Survival Strategies under Repression
The Case of the Egyptian Civil Society
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Abstract:
Similarly to many governments around the world, the Mubarak regime of Egypt was hostile to the activities of civil society. Following the Revolution of 2011 in Egypt, the members of civil society organizations and activists in general were expecting an improvement of their working conditions. However, despite the promises made by the new president, conditions have worsened and the repression has increased. Pressurized by harsher restriction, the civil society needs to create strategies to ensure its survival. This study aims to understand what sorts of strategies are required under a repressive environment.

The conceptual frame of this study was grounded on several articles that researched several relevant areas. These concepts were the repression, the civil society in Egypt, and the state – civil society relationship. In researching these behaviours, the goal was to understand the patterns of such environments, which are not usually present in western society. The core of the research process concerned the gathering of qualitative data through interviews with members of the Egyptian civil society.

The results of the research provide a model that should be replicated with data from other repressive countries in order to ensure its accuracy. This model is based on four major strategic goals that are vital to the survival of a civil society under oppressive regimes. These four goals are fulfilled by behavioural choices that are influenced by the repression’s context. These behavioural choices illustrate the way civil society strategizes and eight of them could be isolated. Mapping the four goals against the eight BCs demonstrate two aspects. The BCs have a tendency to overlap when it comes to their strategic objectives, meaning that one behavioural choice can contribute to several strategic goals. However, this mapping also showed that some goals were sufficiently fulfilled by the BCs. The main issue is the cut of funding and this restriction has not been dealt with in an efficient way by the civil society. This problem needs follow ups and international funds and grant providers should be aware of these sanctions. Moreover, the lack of understanding the government has of the advantages of civil society should also be investigated. Indeed, the research shows that this hostility mainly comes from the government perceiving civil society as a threat.

Keywords related to the study: Repression, civil society, strategies, state – civil society relationship, conflict
List of Abbreviations

BC: Behavioural Choice
CoSOs: Conflict Society Organization
CS: Civil Society
HR: Human Rights
MB: Muslim Brotherhood
NA: National Agency to Regulate the Work of Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations
SCAF: Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
SSI: State Security Investigation

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1. **Introduction**

1.1 Problem Formulation

The UN recognizes the “Civil Society” as the “Third Sector” after the government and the business sector and therefore sees it as a valuable actor to work with (UN, Civil Society). In modern history, there have been many examples of the influence of the civil society in a regime change. One of the latest example of the possible impact of the people’s will is the Arab Spring, which induced several regime transformations (Roll, 2015, p.23). According to Marchetti and Tocci, the analysis of the civil society as a concept has not been evaluated from a non-western point of view yet (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 202). Although this statement can be disputed, this shows the difficulty to find adequate literature on precise issues concerning non-western CS. The beginning of the research on civil society (CS) emerged from precise historical, socio-economic and political contexts. Consequently, these contexts influenced the perception that scholars developed on CS (Ibid, 2009, p. 202). The philosophical discussions that led to the creation of the vision of Marx and Hegel on classes and capitalism or of Gramsci and Habermas on democratization were originally conceived in the west. Similarly, the later thoughts on environment, globalization or race and gender issues have also been founded in the west (Ibid, 2009, p. 202).

The notion of “civil society” has evolved a lot since its use by Marxist intellectuals. As the trend of democratization grew after the fall of the Soviet Union, the citizen’s participation in shaping their political environment grew as well (Ottaway, 2005, p.147). The civil society is a broad concept and many actors can be included. They were created by the structure of a state but act independently from it to motivate changes (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 202). According to Gramsci, the civil society is an entity trying to influence the government and its policy making (Ottaway, 2005, p.149). However, its effectiveness has often been questioned. Several aspects of its functioning have been studied and assessed. Can the civil society really participate in democratization? Can it really help with the negotiation of a peace agreement? Can it really promote peace building? Nevertheless, before any of these questions comes up, CS is the safeguard that the basic rights of the people are being respected. If it is not the case, CS will try claiming these rights back (Ottaway, 2005, p.156).

“Rather than endemic to human nature, the liberal school of conflict resolution argues that conflict emerges when basic human needs are denied.” (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 211)
Nonetheless, in certain cases, CS will undergo a very oppressive campaign from the government before being able to bring a positive change. CS will then take a rival position to the regime through political opposition, protesting or the creation of human rights organizations (Ottaway, 2005, p.156). Yet, when the repression is too strong, how does CS react? How can they manage to still fulfil their duties? What are their strategies against such a system?

These interrogations frame the study and address the research problem. Before CS is able to accomplish anything from democratization to peace building, in some cases, they need to survive the repression first. One example of such a struggle can be found in the current Egyptian civil society. As an Arab country, the contextual frame as a non-western country will be necessary to add to the existent literature on civil society. Egypt went through several recent events in which the civil society had a very relevant role (Roll, 2015, p.23). After enabling the fall of the former dictatorial regime, the civil society is facing a dead end from the government. The positive and democratic change expected through the revolution did not occur and the actors of the civil society are finding themselves fighting for the same rights as before (Ibid, p.37). Moreover, they are facing a very harsh repression when taking part in NGOs and human rights work (HRW, 2017). Investigating the Egyptian CS will provide data on this topic in general and the results can be used to demonstrate other cases.

1.2 Relevance

Due to some difficulty to access research on the exact topic of strategies in non-western countries, it seems important to create a model to understand them. The aim of this research is to contribute to the studies on oppressive countries with other historical, political and socio-economic contexts. Picking a civil society from an Arab country provides different frameworks than in a European context. Although international organization and funding might influence those structures, the subject of this thesis will only focus on civil society’s work in Egypt and it will not expand on this topic in details. An example of differences is the importance of the religious background, which greatly influences the work of CS and polarizes it (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.581). Moreover, the development of CS under several oppressive regimes consecutively in recent history can provide vital information on CS of other countries, which went through the Arab Spring.
Examining civil society’s strategies to survive under an oppressive regime is relevant for the international community as well. According to Martina Fischer, the collaboration between the UN and EU with NGOs has increased. The number of interactions between states and non-state actors are growing and the UN and EU have shown interest in gaining knowledge about societies in countries in conflict (Fischer, 2011, p.293). Therefore, the research of the strategies CS creates under a repressive regime is of importance. This could provide a better understanding of how to properly assist the civil society under threat.

A better understanding of civil society can also have benefits in the long term when it comes to improving the life of the people the CS organizations represent as well as their relationship to their government. The CS has a recognized role when it comes to peace building. However, supporting CS to encourage peace building has not been extensively considered so far. The usually complicated context within which civil society evolves often prevents the international community to support it appropriately (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p.201). Therefore, investigating the different levels of CS and how it defends its interest during the conflict can lead to taking the right decision when it comes to peace building.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of this research is to increase the knowledge concerning CS’s strategies in contexts similar to Egypt. Therefore, the first research objective will be to develop an analytical framework from the literature, which will allow the analysis of the strategies. The second objective will be to gather information about the Egyptian CS’s strategies through interviews. The data will then be analyzed through the developed framework. This will determine the functioning of these strategies, their advantages and disadvantages and their efficiency. The third objective will be to relate the results of the analysis to the case and draw conclusions on their meanings. The results will be interesting not only for the target group of this study, but will also provide clarifications on how to support CS in repressed environment in general. Research questions:

1. What are the strategies the Egyptian Civil Society activists or organizations pursue?

2. What can these strategies demonstrate in respect to their functioning, types, priorities and perspectives?
3. How could the strategies be improved and what model might be drawn from the Egyptian case?
2. Delimitation and Methodological and Analytical Research Frame

2.1 Methodological Frame

This research design will be an abductive case-study for which semi-structured interviews will produce qualitative data. The section below explains the reason of these choices.

Qualitative research:

The main characteristic of a qualitative research is that the topics are framed within the social sciences and humanities. This implies that concepts such as events or situations will provide a meaning when being analyzed. Subsequently, it became a trait of qualitative research to include the perspective of the people who live or undergo the studied situation or environment. The analysis must interpret the social world from the viewpoint of the people (Bryman, 2012, p.399).

The use of a qualitative approach is therefore justified. The variety of opinions and impressions from civil society actors are vital to understand both their environment and their strategies.

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data will allow the emergence of recurring actions and issues. The technic is based on the construction of a framework, which defines central themes and subthemes from the qualitative interviews (Bryman, 2012, p.579). Through the repetition of themes, it is possible to identify patterns and to sort them out according to strategical structures.

Abduction:

When it comes to qualitative studies, one way of thinking the analytical empirical process is through an abductive reasoning. The aim of this process of reasoning is to embed theoretical concepts into the contextual environment of the studied subject. This will allow the analysis of the case through perspectives and characteristics of the people’s viewpoint. Every kind of personal feature from the target group can provide useful information, such as language, event, social mechanisms and others (Bryman, 2012, p.401).
However, the abduction process is not complete without relating the account of the studied group to a social scientific explanation in order to make sense of the research. The importance of the viewpoint of the collected data is the characteristic, which separates abduction of induction. The theoretical interpretation of the results will be in direct connection to the understanding drawn from the participants of the study (Bryman, 2012, p.401).

The abduction being an interpretative method, the perspective of this thesis concerning the civil society in Egypt will depend on the contextualization chosen to analyze the topic. The events are the post-revolution situations as well as the different political tumults and oppression. The angle of the interpretation is the view of the CS actors. The new understanding is focused on the strategies in similar cases (Bryman, 2012, p.401). This means that a research concerning the same topic can produce a different interpretation of the facts if using a different frame than this one. This will produce one perception of the subject and other understanding or conclusions could be considered.

Case study:

According to Bryman, a case study is the intensive and in-depth analysis of a particular case. He mentions Robert Stake who reasoned that a research around a case study is focused on the particular intricacy and the core meaning of the case (Bryman, 2012, p.66). The word “case” refers to the scene of the study, from a community to an organization or a particular kind of group. The case and the setting of the case will both be rigorously examined (Ibid, p.67).

According to Yin, who published a research on the case study methodology, most studies are based on the question concepts such as what, why, who, how, where (Yin, 1994, p.5). He claims that usually a case study will be adequate to answer questions such as how or why. The reason is that such questions are related to concepts of features, which are linked over a certain period of time. Subsequently it is necessary to intensely focus on the case to examine and interpret complicated social singularities (Ibid, p.6).

The use of a case study methodology often faces the difficulty of generalization. Yin makes a comparison with natural sciences for which several experiments are necessary to interpret a generalization. These experiments are then replicated under various conditions and if a pattern can be identified, a generalization will be possible (Yin, 1994, p.10).
The case of this research is the Egyptian civil society, which includes its characteristic as an oppressed entity in the Egyptian society. It is indeed a complex social phenomenon as many countries do treat their civil society poorly. The aim is to understand how CS can react to such a situation and therefore, needs to be studied within its Egyptian context. The case study method will allow the inclusion of social factors, which make the Egyptian case’s particularity. It will provide an analytical generalization for non-western countries in which the Civil Society is being violently repressed. The objective is to present both the Egyptian CS particularities as well a model that could be replicated.

In Bryman’s words, the unit of analysis are any entities that the research questions will point at as the suitable unit to be analyzed for a research (Bryman, 2012, p.416). In this case, the research questions are focusing on CS activists in Egypt. Their feedback on the current situation, suffering, experiences and strategies will allow a form of generalization which will be related to existing literature. Moreover, Egypt’s political and historical context will also be a unit as this research is a case study.

