location of the Crime:

In viral news articles, the perpetrator’s property, and school/college were the top locations. In non-viral news, the crime location was either unknown or the perpetrator’s property. The location of the crime could be divided into locations that would yield institutional blame (e.g., crimes that occur in public at schools/colleges, streets, etc.) and locations that would yield individual blame (crimes that occur in private properties) (Greer, 2017). While incidents in viral news articles were more likely to be public, they focus on individual blame, which could indicate an attempt at avoiding institutional blame.

Public/Private Crime:

Viral incidents were found to be more public than non-viral incidents. This evidence is backed by the literature where even though crimes that occur in private (e.g., perpetrator's/victim's property) could be heavily covered in the news depending on the framing of the crime (e.g., home invasion and/or gruesome and unusual crime), they tend to be less visible than public crimes that are more likely to be recorded, shared online, and go viral (Bryon, Molidor, & Cantu, 2018; Greer, 2017; Meindl & Ivy, 2017; Towers, Gomez-Lievano, Khan, Mubayi, & Castillo-Chavez, 2015).

Crime Witnesses:

Viral incidents were more likely to include witnesses than non-viral incidents. Studies show that having witnesses to a crime, specifically with regards to the witnesses taking photos of the incident, predicts higher audience engagement with the story, making the audience feel like they witnessed the crime too, becoming 'mediated witnesses' (Kim, Huh, Rath, Salecha & Srivastava, 2021; Ahva & Hellman, 2015; Krieken, Hoeken & Sanders, 2015). These studies reinforced the notion that having witnesses to the crime increases its visibility, and thereby, its potential shareability and virality.

Concluding Remarks on Trigger Attributes & News Virality

The study's findings as well as reviewing the existing literature have highlighted the association between trigger attributes and news virality, where viral incidents were found to be associated with physical (murder, sexual assault) as well as technologically-facilitated (e.g., cyberflashing, improper/non-consensual photography) violence, that is individually-motivated (e.g., love rejection, drug use, loose behavior), inflicted by less familiar perpetrators, with more victims and/or perpetrators, coming from middle to upper class, happening in more rural areas; violence that is public (e.g., school/college), with witnesses,

and its updates are covered (e.g., arrest, trial, death penalties) to emphasize the efficiency of the judicial system.

On the other hand, non-viral incidents were also found to be physical (rape and beating), with societal-level motives (e.g., culture of guardianship/discipline), inflicted by more familiar perpetrators (e.g., husband, father/stepfather), with both victim(s) and perpetrator(s) having a lower SES; violence tends to happen in urban cities, in private, with less/no witnesses.

These findings indicate that viral news of violence against women tend to be driven by trigger attributes that could be related back to newsworthiness factors such as shock, severity, unusualness, elite, visibility, and proximity, along with individualized blame, less familiar perpetrator(s), and emphasized system efficiency, indicating systemic blame avoidance, while reinforcing hegemony by amplifying severe, public crimes perpetrated by less familiar offenders in the presence of witnesses, despite the notion of middle-class respectability, adding to the elements of shock and unusualness.

In contrast, non-viral incidents of violence against women were more domestic and private, with less need to cover stages of arrest, investigation, and trial, where victims and perpetrators have lower SES, indicating routinized everyday violence by intimate partners and family members, happening behind closed doors, in lower-class urban areas, rendering crimes driven by the culture of guardianship and discipline underrepresented and domestic violence among lower-classes normalized.

News Virality & Framing

RQ2: How the news virality (*viral/non-viral news articles*) of incidents of violence against women in Egypt is associated with the framing components; *a)* structural elements, *b)* tone, *c)* message features, and *d)* problem-solution frames

a) Structural Elements

Structural elements refer to the article-related elements and how they are associated with news virality. Structural elements include article's length, gender of the journalist, mention of victim's name and number of times mentioned, mention of perpetrator's name and number of times mentioned, use of photos/links/videos, number of sources, gender of sources, types of sources, main focus of the article, sensational label, mention of previous incidents, and graphic description/image/video.

Article's Length:

The results show that the length of the article (i.e., word count) is associated with news virality, where viral news tend to be longer than non-viral news. Studies found that the longer an article, the longer shelf-life it had (Trilling, Dubèl, Kiddle, Kroon, Lin, Simon, Vermeer, Welbers, & Boukes, 2024). Viral incidents get more attention; people are interested to read more details, which explains the longer shelf-life, and the longer articles.

Gender of the Journalist:

Viral news were more likely to have females involved in writing the news articles (both female and male journalists were involved in writing the article or females only) than non-viral news. The journalists' gender often affects the beats that they are assigned to, where women are associated with empathy and are more likely to be assigned to 'pink topics' and fluffy pieces, as opposed to men being assigned to hard news (Paul, Sui & Searles, 2021). This could indicate why women journalists are more likely to be included in viral gender-based violence incidents that are more public and require more 'sensitive/empathetic reporting'. It could also indicate the news organization's desire to emphasize its women journalists' role in reporting on gender issues, especially since the viral incidents are more visible. The percentage of women journalists is relatively increasing worldwide, but that

doesn't always translate into a more gender-balanced coverage. Some studies even found that women journalists use the same gendered narratives as their male colleagues in their reporting (Rodgers & Thorson, 2003).

Mention of Victim's Name and Number of Times Mentioned:

Viral news mostly mentioned the full names of the victims or mentioned their first name and last name's initial, while non-viral news mostly never mentioned the victims' names, or mentioned their initials only. Viral news were found to mention the victims' names more frequently than non-viral news.

These findings are in line with the literature, showing the effect of an 'identifiable victim', where the victims' names are identified and repeated, on generating empathy, support, as well as sustaining collective public attention to the incident (Wu, Gallagher, Alshaabi, Adams, Minot, Arnold, Welles, Harp, Dodds, & Danforth, 2023; Socia, 2022).

Mention of Perpetrator's Name and Number of Times Mentioned:

Viral news mostly mentioned the full names of the perpetrators or never mentioned their name, while non-viral news mostly either never mentioned the perpetrators' names, or mentioned their initials only. In comparison to mentioning the victim's name, the perpetrator's name is mentioned less in viral news. As for the number of times the perpetrator's name is mentioned, viral news were found to mention the perpetrators' names more than non-viral news.

Studies examining naming perpetrators in news stories look at the ethical considerations behind naming perpetrators before getting charged to gain publicity, emphasizing people's right to know vs reputational damage, but do reinforce that naming perpetrators in news stories often yields more publicity (Lillebuen, Lidberg, & Chubb, 2016; Zhong, Mihailidis, & Zhou, 2011).

Use of Photos/Links:

The use of the same links in more than one article was found to be associated with news virality, where viral news were more likely to use the same links in multiple news articles than non-viral news. Studies have found that adding links at the end of the news articles generate more viewership, as well as including images rather than using text-only (Roos, Mela, Shachar, 2020; Collier & Stroud, 2018).

Use of Videos:

The use of videos was associated with news virality, where viral news were found to use videos more than non-viral news, and viral news were more likely to use the same videos in multiple articles than non-viral news. Studies found that short videos tend to sustain audience attention and generate more engagement than text-only formats, because it is perceived to be evidential of what exactly happened, to the extent that it has sometimes become an expectation (Pastrana, Vallejo-Trujillo, & Osorio-Andrade, 2025; Birze, Regeher, & Regehr, 2022).

Number of Sources:

The number of sources used was associated with news virality, where viral news were found to use more sources than non-viral news. Studies have found that the use of multiple sources yields more engagement and influences sharing decisions, since it reflects good quality journalism and perceived impartiality (Ju & Lee, 2025).

Gender of Sources:

The gender of the sources used was significantly associated with news virality, where viral news were found to use more male sources than female sources compared to non-viral news. Some studies indicating that the longer the article, the more likely it would be to cite a

woman as a source (Mitchelstein, Andelsman, Boczkowski, 2019; Nieimi & Pitkänen, 2017; Kroon Lundell & Eriksson, 2010; Pew Research Center, 2005). However, the current finding is in line with the literature where a gender gap was found in news coverage, and women were less frequently used as sources in news stories, reflecting how journalism tend to be dominated by men (Vogler & Schwaiger, 2021; Ibrahim, 2018).

Type of Sources:

Viral news articles were found to more likely use the perpetrator's lawyer, a witness, and/or an expert as a source, whereas non-viral news articles were more likely to use the victim as a source. Studies found that 'law and order' sources such as officials, business and political leaders, police, elites and experts were most commonly used in crime news; they are even called the "top of the pyramid of access" in news media, followed by older members of the public, then the victims themselves (Tiffen, Jones, Rowe, Aalberg, 2014; Prodnik & Vobič, 2023; Albæk, 2011; Cushion, Moore, & Jewell, 2011).

Studies found that source diversity could induce more audience engagement since different communities would more likely feel heard and represented (Badr, 2021a; Paul, Sui, & Searles, 2021; Joris, De Grove, Van Damme, & De Marez, 2020; Loecherback, Moeller, Trilling, van Atteveldt, 2020). Therefore, this finding indicates that viral news articles are more likely to use the more commonly used 'law and order' and expert sources, thereby, diversifying their sources to enhance audience engagement, and attempting to adhere to journalistic professionalism since the viral incidents are more visible.

Main Focus of Article:

Viral news articles were found to mainly focus on collecting witness opinions, execution of the court decision, religious discourse, and tribute to the victim, while non-viral news articles were found to mainly focus on what happened and the court decision. This

could be explained by the fact that viral news mostly included follow-up news stories of the same incidents, unlike non-viral news which were often breaking news of random incidents, which could suggest that they are more likely to include court decisions and explanation of what happened. In addition, viral news articles engaging in sensitive empathetic reporting are more likely to include tribute to the victims and rely on religious discourse.

Sensational Label:

Sensational labels were found to be associated with news virality, where viral news are more likely to use sensational label than non-viral news. This could be explained by the higher likelihood of media monikers (e.g., Mansoura Girl, Ismailia Bride, etc.) to emerge for viral stories because they tend to have follow-up articles as well as hashtags. These monikers are used to play on the memorability, attention and engagement warranted to the story (Peng & Bainbridge, 2025; Bartley, 2024).

Mention of Previous Incidents:

Mentioning previous incidents was found to be associated with news virality, where viral news were more likely to mention previous incidents than non-viral news. This could be explained by viral news being more identifiable than non-viral news (using the sensational label), and could also suggest that viral news are feeding the collective memory of the public, and aiming to increase readability/shareability of previous similar incidents (Powell, Overington & Hamilton, 2017).

Graphic Description/Image/Video:

Graphic description/image/video was associated with news virality, where non-viral news were more likely to include graphic description/image/video. Al Jenaibi (2010) found that there is a discrepancy between Western and non-Western media in showing violence during times of war, where the former is more reluctant to show graphic depictions than the latter.

Some scholars argue that graphic description/images/videos are associated with sensationalism and clickbaiting leading to normalizing violence, while others find that they depict reality and amplify crucial issues (Ibarra, Hermans, & Kleemans, 2025; Henn-Latus & Posegga, 2023). This could suggest that in high profile cases ‘viral incidents’ that involve audience engagement and officials are put under a microscope, there is a tendency for more sensitivity in the coverage, strictly adhering to journalistic guidelines.

b) Tone

The tone of the news articles was found to be more personal in viral news than in non-viral news, and more likely to use a combination of both personal and impersonal tones within the article than non-viral news. Studies show that using a personal tone (i.e., first-person as opposed to third-person tone) increases audience identification with the story, perceived trustworthiness and persuasion, despite being perceived to be ‘less objective’ (Brennan, 2024; Chen & Bell, 2021; Ruzi, Lee, & Smith, 2021).

c) Message Features

Non-viral news articles were more likely to be information-focused than viral news articles, and viral news were also found to more likely be either emotion-focused or both information-focused and emotion-focused than non-viral news. Studies found that emotional messages tend to yield more sharing, making them more likely to go viral, while information-focused messages tend to be assessed according to their utility especially when it comes to health messages (Mukherjee, Dutta, & De Bruyn, 2022; Akpınar & Berger, 2017; Kim, 2015; Berger & Milkman, 2014).

d) Problem-Solution Frames

Viral news were found to more likely either use a combination of diagnostic and prognostic frames within the article or no diagnostic/prognostic frames at all than non-viral

news, which were found to more likely use either diagnostic only or prognostic only frames. Studies have found using third-person pronouns to be associated with diagnostic frames, while first-person pronouns are associated with prognostic frames, and that journalists are typically discouraged from using prognostic frames (Mendelsohn, Vijan, Card, & Budak, 2024). Therefore, the finding can be explained by journalists abiding by journalistic guidelines in viral news articles, when it comes to either balancing both diagnostic and prognostic frames, as opposed to solely using prognostic frames, or not using diagnostic nor prognostic frames at all.

Concluding Remarks on News Virality & Framing

The study's findings as well as reviewing the existing literature revealed that news virality is associated with framing, where viral news articles were found to be longer, containing more photos/images/links, were more likely to be co-/written by female journalists, included more male and diverse sources (e.g., perpetrators' lawyers, witnesses and experts) who are perceived to be legitimate and credible, mentioned the full names of the victims/perpetrators more, focused on execution of court decisions, collecting witnesses opinions, religious discourse, and tributes to victims, used more sensational labels, were more likely to mention previous incidents, used less graphic description/images/videos, were more personal, emotion-focused (emotion-focused only or both emotion- and information-focused), used either both diagnostic and prognostic frames, or didn't use any diagnostic and/or prognostic frames.

On the other hand, non-viral news articles were shorter, contained less photos/links/videos, were more likely to be written by male journalists, included less sources than viral news articles, the sources were more likely the victims, were less likely to mention the names of the perpetrators/victims, focused on what happened, and court decisions, used

less sensational labels, mentioned previous incidents less, included more graphic description/images/videos, were more impersonal, information-focused, used either diagnostic frames only or prognostic frames only.

These findings indicate that viral news articles are focused on audience recall, engagement, and news shareability, in terms of structure, by being longer and incorporating more photos/links/videos, by adhering to professional journalism when it comes to source diversity, using less graphic description/image/video to avoid sensationalism, and having news articles co-written by female journalists to increase perceived balance and for empathetic framing, by engaging in 'sensitive' framing in terms of mentioning the victims' names which makes them identifiable and generates more empathy, and mentioning perpetrators' names to hold them accountable, by focusing on execution of court decisions, collecting witnesses opinions, religious discourse, and tributes to the victims, by building the collective and connective memory in terms of referencing previous incidents and using sensational labels to tag the viral incidents.

In terms of tone and message features, viral news articles were more personal (personal only or both personal and impersonal), which enhances identification, and emotion-focused (emotion-focused only or both emotion- and information-focused), which along with the structural elements, generate more emotional resonance and audience engagement. Therefore, using a combination of emotion-focused and information-focused framing, or personal and impersonal framing increases credibility, identification and engagement by blending factual/objective and emotional/personal reporting. In terms of problem-solution framing, viral news articles were adhering to professional journalism in terms of balance by either incorporating both diagnostic and prognostic frames or none.

In contrast, non-viral news articles, as previously mentioned, were more inclined to cover ‘routinized everyday’ violence and were not interested in news shareability, which is reflected in the framing at the structural, tonal, message features, and problem-solution-levels. They were less inclined to be ‘sensitive/empathetic’ in their reporting; they included more graphic description/images/videos, since they were not under public scrutiny, the way viral incidents were. Non-viral news articles were also more likely written by male journalists, which indicates that women journalists were more involved in viral incidents because of these incidents’ visibility, as well as women journalists’ perceived empathetic reporting.

Not being under the public eye also meant that there was less need to use diverse sources, to incorporate multimedia to generate engagement, and/or to reference previous incidents. Non-viral incidents were more factual and impersonal in tone, focusing mainly on what happened and court decisions, and retracting the names of the victims/perpetrators which ensures privacy for the victims/perpetrators, but takes away from accountability, victim-identifiability, and sustained public interest. Using either diagnostic only or prognostic only frames meant that non-viral news articles were either highlighting the cause of the crime without suggesting solutions, or suggesting solutions without pinpointing systemic/individual causes, which in turn limits identification and mobilizability.

One interesting finding was that non-viral news articles were more likely to use the victims as sources. While witnesses, experts and perpetrators’ lawyers offer more credibility and context, being the “top of the pyramid of access” in news media, it implies that viral news articles are less likely to give voices to the victims themselves than non-viral news articles, where victims’ voices are coupled with routinized/normalized violence framing.

Medium & Framing

Name of Incident in News Articles and X Posts:

In the viral news articles, the incidents that were covered the most were: *Nayera Ashraf* (murdered by colleague), *Shaimaa Gamal* (murdered by husband), *Habiba El-Shama'a* (attempted kidnapping by uber driver), *Ahmed Bassam Zaki* (sexual harassment and rape), and *Salma Bahgat/Sharqiah Girl* (murdered by colleague). In the hashtags on X, the incidents that were covered the most were: *Ahmed Bassam Zaki* (sexual harassment and rape), *Airport Harasser* (non-consensual photography), *Metro Harasser* (sexual harassment), the *Fairmont Case* (gang rape), and *Mitghamr Girl* (sexual harassment and assault).

The incidents that were covered the most in viral news articles were predominantly murder cases (i.e., *Nayera Ashraf*, *Shaimaa Gamal*, *Salma Bahgat*), in addition that most of them involved major institutions (i.e., Mansoura University, the American University in Cairo, Uber, Judiciary), elites/celebrities (i.e., *Shaimaa Gamal*), and a similar viral incident (i.e., *Salma Bahgat*, who was stabbed by her colleague a little over a month from *Nayera Ashraf*, both were killed because of love rejection).

On the other hand, the incidents that were covered the most in X posts were predominantly rape, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and/or non-consensual photography cases. They involved victims who were alive and shared their personal stories on social media.

This is in line with the previous literature about newsworthiness and shareworthiness, which found that there can be inconsistencies between incidents that get news media attention and those that get social media attention (Al-Rawi, 2017; Al-Rawi, Al-Musalli, & Fakida, 2021; Dos Santos, Lycarião, & De Aquino, 2019; Kim & Ihm, 2020).

RQ3: How the medium (X posts/news articles) of viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt is associated with the framing components of these incidents; a) structural elements, b) tone, c) message features, and d) problem-solution frames

a) Medium & Structural Elements

Main Focus of Article/X Post:

Viral news articles focused on *arrest/questioning/trial* and *investigation and collection of evidence* more than X posts, whereas, X posts focused on *reflecting on societal issues* more than viral news articles. The literature suggests that some news articles tend to focus on an incident's legal proceedings and technicalities, instead of focusing on the broader issue (Noetzel, Mussalem Gentile, Lowery, Zemanova, Lecheler, & Peter, 2022; McDonald & Charlesworth, 2013). These results could also be explained by the limited word count in X, and that social media are used to discuss and reflect on societal issues, as opposed to merely provide updates on each incident, whereas, the news media's priority is to inform .

Use of Photos, Videos & Links:

Viral news articles included more photos, videos, and links than X posts. In the viral news articles, the same photos and links were more likely to be used multiple times, while none of the videos were used before. The literature found that using multimedia in journalism makes the stories more resonate, narrative, interactive as well as transparent, adding that the use of multimedia varies by platform (Peng & Bainbridge, 2025; Rafeeq, 2025; Zhang, Tan, Yin, & Shi, 2021; Jiang & Rafeeq, 2017). These findings could also be explained by the observation that the news articles always included photos, even random photos of a courthouse, prosecutor, etc. not necessarily tied to the incident, while photos in X posts were usually related to the incident. News articles always used links to connect readers to

background news about the incident, similar incidents, etc. while this is not needed in X posts.

Mention of Victim's Name and Number of Times Mentioned:

Viral news articles mention the victim's name more than X posts. As for the number of times a victim's name was mentioned in a viral news article, it was mentioned more than X posts, and X posts were more likely not to mention it at all. These findings could be explained by the affordances of each medium. The incident is identified in case of the X posts by the hashtag which typically identifies the incident, so with the limited word count on X, there is less need to identify the name of the victim.

Mention of Perpetrator's Name and Number of Times Mentioned:

Viral news articles mention the perpetrator's name more than X posts. As for the number of times a perpetrator's name was mentioned, viral news articles mentioned it more than X posts, and X posts were more likely not to mention it at all. Similar to the victim's names, these findings could be explained by the affordances of each medium. The incident is identified in case of the X posts by the hashtag, so with the limited word count on X, there is less need to identify the name of the perpetrator.

Sensational Label:

The X posts used a sensational label more than viral news articles. This could be explained by the creation of these monikers for viral incidents because they tend to have follow-up articles as well as hashtags. These monikers are used to play on the memorability, attention and engagement warranted to the story (Peng & Bainbridge, 2025; Bartley, 2024). They are more likely to be used as the hashtags' names than in news articles' headlines and ledes.

Mention of Previous Incidents:

The X posts mentioned previous incidents more than viral news articles. This can be explained by the X posts' likelihood to include multiple hashtags – for the same incident or similar incidents – to gain more visibility and engagement, to build connective memory also called hashtag commemoration (Adriaansen & Smith, 2025; Powell, Overington, & Hamilton, 2017). The news articles, on the other hand, usually tend to link their stories to background news of that same incident.

Graphic Description/Image/Video:

Viral news articles used graphic description/image/video more than X posts. This could be explained by X posts predominantly reflecting on societal issues, as per this study's findings, as opposed to graphically describing/showing what happened. It could also be indicative of content moderation on social media and/or self-censorship as a preemptive measure to avoid violating the platform's policies, and/or sensitivity towards the victims.

b) Medium & Tone

In viral news articles, the articles are more impersonal than X posts, and more likely to be both personal and impersonal. Previous literature support this finding, where detachment in journalism is a prerequisite for authority, professionalism, and credibility, while social media are more personal and provide gossip-like platforms making them resonate more than stories in news media (Bourne, Boland, Arnold, & Coane, 2020; Lee, 2015).

c) Medium & Message Features

In the viral news articles, the articles were more information-focused than X posts, and more likely to be both information- and emotion-focused. Previous literature found that social

media usually focus less on factual issues than news media, aiming to make people more identifiable and emotionalized (Spatzenegger, 2020; Klinger & Russman, 2017).

d) Medium & Problem-Solution Frames

Viral news articles were more likely to use diagnostic frames only or no diagnostic nor prognostic frames at all, whereas X posts were more likely to use prognostic frames only or both diagnostic and prognostic frames. Previous literature found that social media tend to use more prognostic framing, since these platforms are perceived to be spaces for discourse which is needed to create conversations around solutions and tactics (Mendelsohn et al., 2024). As per the current study's findings, social media were found to be more personal and emotion-focused than news media, which makes social media more likely to use prognostic frames than news media.

Concluding Remarks on Medium & Framing

The study's findings as well as reviewing the existing literature revealed that the medium is associated with framing where news articles focused on the legal processes and investigations, were more likely to incorporate multimedia (photos/links/videos), mention the names of the victims/perpetrators more, use more graphic description/image/video, while referring to previous incidents and using sensational labels less. News articles were also more likely to be impersonal or both personal and impersonal. They were more likely to be information-focused or both information- and emotion-focused; they were also more likely to only use diagnostic frames, or to use both diagnostic and prognostic frames.

On the other hand, X posts focused more on reflecting on societal issues, used less photos/videos/links, mentioned the names of the victims/perpetrators less, included less graphic description/image/video, while they were more likely to use sensational labels and

refer to previous incidents. X posts were more likely to be personal, emotion-focused, and more likely to use prognostic frames or both diagnostic and prognostic frames.

These findings indicate how each medium's affordances shape the stories' framing on a structural, tonal, message features, and problem-solution level, where news articles, especially on a news website as opposed to a newspaper, possess the affordance of free word count, unlike X posts that are restricted by character count. Conversely, X posts offer a participatory platform for immediate unrestricted discourse, unlike news articles that must abide by journalistic norms.

Moreover, viral news articles were found to adhere to the journalistic norms, by focusing on factual reporting of legal and investigative proceedings. News articles used frames that would 'subtly' generate emotional resonance, by identifying the victims'/perpetrators' names, making victims identifiable, and the perpetrators held accountable. News articles were more likely to include multimedia (photos/videos/links) which included generic photos and links to background information about an incident.