Qualitative interviews:

In the history of qualitative research, interviewing is one of the most used tools when it comes to data gathering. One of the reasons for this enthusiasm is the wide range of possibilities its use offers. The unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview are the most commonly used forms of interviews among qualitative researchers (Bryman, 2012, p.469).

The most adequate kind of interview for this research is the semi-structured interview. The less structured shape of these interviews allows the interviewee to speak more freely and therefore, bring in his point of view (Bryman, 2012, p.470). In doing so and providing an insight into his personal experience regarding the subject of the study, the abductive nature of this research can be achieved. This flexibility can lead to detailed and deep results; however, this can lead to the need to alter the focus of the thesis if the answers are not the ones that the frame had expected (Ibid, p.470).

The people interviewed for the purpose of this research are members of various civil society organizations whose efforts focus on the people’s rights. All the interviews were semi-structured, which offered a lot of liberty to gather the data. An almost equal number of interviews was carried out via skype and in real life. The language used to communicate for
most of the cases was English, which sometimes was an obstacle as some of the participants’ English was rudimentary. One interview was conducted in French. Managing to get in touch with interviewees was a lot of work and was sometimes frustrating due to the lack of responding as well as false promises.

The concept of civil society is wide and, as previously explained, includes many different actors. Moreover, Egypt’s political context leads to very intricate relationships between the different actors (Roll, 2015, p.23). Due to these characteristics, the choice of a category of CS actors is important. Therefore, this study will focus on organizations which aim to improve any aspects of Egyptian people’s life. This means any organization that provides material and services to raise awareness of freedom and rights issues generally. The reason of this decision is that the organizations focusing on such issues are the most problematic for the government, and therefore the most targeted. Moreover, this study will solely focus on non-religious groups. This does not mean that organizations which fight for the rights of minorities, including religious minorities, will not figure in the target group. However, this study will not include actors who are aiming for the rights of one single religion or are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Including such actors would require widening the analysis and therefore explore an additional layer of context. This might take away the focus of the research as the basic context of differences between religious and non-religious groups are influencing their strategies immensely. Additionally, the Muslim Brotherhood is an even more risky subject and trying to get in touch with them might lead to an unsafe situation.

The research will have two different levels; the first one will focus on the primary source, the data based on the interviews of organizations and civil society actors. The analysis of the produced data will be embedded in an analytical framework and the content of previous literature on the subject. The secondary sources will be the support of literature analysis, especially of research on the civil society and background literature on Egypt.

The interviewees as repressed entities, their strategies to survive as well as their relationships with the media, the nature of their work and the obstacles to it, will be elements to explore. These research points were selected from the theoretical literature, which will be reviewed below. The research will require the interviews of CS organizations leaders or activists and a selection of documents such as the constitution and legal instructions. The goal of this research is not to represent the whole of the Egyptian civil society, but merely the less conservative and often younger part of the population who were particularly expecting drastic changes through the Arab Spring.
This research will be conducted ethically and with honesty toward the interviewed people concerning the expected results of this research and its meaning. There will be the possibility for the participants as well as their organizations to be anonymous. Contacts and relatives in Egypt will provide a briefing on safety to ensure everyone’s security.

The interviewees

The climate of fear in Egypt dissuaded many people to be interviewed for the purpose of this research. Therefore, in order to enable some interviews, the anonymity of the participants was required, which means that no names of individuals or organizations will be disclosed, however a vague description of their work will be featured in the Appendix. Additionally, many were very much against any form of publication of their opinions through the interviews, consequently, the transcription won’t feature in this research.

2.2 Restrictions of the Study:

One of the main limitations of the study is the distance between Egypt and Sweden. Although the search for CS actors was successful enough to allow the pursuit of this research, there were many obstacles. The first issue was to gain access to the network of Egyptian activists due to the widespread distrust of anyone who is unknown. In addition, the distance made it hard to maintain such networks, and it happened that contacts were lost. However, the biggest issue was to find people who were feeling safe enough to be interviewed. The constant threats from the government have influenced the decision of CS activists concerning actions that might reveal them and interviews are one of them. Moreover, the tense and unstable situation led to unexpected problems such as the shutting down of organizations or the imprisonment of activists who had agreed to be interviewed.

Another unexpected issue was a series of important changes concerning the CS in Egypt, which have modified many elements of the primal context of this study. These changes required several and regular adaptation and transformation of the research as it was being written.
3. **Background**

3.1 The Egyptian Civil Society

The Egyptian civil society has several influences and streams. Especially since 2000 the political opposition has been growing and evolving, which dramatically influenced the events of 2011 (Abdelrahman, 2013, pp.570, 572). Before this decade, most drastic mobilizations were rare and happening far apart from each other. However, the period between the twentieth and the twenty-first century has seen a lot of political and economic changes which induced the development of a more active CS. The most important influencing events are the 2000 Palestinian intifada and the harsh neoliberalist privatization. They caused the Egyptians to distrust their leadership and see it as weak. As the years passed, this situation worsened and culminated in the 2008 crisis (Ibid, p. 573). There were four separate relevant movements, the first one is “the pro-democracy movement”, the second one the “Labour movement”, the third one “the citizenship-based movement” and the fourth one the Muslim Brotherhood.

The pro-democracy movement has first started around the Palestinian intifada and its activists were mostly aiming for political reformation of the constitution, the elections, the emergency law and the presidential terms. They became essentially a Nasserist movement that grew disappointed with the Mubarak dynasty-like political domination (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.575). The Labour movement has reinforced itself during the Mubarak years and protested persistently. This movement allowed innovative forms of unions to develop as well as encouraged the use of intense political networking (Ibid, p.577). The Citizenship-based protest movements were an eclectic series of civil disobedience revolts. People from poor backgrounds had growing anger over the increasing food prices and bad living environment (Ibid, 2013, p.579).

The Muslim Brotherhood is the most important religious movement in Egypt. This group was created in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, who aimed to reform the society with an inclusive Islamic perception. However, it didn’t wish to engage into radical changes but rather slowly transform into a society that would voluntarily adopt a Shari’a based government. Ever since 1984 they have been very active politically with candidates running for parliament seats (Wickham, 2011, p.206). Despite being a very organized CS actor, the MB has been having a lot of internal divisions concerning ideological concepts. A younger stream of the movement was
pushing for more interest into democratic reforms and they consequently became critical of the Brotherhood’s original ideology (Ibid, p.208).

Their success did not please the different Egyptian governments and they have always been under severe oppression. Mubarak was particularly strict, as the MB became increasingly popular and reached an exceptionally high result in the 2005 elections. The regime wanted to ensure such results would not happen again and arrested many members of the MB (Wickham, 2011, p.211). When the Arab Spring started, they first stayed discrete and only joined to support the protest as citizens and not as Muslim Brothers. Only later, as the protest grew that the MB massively participated and worked together with secular CS activists and organizations (Ibid, p.212). They later came back to the idea of becoming a political party and started legal procedures to do so. They filed the papers for recognition at the Political Parties Committee on April 7, which allowed them to win the elections and Morsi to become president in June 2012 (Ibid, p.215).

3.2 The Revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood and the military Coup

Egypt was under the authoritarian rule of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak when protesters gathered on the 25 of January 2011 in order to protest against the increasing police violence and to urge the president to resign (Van de Bildt, 2015, p.254)(Abdelrahman, 2013, p.570). This movement expanded over the whole country and ultimately led to the overthrow of Mubarak in February 2011 (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.569). The population could finally express their thoughts freely after the ouster but this freedom lead to the apparition of divisions (Lavie, 2017, p.35). The different political parties were created as the elections were expected and were therefore representing along the line of those divisions. Both the Islamist parties and the youth movements tried to gain political importance (Ibid, p.36) and the conflict between secularization and religion became one of the crucial components of the political debate (Ibid, 2017, p.37). As the first democratic presidential elections came about in May 2012, this same feature separated the candidates of the second round. Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood represented the religious interest and Ahmad Shafiq, formerly minister under Mubarak, represented the secular side. Morsi was elected with 52% of the votes and could begin the writing of the constitution. This document had a very religious tendency, labelled Egypt as an Islamic nation (Ibid, p.40) and declared that the legislation will be formatted on the principles of Islamic law (Albrecht, 2013, p.1). Despite the
demonstrations in response to the orientation of the document, the constitution passed (Lavie, 2017, p.41).

However, a year after Morsi’s inauguration, the protests against him gathered millions of Egyptians. The military could take over with the support of the people and organize a coup against Morsi. One of the leaders of the event was the then minister of defense Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi and his first move was to invalidate the constitution (Lavie, 2017, p.41). Subsequently, the organization of new presidential elections started. Until then, a transitional president, Adly Mansour, became the head of the country. This interim phase fostered violent tensions between the government and religious groups or anti-military movements (Roll, 2015, p.33).

Al-Sisi used the support of anti-Muslim Brotherhood protesters to legitimate his interests in running for president. Therefore, at the end of March 2014, he officially resigned from his military profession (Roll, 2015, p.36) and participated in the election in May 2014. Many political movements that rejected this election, did not participate and al-Sisi was elected with over 90% of the votes (Al-Jazeera, 2014).

3.3 Al-Sisi’s Relationship with the Civil Society, his first Moves and the Hopes

3.3.1 Al-Sisi’s political Past and Position

Al-Sisi, as a former military figure, was part of the “Supreme Council of the Armed Forces” (SCAF) and therefore, part of the elite (Roll, 2015, p.23). The SCAF’s influence varied over the years, hitting a low phase during the Sadat years (Ibid, p.26). However, they always were an appreciated institution among the people, and they were very trusted (Steiman, 2012, p.5). Although they had regained some control under Mubarak, they felt he was favoring other agencies such as the police toward the end (Roll, 2015, p.26). Subsequently, the military saw the start of the demonstrations as an opportunity. Therefore, they slowly distanced themselves from the government and earned appreciation from the people demonstrating (Ibid, p.25).

When the government was ousted, the SCAF managed to become the head of the transitional government until Morsi was elected (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.403). As explained above, the activist movements and later on the coalitions were divided between the secular and religious interests after Mubarak’s fall (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.581). As a result, the SCAF was able to make use of some of the movement’s disappointments after the election of Al-Morsi in order to legitimate their coup a year later (Roll, 2015, p.33). The most important campaign against
al-Morsi, called Tamarod, is suspected of having benefited from the backing of the SCAF during its course (Ibid, p.33). After the success of the coup, the SCAF was determined not to lose the support from such movement. Therefore, some of Tamarod’s activists were allowed to be involved in the drafting of the new constitution and some groups could even receive state funding (Ibid, p.34). As a result of these events, the SCAF could present themselves as good-willing actors on behalf of the people and subsequently deserve their legitimacy (Ibid, p.33).

After his election, Al-Sisi’s constitution received the support of many (Van de Bildt, 2015, p.258) as the document had a strong secular orientation. This version eliminated the strong Sharia conditions on which the former one was based and is considered quite progressive (EU COM, 2015). It ensures the protection and equality of women (Egyptian Government, 2014, p.13), fights against discrimination (Ibid, p.21), bans torture (Ibid, p.21) and protects workers (Ibid, p.14). Moreover, regarding the protection of human rights, the article 82 prevents the passing of laws that could counter legally recognized rights (Ibid, p.27). Additionally article 93 obliges the government to implement the conventions on human rights that Egypt has ratified (Ibid, p.29).