They employed a more detached framing in comparison to X posts, including graphic description/image/video, which based on the findings of the study could be associated to adopting an impersonal tone. Viral news articles focused on highlighting the causes of the crimes without suggesting solutions, by using diagnostic frames, or not using any frames at all. News articles were predominantly framing viral incidents through balancing factual 'objective' reporting with identifiability to generate credibility, empathy and emotional resonance, all while abiding by journalistic norms.

In contrast, X posts are bound by character count, which meant that they were more likely to be emotionally intense and focus on reflections on societal issues rather than fact-based reporting. X posts adopted a more personal tone, were more likely to suggest solutions

and encourage connective action rather than merely discussing the causes and assigning responsibility for those incidents. X posts did not need to identify victims/perpetrators because hashtags tend to do that. They were less graphic in terms of description/photos/videos which could indicate self-censorship to avoid being banned by content moderators. X posts were building connective and collective memory by referring to previous incidents and using sensational labels to generate emotional resonance.

Comparing the viral incidents that were covered more in news articles vs. X posts revealed that news articles covered severe physical ‘fatal’ crimes (i.e., murder) and crimes involving major institutions and elites, which could explain why systemic solutions were overlooked to avoid to assign blame to institutions. In contrast, X posts focused on sexual ‘non fatal’ crimes (i.e., rape, sexual harassment), involving victims who are alive and shared their experiences on social media.

In conclusion, the study found that news articles were more focused on documenting viral incidents of violence against women and making victims identifiable to generate sustained attention, while avoiding institutional blame and overlooking systemic solutions. Conversely, X posts were more focused on participatory discourse, foregrounding the victims’ voices and lived experiences, prioritizing suggesting solutions, collective and connective memory, and mobilization over documenting causes and factual reporting.

Cyberfeminism Goals

RQ4: The goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, and mobilization) are manifested in the X posts when it comes to the viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt

A thematic analysis was conducted on 233 X posts for the hashtags of the 13 viral incidents. There were nine emerging themes that the author assessed where they fell under

the goals of cyberfeminism identified in the literature, which are namely, documentation, education, and mobilization (Lee, 2025; Tazi & Oumlil, 2020; Khamis, 2013). Some of the themes overlapped; they were found fitting for more than one goal of cyberfeminism.

Documentation: *From Mediated Witnesses to Connective Memory*

Documentation refers to being a witness or rather a ‘mediated witness’ by sharing evidence online (Kim, Huh, Rath, Salecha & Srivastava, 2021; Ahva & Hellman, 2015; Krieken, Hoeken & Sanders, 2015). Documentation as a goal of cyberfeminism differs from documentation as a goal in news media, which are predominantly state-controlled/-monitored in Egypt (Badr, 2021a). As an act of cyberfeminism, documentation is a means for women to claim their experiences and stories, instead of government-imposed/led top-down feminism, which speaks for women instead of offering women a platform to speak for themselves (Lee, 2025; Tazi & Oumlil, 2020; Khamis, 2013).

Documentation as a goal of cyberfeminism encompassed several themes: graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s), the efficiency of the judicial system, the mentioning of previous incidents, and social media.

The graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) theme involved providing details of the crime including the weapon(s) used, and how the crime was committed, as well as using sexual references to describe what happened. This theme was reflected in incidents such as Nayera Ashraf, who was slaughtered and stabbed by her colleague, and the Fairmont Case, where the victim was drugged, gang raped and mutilated. The purpose of including graphic description/images/videos in X posts is not for sensationalism, rather it is a form of digital testimonial for documentation, it allows women to not only ‘witness’ their stories being told, but to be the ones who share and engage with their lived experiences, without the

redactions and omissions delineated by the news media agenda (Lee, 2025; Tazi & Oumlil, 2020; Khamis, 2013).

Praising the efficiency of the judicial system as a theme fits under documentation as a goal of cyberfeminism, where X posts documented accountability and the achievement of justice such as celebrating the swift death sentences in the cases of Nayera Ashraf, Salma Bahgat, and Shaimaa Gamal. When praising the efficiency of the judicial system, patriotic sentiments such as ‘long live Egypt’ are highlighted to express pride in their country and justice. It serves as a documentation of the resolution to the climax of their invested advocacy and mobilization. It is as important to acknowledge and celebrate collective victories in social movements – even small short-term victories – as it is important to document the incidents and challenge the inefficiencies of the system. Acknowledging and documenting these victories keeps a movement going in times of discouragement and hard to reach long-term goals (Cox, 2011).

The mentioning of previous incidents, such as repeatedly referencing Nayera Ashraf in other similar incidents, acted as a tool for documenting those incidents and building a connective and collective memory of incidents of violence against women in Egypt. It illustrated the repetitive patterns of gender-based violence, unlike news media that tend to depict these incidents of violence against women as isolated incidents to avoid blame attribution. Having this thread of past incidents ensures that incidents of violence against women do not perish under the news media’s limited shelf-life (Castillo et al., 2014).

As for social media as a theme, it fulfilled the documentation role by explaining how social media are used to share stories/videos related to/of the crime(s), such as the video shared by the victim of the Airport Harasser and the posts shared by the victims in the case of Ahmed Bassam Zaki. Social media are used for documentation of violence against women in

Egypt, where users could be the victims sharing their stories, witnesses recording what happened, and/or archivists collecting and sharing news and updates, all contributing to a horizontally compiled repository of incidents of gender-based violence, that are victim-led/centered, as opposed to top-down news media (Gordillo-García, 2023).

Education: *Between Raising Awareness and Changing Religious Discourse*

Education, as a goal of cyberfeminism, refers to educating women about their rights and how to fight for them, as well as educating society about patterns of violence against women and how to stop them (Khamis, 2013). Hence, education in this context means that women would be empowered with knowledge of their rights to speak up and society would be conscious and open to listen. The following themes emerged from the hashtags and were found to fall under the education dimension: raising awareness, religious rhetoric, social media, and solution/advice.

The theme of raising awareness involved sharing information about the legal penalty for the crimes and of what to do in reaction to these crimes. Examples of this theme include the Airport Harasser incident where posts were raising awareness to taking non-consensual photos of someone being a punishable crime and sharing help hotlines to report crimes in the case of Nayera Ashraf. Raising awareness about crimes and their legal penalties as well as help lines, civically educates both women and society as a whole, who might not be aware that taking non-consensual photos is a crime or who might not know the existing resources (Csanád & Elshafei, 2024; Miller & Demirbilek, 2023; Loney-Howes, 2018).

The religious rhetoric theme was found to be another educational tool, giving how influential religious rhetoric is in the hybrid liberal-conservative Egyptian society (Abdou & Zaazou, 2013; Ahmed & Gielen, 2017). This theme recited verses from the Quran, Dua'a and/or Hadith to condemn the perpetrator(s)/crime and criticized incitement to violence

driven by religious extremism to restrict women's bodily autonomy, which reflects an attempt to educate and change the religious discourse around gender-based violence as well as reclaim religion as part of the feminist discourse.

Social media as a theme fits under education, as a goal of cyberfeminism, by highlighting the unethical use of social media. The incident of the Airport Harasser included posts condemning those who use social media to defend the harasser and undermine the gravity of the crime. Social media in this context were used to make people recognize that those who defend a crime are as guilty as those who committed it. Therefore, social media are not only an education tool; they provide an informal 'classroom' learning space (Amoyaw, 2023).

The theme of solution/advice reflects educational properties by spreading social awareness and advocacy, where women were advised to exercise and protect their autonomy, society were made aware not to fall into the trap of victim-blaming, emphasizing that women were the victims not the perpetrator. This theme acts as a pedagogical advice/solution to help women understand their rights, and society recognize patterns of gender-based violence and vicious rape myth acceptance as a step towards social change (O'Connor & McMahon, 2022).

Mobilization: *From Sarcasm & Frustration to Digital Resistance*

Mobilization refers to emphasizing the salience of the issue with the goal of inducing action (Haßler, Magin, & Russmann, 2023; Khamis, 2013). Mobilization in this study refers to calling out inaction/inefficiency and calling people to action when it comes to violence against women in Egypt. Mobilization, as a goal of cyberfeminism, encompassed the following themes, employing graphic description of the crime and/or perpetrator(s),

criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system, referring to previous incidents, suggesting solution/advice, and expressing frustration/sarcasm.

The graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) theme can be considered as mobilization through emotional arousal by using profanity to describe the crime/perpetrator(s), as well as providing details of the crime. Graphic description not only serves as a tool for documentation, it also works as a catalyst to transform desensitization into engagement. Graphic description invokes emotional arousal such as anger and fear, which are often associated with action and participation (Gause, Moore, & Ostfeld, 2023).

Criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system translates into mobilization. This theme involved criticizing the sentence for not being commensurate with the crime, and for acquitting the perpetrator(s) from charges such as the incident of Shady Khalaf, who raped seven girls and was sentenced to three years in prison and the Fairmont Case, where the rapists were let go for lack of evidence. Criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system calls out patriarchal institutions that undermine the gravity of violence against women crimes, and emphasizes the salience of the issue (Khamis, 2013).

Mentioning of previous incidents has documentary significance, and it works as a mobilization tool as well, by highlighting how prolific gender-based violence is. Mentioning previous incidents builds, as previously mentioned, connective memory and a repository of violence against women incidents. These archived patterns of violence against women leads to the realization that it is a systemic issue rather than random isolated incidents, as news media often depict them. This realization could invoke emotions, which in turn lead to engagement and action (Mccammon, 2025).

Solution/advice as a theme involved demanding accountability, as well as social, legal and policy reforms and calling for/taking action against crimes of violence against women.

Examples include the incidents of Ahmed Bassam Zaki and Port Said Girl, where stagnant laws, judicial corruption and protecting perpetrators were identified as the culprits for the proliferation of violence against women in Egypt, demanding deterrent laws, thereby taking agency through demanding accountability, calling for reforms and taking action (Miller & Deirbilek, 2023).

As for using frustration/sarcasm, it can be considered another emotional mobilization tool. Frustration/sarcasm included expressing frustration from the constant gendered fear, calling out the perpetrators and apologists, frustration with the country, frustration with the judicial system, using sarcasm to shame perpetrator(s) and sympathizers, and frustration with inaction and/or the outcome. As previously mentioned, emotional arousal (i.e., anger, fear, frustration) can be a mobilizer to taking action; sarcasm has long been used as a tool for mobilization and political participation in Egypt (Hammad, 2019).

Support/Solidarity: *A Fourth Cyberfeminism Goal*

After the analysis, there were themes that did not fit under the three a priori goals of cyberfeminism namely, documentation, education, and mobilization, which led the author to propose ‘support/solidarity’ as an emergent fourth posteriori goal of cyberfeminism. Beyond documenting the incidents of violence against women, educating women and society about women’s rights, and mobilizing people to engage and take action, came expressing support/solidarity as an integral goal of cyberfeminism.

Support/solidarity involves building “emotional community” and bonding over unified grievances, where the victims are not alone in their pain and/or injustice, resulting in collective solidarity (Gordillo-García, 2023; De Marinis & Macleod, 2018; Jimeno, Varela, & Castillo, 2015; Goodwin & Pfaff, 2001). Support/solidarity, as a cyberfeminism goal,

encompassed the following themes; religious rhetoric, supporting/paying tribute to victim, and social media.

Religious rhetoric, as a recurrent theme reflecting support/solidarity, fosters solidarity by creating “bonds of sentiment” where people use religious discourse to express compassion and empathy towards others within that same community, especially during times of crisis (Boutabia, 2022; Johnson, 2022). Religious rhetoric was evident by praying for the victim(s) and their families and seeking divine justice. Examples of religious rhetoric include praying for mercy for Sharqiah Girl and for solace and patience for her family and praying that Ahmed Bassam Zaki suffer under divine justice.

Supporting/paying tribute to the victim(s), as a theme under the umbrella of support/solidarity, was found to be expressions of emotion associated with the recovery phase of a crisis, where tributes and/or condolences are foregrounded in solidarity with the victims (Castellanos, Edjossan-Sossou, & Komendantova, 2025). Similarly, the study at hand found that supporting/paying tribute to victim(s) comprised of showing public solidarity/sympathy for the victim(s), praising the victim’s bravery, and memorializing the victim.

As for social media as a theme, it fits under support/solidarity by showing the support the victim(s) are receiving on social media and expressing how public solidarity on social media can create pressure. Studies found that social media are tools for creating and strengthening solidarity in communities, emphasizing a sense of unity and war in the face of crisis (Castellanos, Edjossan-Sossou, & Komendantova, 2025; Irwan, Kolopaking, Muljono, & Yonvitner, 2019).

Concluding Remarks on Cyberfeminism Goals

The study’s findings as well as reviewing existing literature found that the goals of cyberfeminism were manifested in the X posts of the viral hashtags creating an ecosystem of

action, where no goal stands in isolation. The four cyberfeminism goals namely, documentation, education, solidarity/support, and mobilization complement each other, where X posts were acting as witnesses, recorders, archivists, teachers, allies and moral supporters, judges and advocates for incidents of violence against women in Egypt.

Documentation involved creating a repository for incidents of violence against women that surpasses redactions and institutional blame avoidance, and that gives victims a platform to share their experiences, instead of having their voice excluded and their stories news-crafted and disseminated. Documentation encompassed celebrating even minor victories to sustain the community morale. Documentation also involved building a connective memory that refutes the prolific 'isolated incidents' claim.

Education went beyond documentation to making cyberfeminism pedagogical, raising women and society's awareness of women's rights, defining crimes and their legal consequences, as well as sharing help lines, to empower women and society in general with knowledge to recognize gendered crimes and to stand up for them. Education also included criticizing and challenging the existing patriarchal religious discourse through a feminist lens, engaging in religious discourse for cyberfeminism not against it.

Mobilization transcended both documentation and education turning archiving and awareness into action. Mobilization criticized the inefficiencies of the judicial system through frustration and sarcasm, demanding deterrent laws, aroused outrage through graphic descriptions of the crime and highlighting vicious patterns of gender-based violence, called for accountability and reforms.

The emergent fourth goal of cyberfeminism namely, support/solidarity looked at creating an emotional community through using religious rhetoric, paying tribute to victims, and showing social media support. Support/solidarity was reflected by praying for the victims

and their families, memorializing them, and supporting victims through expressing shared struggle/pain.

Cyberfeminism's goals, which are considered a form of sousveillance, are all interconnected (Ceccato, 2019; Bucholski, 2016). Furthermore, cyberfeminism is not only about mobilization and advocacy; it's about creating a non-patriarchal, non-institutional, victim-led/centered archives that contribute to the public connective memory; it's about arming women with knowledge of their rights and challenging patriarchal religious and societal discourses that normalize and legitimize gender-based violence, it's about building an emotional community that turns grieving and mourning into demands for justice, and transforms acknowledgment of victims' courage and bravery into collective empowerment.

It is the fostering of this emotional community of support and solidarity, using religious rhetoric, patriotic sentiment and sarcasm that make cyberfeminism in the Egyptian context unique. Religious rhetoric is reclaimed from patriarchal interpretations to defend women against violence, to express grief and compassion and demand divine justice. Patriotic sentiment was manifested either in pride when justice is achieved (e.g., long live Egypt), or in shame that violence against women is still prolific in Egypt, the cradle of civilization. Sarcasm, being a staple of Egyptian culture, was used as a tool of mobilization along with frustration.

Cyberfeminism, News Virality, & Sur/Sousveillance

RQ5: Cyberfeminism shapes the viral news articles, compared to non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance

News media that are predominantly state-controlled/-monitored, as is the case in Egypt, are used as a government mouthpiece and a tool for surveillance, instead of fulfilling their role as a watchdog (Taher & Ismail, 2025; Abdulla, 2023; Khalifa, 2021; Allam, 2019;

Hamzawy, 2017). Frames are perpetuating hegemonic patriarchal narratives to justify control, align public opinion with regime policies, reinforce regime legitimacy, and discourage dissent (Xia, Huan, & Zhang, 2022; Nadhira & Angeliqa, 2020; Aulia, 2019; Khamis, 2013).

A thematic analysis was conducted on 248 news articles of non-viral incidents and 256 news articles of the 13 viral incidents. There were six emerging themes from the non-viral news articles and 12 themes emerging from the viral news articles. The study explored how cyberfeminism, as a form of sousveillance that manifested in the X posts of the viral hashtags (based on *RQ4*), shaped the viral news articles of the 13 viral incidents, in comparison to non-viral news articles that were not shaped by cyberfeminism, through assessing the emerging themes from both viral and non-viral news articles and determining where they fall under surveillance and/or sousveillance.

Non-Viral News: *Surveillance & the Reproduction of Patriarchal Narratives*

Based on the study's findings (see *RQ1* & *RQ2*), covering the crime-related elements (trigger attributes), as well as the structural, tonal, message features, and problem-solution frames, non-viral news articles were found to focus on crimes that were domestic, perpetrated by intimate partners and family members behind closed doors, driven by a culture of guardianship and discipline that normalizes and routinizes violence. Non-viral articles also tended to be shorter, predominantly written by male journalists, less sensitive/empathetic in their reporting, included more graphic descriptions, were less diverse in their sources and multimedia. They were more factual, detached, with less concern about victim identifiability, accountability, suggestion of solutions or identification of institutional causes. The incidents are thereby depicted as isolated incidents without referring to systemic roots.

In the thematic analysis, six themes emerged from the non-viral news articles namely: graphic description of crime/perpetrator(s), efficiency of the judicial system, raising awareness, victim-blaming, diffusion of blame, and undermining the gravity of the crime.

The graphic description of crime/perpetrator(s) theme was manifested in non-viral news articles through identifying the injuries of the victim(s), describing how the crime happened, providing sexual details of the crime, and using graphic adjectives to describe the crime and/or perpetrator(s). As previously mentioned, non-viral news articles are not interested in sensationalism and/or clickbaiting, which would justify the use of graphic description of crime/perpetrator(s) (Ibarra, Hermans, & Kleemans, 2025; Henn-Latus & Posegga, 2023).

However, non-viral news articles focus on routinized ‘everyday’ crimes that are reported using an impersonal detached tone, so using graphic description of crime/perpetrator(s) in that context acts as a surveillance device. Furthermore, violently graphic details of women describe women’s suffering, sexualize, and objectify them in a way that is not intended to invoke emotions, but to normalize their suffering to justify control. This is in line with the existing literature on women objectification/sexualization and victim-dehumanization, desensitization, and trivialization and normalization of their suffering (Loza, 2022; Galdi & Guizza, 2021; Pacilli, Pagliaro, Loughnan, Gramazio, Spaccatini, & Baldry, 2017).

The efficiency of the judicial system theme involved praising the efficiency of the arrest and/or investigation (e.g., they were brilliant in solving the mystery of the crime and identifying the two corpses) and expressing trust in the judicial system (e.g., feeling protected by the Egyptian judiciary). This theme reinforced institutional authority and reinforced the regime’s legitimacy through emphasizing efficiency and popularity. This finding is supported

by studies emphasizing how news media reinforce regime narratives in authoritarian regimes, acting like cheerleaders, highlighting their efficiency in fighting ‘immorality’ (Barnehl & Schumacher, 2024; Ismail, 2019; Xia, Huang, Zhang, 2022; Han, 2018; King, Pan, & Roberts, 2017; Hamzawy, 2017).

Raising awareness as a theme was evident by raising awareness of legal terminologies and legal penalties for the crimes, as well as explaining trial scenarios and outcomes. Raising awareness in non-viral news articles, as previously mentioned, depicted incidents of violence against women as isolated incidents as opposed to a vicious pattern with systemic roots. Raising awareness in this context, instead of being considered a tool for education as was the case in the X posts (see *RQ4*), was used as a tool for surveillance by aligning the public opinion with the regime’s policies and laws and projecting a narrative of institutional efficiency (Barnehl & Schumacher, 2024; Xia, Huang, Zhang, 2022; Ismail, 2019; Hamzawy, 2017)

Victim-blaming as a theme encompassed avoiding calling them victim(s) and/or perpetrator(s) and calling the victims according to their relationship with the perpetrator (e.g., husband/father/old man, instead of perpetrator, and girl/daughter/wife instead of victim), as well as blaming victim(s) for provocation (e.g., starting the fight, withholding sex from him) and for ‘loose morals’ (e.g., coming home late; wife caught naked in the arms of her lover). These linguistic choices served as reproductions of patriarchal narratives that absolve men from their crimes and emphasize a disciplinary discourse when it comes to women, thereby justifying control and preserving a top-down patriarchal social order. Studies illustrated that news media make linguistic decisions and justifications to perpetuate patriarchal narratives that result in victim-blaming (Gravelin, Biernat, & Kerl, 2024; Galdi & Guizza, 2021; Gramazio, Cadinu, Pagliaro, & Pacilli, 2019; Holland & Haslam, 2016; Galvão, 2015).

Diffusion of blame involved abstract blame attribution (e.g., the devil possessed the husband and pushed him to kill his wife, husband was avenging his honor), implying that the crime is uncharacteristic of perpetrator (didn't intend to kill her, he was just disciplining her), and questioning the perpetrator's mental stability. Using diffusion of blame as a theme normalized violence against women, adopting the surveillance framework of avoiding/discouraging dissent and reinforcing hegemonic patriarchal ideologies, treating violence against women as a social issue, where the narrative shifts towards absence of intent and consequently absence of institutional and/or individual blame, instead of labeling it as a crime (Persson & Dhingra, 2020; Pennington and Birthisel, 2016; O'Hara, 2012).

Undermining the gravity of the crime manifested in non-viral news articles through reducing the crimes to weaker alternatives and softening the legal language such as, reducing rape to 'slept with her like husband and wife' and labeling a killer as a 'reckless husband'. As previously mentioned, the linguistic choices served as reproductions of patriarchal narratives that absolve men from their crimes, transforming a crime into a consensual encounter, and a killer into an 'impulsive' intimate partner (Pennington and Birthisel, 2016; Galvão, 2015).

These findings illustrated how non-viral news articles engaged in surveillance by making linguistic choices that reproduce patriarchal narratives, as well as perpetuate and sustain routinized gendered violence, transforming it into a social issue, absolving perpetrators from their crimes, invoking a disciplinary narrative that blames the victims for provocation and 'loose morals', reinforcing the legitimacy and cheering the efficiency of state institutions, even the depiction of women's suffering was an instrument for objectification, subjugation, and control, not mobilization.

Viral News: ‘Meso-Veillance’ & the Hybridization of Control and Resistance

Based on the study’s findings (see *RQ1* & *RQ2*), covering the crime-related elements, as well as the structural, tonal, message features, and problem-solution frames, viral news articles were found to focus on crimes that were physical, fatal, and/or technologically-facilitated, public, individually-motivated, committed by less familiar perpetrators. Viral news articles tended to be longer, co-/written by female journalists, sensitive/empathetic in their reporting, included less graphic description, more diversity in the sources and multimedia. They were more emotion-focused and personal than non-viral articles, more concerned about victim identifiability, and accountability, and either both highlighted causes and suggested solutions or didn’t do either.

In the thematic analysis, 12 themes emerged from the viral news articles which demonstrated a hybrid between surveillance and sousveillance (Bakir, 2015). Viral news articles engaged in what the author of the study at hand coined as ‘*meso-veillance*’, where *meso*-means in between and *veillance* means watching, referring to engaging in both types of watching; surveillance and sousveillance simultaneously. Therefore, the author divided the findings from the thematic analysis to reflect this duality into themes in viral news articles that reflect surveillance and themes that reflect sousveillance.

a) Surveillance in Viral News: *Visibility & Persistence of Patriarchal Narratives*

In viral news articles, surveillance manifested through the following recurring themes: graphic description of crime/perpetrator(s), efficiency of the judicial system, religious rhetoric, victim-blaming, sympathy with the perpetrator(s), undermining the gravity of the crime, and social media.

Graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) in viral news articles involved, similar to non-viral news articles, identifying the victim’s injuries, describing how the crime

happened, and providing sexual details of crime. This theme overlaps between surveillance and sousveillance, since, as in case of non-viral news articles, graphic description could be construed as an instrument of surveillance. However, unlike non-viral news articles, viral incidents are public, which indicates that graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) is used for its shock element, but not to invoke anger, to reinforce sensationalism and/or clickbaiting and ultimately, desensitization to gendered violence (Ibarra, Hermans, & Kleemans, 2025; Henn-Latus & Posegga, 2023; Persson & Dhingra, 2020).