3.3.2 How the SCAF maintained its Advantages

The military elite had started securing their control, before al-Sisi officially became president. They had passed a referendum through which they ensured their management and decision making in the transition process (Roll, 2015, p.27). Furthermore, it also maintained the state of emergency, which was established by Nasser and deactivated and reactivated it several times. This allows the government’s institutions to arrest and jail people without charges and force them to trial (Ibid, p.27). Moreover, the 2014 constitution secures the military power, civilian trials and the army control on the military budget are secured in article 204 and 203 (Egyptian Government, 2014, p.51). The institutional autonomy of the SCAF is also secured and allows them to have ultimate decision making on national security, budget, military justice and to choose the minister of defense for at least two presidential terms (Roll, 2015, p.32).
3.3.3 Oppression of the Civil Society under Al-Sisi

Researching the current situation and interviewing Egyptian civil society activists indicates an ongoing oppression. The first noticeable fact is the overall lack of implementation of the 2014 constitution (Roll, 2015, p.32). Quickly after coming into power, Al-Sisi was confronted with the unhappiness of the conservative and pro-Morsi part of the population. After violently repressing and killing some demonstrators who disapproved of his coup, Al-Sisi issued an anti-protest law (el-Dinshahin, 2015, p.345). Moreover, there are growing complaints about the impunity of the military and police forces (Sharmila Devi, 2016). The academical world has been threaten as well when the Italian PHD student G.R. disappeared in 2016. Ever since his tortured body was found, the military regime has been having difficulties distancing itself from this death and the diplomatic relations between Egypt and Italy have been gravely affected (Stille, 2016). The CS has seen a reinforcing of harsh measures against them and it seems that the Egyptian government is more politically repressive than ever before. Moreover, the military managed to develop and ensure its ruling power (Roll, 2015, p.37). Several direct attempts by the government to prevent the civil society to function need to be highlighted. First, the military government kept the prohibition of public criticism of the government, which was already a policy under Mubarak. The official media are not allowed to critically report on the Egyptian politics and the head of the Press Syndicate has been incriminated (HRW, 2017). According to alternative Egyptian media, many email accounts of NGOs and activists have been hacked and most workers in that domain feel monitored (Mada Masr, 2017). Through a legally legitimate crack down, NGO’s and activist’s assets were frozen, travel bans were issued, many were arrested and in some cases NGOs have been shut down as well (HRW, 2017). There have been a series of such investigations under the legal “case no 173”, which has been investigating a panel of NGOs and activists on foreign funding offences (UN news center, 2016). However, according to the interviews, the government has to present a reason to interrupt the work of an organization. Therefore, a new law restraining funding possibilities for NGOs had been drafted (Aljazeera, 2017).

3.3.4 The Consequences of the New Law

This document had passed parliament in November and was on hold by Al-Sisi for six months before being ultimately passed (Aljazeera, 2017). Although the Mubarak regime had already a very restricted policy toward the NGOs, this new law will cancel any form of independent space for them. This law contains a blurry language in order to allow the authorities to interpret it and use it as wished.
Listed below are the main points of this law:

- **Foreign and Domestic Funding:** All Egyptian organizations will have to get the government’s approval before receiving funds from foreign organizations inside or outside of Egypt or from other governments (Article 24). Member of all Ministries and of the security and intelligence will form a new agency called “National Agency to Regulate the Work of Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations” (NA). This agency’s role will be to approve or reject the foreign funding within 60 days (Article 24, 70). Concerning domestic funding, the organization will have to seek the approval of the government as well (Article 23). The members of organizations will have to provide a full transparency of the funding’s data. They will have to publish it on their own websites as well as the Ministry of Social Solidarity’s website (Article 25). If the organizations do not comply with these rules, they risk an official dissolution (Page, 2017).

- **Foreign Organizations:** The NA will have to approve the settlement or the activation of foreign organizations in Egypt (Article 59). Their permit will only last three years and cost a minimum of 16,500 $, however every five years this price is expected to rise by 20 percent (Article 59, 61). The activities of the foreign organizations will be closely monitored and are not allowed to be politically oriented or harm the Egyptian security and morals in anyway (Article 62). If the government perceives a foreign organization as a threat, the cancellation of its permit or the freezing of its assets are possible (Article 68) (Page, 2017).

- **International Contact:** Collaboration with foreign organizations and employment of foreign worker also need to be approved by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (Article 19, 66) (Page, 2017).

- **Formation:** In order to create an association, there must be ten founders and proof of it (Articles 1, 7). Each of the founders must be legally able to use their civil rights and have no criminal record. Only up to 10 percent of the members are allowed to be non-Egyptians (Article 5) (Page, 2017).

- **Establishment:** The activities of the organizations must be limited to “civil work” and have a year to register again under the law 70 (Preamble Article 2). The registration costs around 550 $ and very invasive as the government gain access to the organization’s background and can stop the progression at any moment (Article 8-9).
Working with illegal organizations is punished by up to five years of imprisonment and an expensive fine up to 55,000$ (Article 87) (Page, 2017).

- Activities: The support of violence or terrorist organizations is prohibited as well as monitoring opinion polls and publishing the outcome. The NA has to review and approve every research and reports before publication (Article 14) (Page, 2017).

- Government Supervision: The Ministry of Social Solidarity is allowed to send inspectors and require the financial and administrative annals of an organization (Article 27). The Ministry has the power to reject any activity or decision made by the organization (Article 31). The organization needs to notify the Ministry of any changes and use of money or the government can take over the board (Article 42). Moreover, the members of the board can be considered ineligible and rejected by the government (Articles 34) (Page, 2017).

- Penalties: Overall, an organization can be dissolved in case of unauthorized foreign funding or collaboration with a foreign organization (Article 43). Such actions can result in criminal penalties up to five years in prison and fines for individuals. In addition, conducting unauthorized researches can also result in a one-year prison sentence or a fine (Article 87). Finally, the harshness of the penalties is not limited to the one mentioned above as the Law 70 refers to any penalty within the Penal Code or within another law (Article 86) (Page, 2017).

In this background overview, the oppressive nature of the government’s policing on CS is introduced. In order to continue the framing of the research, the literature review will provide a more focused analysis.
4. Literature review

The two following subchapters will first present a condensed review of the debate around the connection between repression and CS. Secondly it will introduce the Egyptian example as a case of repressed CS. Due to the lack of model to directly study the strategies of CS, the chosen approaches will clarify important concepts. They will be relevant for the elaboration of a model to categorize CS’s strategies.

4.1 Discussion around the Relationship between the Repression and the Civil Society

The articles chosen for this review focus on the different areas. On the topic of repression the article “State Repression and Political Order” by Christian Davenport and “The Dictator’s dilemma” by Ronald A. Fransisco were selected. The Study will bring different but complementary approaches of the aims of a government’s repressive tactics. To understand CS as a positive actor during a period of crisis the approach of Raffaele Marchetti & Nathalie Tocci with “Conflict society: understanding the role of civil society in conflict” and the one of Thania Paffenholz with “Civil society and peace building” will be relevant. In order to add some perspective to the definition and roles of the civil society, the article “Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Strengths and Limitations” by Martina Fischer will also be reviewed. There is a substantial debate on the effect of a regional or cultural context on CS, in order to illustrate it, the articles "State control of civil society organizations: the case of Turkey” by Jessica Leigh Doyle and “Civil Society and Democratization in Arab World” by Sean Yom will bring some nuances.

To understand the conceptual environment of a topic such as the one of this thesis, the different concepts should be reviewed and understood. The first important component is repression and the way repression can be defined. This term can have different meaning according to its durability. In Davenport’s perception of repression, this phenomenon is first defined by its harshness as a threat to the physical and mental integrity of the people targeted (Davenport, 2007, p.2). However, for him repression is very closely linked to an idea of power. According to him, from the 50s to the 70s, repression was used to maintain a system with its elite (Ibid, p.4).

“Political order was either possessed or not possessed.” (Davenport, 2007, p.3)
Repression is ultimately a tool to safeguard a status quo and should be carefully assessed before using it. This point of view considers the concept of repression as a durable one, which is being used long term to guarantee the establishment of a ruling entity. Such perception of the matter comes from around 1400 and was a usual form of governance until around 1600 (Davenport, 2007, p.7). This concept is called the Law of Coercive Responsiveness and its use is always weighed according to the cost and benefits it would bring and is not a constant. However, this shows that this form of repression is not obsolete and can still be a durable tool to safeguard a government or elite (Ibid, pp.4-7).

Nevertheless, repression does not always imply a durable process with a long-term aim. Francisco’s point of view of repression can be understood as an event of very high violence during a certain event or certain period. Such events don’t need an ultimate durable goal, it just proves that the government does not want or need to be seen as a legitimate actor by its people (Fransisco, 2005, p.58). This perception of repression is a tool against temporary issues that could bother a regime, such as preventing or shutting down protests or cracking down on an opposition movement. The technics to achieve such short-term goals can be quite diverse, from arrests to shooting at protesters (Ibid, pp.62-64).

However, when a specific case of repression is being studied, the line between forms of repression and the aim of these is blurry. Leigh Doyle conducted a research on women’s organizations in Turkey to study what sort of control the state can use over them (Leigh Doyle, 2017, p.1). What her results show is that the government used three sorts of repressive tools to exercise power against them:

1. The state produces civic organizations, which will influence CS to be more sympathetic to the state (Ibid, p.15).
2. The state works together with specific organizations in order to control them.
3. The state uses repression against CS (Ibid, p.16)

This shows that the concept of repression can be used for short-term as well as long-term goals against CS of a country. A regime can use both approaches simultaneously to tackle an opposition movement or CS organizations on different fronts over time. On the one hand it needs to maintain its establishment, on the other hand it needs to prevent public displays of dissatisfaction.
The nature of a state will always influence its type of repression and the type of CS in a specific country. Davenport claims that in democracies many values which are recognised would be threatened by the use of repression (Davenport, 2007, p.10). This democratic nature of a state allows to control disruption through contribution and contestation. The probability of a conflict in democracies is also lower, therefore coercion is less likely to be used and legitimised. Most researches do find that a democratic orientation reduces the repressive nature of a state (Ibid, p.11). However, some disagree and argue that autocracies and democracies do both use little repression. Instead, mixed and transitional governments are the one whose repression is the harshest. The principle of democratization leads to the restriction of civil liberties and individual integrity, while the more evolved the democracy, the less repressed those two areas are (Ibid, p.11).

On the civil society’s side, the demands of the activists will vary according to the nature of the state. In Marchetti and Tocci’s article, they give a useful example to illustrate this claim; in a strongly militarized country, a civil society will usually be thrusting for the democratization of the political sphere (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 203). Paffenholz also emphasized the importance to analyse the state’s behaviour as he can have several roles, from a violent to a repressive one. The institutions’ behaviour during a conflict has a great influence on the focus and priorities of the civil society (Paffenholz, 2010, p.8-14).

Several studies concerning the concept of conflict resolution are expanding to CS as an actor, which enjoys an important role in the process. Therefore, the notion of conflict is a core component for such researches. In the study of Machetti and Tocci, they mention the liberal school of conflict resolution for which the apparition of conflict is triggered when humans are deprived of their basic needs. This conflict will be a strong influencer of the nature of CS and the rebalancing of those needs will be part of the conflict resolution (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 211). However, defining CS in general is quite hard to do precisely:

“In so far as civil society is both an independent agent for change and a dependent product of existing structures, we are likely to encounter a wide range of civil society actors, including both ‘civil’ and ‘uncivil’ actors carrying a wide range of actions.” (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 202)

The definition of CS within a research will also influence the perspective of the study. In their case, they are focused on what they call conflict society organization (CoSOs), which is represented by “conflict specialists, business, private citizens, research and education,
activism, religion-based groups, foundations and the media” (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 206). This CoSOs is framed within the study of their duties depending on the phase of a conflict. When the violence is latent, the CoSOs will focus on mobilization, such as protest or campaigns to raise awareness of untreated issues. In a frozen conflict, CoSOs will use activism in order to pressure the government to make some changing actions. In an actively violent phase, the CoSOs will provide emergency relief services and solidarity work. The last phase is the post-violence one, and the CoSOs will be focused on capacity-building, reconstruction and rehabilitation (Ibid, p. 213).