Praising the efficiency of the judicial system in viral news articles involved praising the speed of the trial/sentence, the efficiency of the arrest and investigation, and expressing trust in the judicial system and defending the integrity and impartiality of the Egyptian judiciary and public prosecutors. Examples of praising the efficiency of the judicial system in viral news articles include the incidents of the Metro Harasser and Nayera Ashraf. This theme also overlaps between surveillance and sousveillance, since, as in case of non-viral news articles, it could be considered as an instrument of surveillance that reinforced institutional authority and reinforced the regime's legitimacy through emphasizing efficiency and popularity, as opposed to a way to celebrate small victories to avoid discouragement and foster solidarity (see *RQ4*) (Barnehl & Schumacher, 2024; Ismail, 2019; Xia, Huang, Zhang, 2022; Han, 2018; King, Pan, & Roberts, 2017; Hamzawy, 2017; Cox, 2011).

Religious rhetoric, as a recurring theme, in viral news articles depicted the victim(s) and/or perpetrator(s) as religious. In the incident of Habiba El-Shama'a, news articles included photos of the victim wearing hijab during pilgrimage and voice notes of her praying, and in the same incident, photos of the perpetrator holding a Quran during trial were included in the news articles. Religious rhetoric subtly imposes surveillance by suggesting that victims and perpetrators need to be seen through a moral lens that absolves the pious perpetrator and incriminates the non-virtuous victim who 'had it coming', using religious rhetoric to

reinforce patriarchal narratives and maintain social order (Pagliaro & Pacilli, 2025; Ziada, 2022; Taha, 2021; Pollino, 2020; Sadler, 2019; Abdelmonem, 2015).

The theme of victim-blaming in viral news articles involved blaming the victim for not speaking up, for being aggressive, for misunderstanding, for using the perpetrator, and for her 'loose morals.' Victim-blaming, as a theme, is an instrument that is restricted to surveillance, unlike other themes where surveillance and sousveillance overlapped. Unlike victim-blaming in non-viral news articles, viral news articles are more visible, which makes the insertion of victim-blaming more subtle, such as the incident of Salma Bahgat, who was murdered because of love rejection after 'humiliating' the perpetrator. This theme, similar to the preceding religious rhetoric theme, transforms victims into targets of public moral judgment, where a victim goes from 'deserving empathy' to 'getting what she deserved', subtly reinforcing patriarchal norms and societal expectations of women (Gravelin, Biernat, & Kerl, 2024; Galdi & Guizza, 2021; Gramazio, Cadinu, Pagliaro, & Pacilli, 2019; Holland & Haslam, 2016, Galvão, 2015).

Sympathy with the perpetrator(s) involved diffusing the blame, expressing that the crime was uncharacteristic of the perpetrator, showing support for the perpetrator, questioning the perpetrator's mental stability, and devictimizing the victim. An example includes the incident of Habiba El-Shama'a, where the perpetrator has been working in Uber for three years with no complaints. This theme invokes empathy for the perpetrators, empowering them, and absolving them of their crime, while de-victimizing the victim, thereby preserving social order (Johnson, 2022; Baum, Cohen, & Zhukov, 2018; Gravelin, Biernat, & Kerl, 2024; Galdi & Guizza, 2021; Gramazio, Cadinu, Pagliaro, & Pacilli, 2019; Holland & Haslam, 2016).

Undermining the gravity of the crime, as a recurring theme, manifested in viral news articles by reducing crime gravity through using generic terms such as, reducing sexual harassment to teasing/nuisance in the incident of Ahmed Bassam Zaki. This theme is another theme that does not afford the duality of surveillance and sousveillance and is solely restricted to surveillance. Similar to non-viral news articles, undermining the gravity of the crime in viral news articles subtly made linguistic choices that served as reproductions of patriarchal narratives to trivialize gendered violence and absolve its perpetrators (Arya & George, 2022; Johnson, 2022; Cusmano, 2018; McManus & Dorfman, 2003; Galvão, 2015).

Social media involved blaming the unethical use of social media (e.g., using social media for exaggeration, spreading lies about public prosecutors that would negatively affect the investigation, and leaking a video of the deceased victim from the morgue) and expressing support for the perpetrator(s) (e.g., Nayera Ashraf's killer and the Mitghamr Girl). This theme reinforces patriarchal control through depicting social media as a swamp for lies, exaggerations and immorality, threatening regime legitimacy, and is therefore in need of state-regulation (Pennington & Birthisel, 2016).

b) Sousveillance in Viral News: *Echoes of Cyberfeminism*

Along with the persisting surveillance in viral news articles, sousveillance manifested in those same articles simultaneously through the following recurring themes: efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system, religious rhetoric, raising awareness, supporting and paying tribute to the victim, mentioning similar incidents, blaming the perpetrator(s), social media, and solution/advice.

Graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) in viral news articles, as previously mentioned, was a recurring theme manifesting both surveillance and sousveillance. Graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) involved identifying the victim's injuries, describing

how the crime happened, and providing sexual details of crime. The purpose of including graphic description/images/videos in viral news articles could be, as mentioned in the surveillance in viral news, for its shock element to generate sensationalism and/or clickbaiting of gendered violence, or, as mentioned in the X posts'

Cyberfeminism/sousveillance section (see RQ4), for being a documentary instrument, allowing women to record their own testimonials. Nonetheless, unlike the X posts, viral news articles were still constrained by the norms of journalistic professionalism (Lee, 2025; Arya & George, 2022; Tazi & Oumlil, 2020; Khamis, 2013).

Criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system in viral news articles involved criticizing the sentence for not being commensurate with crime, and for acquitting the perpetrator(s). An example would be the incident of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, who was acquitted from charges of drug use and possession, despite finding drugs in his system and got sentenced to 8 years for *hatk ard*¹²/raping three girls. Viral news articles engaged in sousveillance through 'subtly' criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system, unlike X posts, which explicitly used this theme to mobilize the public (see RQ4). Despite its subtlety, criticizing the inefficiency of the judicial system in viral news articles highlights how patriarchal institutions undermine the gravity of violence against women crimes, and emphasizes the salience of the issue (Khamis, 2013).

Religious rhetoric manifested in viral news articles through reciting verses from the Quran and/or Hadith to condemn the perpetrator(s)/crime, praying for the victim(s), and praying for divine justice, to calling to adhering to religious teachings (e.g., in the Nayera Ashraf incident, a religious expert calling out connecting crime to what a woman wears). In

¹² The term '*hatk ard*'/هتك عرض: refers to touching and/or showing someone's private parts without their consent.

viral news articles, religious rhetoric adopted *sousveillance* through calling for a change in the existing patriarchal religious discourse, adhering to religious teachings, and through sharing solidarity and support by praying for the victims. This is in line with literature where news emphasize the role of religion in supporting women (Sabah, Shaari, & Aladdin, 2023). This echoes the religious rhetoric theme within X posts in the viral hashtags, used as an instrument of education and solidarity/support.

Raising awareness, as a recurring theme, encompassed raising awareness to legal terminologies and legal penalties of crimes, as well as explaining people's rights/duties and trial scenarios/outcomes. This theme reflected *sousveillance*, similar to *sousveillance* in X posts, where raising awareness was a tool for education for women to arm themselves with knowledge of their rights to be able to stand up for themselves, and for society to change patriarchal narratives (Csanád & Elshafei, 2024; Loney-Howes, 2018).

Supporting/paying tribute to the victim and mentioning similar previous incidents of violence against women were recurring themes in viral news articles. These themes, echoing the 'emotional community' found in X posts (see *RQ4*), adopted *sousveillance* through fostering solidarity and memorializing victims such as Nayera Ashraf and Salma Bahgat, as well as building connective memory. Studies found that solidarity and connective memory generate bottom-up mobilization (Csanád & Elshafei, 2024).

Blaming the perpetrator(s) in viral news articles refers to implicitly and/or explicitly pointing fingers at the perpetrator(s). This theme is exclusive to viral news articles, that constituted a shift from victim-blaming towards perpetrator accountability. Blaming the perpetrator(s) in viral news articles reflects *sousveillance*, since it reverses the power structure from top-down blame avoidance and victim-blaming to bottom-up blame attribution, albeit still avoiding institutional blame attribution (Csanád & Elshafei, 2024).

Furthermore, studies linked perceived perpetrator culpability with authoritarianism, meaning that the more the perpetrator is blamed, the less authoritarian, ascribing to patriarchal control, a regime is (Abrams, 2025; Martini & De Piccoli, 2020).

Social media, as a theme in viral news articles, was used to share stories of the crime(s), to express support for the victim(s), and to criticize the unethical use of social media. There are overlaps in this theme between surveillance and sousveillance, where in the context of surveillance in viral news articles, social media were reinforcing patriarchal control and threatening the regime legitimacy by expressing the need to regulate. In the context of sousveillance, similar to X posts (see *RQ4*), social media in viral news articles were seen as victim-led/centered tools for documentation and instruments of education, as well as fosters of solidarity (Csanád & Elshafei, 2024; Gordillo-García, 2023).

As for solution/advice in viral news articles, it involved refraining from attacking the victims and defending criminals, and taking action against crimes of violence against women, ranging from encouraging women to speak up, helping to restore justice, bettering society's values and ethics, and parents needing to advise their children, to making an example out of the criminals and asking to televise death sentences as a deterrent. This theme is unique to sousveillance; like X posts (see *RQ4*), suggesting solutions and giving advice, demanding accountability, calling for reforms and taking action falls under the umbrella of bottom-up mobilization (Galvão, 2015). Studies have found that solutions/advice usually come after the fact, instead of being a preventative measure (Johnson, 2022; McManus & Dorfman, 2003).

Concluding Remarks on Cyberfeminism, News Virality, & Sur/Sousveillance

The study's findings as well as reviewing existing literature found that cyberfeminism shapes viral news articles, compared to non-viral news articles of incidents of violence against women in Egypt in terms of surveillance and/or sousveillance.

Non-viral news articles were found to engage in surveillance, where they reproduced patriarchal narratives, making linguistic choices that center around blame diffusion, absolving perpetrators of blame and victim-blaming, as well as normalizing women's suffering through using graphic descriptions of the crime(s), and trivializing crimes of gendered violence through using softened language. Non-viral news articles depicted incidents of violence against women as isolated incidents of 'everyday' behind closed doors violence.

Viral news articles were found to engage in both surveillance and sousveillance simultaneously, which led the author to coin the term "*meso-veillance*." Viral news articles were in between top-down surveillance, embodied in victim-blaming, sympathy for the perpetrator(s), religious rhetoric to moralize the victim/perpetrator, and praising the efficiency of the judicial system, and bottom-up sousveillance, including raising awareness, solidarity and tribute to the victims, suggesting solutions and calling for accountability and taking action.

Consequently, viral news articles provided a space to integrate this hybrid dynamic, where they were working within the confines of journalistic professionalism and engrained patriarchal norms to construct frames that legitimize control and impose conformity, while echoing the resistance and mobilization emerging from the Cyberfeminism in the viral hashtags. The heightened visibility of the viral news articles could be considered a culprit in producing this hybrid dynamic of 'meso-veillance,' which led news media to subtly incorporate the cyberfeminism goals (see RQ4) into their framing to avoid public scrutiny, while enforcing frames that reflect top-down control.

Discussion Synthesis: *Triggers, News Virality, Cyberfeminism, Veillance, & Framing*

RQ1 examined the crime-related elements that could ‘trigger’ news virality (e.g., type of crime, its consequences, criminal motives, victims’/perpetrators’ SES, etc.). The findings indicated that viral news are driven by factors of newsworthiness such as elite, unusualness, visible, and shock. Crimes were inflicted by individually-motivated, less familiar perpetrators. In contrast, non-viral news focused on routinized everyday crimes, that were private and domestic, inflicted by family/intimate partners, involving lower class victims/perpetrators, driven by societal-level motives.

Building on *RQ1*, *RQ2* examined how, in turn, news virality shapes a story’s framing on a structural, tonal, message-features, and problem-solution levels. The findings indicated that viral news articles are focused on audience recall and engagement, which was evident in their framing. Viral news were longer and more likely co-/written by female journalists, sensitive /empathetic reporting, included diverse legitimate/credible sources, were concerned with audience identifiability, used sensational labels and mentioned previous incidents, building collective memory. They were more personal or a mix of both personal and impersonal and emotion-focused or a mix of both emotion- and information-focused than non-viral news, presenting either both cause and solution in the same article or none. Conversely, non-viral news were shorter and more likely written by male journalists, detached, were more graphic in their reporting, depicted violence against women as isolated incidents. They were more impersonal and information-focused than viral news, presenting either the cause or the solution in the articles.

RQ3 examined how the medium’s affordances shape a viral incident’s framing on a structural, tonal, message-features, and problem-solution levels. The findings indicated that X posts of the viral hashtags were participatory, foregrounded victims’ voices, focused on

reflecting on societal issues, included more sensational labels and referred to previous incidents more than viral news articles. X posts were also more personal, more emotional and prioritized suggesting solutions. In contrast, viral news articles adhered to journalistic norms, while trying to make the victims identifiable to sustain attention, avoided institutional blame, focused on the legal processes and investigations, identified the victims/perpetrators' names, were more graphic, more impersonal or a mix of both personal and impersonal, more information-focused or a mix of both emotion- and information-focused than X posts and more likely to reflect the cause or both cause and solution in their articles.

RQ4 examined how the goals of cyberfeminism (documentation, education, mobilization, and the newly added goal: solidarity/support) manifested in the framing of X posts. The findings illustrated that the four goals complemented each other, where X posts acted as witnesses, recorders, archivists, teachers, allies, moral supporters, judges and advocates for incidents of violence against women. Cyberfeminism goals engaged in sousveillance (bottom-up watching) by documenting incidents of violence against women, educating women and society about women's rights and patterns of gendered violence, supporting victims and showing solidarity, and mobilizing people to stand up for women's rights, and advocate for justice and reform.

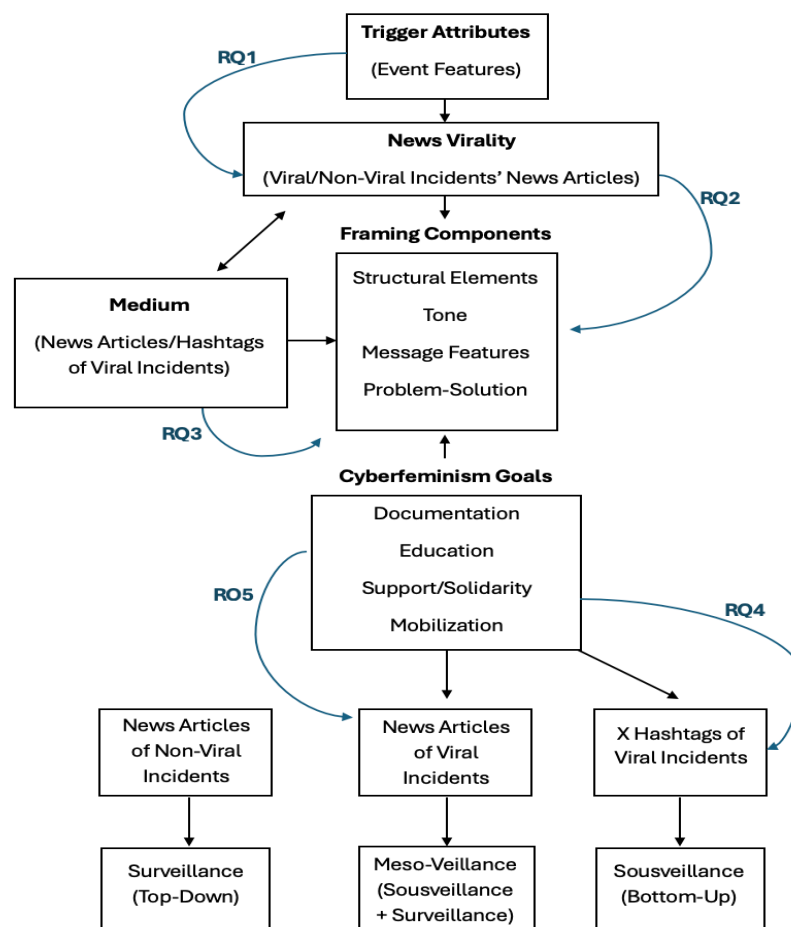
RQ5 examined how cyberfeminism shapes viral news articles as opposed to non-viral news articles in terms of surveillance or sousveillance. The findings reflected that non-viral news articles engaged in surveillance, reproducing patriarchal narratives, normalizing women's suffering, and trivializing crimes of gendered violence, while viral news articles were found to engage in both surveillance and sousveillance simultaneously (i.e., *meso-veillance*), where they abided by the journalistic norms and reinforced patriarchal narratives that legitimized control, while echoing the resistance emerging from the Cyberfeminism in the viral hashtags.

Proposed Heuristic Model of News Virality, Cyberfeminism & Sur/Sousveillance

The variables of the study at hand can be illustrated by a proposed heuristic model of news virality, cyberfeminism, & sur/sousveillance, as shown in Figure 1. The model shows the crime-related elements that trigger news virality, how virality and the medium shape news framing, how Cyberfeminism goals are manifested in the themes emerging from the X posts, and how Cyberfeminism, that engaged in sousveillance in the X posts, is echoed in viral news articles' framing as opposed to non-viral news articles, reflecting ideologies of 'meso-veillance' (surveillance and sousveillance) in the former and surveillance in the latter.

Figures 1

A Proposed Heuristic Model of News Virality, Cyberfeminism & Sur/Sousveillance



In conclusion, the news articles covering non-viral incidents were the least visible (in comparison to viral news articles and X posts of the viral hashtags), the most detached, information-focused, institution-oriented, most graphic, victim-blaming, perpetrator-absolving, focused on what happened, enacting surveillance by reinforcing patriarchal narratives and power hierarchies. On the other hand, X posts were the most personal, emotional, victim-led/centered, least graphic, most resistant to patriarchal narratives, engaging in Cyberfeminism and enacting sousveillance by documenting, educating, supporting and mobilizing.

Contribution of the Study

The study at hand contributes to the corpus of knowledge conceptually by illustrating how visibility transforms ‘isolated incidents’ into ‘connective memory’ that negotiates, reinforces, and contests, separately or simultaneously, existing hegemonic structures. This study looks at news virality as a social and political process that has event-specific triggers.

Theoretically, this study merges theories of Framing, Cyberfeminism, and Veillance to understand not only how viral/non-viral news are framed, but how they reflect feminist and/or patriarchal ideologies, enacting surveillance and/or sousveillance through their framing. The study also introduces a new term; ‘meso-veillance,’ which simultaneously combines surveillance and sousveillance, to describe news media covering viral incidents acting as a space to both reinforce and resist existing patriarchal structures.

The study at hand serves as an addition to existing literature that strives to de-Westernize media studies. There were contextualized country/region-specific findings such as how patriotic sentiments manifest to express pride or shame at the efficiency of the system in approaching gendered violence, in addition to using linguistic choices, religious rhetoric, and sarcasm as instruments of conformity (surveillance) and/or resistance (sousveillance).

Cyberfeminism goals were extended to include a fourth goal; solidarity/support, which was found to be integral to collective empowerment.

Methodologically, the study traces news virality in different platforms (news website and X) and uses mixed-methods, combining quantitative content analysis and thematic analysis to capture not only the triggers of news virality and its framing, but also how the emerging themes manifest feminist and/or patriarchal narratives that enact surveillance, sousveillance or *meso-veillance*, thereby shifting from treating news virality as isolated incidents to a more recursive, relational approach that is negotiated cross-platforms. The study proposed a heuristic model that illustrates the dynamic relationship between triggers, news virality, Cyberfeminism, veillance and framing.

Limitations of the Study

The study at hand was subject to several methodological and contextual limitations. Firstly, X (formerly known as Twitter) restricted its data access, which made it difficult for the author to scrape data or find a reliable method to retrieve the data. As a result, the author had to manually take screenshots of the X posts from the top posts/tweets for each hashtag and analyze them. Drawing a sample from the top posts/tweets presents a challenge for replicability due to the constant changing ranking and customization of top posts/tweets selected by the algorithms, which wouldn't guarantee future researchers' ability to retrieve and analyze the same posts.

Secondly, the news website's archive occasionally produced duplicate news articles and/or blank news articles, other articles failed to load, and it lacked a refined search option, where a researcher can add different keywords/dates, especially for the non-viral news articles. Additionally, relying on a single news outlet namely, Youm7 news website, and a single social media platform namely, X, may limit the representativeness of the findings. The

study excluded other outlets and platforms that are widely used in Egypt such as, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Al-Ahram, Al-Masry Al-Youm, and El-Shorouk, which could vary in framing and engagement dynamics, as well as in the manifestation of cyberfeminism goals and the patterns of surveillance and sousveillance.

Thirdly, focusing on Egypt could restrict the generalizability of the findings beyond a certain socio-political context with a similar media landscape, gender norms, and religious rhetoric. Findings may differ in other countries with different socio-political contexts, media environments, religious and cultural rhetoric, and power structures.

Finally, reading and analyzing stories of violence against women over an extended period of time can take an emotional toll, which led to the author taking breaks to decompress and mitigate emotional fatigue. Despite these limitations, the study applied a rigorous and transparent scientific methodology including identifying inclusion and exclusion criteria, crafting a detailed codebook, and highlighting the sampling process.

Further Studies

The study provides a foundation that offers directions for future research on news virality and the multi-layered framing of violence against women. While the study at hand examines news virality of violence against women on a news website and a social media platform 'X', it would be interesting to explore TikTok and/or Instagram as predominantly visual platforms that are more influencer-driven. These platforms could demonstrate different patterns of how incidents of violence against women become viral, and how they are framed and how the goals of cyberfeminism and surveillance and sousveillance are enacted.

Another direction could be to compare social media discourse about viral and non-viral incidents of violence against women, exploring how incidents that failed to reach

virality are framed and discussed on social media, which would offer deeper insights into determinants of visibility/invisibility on social media.

Additionally, future studies could conduct a critical discourse analysis to examine the linguistic choices made by news media to frame violence against women, such as how they refer to perpetrators and victims as defendant, perpetrator, killer or complainant, plaintiff, victim, exploring how these choices can reinforce and/or challenge patriarchal structures. In-depth interviews with journalists could provide interesting insights into how these choices are made when framing incidents of violence against women, and whether they are intentional or unintentional.

Finally, longitudinal studies could look at whether cyberfeminism on social media would lead to changes in the journalistic framing of violence against women as well as legislative shifts in issues related to violence against women, measuring whether cyberfeminism could lead to actual institutional reforms.

Conclusion

This study is about the news virality of incidents of violence against women in Egypt. It identifies the ‘event’ triggers of news virality, how viral news construct frames in comparison to non-viral news articles, how a medium’s affordances affect the framing of viral incidents comparing articles on a news website to posts in hashtags on X of the same viral incidents. It also explores how cyberfeminism goals (documentation, education, solidarity/support, and mobilization) are manifested in the framing of X posts, and how echoes of cyberfeminism are reflected in viral news framing, as opposed to, non-viral news framing acting as surveillance, sousveillance, or *meso-veillance* instruments.

After conducting a quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis of 233 X posts on viral hashtags, 248 non-viral news articles and 256 viral news articles, the study

found that physical/fatal crimes committed by less familiar perpetrators, with victims/perpetrators representing higher SES, as well as public crimes, individualized blame, emphasizing system efficiency are more likely to trigger virality, reflecting factors of newsworthiness such as shock, severity, unusualness, elite, visibility, and proximity.

Furthermore, the study illustrated that the more visible an incident is, and the more a medium affords participatory discourse (news website vs. X hashtags), the more personal, emotion-focused, victim-centered, solidarity-fostering, solution-oriented, systemic roots-tracing, sensitive/less graphic reporting, engagement and mobilization fostering and the more bottom-up resistance (*sousveillance*) to patriarchal narratives the framing is. News articles covering viral incidents were found to be the middle ground between X posts (most visible, engaging, and participatory) and news articles covering non-viral incidents (least visible), thereby enacting '*meso-veillance*', blending frames that reinforce patriarchal power structures (*surveillance*) and resistant frames that echo the Cyberfeminism on social media (*sousveillance*).