Another research concerning CS as an actor during a conflict is the study of Paffenholz. This research allowed the author to define the different roles of the civil society depending on the conflict stages in order to encourage peace-building (Paffenholz, 2010, p.2). Through her research, the importance of civil society in peacebuilding is recognized. However, she doesn’t see it as an active role, more a supportive role as political actors and the conflict groups are the main actors to achieve peace building. Nevertheless, civil society helps reducing violence and can facilitate the negotiations and peace in the aftermath of a conflict (Ibid, p.6).

According to Paffenholz, the utility of CS in a certain situation should be assessed after reporting the direct needs functionally. There are four state of conflicts; 1. war, 2. armed conflict, 3. windows of opportunity for peace negotiations and 4. post-large scale violence. Some functions are more adequate in certain phases than other (Ibid, p.6). In the midst of a violent conflict, functions of protection, monitoring, advocacy and facilitation are the most important ones as they respond to urgent need. During a conflict transitions to a peace building phase, advocacy and facilitation are more important, and in the aftermath of a conflict, social cohesion and socialization should be more considered in order to reintegrate cohesion in the society (Ibid, p.8-11).

Both studies offer a personal perception of CS’s role in a crisis situation, and although the study of this thesis does not focus on peace-building or conflict resolution, they provide two analyses that can be used.

However, they are both defining very strictly their target group, and the notion of CS can vary according to the study. In Fisher’s article she focusses on NGO’s and defines them as “non-profit organizations active in development and humanitarian aid, human rights advocacy and peace work on international, regional and local levels” (Fischer, 2011, p.288). She also provides a more detailed list of role the civil society can endorse. It includes features such as youth work or documentation of war crime (Ibid, p.291-292). The author also highlights the
difficult nature of some NGOs due to their relationship to the state. Most of them cannot be independent from the state; their efficiency is influenced by the donor markets and the media. NGOs from local origin cannot compete when powerful western NGOs come to impose their views. Finally, NGOs are not organized by a democratic regulator, which affects their legitimacy (Ibid, p.294).

The relationship between the state’s repression and CS is an important component of this research. That is why it is necessary to understand how far both, the repression and CS can have an effective impact on the society. Returning to Davenport and Fransisco, it emerges that there is a consensual opinion on the repression’s effectiveness. Although Davenport expresses concerns about the consistency concerning the results of studies on the matter, he points out that so far a government has never managed to effectively eradicate dissidents (Davenport, 2007, pp.8-10). Nevertheless, the repression technique keeps being used as a tool to preserve the political stability, which implies that more research is needed concerning the relationship between threats, the behaviour of the different actors and the use of alternative means of control (Ibid, p.8). Fransisco is tougher and completely negates the efficiency of harsh repression against the opposition. He uses the theorem of Lichbach to demonstrate his claim. This theorems’ goal is to define the most ideal policies for a repressive government to stay in power. Subsequently, Lichbach proves with his theorem that a constant repression will lead to the escalation of radical feelings among the population. Moreover, this theorem also explains that such a system might decrease the amount of violent opposition (Fransisco, 2005, pp.65-71). Through his research, Fransisco shows that harsh repressive technics such as violently ending a protest or conducting a wave of arrests to intimidate an opposition movement only has momentary effects. First, the movement will calm down but later on, the opposition starts the mobilization again, changes tactics in order to prevent new intimidation and tries to broaden the outreach (Ibid, p.76). Similar effects happen with massive incarcerations, many dissidents will still be free and able to share their opinions. Additionally, a prison sentence positively increases the reputation of the inmate. Moreover, free dissidents will keep adapting their strategies in order to stay productive. Through the cases of bloody repression Fransisco investigated, almost all the protesters were non-violent and without weapons (Ibid, pp.64-71). The same constant consequence of repressive actions happens in which CS feels more and more aggravated and uses it as an argument to continue the opposition. Therefore, if an autocratic regime wishes to stay stable but keeps the same amount of power, it must understand when to use repression in a limited way in order not to provoke a backlash.
According to Francisco, this is very improbable, as even if the security forces are highly trained, they cannot predict the opposition’s actions (Ibid, p.77). Overall, the author aims to explain that an autocratic government does not have the control over every elements that might influence the stability of its country.

On the side of CS, one can wonder if they can effectively and positively affect a society in which they are being radically cracked down on. In Leigh Doyle’s case study on Turkey, she acknowledges that unfortunately the targeted organizations are mostly in constant fighting against the government, which prevents them from doing fruitful activities (Leigh Doyle, 2017, p.24). In his article about CS and the concept of democratization in Arab countries, Yom largely criticizes the supposedly necessary action of the former to induce the later (Yom, 2005, p.14). He elaborates the concept of civil society, which has evolved within western countries, and that social scientists saw as a solution to induce democracy around the world. According to him, this neo-Tocquevillian assumption that without CS there is no democratization, ignores the broader issues of an authoritarian context (Yom, 2005, p.15).

For him the main issue is that such countries are rentier states and therefore maintain elite through redistribution. This system that lacks economic maturity and institutions doesn’t offer many “pressure points” for CS. Moreover, this induces the incapacity of the public sectors and encourages patronage and investment from special clients. He adds that the western allies are responsible for maintaining the disadvantaged situation (Rubincenter, 2005).

To summarize the literature review, the repressive nature and actions of a state will have a great influence on the activities and claims of CS, which will mutually feed the aggravation of the situation. There is an endless quest of the former to maintain its order and of the latter to survive and to keep working. However, both actors’ efficiency is being largely questioned and the need to understand the broader economic, political and historical context is being repeatedly pointed at.

4.2 Discussion around CS in Egypt

The section will present the background and the present challenging environment for the Egyptian CS on the base of four articles. The first ones are “Competing Rather than Collaborating: Egyptian Nongovernmental Organizations in Turbulence” by Catherine Herrold and Mona Atia and “The Arab Spring, looking forward: State-Society Relations after the Arab Spring: New Rulers, Same Rules” by Sarah E. Yerkes to investigate the repression
system and the effect of it on CS until now. The article of Maha Abdelrahman “In Praise of Organization: Egypt between Activism and Revolution” will offer a very deep and thoroughly researched insight in the Egyptian activism. Additionally the article of Mark R. Beissinger “‘Conventional’ and ‘Virtual’ Civil Societies in Autocratic Regimes” will give insight on the impact of the recently developed virtual CS.

Ever since the Arab Spring, researches on the event and the role of CS emerged. Besides the series of riots, the past living and working conditions of CS prior to those events need to be explained. Despite the lack of resources on this precise subject due to the tumultuous recent history, some articles managed to treat this topic. In the different articles, there is the consensus that Mubarak was the creator of an anti-CS system. Catherine Herrold and Mona Atia argue that ever since the Nasser area, the Egyptian political elite thrived to weaken the civil society. However, Mubarak was the one to establish a system based on “dividing” and “throttling” (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.390). According to the authors, the main principles were “flooding and bureaucracy”. Mubarak was encouraging the propagation of a large amount of minor organizations in order to push them to compete for funds instead of collaborating. Through harassing larger NGOs with the MOSS and SSI, they started to self-censure and police themselves in order not to become too big. Consequently, this kept the civil society sector full of small NGOs competing against each other. In case a NGO would get a little bit too influential, the government would shut it down (Ibid, p.396). The bureaucracy was an instrument in order to keep the civil society too busy filling required forms and reports. The NGOs have been required to fill out constant reports to the MOSS, letting the Ministry know every single activity planned (Ibid, p.397). Consequently, the NGOs were not able to work effectively and lived in apprehension of the government’s surveillance by the SSI (State Security Investigation) (Ibid, p.390).

In 1956, Egypt’s law of Association was ratified and became a way for the government to keep control over the NGOs. In 2002, this law was upgraded and became Law 84, allowed the government to control the registration, activities, fundraising, governance and dissolution of any organization (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.394). It also uses a very imprecise vocabulary; hence the government can interpret it to its benefice. For example, it prohibits any activities which are politically oriented or “acts threatening national unity, breaking general order or ethics, and activities that discriminate among citizens” (Ibid, p.395).

After the fall of the regime in 2011, the lack of political cohesion of the NGO sector jeopardized the possibility of a positive outcome. The repression became a crackdown under
the transitional government and prevented any strengthening of civil society actors (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.403). The current government of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi kept the same repressive model as before and currently continues to monitor and threat NGOs (Ibid, p.404).

Concerning the 2011 events, most researchers who dealt with the subject see an interesting outcome for the CS organizations concerning their self-determination and development. Yerkes researched on the same administrative and legal repression as mentioned in the article above (Yerkes, 2012, p.9). However, she explains how the phase of confusion following the fall Mubarak allowed CSOs to openly work on matters, which had been forbidden earlier. The CSOs also quickly began to network and created a new wave of organizations. According to the author, this is the reason why the transitional government ruled by the elite decided to re-establish the control rules that were created under Mubarak’s governance (Ibid, p.10).

Moreover, CS had the opportunity to develop and engage new ways of mobilizing people. In his article on the impact of the recently developed virtual civil society, Beissinger sees a correlation between the rapid development and enthusiastic use of a “virtual” CS and the weakness of the “conventional” CS in middle-income countries. Although his case to illustrate the phenomenon is Russia, he also reviewed Egypt’s situation (Beissinger, 2017, p.3). He affirms that the “conventional” CS was stronger than the “virtual” one during the Arab Spring due to the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood who acted as a mobilizing actor (Ibid, p.17). However, the internet did enable the massive gathering on the 25 January 2011 (Ibid, p.18) and he thinks that the “virtual” CS might become the structure of a new “conventional” CS movement able to counter the regimes in unknown ways (Ibid, p.19).

However, the possible impact of CS to dramatically improve the society in Egypt is often doubted. Maha Abdelrahman makes some relevant statements on the matter and points out that the civil society activists never had the opportunity to pretend to have political power. Unfortunately, this was reflected in their inefficiency to take over the power, to create institutions or long-term plans (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.572). Abdelrahman emphasized on the variety of groups participating in the Tahrir Square protests and how this negatively influenced the cohesion within the movement. Youth movements, Muslim Brotherhood members, liberal parties and leftist groups were participating. Consequently, these coalitions could not become solid and organize political alliances, as they couldn’t represent themselves properly (Ibid, p.581). Although many of them tried to create over forty parties to participate in the election, none of them managed to become more relevant than the Muslim
Brotherhood. Nowadays the polarization between secular and Islamist movement is still a handicap for the civil society actors (Ibid, p.581).

Overall, if these different articles emphasize the different external and internal challenges the Egyptian CS faces to be efficient. The external issues are all the repressive measures applied by the government to cut vital means for CS to survive and work. However, the internal issues are the ones CS has to overcome in its ranks in order to increase its survival chances, such as the lack of organization and meaningful cohesion.

4.3 Relevance of the literature review for the Case

The literature summarized above implies the need to study several areas in order to fully research civil society. The first step is to relate both articles about repression from Davenport and Fransisco to the situation in Egypt. Davenport’s article explained how from the 50s to the 70s, repression from a state was seen as a way to ensure the status quo and was thought to be necessary in case of threat (Davenport, 2007, p.3). In the case of Egypt, it seems like this approach has not changed extensively. Although Al-Sisi has been weighing cost and benefits recently and has been prudent concerning a drafted law on foreign funding, he did ban protests and crack down on contestation (Ibid, p.4). By opposing any form of contestation, he also rejected the principle of democratic values described by Davenport (Ibid, p.10). In doing so, the Egyptian government is preventing the de-escalation of conflict through the participation of CS. Davenport highlighted the inconsistency about the result of repression on dissident (Ibid, p.8). However, the one sure fact about this area is that no government has ever managed to repress dissidents so greatly that they would disappear by themselves (Ibid, p.10). Due to the countless measures Al-Sisi has taken in order to prevent escalating contestation, it can be determined that the government believe he is achieving perfect control over dissident. However, if Davenport’s review is right, this system is bound to fail.

Fransisco’s article also affirms that the repression from a state is due to the defence of the stability and safeguard of the government’s power over its country (Fransisco, 2005, p.58). One very important comment he makes is the lack of interest such a government has to be legit in the regard of its citizens (Ibid, 2005, p.58). This can very much be applied to Egypt, as the entire event that carried Al-Sisi to the power as well as its policies are not comforting the government’s legitimacy. The military coup, the successful election due to the boycott of several parties and the increasing harshness of its politics toward the civil society shows that
this government does not see legitimacy as an ingredient to an effective mandate. However, like Davenport, Francisco does also describe how the repression strategies of the government are bound to fail. Ban, imprisonments and violence only motivate the civil society’s revolutionary feelings more (Francisco, 2005, pp.62, 64). The dissidents will keep adapting their strategies until it is too much to take and they try to overthrow the government (Ibid p.76). The current Egyptian government might believe it has found the perfect amount of pressure; however, the versatility of CS will eventually lead to a backlash. Moreover, the recent revolutionary past of Egypt implies that the Egyptian people are ready to fight for their rights. This study aims to analyze the strategies the Egyptian CS uses in order to defy the government’s repression.

The next area involves the elements shaping the environment of the studied situation. The context of the current hostilities (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 202), the phase of the conflict (Paffenholz, 2010, p.6), the state of the conflict (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 213) and the level of conflict going on (Ibid, p. 201) need to be defined. The context of the current troubles is due to the unhappiness of the population with the government. The January revolution in 2011 led to many deaths but was motivated by the need of a change of regime (Abdelrahman, 2013, 569). As previously stated in the background chapter, the current government is just a continuity of the former one with more repressive policies (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.390). The government therefore lacks legitimization but refuses to adapt and tries to maintain an oppressive status-co. This research will focus on CS in the capital Cairo, and therefore the context is modular and not segmental (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 203). When it comes to defining the phase of the conflict according to the scheme of Paffenholz, the “post-large scale violence” is the suitable one (Paffenholz, 2010, p.6). The peak of the violence happened both during the revolution and after the military coup (Roll, 2015, p.33) (Abdelrahman, 2013, 569), ever since Al-Sisi became president, the conflict is not an open one but rather an attempt to prevent new uprising. However, the level of the conflict from the perspective of Marchetti and Tocci is related to the level of political mobilization. The government has been targeting precisely any form of political contestation through the work of the civil society, therefore the political orientation of their work is quite strong. Consequently, the conflict level in this regard is high. The last characteristic is the state of the conflict, whether it is latent, frozen, active or post-violent. In the perspective of Marchetti and Tocci, the latent state fits the circumstances. The civil society is not yet in a position to pressure the government and although violence does happen, it is not on a scale needing huge emergency relief. In such a
phase, the Egyptian CS is experiencing the same phenomenon that Doyle observed in Turkey. The CS keeps fighting the government’s repression without achieving any impactful work (Leigh Doyle, 2017, p.24). Despite the past violence of 2011, the country is not on a reconstructive state due to the lack of change and the persistent political structures. Therefore, the Egyptian CS is again in a latent phase.

The next step is to relate the literature to the studied case, the Egyptian civil society. Firstly, the civil society needs to be defined (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 202). In her research, Fisher used NGOs in order to study human rights related independent bodies (Fischer, 2011, p.288). However, in Egypt the concept of NGOs is quite intricate, as will be explain later in the research. This study is about the civil society’s work which is quite broad in Egypt and is constituted of different bodies. There are institutes working on policy, human rights, institutional violence or education. There are also legal firms, which aim to legally help individuals, unofficial NGOs that take care of precise issues such as minorities and organizations providing direct help for victims of torture. Moreover, it has recently started expanding its influence through the use of internet platforms and networks (Beissinger, 2017, p.19) To understand these organization’s motivation, it is important to understand the reason of their mobilization, what needs were violated by the government (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 211). They do not have a respected freedom of speech, they are being harmed by the authorities. Religious, gender and LGBT discrimination are an issue (HRW, 2016). They are not allowed to protest, their organizations are being shut down and activists disappear (HRW, 2016). When it comes to the function, related to the Paffenholz phase of Post-Violence, CS should keep on monitoring the government, try to rebuild the cohesion within the society and provide services (Paffenholz, 2010, p.8). Additionally, the roles of the civil society according to Fisher provide a wider panel. She mentions alternative media for a broader reporting, support for education, youth work, protection of individuals, taking care of traumatized people or protection of minorities (Fischer, 2011, p.291-292). All these functions are being taken care of by the Egyptian CS.

The different civil society literature emphasizes on the impact of the context on the efficiency on the civil society (Paffenholz, 2010, p.7). In the case of Egypt, Yom sees the concept of the rentier state as the main reason of the incapacity of CS to induce change (Rubincenter, 2005). Nevertheless, one of the reasons it failed to become an active political actor according to Abdelrahman was due to the lack of opportunity, and the former establishment being too strong (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.572). However, another contextual issue is the division
between secular and religious CS organizations as well as the lack of cohesion produced by the Mubarak system (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.403). Although the primal phase of confusion following the fall of the government allowed CS actors to potentially network (Yerkes, 2012, p.10), the ambient mistrust and the polarization around religious and non-religious CS strongly prevented an alliance between several organizations. This division is still an obstacle to the efficiency of the work of CS actors in Egypt.
5. **Conceptual Structure**

5.1 Defining the Type of Strategies

Outlining the sort of strategies is useful to define the angle through which the results of the interviews will be classified and analyzed. In order to categorize the results of the interviews, four different outlooks are being created from the literature previously reviewed.

Avoiding harassment:

The quite constant harassment against CS reveals that one of the government’s techniques is to monitor organizations and target the influential one (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.396). The reports of Human Rights Watch on the situation show that the government targets the one who express too much (HRW, 2016) and additionally there is a continuous surveillance of such actors (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.390). This states the need of the civil society to not look suspicious to the government in order to avoid harassment.

Continue impacting:

Despite this harassment, CS still exists. Fransisco stated that activists do not simply give up to the government’s pressure and adapt over time (Fransisco, 2005, p.64). Moreover, according to Davenport, dissident are never beaten by the government in such a regime (Davenport, 2007, p.10). The presence of the civil society is required at every stage of a conflict (Paffenholz, 2010, p.8) and has special roles to accomplish (Fischer, 2011, p.291-292). Consequently, this means that CS manages and needs to keep impacting the society in which it is active. Therefore, in regimes such as the Egyptian one, they need to find ways to continue working.

Protection:

Confronted with this repression, many activists deeply suffer and sometimes even their lives are at risk. The government is ready to use any sanction to prevent CS to act (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.403). If every organization shuts down and every activist ends up in prison, the civil society wouldn’t be able to positively induce change anymore. Therefore, CS organizations need to develop strategies to ensure their protection.

Long term vision:
As previously explained in the literature review, Fransisco stated that repressive governments are not durable and that eventually the situation will escalate as soon as a radical confrontation happens (Fransisco, 2005, p.65). Moreover, in regard of the different techniques Al-Sisi’s government has been using against the activists, they need to produce strategies to be durable and to continue spreading their influence.

In 1956, Egypt’s law of Association was ratified and has been a way for the government to keep control over the NGOs. In 2002, this law was upgraded and became Law 84, allowed the government to control the registration, activities, fundraising, governance and dissolution of any organization (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.394).

5.2 Conceptual Framework drawn from Theories

This conceptual framework aims to illustrate the relationship between the strategies created by the civil society in order to survive and the theories previously developed on the civil society in general. As observed above, the sort of strategies will depend the country’s context. History plays an important role in the structure of CS; however, one crucial root of the repression is the perception the government has of the CS (Davenport, 2007, p.3). If the government does not see CS as a legitimate actor within its society, it will criminalized it. In doing so, CS will need to strategize to survive instead of strategizing with the government for mutual interests. When staying active thanks to strategies, CS is challenging the government’s status (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.394).
The objective is to understand the nature of the strategies a civil society can use when being constantly repressed. This graph represents how the different variables are dependent on each other. It shows how the context of the 2011 recent Egyptian history affects the legitimacy of the government. The civil society can be seen both as an ally or an opponent by such a government depending on its wish to become legit or not. This will either lead to repression or partnership and will determine the nature of the strategies.

The data results of the interviews provide the “Behavioural Choices” BC made by activists to implement strategies in the case of Egypt. Moreover, an explanatory analysis of the results in the frame of the civil society problematic in general will be done. The analysis will allow the possible generalization of the strategies for other non-western countries, which are going through a particular phase between conflict and stability.
6. **Findings**

6.1 Categorization

Through the interviews, the creation of eight categories concerning the nature of the behavioural choices for the civil society was possible. In some cases these categories can overlap, however they are carefully defined to outline specific characteristics. The categories were created on the basis of the generalization and careful interpretation of the interviews.

1. **Language:**

   The term language delimits all strategies which focus on the manipulation of the words either in order to ensure protection or to attract support. According to Foucault, a regime claims detaining the truth and use it as a power to dictate its “general politics” (Foucault & Rabinow, 1991). An oppressed CS will try to redefine the truth discourse according to its experience. However, not being in a safe position of power, their discourse has to be adapted to their safety.

2. **Reduce visibility:**

   The act of reducing visibility aims to help the activists to avoid being seen by the government as threatening organizations. This category is quite broad; therefore, the strategies are very diverse. They can be related to many aspects of an organization’s work such as its interactions, style of activities, structure and relationship to their partners and field. As previously explained in the literature review, the Egyptian government has been tackling any organization that might be too influential or gaining importance (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.396). Any government aiming to repress CS will also target the most leading organizations in the country (Fransisco, 2005, p.62). Therefore, the civil society will develop strategies to reduce their visibility to the government.

3. **Manipulating the law:**

   This strategy means CS organizations are registering as other entities than NGO’s in order to sustain their work and to look less suspicious to the government. The need of registration alternatives happened as the Egyptian government reinforced the association law, which increased the government’s control on the NGOs (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.394). Although this technique to oppress the civil society might not be
used in all societies where the government is harsh to CS, the registration strategy can also be used as a strategy to reduce the visibility of an organization.

4. Use of social media and internet:

This category focusses on the use of the web to serve the purpose of the organizations. The internet offers a variety of possibilities from social media to alternative media news and forums concerning important issues. Especially social media have been increasingly important for the communication of CS in general. It became an efficient tool to gather and share the news as well as promoting problem solving of societal issues. This use of the internet offers the possibility of real-time news and worldwide networking (Usaid, 2016, p.8)

5. Being recognized by the state:

The strategy of recognition aims to get approval from the government, even though this means letting the government have more access and control over the organization. Such process is not easy to achieve and controversial. Therefore, the feedback of different activists on it varies quite a lot. This can be generalized as a strategy which aims to play the government’s game in order to increase protection and reduce harassment.