List of Tables

Table 1

Codebook for News Website Articles

Code	Description	Example
Date of the story	Day/Month/Year of the article.	24/10/2023.
Name of incident	Identify the name of the incident if it is one of the viral incidents (see Table 3). If it is not a viral incident, it will be coded as N/A.	Mit-Ghamr Girl.
Article word count	The number of words in the article.	110 words.
Gender of the article's journalist	The gender of the journalist who wrote the article according to their name (woman, man, unidentified/unknown, both).	"Written by: Hend Ibrahim" would be coded as woman.
Headline	Copy and paste the article's headline.	"A new Nayera Ashraf in Monofeya...an unemployed man killed a woman who refused to marry him..."
Number of victims	Identify the number of victims involved in this incident mentioned in the article (1, 2, 3, more than 3, couldn't tell/not mentioned).	"A new Nayera Ashraf in Monofeya...an unemployed man killed a woman who refused to marry him..." would be coded as 1 victim, since Nayera Ashraf [a victim of a similar incident] is not involved in this incident.

Number of perpetrators	Identify the number of perpetrators involved in this incident mentioned in the article (1, 2, 3, more than 3, couldn't tell/not mentioned).	"A new Nayera Ashraf in Monofeya...an unemployed man killed a woman who refused to marry him..." would be coded as 1 perpetrator.
Victim-perpetrator relationship	Who the perpetrator is to the victim (father/stepfather, brother/stepbrother, son, uncle, cousin, husband, fiancé, lover, admirer, friend, ex, colleague, employer, employee, acquaintance/caretaker/neighbor, stranger, unknown/not mentioned, other).	Nayera Ashraf's killer, Mohamed Adel was her <u>colleague</u> in college.
The main focus of article	What the article is mainly focusing on (what happened/the crime, the arrest/questioning/trial, the court decision, the execution of the court decision, investigation and collection of evidence, collecting witnesses opinions, official reactions, reflection on social issues and solutions, religious/expert opinions, tribute to the victim, background on the victim/perpetrator, other).	"The hanging of Mohamed Adel, the killer of Nayera Ashraf" would be coded as the <u>execution of the court decision</u> .
Article includes image	Whether the article uses an image or not (yes or no) and provide a description of what the image is.	Yes. A portrait picture of Nayera Ashraf [the victim] and a portrait picture of Mohamed Adel [the perpetrator].
Image was used before	Whether the same image(s) was used before in previous articles (yes or no).	

Article includes video	Whether the article uses a video or not (yes, no) and provide a description of what the video is.	Yes. A video of the killing of Nayera Ashraf.
Video was used before	Whether the same video(s) was used before in previous articles (yes or no).	
Article includes link	Whether the article uses a link or not (yes, no) and provide a description of what the link is.	Yes. "the father of the late student Nayera Ashraf," "Nayera Ashraf's father," "Mohamed Adel."
Link was used before	Whether the same link(s) was used before in previous articles (yes or no).	
Type of crime	Identify the type of crime in the article (murder, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, beating, sextortion, verbal abuse, improper photography/non-consensual photography of a stranger, cyberflashing, hatkard, other).	The murder of Nayera Ashraf would be coded as <u>murder</u> .
Reason for crime	Identify the reason behind the crime (honor killing/defending honor, guardianship/discipline, love rejection, betrayal/cheating, unknown/not mentioned, other).	The murder of Nayera Ashraf would be coded as <u>love rejection</u> .
Identified victim's name	Whether the article identifies the victim (yes, no, only by their initials, first name and initials of last name/vice versa).	M.A. killed N.A. would be coded as <u>only by their initials</u> .
Number of times a victim's name was mentioned	The number of times the victim's name was mentioned in the article including the headline.	"Nayera was killed by her colleague in front of Mansoura University...Nayera's father connected on the court

		sentence” would be coded as 2.
SES of the victim	Identify the socio-economic status of the victim (high, middle, low, unknown/not mentioned).	“The victim was a famous talk show host and married to a judge” would be coded as high.
Identified perpetrator’s name	Whether the article identifies the perpetrator (yes, no, only by their initials, first name and initials of last name/vice versa).	Mohamed Adel killed Nayera Ashraf would be coded as <u>yes</u> .
SES of the perpetrator	Identify the socio-economic status of the perpetrator (high, middle, low, unknown/not mentioned).	“The killer was unemployed and struggled with addiction” would be coded as low.
Number of times a perpetrator’s name was mentioned	The number of times the perpetrator’s name was mentioned in the article including the headline.	“Mohamed Adel killed Nayera...sympathizers of Mohamed Adel...” would be coded as 2.
Crime location	Identify where the crime took place (street, school/college, random property, workplace, his property (house/car), her property (house/car), unknown/not mentioned, other).	Mohamed Adel killed Nayera Ashraf in the street would be coded <u>the street</u> .
Governorate of the crime	Identify the governorate where the crime was committed.	“Nayera Ashraf was killed in front of the gates of Mansoura University” the governorate would be coded as ‘Mansoura.’
Publi/Private crime	Identify whether the crime was committed in public or private.	“Nayera Ashraf was killed in front of the gates of Mansoura University” would be coded as public.
Witnesses	Identify whether there were witnesses to the crime (yes or no).	“There were 40 witnesses in the Fairmont case” would be coded as ‘yes.’

Crime consequence	Identify the consequences of the crime (arrest, convicted, charged, death penalty, killed, suicide, fled, chased, on trial, under investigation, unknown/not mentioned, other).	“Mohamed Adel killed Nayera Ashraf and was immediately arrested” would be coded <u>arrest</u> .
Number of sources	Identify the number of sources that the article uses.	“Nayera Ashraf’s father comments on those who are against Mohamed Adel’s death penalty” would be coded as 1.
Type of sources	Identify who the sources used in the article are (law enforcement, politicians/ public officials, expert/advocate, victim(s), perpetrator(s), family/friend of victim, victim’s lawyer, family/friend of perpetrator, perpetrator’s lawyer, witness, other).	Nayera Ashraf’s father would be coded as the <u>family of victim</u> .
Gender of sources	Identify the gender of the sources used in the article (male, female, more males than females, more females than males, unknown, N/A).	Nayera Ashraf’s father as a source would be coded as man.
Graphic description/image/video of the crime in article	Whether the article uses graphic description/image/video of the crime (yes or no) and provide a description if yes.	Yes, “Mohamed Adel slaughtered Nayera Ashraf.”
Mention of similar previous incidents	Identify whether the article mentions similar previous incidents (yes or no) and mention what the name of the incident.	“A new Nayera Ashraf in Monofeya...an unemployed man killed a woman who refused to marry him...” would be coded as yes, “Nayera Ashraf.”

Tone	Identify whether the tone used in the article is personal (includes first-person accounts), impersonal (written from third-person perspective), or both.	- “Nayera Ashraf”s father thanked God after the death sentence of his daughter’s killer, thanking the judicial system for avenging his daughter” would be coded as <u>personal</u>. - “Gamassa prison witnessed the death sentence of Mohamed Adel, accused of killing the Mansoura student, Nayera Ashraf” would be coded as <u>impersonal</u>.
Message features	Identify whether the article is information-focused (arguments/facts), emotion-focused (anger, awe, fear, anxiety, sadness, hope, etc.), or both.	“Lawyers volunteered and I am certain that they can bring justice for my daughter Nayera” would be coded as <u>emotion-focused (hope)</u> .
Problem-Solution frames	Identify whether the article is providing diagnostic frames, prognostic frames, both prognostic and diagnostic frames, or none.	Prognostic and diagnostic frames.
Sensational Label	Identify whether or not the article is providing a label for victim, a label for the incident, and/or a label for the perpetrator.	Mansoura Girl, Dress Girl.

Table 2*Codebook for the Hashtag X Posts*

Code	Description	Example
Date of the post	Day/Month/Year of the article.	24/10/2023.
Name of incident	Identify the name of the incident if it is one of the viral incidents (see Table 3). If it is not a viral incident, it will be coded as N/A.	Mit-Ghamr Girl.
X post word count	The number of words in the post.	110 words.
Number of likes	The number of likes in the post.	200 likes.
Number of comments	The number of comments in the post.	20 comments.
Number of re-posts/retweets	The number of re-posts/retweets of the same post.	40 retweets.
The main focus of X post	What the post is mainly focusing on (what happened/the crime, the arrest, the court decision, the execution of the court decision, collecting witnesses opinions, background on the victim/perpetrator, other).	“The hanging of Mohamed Adel, the killer of Nayera Ashraf” would be coded as the <u>execution of the court decision</u> .

Identified victim's name	Whether the post identifies the victim (yes or no).	M.A. killed N.A. would be coded as <u>only by their initials</u> .
Number of times a victim's name was mentioned	The number of times the victim's name was mentioned in the post.	"Nayera was killed by her colleague in front of Mansoura University...Nayera's father connected on the court sentence" would be coded as 2.
Identified perpetrator's name	Whether the post identifies the perpetrator (yes or no).	M.A. killed N.A. would be coded as <u>only by their initials</u> .
Number of times a perpetrator's name was mentioned	The number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned in the post.	"Mohamed Adel killed Nayera...sympathizers of Mohamed Adel..." would be coded as 2.
X post includes image	Whether the post uses an image or not (yes or no) and provide a description of what the image is.	Yes. A portrait picture of Nayera Ashraf [the victim] and a portrait picture of Mohamed Adel [the perpetrator].

Image was used before	Whether the same image(s) was used before in previous X posts (yes or no).	
X post includes video	Whether the post uses an video or not (yes, no) and provide a description of what the video is.	Yes. A video of the killing of Nayera Ashraf.
Video was used before	Whether the same video(s) was used before in previous X posts (yes or no).	
X post includes link	Whether the post uses an link or not (yes, no) and provide a description of what the hyperlink is.	Yes. “the father of the late student Nayera Ashraf,” “Nayera Ashraf’s father,” “Mohamed Adel.”
Link was used before	Whether the same link(s) was used before in previous X posts (yes or no).	
Graphic description/image/video of the crime in post	Whether the post uses graphic description/image/video of the crime (yes or no) and provide a description if yes.	Yes, “Mohamed Adel slaughtered Nayera Ashraf.”
Mention of similar previous incidents	Identify whether the post mentions similar previous incidents (yes or no) and mention what the name of the incident.	“A new Nayera Ashraf in Monofeya...an unemployed man killed a woman who refused to marry him...” would be coded as yes, “Nayera Ashraf.”
Tone	Identify whether the tone used in the post is personal or impersonal.	- “Nayera Ashraf’s father thanked God after the death sentence of his daughter’s killer, thanking the judicial system for avenging his daughter” would be coded as <u>personal</u> .

Message features	Identify whether the post is information-focused (arguments/facts) or emotion-focused (anger, awe, fear, anxiety, sadness, hope, other)	“Lawyers volunteered and I am certain that they can bring justice for my daughter Nayera” would be coded as <u>emotion-focused (hope)</u> .
Problem-Solution frames	Identify whether the post is providing one or more than one frame.	Prognostic and diagnostic frames.
Sensational label	Identify whether or not the post is providing a label for victim, a label for the incident, and/or a label for the perpetrator.	Mansoura Girl, Dress Girl.