6. Using one’s reputation:

This strategy only applies to organizations which have an international appreciation important enough to be used as a form of protection.

7. Adaptation of the job:

The adaptation of the activities has the goal to ensure the safety of the organizations without stopping their work. They can also be the alternatives some organizations need to create in case their assets are frozen or when the government is trying to slow down their work. The Egyptian government has been using a broad language to be able to target a wide range of people with the oppression (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.395). In case of such repression in other countries, the flexibility of an organization is a very important tool to avoid being shut down.

8. Risk assessment:
Assessing risks allows an organization to avoid rash decisions, which might have harsh consequences in the future. When a government is repressive, civil society organizations need to be able to deal with unexpected policies against them. The reestablishment of the authoritarian regime in an unstable climate leads to a confusing stage (Yerkes, 2012, p.10). Any government which aims to eradicate any form of opposition will have unpredictable actions. Therefore, a risk assessment strategy will be useful for any CS, which thrive to survive an unpredictable regime.

6.2 The categories and the Egyptian context

Based on several interviews, informal talks and meetings during the data gathering process, it has become obvious that the repression is very harsh and the activists have to be very versatile to keep working. Finding activists willing to talk about such sensitive issues requires a lot of time and persistence.

Language:

One often used technique is the self-censorship on certain issues. This allows certain organizations to avoid harsh backlash from the government while still publishing. If the organization is not willing to censor, they can also avoid the radar of the government by changing the terminologies into less offensive words but without modifying its content. Just a different title for a project can make it look less suspicious. When some organizations keep reporting on sensitive subjects despite the danger, they often willingly omit the name of subjects and organizations involved in the research or investigation. In certain organizations, their activists have full anonymity in reports or projects except for their leader.

In some cases, the change of language is necessary for organizations to attract support. Especially since the end of the euphoria of the revolution, people are less inclined to participate in a change due to the disillusion. In order to be more appealing, some organizations switched from an ultra-positive and revolutionary language to a more long-term oriented one.
F1: “Our legal reviews and comments on policy need to be censured, even if we keep researching it. But we will keep publishing our papers”.

On the other hand, although this can be a good tool, some terminologies cannot really be modified without losing their accuracy. For example, the term “Violation”, is too important to be switched with another word with less impact. In addition, some organizations see such strategies as a way to be complaisant to the government, especially the censorship.

Reducing Visibility:

To reduce visibility and not raise suspicion, activists can avoid meeting colleagues from other organizations. However, half of the interviewees said they kept meeting and collaborating as it is an important component of a successful work. Moreover, in the case of very targeted organizations whose funds have been frozen, collaborating can be part of a strategy. These organizations can work with less targeted ones to host events in their names and with their funds. Actions such as field investigations, trainings, workshops or delivering services became very dangerous and increased visibility. Therefore, most organizations have stopped such activities and mostly focus on research.

F7: “We are seen as a research institute, we are not subject to the same danger as official Human Rights organizations. We stop doing any kind of trainings or workshops, it’s too dangerous”.

When carrying out a research, sometimes organizations need to omit certain issues that might be too sensitive. Another strategy that has been often mentioned is how some organizations decide to move their headquarter outside of Egypt to be less easy to prosecute. Moreover, on this optic, many organizations have decided to downsize in order to avoid the constant harassment when being too big. In extreme cases, some organizations or activists take the decision to go underground and continue working illegally.

Unfortunately, such strategies really impact the quality of the work, preventing organizations to work on the most important and sensitive issues. However, in applying these methods they avoid arrest and closing. Concerning organizations moving their headquarters, the main problem is that the activists on the ground in Egypt do not have any protection. Also managing an organization from the outside makes it hard for the work to be successful. The downsizing techniques lead to the termination of many important but controversial jobs.
Going underground is risky if the government discovers it. Besides, how do people know about these organizations if underground, how do they know they can be helped. Moreover, in most cases working secretly even illegally would be impossible as they could not publish or report anything anymore.

Manipulating the law:

Ever since 2002, Egypt’s CS organizations have been ruled through association’s laws from the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Justice, which were quite restrictive. This law has been forcing organizations to register in order to control their activities and funds. Consequently, the majority of organizations started registering as another legal entity depending on their work.

Most of them registered as law firms and a few as private companies or in some cases, medical centers. The issue with registering as a private company is that there are taxes to be paid to the government and provide an income declaration, which allows it to monitor the company. Moreover, the situation has become harsher since the revolution and the government checks bank accounts and money flows of any suspicious association, even law firms.

F2: “People started contacting donors to receive funds and decided to think outside the box. They started to create private companies or law firms. The problem with private companies is that you enter a new kind of legal accountability and some donors refuse to be part of it”.

Use of Internet and social media:

Social network and internet have become an alternative space to report issues and violations. Although it is not systematic, some migration has taken place from the civil society organization sector to the alternative internet platforms. Many activists use them as way to spread their message in the most accessible way. Harassed activists have developed online newspapers, which report information that the state media will not investigate. The most famous one is called Mada Masr. Another example of internet use is the creation of informative forums. Such platforms aim to be a space where Egyptians can access knowledge on crucial topics, such as personal rights and law. Despite the efforts to maintain reporting on controversial issues, such reports and investigations are usually less deep and detailed. The
reason is the difficulty to carry out field investigations and a lack of funding under the current government. Moreover, the government has been trying to establish control over some social media platforms, for example, they have been trying to shut down Facebook. In addition, it might be a risk to over use it to condemn the government, as a reckless comment can be a reason for the police to arrest someone.

F4: “There is no other way (than using social media) to explain the situation. Since al-Sisi came to power, the media hasn’t been properly reporting the violations”.

Unfortunately, despite the ingenuity of such strategies, they do impact the quality of the activist’s work negatively as well.

Being recognized by the state:

As previously mentioned under the registration strategy, the government has been forcing organizations to register in order for the government to supervise them closely. Some organizations are attempting to become legal national organizations. Their goal is to prevent harassment, being able to receive funding and still carry out some work. However, according to an activist member of a NGO legal since 2007, the government has been continuing their harassment policy. Moreover, since the election of Al-Sisi, the repression has been increasing despite their legal status. Therefore, this NGO has been using this fact as an argument to prove the lack of legitimacy of the government.

F9:” We have been registered as an NGO since 2007, however it doesn’t mean we are not targeted. It doesn’t protect us, but it gives us an argument to say “look what the government is still doing to us””.

One of the main issues of this strategy is that none of the organizations who have been trying to achieve this legalization and were interviewed have been legalized. Sometimes they have been in the process for years, and the government still refuses to legalize them. Moreover, if they do become legal, they will be constantly investigated by the government and will be at the mercy of it concerning activities or funding. Essentially, such a process would allow the government’s full control over their work. Additionally, according to the one legal organization mentioned previously, it enables the government to easily target them, even the NGO’s funds were frozen.
Using one’s reputation:

If an organization has a strong international network and reputation, they can use it to discourage the government to try to shut them down as it might provoke an international backlash.

F5: “We have a strong position internationally and we use it. With this reputation we will not close unlike other organizations and institutes”.

Unfortunately, only a few entities enjoy such a position and most of them are really struggling. Moreover, the government will still harass such organizations.

Adaptation of the work:

Some organizations avoid risky activities and cancelled their branches focused on field work. Individual activists might do freelancing in several and diverse organizations to prevent being identified with single one and suffer from government harassment. Some organizations present themselves as a research institute and enjoy a more harmless image. Reporting violations or torture became too controversial, therefore these focuses have been abandoned by many. Many people started their own organizations and avoid all the dangerous parts of being in NGO.

F6: “Some individual people do freelancing to still work but in an adaptable and less risky way”.

This led to a kind of rebranding process for activists, from a Human Rights CS focus to a focus on very precise and less controversial issues. Projects from such active groups get funding more easily compared to known NGOs. The government often tries to bury organizations in legal papers to prevent them from working. Therefore, some organizations decided to not involve their own lawyer in legal battle and hire external ones only. In case of asset freeze, organizations are not able to pay anyone or do anything that needs money expense. As a consequence, most people continue working on a voluntary basis. Moreover, although they are not supposed to use any money, they can continue to hold events and workshop. Instead of hosting events in venues, they do more visits to schools and other organizations. In doing so, they can keep up their active work without having to pay for accommodation or venues.
Risk assessment:

Another way to limit the impact of the repression is to assess risks. When potentially partnering with other organizations, doing background check is crucial as many organizations are working with the government. The government has been very secretive and unstable. Therefore, one important tendency of the risk assessment strategy is the overall stagnation of the civil society organizations. The reason for this is the apprehension of doing something (an activity, or a strategy to get funding) that might be used against them in the future. When slowing down or freezing, some activists just hope that the unstable situation might turn into a positive change.

F6: “Many organizations we worked with slow down or freeze in order not make mistakes that might get them in trouble later. Every process has been slowing down. Especially when it comes to funding”.

Unfortunately, like the adaptation strategy, this one also largely affects the quality of the work an organization can do.
7. **Noticeable Issues**

7.1 The Issue of Funding

During the data gathering period one important issue came up, the funding possibility. As explained earlier, the government has been restricting more and more the association law, making it difficult for organizations to be funded. However, many organizations managed to receive funds through getting donation as a private company or through applying for grants from international organizations. In an attempt to destroy CS, the government opened the case against several organizations on the accusation of illegal foreign funding. Foreign funding has been largely criminalized and the condemnations can go up to life in prison for a private individual or execution for a public person (F4). This has allowed the government to close down several organizations. Another way to attack the funds is to freeze them. Many activists and a few organizations have seen their assets being blocked by the government. Al-Sisi’s last effort to prevent funding for CS is the new law, which was finally approved on the 29th of May despite the international concerns about the civil society in the country (Aljazeera, 2017).

To analyse this problematic, the project by Douglas Rutzen, “Civil Society Under Assault”, provides a good frame. This short article aims to recapitulate the macro-political environment surrounding the declining respect for civil society in different nations. Particularly relevant regarding the results of the interviews, he focusses on the possible restrictions to access funding (Rutzen, 2015, p.28).

The author mentions the different techniques developed by some governments to restrict the access to funding for civil society organizations (CSOs). Firstly, they demand a consent from the government in order for them to receive international funding. Secondly, they ratify legislation, which denounce CSOs that manage to receive foreign money. The government can also limit the total sum of international money a CSO has the right to receive (Rutzen, 2015, p.30). Another technique is to require the funding being directed to go through a body controlled by the government. The government can limit the kind of activities that CSOs can carry on with international funding. To forbid relationship with certain donors is a following technique as well as taking advantage of policies to fight terrorism and money laundering. The government can also issue high taxes on receiving international funding or demand expansive reporting when international money is received. Taking advantage of laws
concerning defamation, treason or such in order to criminally charge beneficiaries of international funding is another way to limit the access to funding (Ibid, p.31).

Nevertheless, most repressive governments will provide reasons to such restrictions. Rutzen defines four types of justifications. First, the protection of the state sovereignty for which the author gives an Egyptian example. In 2012, 43 CSO activists were put on trial for “establishing unlicensed chapters of international organizations and accepting foreign funding to finance these groups in a manner that breached the Egyptian state’s sovereignty.” Officials claim that receiving international funds was contributing to foreign intrusion into the country’s political matter. The second category is that aggressively limiting outside funding is a way to encourage transparency in the civil society domain (Rutzen, 2015, p.31). Thirdly, the improvement of the efficiency of aid and organization through endorsing “host-country ownership”. Finally, the use of the fight against counterterrorism, insecurity and dirty money policies as an excuse (Rutzen, 2015, p.32). Related to the background chapter, Rutzen offers a more in-depth analysis of the effect the restriction of funding can provoke on the efficiency of CS organizations concerning their work (Ibid, p.30-31).

Considering these different sanctions from the government, the model of Rutzen is justified. The government forced the NGOs to register in a body created for that purpose, giving the government full control over them (Rutzen, 2015, p.31). Al-Sisi has also criminalized any work with international funds (UN news centre, 2016) as a form of treason such as spying for external actors. He also uses the war on terror as an excuse to cut ties to foreign countries (Rutzen, 2015, p.31). Moreover, the new law obliges any foreign funding to be first examined by the national authority before being allowed (Aljazeera, 2017). The argument of the fight against terrorism is a very old one and exploits the bad relationship between the state and the MB. According to the interviewees, this argument has been used countless times to repress the CS (F1,F2, F4).

Loosing access to funds is the main issue for CS, and although the registration strategy was helpful, Al-Sisi’s crackdown made it obsolete. The next step for CS will be to creates strategies to either get funds in an alternative way or function without any, such as volunteering or unofficial partnerships with groups or individuals with financial means. However, the latter option would not be durable and might endanger the integrity of the organizations. It is yet too early to tell what new strategies can emerge to fight these restrictions; still when the consequence of the new law will start affecting CS, they will have to create new solutions.
7.2 The Issue of the Collaboration between the State and CS

The graph illustrating the relationship between CS and the government showed two possible ways, the way of opposition and the way of collaboration between both actors. The majority of the interviewed organizations were not having any form of constant collaboration with the state. However, a few had some experiences with it. One of the organizations had tried to launch a collaborative project with the state in order to improve certain areas of academic education in Egypt. The other one was requested to produce a report concerning some transparency issues in the current government. Their feedback on such collaboration shows it requires some adaptation and tends to not be very successful due to the government’s harshness. In the first case, despite many efforts, the government remained closed to the wished changes in the Academic curriculum. In the second case, although they were able to carry out the research and present the report to the government, there had been some limitation. They were forced to omit some areas in order to stay safe and not vex the targeted officials.

One big issue with organizations working with the government in such a tense environment is the damage of their reputation. Other organizations might consider them untrustworthy due to the ongoing crack down.

To reinforce their approval from the international community, in the first few years of Al-Sisi’s ruling, the government organized meetings with several CS organizations to discuss issues concerning them. The MOSS had formed a committee to discuss the new NGO of 2013 with members of active CS organizations. Following the meetings, a new bill was formulated, which was far friendlier to CS than any version formulated by the government so far. However, the government did not intend to pass it and used the process to advertise itself positively to the international community (CIHRS, 2014).

It can be concluded that a collaboration is not completely unmanageable and unimaginable; however, it requires a certain amount of compromises from CS’s side. Consequently, the activists do not see enough counterparts for them to collaborate. Moreover, there is the legitimate fear of being used and manipulated by the government.
8. **Data Analysis**

8.1 What can those Behavioural Choices of Strategies demonstrate?

The following step aims to analyze the interviews based on the theoretical structure drawn from the literature review.

In the literature review, Davenport’s statement that a government who represses its opposition does not care about democratic values was mentioned. The behavioural choices of the Egyptian CS shows their acceptance of this issue and they develop themselves around it. Moreover, Davenport believes that such a system of repression (in this case Al-Sisi’s) is bound to fail (Davenport, 2007, p.10). If this statement wasn’t valid, CS would have stopped working during Mubarak’s time. However, they think that continuing those efforts are necessary to induce change. Therefore, risk management’s strategies are so important, as they show how some CS organizations are committed to plan in the long term, even if it affects their work in the meantime. Just as Fransisco wrote about CS in general, the Egyptian CS organizations are good at adapting their strategies until there is a change (Fransisco, 2005, p.76). The adaptation sometimes calls for radical measure, such as cancelling a risky branch of the organization. However, such adaptation is seen as a necessary step until there is a regime or society transformation. As stated by Davenport (Davenport, 2007, p.7), the repression used by a ruler is usually aiming to maintain a stable political situation. This stability ensures the power and control of the regime. On the other hand, the will of CS to keep working aims to provoke disruption, which is still better than the current situation. The revolution of 2011 was a society transformation opportunity and that is why it gathered so much support from CS. Although the Mubarak era was not as extreme as Al-Sisi’s, CS also had to develop strategies of risk management and adaptation. They were already trying to induce a regime change while surviving in the long term. The next election is scheduled for 2018 (Mansour et Al, MadaMasr, 2017), and although CS does not expect a radical positive change, it is an encouragement for them to go forward until there is a possible regime change.

Continuing on Fransisco’s article, he claimed that a very harsh repression will only dissuade the dissents from being active for a short time (Fransisco, 2005, p.62). Such radical actions from the government usually provoke the opposite and CS will use it as a reason to fight even more. This can be proven by the example of the one legal organization which was interviewed for this research. The repression of the government toward them as a legal organization is
being used as an argument to carry out their work and denounce Al-Sisi’s regime as undemocratic. Fransisco followed his argument on this subject by saying that the revolutionary feeling the activists get after being mistreated by the government pushes them to be more efficient. Even though Al-Sisi has increased its pressure and the CS is feeling more and more in danger, many activists are ready to defy the closing of their organization or the freezing of their assets. They are ready to continue providing certain services illegally or to represent a whole organization by themselves, allowing their employees to work anonymously. The will to keep working in adversity can be compared to the revolutionary feeling described by Francisco (Fransisco, 2005, pp.62, 64). On the subject of the inefficacity of jailing leaders of CS activists groups, Fransisco argues that their reputation increases after a prison sentence (Ibid, p.64). The use of a certain reputation can be used as a strategy to attract new members in CS organizations. When an activist is being aggressively targeted by the government, it gives them a stronger relevance within the movement. Moreover, as mentioned in the categorization chapter, if an organization has a strong reputation and has collaborated with international entities, this can also provide a form of protection as the government will be less inclined to attack them.

Based on the article of Fransisco, it was previously established that Al-Sisi did not seek legitimization from the population as president (Fransisco, 2005, p.58). However, CS does make a lot of effort to be considered as a legit actor of society. As they carry on work while being harassed they provide a safe space for Egyptian people in need to come to. Davenport said that the nature of a state will affect the behaviour of CS organizations (Davenport, 2007, p.8). Al-Sisi’s lack of interest in having a democratically legitimized government allowed him to use harsh sanctions against CS organizations that he considers a form of opposition. Consequently, CS organizations have developed different strategies as a response to the sanctions. A democratic system is less inclined to repression due to its regulations (Ibid, p.10), and CS is stubborn and wishes to improve the democratic values of this society. Marchetti and Tocci mentioned that, when a government is strongly militarized, its CS is pushing for democratization. They consider it important to know the nature of the state in order to understand the environment of CS (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 203). The results of the interviews demonstrate that the activists do see the government as totalitarian military regime that has been reinforcing a system of oppression, which has always existed in Egypt. Related to the political orientation of a movement, Marchetti and Tocci also analyzed that conflicts emerge when part of the population do not enjoy their basic rights and cannot fulfil
their needs (Ibid, p. 211). In fighting for their political integrity, all these CS organizations focus on rights, which are not respected. Some go for the most controversial one, such as women’s rights or the fight against torture and some go for less controversial ones, such as health care rights. In regard of the diverse CS organizations, the reclaiming of the people’s fundamental rights is their priority. In order to avoid harassment from the government, many of them are focused on issues that sound less suspicious than Human Rights. Nevertheless, they all wish to achieve a society in which their rights are valued. The aim of such organizations is to raise awareness of rights and need fulfilments Egyptian people are eligible to have. As long as such issues won’t be addressed, there will always be political mobilizations.

Although they are being relentlessly targeted, the will of some of them to become legal prove that they feel entitled to the respect of the government as valuable societal entities. Also mentioned by Fransisco, most of those dissent movements in CS are not violent (Fransisco, 2005, p.71). Although he was referring to demonstrations in this article, it also fits the Egyptian society, which is harshly repressed. Despite such violence from the government, CS mostly carry out peaceful actions and their strategies aim to be as long lasting as possible. The fact that they develop strategies to adapt to their situation shows that they do not project a violent coup. Just as indicated by Fisher, CS in Egypt is very large and includes many activities (Fischer, 2011, p.291-292). Reporting and alternative media have become very important tasks, showing how this part of the society feels underreported. Nevertheless, focusing on reporting has also been a way to avoid the government’s harassment when doing fieldwork. Sadly, most of CS organizations do not work on the ground anymore or deliver services. This strategy demonstrates that, although they want to keep carrying out their work, the risks are high. High enough for some of them to give up. However, the activists interviewed and their milieu did not consider the current repression as the end of CS per se. For most of them this is a transition phase to a political and societal transformation eventually.

In the literature review, the state of the conflict in Egypt has been described as “latent” according to the classification of Marchetti and Tocci. An argument for this statement is the risk management strategies. If the conflict was not latent but open, such strategies would not be relevant as humanitarian and protection measures would be the most needed. However, the current situation is requiring risk management strategies to ensure the survival of CS organizations as the government tries to invalidate them with legal measures. This constant
tension and slow but efficient repression demonstrate the latent nature of the conflict. The latest proof of it is the carefulness with which Al-Sisi handled the passing of the last NGO law (Aljazeera, 2017). He did not want it to be seen as an open war against CS, and therefore, took six months to approve it.

According to Marchetti and Tocci, CS of conflicted countries have a strong political orientation (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 201). Despite their strategies to reduce their visibility and in some cases to annihilate any direct political references, most of the interviewees’ organizations do have strong political opinions. They all aim to fight against a regime that deprives them from a political integrity and do not support the SCAF. At best, they prefer being ruled by the SCAF than by the Muslim Brotherhood that they consider too conservative. Abdelrahman has criticized the lack of efficiency CS organizations had politically as the regime failed and how they could not take over the power due to a lack of long term visions (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.572). He also mentioned the non-existence of valid political opposition to the government apart from the Muslim Brotherhood (Ibid, p.581). The results of the interviews show a lack of interest from the participants to build a political opposition. They do not see it as a priority as they do not believe in the fairness of the system and prefer fighting for social issues. Moreover, they do not see any political party strong enough to represent them. Most of these movements are also opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood due to the importance of religion and do not like their popularity. Their strategies aim to fight for their existence and different basic rights, but the political sphere does not seem to be a priority. It has been explored in the background chapter that the Egyptian CS is fragmented. It seems that CS organizations have decided to keep it this way for safety reasons. They all recognized that collaboration is an important component of the efficiency of their work and some continue collaborating on certain issues. However, as previously explored, the survival of the organization depends on their visibility. In addition, there is an atmosphere of distrust around the different CS groups, as many fear some could be spying for the government. Moreover, some activists even start freelance independent carriers, to be able to be safe and to be able to earn a living.

In the literature it was defined that according to Paffenholz’s phases, Egypt is in a phase of “post-large scale violence” (Paffenholz, 2010, p.6). According to it, the duties of CS should consider social cohesion and socialization as a priority in order to reintegrate cohesion in the society (Ibid, p.8-11). Unfortunately, although such activities are much needed for the rebuilding of the society, collaboration became quite difficult. All the interviewees saw it as
important but also as a dangerous visibility. The main problem within CS organization in Egypt is the lack cohesion. According to Paffenholz, in a post-conflict society such as Egypt, CS should continue monitoring the government, provide services and encourage social cohesion (Paffenholz, 2010, p.8). Due to the factors mentioned above, the cohesion is largely affected and negatively influences other duties. Providing services is also a difficult task as the government consider such activities as suspicious.