Table 3*Viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt between the years (2020-2024)*

Incidents of Violence Against Women in Egypt	Yout7	Hashtags	
	Population/Sample /Interval	Hashtag Names	Population/Sample /Interval
Ahmed Bassam Zaki (<i>Rape</i>)	60(20) Interval: 3	#المتحرش_احمد_بسام_زكي #the_harasser_ahmed_bassam_zaki	132(25) Interval: 5
Nayera Ashraf (<i>Killed</i>)	270(91) Interval: 3	#نيرة_أشرف #nayera_ashraf	142(14) Interval: 5
Shaimaa Gamal (<i>Killed</i>)	120(40) Interval: 3	#شيماء_جمال #shaimaa_gamal	176(16) Interval: 5
Fairmont Case (<i>Gang rape</i>)	27(10) Interval: 3	#قضية_الفيرمونت #case_of_fairmont_girl	125(21) Interval: 5

Salma Bahgat/Sharqia Girl (Killed)	38(14) Interval: 3	#سلمى_بهجت #salma_bahgat	134(17) Interval: 5
Portsaid Girl (Killed)	8(3) Interval: 3	#خلود_درويش #kholoud_darwish	91(18) Interval: 5
Ismailia Bride/Groom (Domestic violence)	26(10) Interval: 3	#عريس_الاسماعيلية #ismailia_groom	134(19) Interval: 5
Mit-Ghamr Girl (Harassment)	24(8) Interval: 3	#حق_بسنت_فين #where's_bassant's_right	125(20) Interval: 5
Airport Harasser (Taking non-consensual photos)	14(5) Interval: 3	#متحرش_المطار #airport_harasser	122(25) Interval: 5
Habiba El Shamaa/Shorouk Girl (Harassment)	120(40) Interval: 3	#حبيبة_الشماع #habiba_elshama'a	139(16) Interval: 5
Shady Khalaf (hatkard)	9(3) Interval: 3	#خلف_شادي #shady_khalaf	55(11) Interval: 5
Ahmed Yasser el Mohamadi (rape/assault)	21(7) Interval: 3	#احمد_ياسر_المحمدي #ahmed_yasser_elmohamadi	40(8) Interval: 5
Metro Harasser (Sexual harassment)	15(5) Interval: 3	#المترو_متحرش #metro_harasser	115(23) Interval: 5
Total Population/Total Sample	725(256)		1457(233)

Table 4

Keywords for non-viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt between the years (2020-2024)

Non-Viral News Keywords	Population	Sample	Interval
Harassment تحرش	440	62	5
Rape اغتصاب	220	32	5
Murder of wife قتل زوجة	448	75	5
Assault on wife اعتداء على زوجة	38	7	5
Assault on daughter اعتداء على ابنة	68	8	5
Murder of daughter قتل ابنة	118	18	5
Threat on daughter تهديد ابنة	4	1	4
Threat on wife تهديد زوجة	11	2	6
Assault on woman اعتداء على سيدة	73	19	5
Threat on woman تهديد سيدة	20	4	5
Murder of woman قتل سيدة	103	20	5
Total	1543	248	

Table 5

Independent and dependent variables breakdown for RQ1, RQ2, & RQ3

Independent variables	Dependent variables
Trigger Attributes: 1- Type of Crime 2- Number of Victims 3- Number of Perpetrators 4- Perpetrator-Victim Relationship 5- Criminal Motives 6- Crime Consequence 7- Governorate of the Crime 8- Location of the Crime 9- Public/Private Crime 10- Crime Witnesses 11- Victim's SES 12- Perpetrator's SES	News virality (viral/non-viral)
News Virality (Viral/Non-Viral News Articles)	Framing Components: 1- <i>Structural Elements</i> - Length of the Article - Gender of Journalist - Article's Main Focus - Number of Sources - Gender of Sources - Source Type - Use of Videos - Video Used Before - Link(s) Used Before - Mention of Victim's Name - number of times a victim's name was mentioned - mention of perpetrator's name - number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned - sensational label - mention of previous incidents - graphic description 2- <i>tone</i> 3- <i>message features</i> 4- <i>Problem-solution frames</i>

Medium (News Articles/Hashtags)	Framing Components: <i>1- Structural Elements</i> - main focus of the article - mention of victim's name - number of times a victim's name was mentioned - mention of perpetrator's name - number of times the perpetrator's name was mentioned - use of photo in article/tweet - whether the photo was used before - use of video in article/tweet - whether the video was used before - use of link in article/tweet - link(s) used before - sensational label - mention of previous incidents - graphic description <i>2- tone</i> <i>3- message features</i> <i>4- problem-solution frames</i>
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Table 6

Compilation of X hashtags, viral & non-viral news articles themes (RQ4 & R5)

X Hashtag Themes	Viral News Articles Themes	Non-Viral News Articles Themes
1- Graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) 2- Efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system 3- Religious Rhetoric 4- Raising Awareness 5- Supporting/Paying tribute to the victim 6- Mentioning of previous incidents 7- Social media 8- Solution/advice 9- Frustration/sarcasm	1- Graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) 2- Efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system 3- Religious rhetoric 4- Raising awareness 5- Victim-blaming 6- Sympathizing with the perpetrator 7- Supporting/paying tribute to the victim 8- Undermining the gravity of the crime 9- Mentioning of previous incidents 10- Blaming the perpetrator 11- Social media 12- Solution/advice	1- Graphic description of the crime/perpetrator(s) 2- Efficiency/inefficiency of the judicial system 3- Religious rhetoric 4- Raising awareness 5- Victim-blaming 6- Diffusion of blame 7- Undermining the gravity of the crime 8- Mentioning of previous incidents 9- Social media

Appendix

Case Profiling of the viral incidents of violence against women in Egypt

CONTENT WARNING: The details of the crimes may be disturbing

Please make sure to take some time away, if overwhelmed

1. *Ahmed Bassam Zaki: 2020*

Ahmed Bassam Zaki is a former college student who was blackmailing and sexually assaulting three girls between the years 2016 and 2020. He was accused by a girl in 2016 of blackmail to have sexual intercourse with him. Other women followed up with accusations against him which went viral on social media in 2020. Zaki was sentenced eight years in prison as a result (Gamal El-Din, 2023).

2. *Nayera Ashraf: 2022*

Nayera Ashraf was a student in Mansoura University who was beaten and stabbed multiple times in front of the university gate in broad daylight by her colleague Mohamed Adel. Adel was in love with Ashraf and she rejected his marriage proposal which drove him to threaten her. In front of the Mansoura University gate on June 20, 2022, after stabbing Ashraf multiple times in the presence of witnesses, he slit her throat. A video circled social media platforms of the gruesome crime. Adel was arrested and sentenced to death (Farhat, 2023).

3. *Shaimaa Gamal: 2022*

Shaimaa Gamal was a TV presenter who was married to senior judge, Ayman Haggag. Haggag reported that his wife was missing on June 2022. A few days later, Gamal was found dead and buried in a farm with signs of suffocation and blows.

Haggag had help from the second convict and they both lured her into the farm and gave her a blow to the head, suffocated her and buried her. Gamal was threatening Haggag of disclosing all his secrets in an argument. Haggag was sentenced to death (“Killers of Egyptian T.V. Presenter”, 2022).

4. *Fairmont Girl: 2020*

A woman reported that she was gang raped by several men at the Fairmont Hotel in 2014. The authorities were reluctant to arrest the suspects, which gave some of them the chance to flee the country. The police received screenshots of the gang rape video. In 2020, this video has been teased on social media platforms causing public outrage. The perpetrators gang raped and allegedly signed their names on the victim’s body. The perpetrators were released from custody until the investigation is complete (Kandil, 2021).

5. *Salma Bahgat/Sharqia Girl: 2022*

Salma Bahgat was a college student from Sharqia governorate, who was stabbed to death by her colleague Islam Mohamed. Bahgat broke up with Mohamed, so he stabbed her 17 times all over her body in front of a courthouse in Zagazig. Mohamed was sentenced to death (Abdou, 2022).

6. *Kholoud al-Sayyed/Portsaid Girl: 2022*

Kholoud al-Sayyed Darwich was killed by her ex-fiancé for refusing to marry him and breaking up with him. Darwich was found dead at her apartment in Port Said governorate on October 2022. She was suffocated to death according to police reports. The perpetrator was threatening Darwich repeatedly before committing his crime (Farhat, 2023).

7. *Ismailia Bride/Groom: 2022*

A video of a groom brutally beating his bride on their wedding day in the middle of the street in Ismailia circled social media platforms on February 2022. The groom –as shown in the video- is beating the bride to force her to get in the car and she was refusing following an argument between the couple, resulting in spots of blood on the bride’s dress. Another video surfaced on social media shortly after of the bride and groom married and reconciled, having family over to congratulate them and emphasizing that this was merely a misunderstanding. The video showed the bride looking uncomfortable as the groom was smiling and joking (Kandil, 2022). Eight months after this incident, the bride accused her husband of assault. Maha, the bride, was threatened by her husband, Abdullah, against reporting him or filing for divorce. She was tortured and abused for months and kept captive. Abdullah was arrested on assault charges (“Authorities arrest man”, 2022).

8. *Mit-Ghamr Girl: 2020*

Basant Mahmoud is a college student who got sexually assaulted by a large group of men in the city of Mit Ghamr in Mansoura. Seven men were arrested after Mahmoud posted on her Twitter and Facebook account:

“Today, exactly two hours ago, I was exposed to an incident of collective sexual assault in Mansoura...a group of young men bombarded me and blocked the road. They cut my clothes and touched all of my body and the rest was photographed. Our (rape victims) rights are lost in Egypt... I want to die.”

Ever since, Mahmoud has been allegedly receiving death threats from the families of the seven men who sexually assaulted her. She has been slut-shamed and criticized

for not dressing “modestly”, saying that she got what she deserved. In an interview, Mahmoud said:

“I got out of my car and was on my way home...I feel so sick every time I remember what happened. Seven of them sexually assaulted me, they all grabbed my body...I tried to resist but I couldn't. Someone else ended up taking me home. Then I tweeted about the incident, when I found people supporting me, I was encouraged to file a police report.”

The seven men were eventually acquitted from all charges without releasing an explanation of the verdict (“7 men acquitted”, 2021b; Hoteit, 2020).

9. *Airport Harasser: 2021*

Egyptian blogger Basma Bishay called out an employee at Cairo International Airport whom she caught taking photos of her body as she was collecting her baggage without her consent. She shared a video on her platform about her experience denouncing harassment. The perpetrator consistently denied her accusation and did not want to give her his phone. Bishay called security and he gave them his phone where they found photos of Bishay and photos of many other women. Instead of taking action, the employees kept passing the phone to each other and dismissed Bishay completely in total disregard, pushing her out of the room eventually. Police then arrived and after investigating the incident, arrested the harasser (“Man arrested at Cairo airport”, 2021b).

10. *Habiba El-Shama'a (Uber Girl/Shorouk Girl): 2024*

Habiba El-Shama'a was taking an Uber, when the driver started acting strange, speeding, shut the windows, and sprayed something in the car which he later claimed to be a perfume. Habiba got scared and jumped out of the moving car. She told the

person who found her that the driver was trying to kidnap her. Habiba sustained fatal injuries that led to her passing. The driver was first defended by Uber. The investigations revealed that the driver was high on weed and that his Uber account was shut down after many complaints against him, but he managed to open a different account. The perpetrator's sentence was reduced from 15 years to 5 years in prison and 10,000 EGP fine (Scene Now, 2024; Egyptian Streets, 2024).

11. Shady Khalaf: 2021

Shady Khalaf is an Egyptian actor who was accused of harassment and attempted rape of seven women in an acting workshop. The women accused Khalaf by revealing on Instagram that the actor used to convince them to stay after his acting workshop for more practice and that's when the assaults occurred. Khalaf was found guilty and sentenced to 3 years in prison (Egypt Today, 2021).

12. Ahmed Yasser El-Mohamadi: 2024

Ahmed Yasser El-Mohamadi is an Egyptian footballer for the Qatari Al-Rayyan football team, who has been accused of sexual assault by a woman in Qatar. He fled to Egypt as soon as he was released pending further investigation. El-Mohamadi claims that he was in a consensual relationship with the woman, while she claims that the footballer lured her to his apartment and assaulted her. El-Mohamadi was caught in Egypt and sentenced to 3 years for sexual assault (Youn7, 2025; Egypt Independent, 2024).

13. Metro Harasser: 2021

A girl was taking the underground/metro, all the girls/women got off the cart, and there was no one left but two guys. Then, the perpetrator got on the train and sat right across from her. The girl said that his behavior was suspicious from the moment he

stepped onto the train. He started touching himself and looking at her. The girl called her fiancé who advised her to record him. She recorded him and posted the video on Facebook. The perpetrator was sentenced to one year in prison and 10,000EGP fine, reduced from 3 years and 20,000EGP fine (Egyptian Streets, 2021; Youm7, 2021).

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