An important characteristic of the research shows that many of CS’s strategies are involved with foreign countries and international organizations. The international sector allowed them to receive funds, a form of protection and the benefits of having an important reputation, which helped pressuring the government. Therefore, the government is trying to sever the ties between the Egyptian CS and international influence.

8.2 The Strategies and their Behavioural Choices

The following step is to relate the strategies developed earlier to the behavioural choices drawn from the interview. The table below classifies the BC according to those strategies. This demonstrates that these BC can overlap but aim overall to safeguard an organization and its employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoiding Harassment</th>
<th>Continuing to impact</th>
<th>Protection</th>
<th>Long-term vision</th>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
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<td>Reducing visibility</td>
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<td>Manipulating the law</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Use of internet and social media</td>
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<td>Being recognized by the state</td>
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<td>Using one’s reputation</td>
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<td>Adapting the work</td>
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<td>Risk Assessment</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
However, this table also shows some weaknesses as the BC cannot fulfil every determinant and therefore have to neglect some important characteristics of efficiency.

The “Language” BC, although very relevant to protect the organizations, consequently reduce the meaning and therefore the impact of the publications on the individuals. When it comes to “Language” as a tool to attract new members, it is of course beneficial. However, so far it does not ensure that this will help maintaining support over the years, and therefore cannot be seen as fulfilling the “Long-term vision” determinant.

The “Reducing visibility” BC is quite advantageous for the safeguard of the activists’ wellbeing, however it prevents the determinant “Continue impacting” to grow and induce a positive change. Too many important activities and collaborations are being cancelled through the “Reducing visibility” BC to be able to protect the activists, and this will affect the “Long-term vision” and the efficiency of their projects.

The “Manipulating the law” BC has been a great solution for years as it has allowed non-official NGOs to receive funding. Additionally, it had a positive effects on most determinants. It improved the “Protection” and “Avoiding harassment” issues and the extra funding could fulfil the “Continue impacting” determinant. However, this technique is now made obsolete by the new law and therefore, does not fit into the “Long-term vision” determinant.

The use of the “Internet and social media” BC is wide and appreciated, however it does not serve many determinants. It was developed in order to provide some alternative reporting as the press has been controlled by the government. Nevertheless, although it might give a comforting feeling to the activists as a community and promote the fast organization of events, it can be dangerous and reduce the “Protection” determinant. In addition, Al-Sisi is slowly regaining control over it, as an example he recently temporarily shut down the most famous online newspaper Mada Masr (Madamsr, 2017).

The “Being recognized by the state” BC had the primal goal to fulfil the “Avoiding harassment” determinant. Unfortunately, it does not prevent the government from targeting legal NGOs and even facilitates its interferences as they can review all projects and funding.

The “Using one’s reputation” BC is very efficient concerning the “Protection” and “Avoiding harassment” determinants. However, such status is quite hard to achieve and even if it works, it does not completely annihilate harassment.
The “Adapting the work” BC is the most efficient one as it has an effect on every determinant. One very interesting technique is the refocus of CS on certain issues seemingly less controversial but actually developing very impactful projects around it. Such strategies really seek a long-term active future, which is the main problem in such an unstable environment. However, the adaptation also implies stopping other activities on vital issues.

Overall the “Risk assessment” BC is quite handicapping for the “Continue Impacting” determinant. Moreover, it doesn’t improve “Protection” or “Anti-harassment” techniques. Its main quality is that in a very unstable phase it can safeguard an organization from making hazardous choices that might backlash in the future.

Unfortunately, most of the BC aim to counter direct threats and harassment. This means that a long-term vision is lacking and a sense of durability is missing. Most of them are firefighting the government’s harassment and are neglecting the “Continue impacting” and “Long-term vision” strategies.
9. **The Model for Non-Western Nations**

9.1 Civil Society as Non-W-Western Concept

As described in the Relevance chapter, the current English literature on civil society is not offering an adequate model, which can fit the study of this phenomenon in non-western societies. Literature started featuring the concept of CS as a sphere between the private sphere and the political society in the modern era with Hegel (socio economic) (Chakraborty 2016, p.21). Following the creation of this concept, prominent thinkers like Marx and Tocqueville began to work around it. Despite some nuances concerning its nature and role within society, both Marx and Hegel saw CS as an ambiguous actor. They both considered it an actor that can be used by capitalism to serve its hegemonic interests in some ways (Ibid, p. 21).

Antonio Gramsci was the first one to consider CS as an actor within the political sphere. According to him, every class can use the civil society to represent its interests and goals. It is through this perception that the civil society can be also seen as a strength for the hegemony of capitalism. Following Gramsci’s opinion of CS, the perception of it started changing to CS as a sphere to defend different groups’ rights and ideological struggle (Chakraborty, 2016, p. 24-25).

Nowadays, civil society is seen as a filler of the space between family and market, which interacts with the state (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 202). Ever since the end of the Cold War, the core nature of CS became ambiguous in its relationship with the state. The development of these global actors induced the transformation of the civil society into a more neutral concept, which aims to encourage alternatives within societies with deep struggles (Ibid, p. 203).

Through this short summary, the roots of the current discourse on CS within the concept of class struggle and capitalism are obvious. However, according to the interviews conducted for this research, the need for CS in Egypt emerged from different concepts. In the same way as many other countries, Egypt’s modern history is embedded in the concept of colonialism and post-colonialism. Egypt has gone through several forms of ruling which prevented the Egyptian people to enjoy political and national self-determination. The latest ones were the Ottoman Empire, the short French rule and the long British occupation, which only ended in 1922 and with British forces in the country until 1956 (History World, Egypt Timeline). Until
the beginning of WW1, Egyptian pro-nationalist movements were mostly constituted of a certain educated class. However, the war pushed the British to abuse the Egyptians through forced conscription and requisitions. Such behaviour spread the will to achieve independence among Egyptian people of different classes (International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, 2011). This mobilization lead to the revolution of 1919 in which the activists used civil disobedience to induce political disruption. The British used harsh repression against the dissent, including arrest and killing of demonstrators. In this case the civil society pushed the British to reconsider its occupation, which lead to the declaration of Egyptian independence on 22 February 1922 (Ibid, 2011). Following the end of colonialism, Egypt has politically evolved under the rule of strong men. Nasser was the most successful one, managing to gather the people behind him to build an Egyptian nation. However, under Sadat and Mubarak, people began to be disenchanted with a strong regime ruling as the economic situation for average Egyptians worsened and the corruption of the leaders expended (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.390). This le to the revolution of 2011 and the Al-Sisi regime and the current repression.

In examining the different periods of regime over the Egyptian people, several constants can be noticed. In each of these periods, the CS was struggling for improvement of rights and self-determination and the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic movements were very disrupting. Facing this, the regimes used harsh repression for the sake of national or colonial stability. Therefore, the primal aim of Egyptian CS was different from the Marxist or Gramsci-an perception. Although the global politics of the two blocks did influence opinion and politics at the time, it was not the main motor of the dissent movements. They were mostly based on anti-colonialism originally, and later on, on dissatisfaction over the totalitarian regimes. Moreover, the presence of a constant radical religious group implies the difficult conflict between religious and non-religious actors within the civil society. Consequently, this proves that the conflicts the civil society has to struggle with in such societies are essentially different from western societies and therefore need a different model.

The results of this research will be relevant for countries whose CS suffers in conflicts, which are embedded in recent history. This recent history largely affects the way the Civil Society is working as well as its priorities. As previously explained, another important component of a country that would fit the model is the lack of legitimization of its government and the ongoing repression. This model aims to study CS’s strategies under repression; therefore, the degree of it and its context will be important for such research.
9.2 The Relevance of the Model

In the previous chapter relevance, the possible uses of this model were defined. The first possible one is the improvement of the understanding of such struggles by international actors. This would improve the collaboration and assistance such actors could have with CS. The categories defined through the interviews show in which areas CS could need support. For example if the international community shows support to more organizations, this could increase their reputation and consequently their protection.

The second one concerned the long-term vision when it comes to a government and civil society. Such knowledge could improve their mutual relationship and encourage collaboration. Moreover, the civil society could progress on areas such as peace building and social cohesion, which would have long-term benefits for the society. The adaptation of the aims and objectives led the civil society to focus on less targeted social issues. Additionally, in one particular case (F7), the government showed interest in their work and they were given a mandate. Although such occasions do not happen a lot and conditions were attached to this job, this shows the possibility of a transformation if the government opens up to CS.

Moreover, it seems that the animosity from the government toward CS mostly is a result of ignorance of what the HR are. Instead of approaching emergent CS movement of the 90s comprehensively, the government perceived it as a threat to their ruling. Consequently, due to the ongoing crack down ever since, there is not a lot of interest in HR on an academic and professional way (F2).
10. Conclusion

This chapter includes a summary of the results as well as remarks and conclusions concerning the analysis of the data.

10.1 Conclusion and Remarks concerning CS

The results of the first research question aimed to understand what sort of strategies CS in repressive countries creates. The analysis of the interviews shows that CS needs to achieve four objectives; avoiding harassment, continue impacting, protection and long-term vision. Only in doing so, they can safeguard their members as well as continue to provide efficient work. As seen with Davenport, the repression can achieve the long-term goal of maintaining power while using short-term violent peak to induce a constant repression (Davenport, 2007, p.7). These four objectives will be fulfilled by BCs of strategies, which mostly consist of areas that can be manipulated to advantage of CS. The current policies against CS will influence the nature of the BCs in order to counter specific harassments and sanctions. These strategies and BCs aim to counter both the long-term oppression as well as the short-term state violence.

The interviews also show the lack of interest in the strategies to directly influence the political environment or politically participate. The disillusion with politics pushed CS to act on political matter, without being politically involved. Moreover, even the revolution did not allow them to organize themselves due to strength of the anti-CS policy of the former government (Abdelrahman, 2013, p.572).

The second research question focused on what those strategies can demonstrate concerning their nature and functioning. The first remarkable fact is that the BCs made by CS is not always optimal when it comes to fulfilling the strategies. The instability of the situation made it quite hard for CS to develop a long-term vision that would be a benefit to their durability. The current strategies are unfortunately just firefighting the government and are rarely developing projects. Moreover, due to the passing of Law 70 as this research was being conducted, certain BC were not efficient anymore and will need adjustment. The most problematic areas are the ones concerning funding, collaboration and the negative impact of the protection BC on the efficiency of CS. The effort of the Mubarak regime to divide (Herrold and Atia, 2016, p.403) was taken over by Al-Sisi and he continues preventing collaboration. The model of this research aimed to countries whose repressive states are rooted in post-colonial history. This means that the ultimate goal of CS is to help the Egyptian people to reach a form of self-determination. According to Marchetti and Tocci, the latent
phase makes it difficult for CS to find angles to pressure the government (Marchetti and Tocci,). Therefore, a majority of their strategies are focused on defending themselves from repression.

The third research question aims to explore ways of improving the strategy model in the case of Egypt and to perfect its relevance. The present use of the strategies can be adjusted some more to the necessity of CS as an actor in the long run. Concerning the “Language” BC, its efficiency to attract new members should be researched and monitored over a certain period. This would help to assess if the new memberships are durable and operative. Due to the latest political updates, the “Manipulating the law” BC should engage in research to either manipulate the law further to CS’ advantages or to explore a new direction. As previously explained, the “Internet and social media” BC is not used to its full potential. Instead of solely focusing on alternative media and publishing, its use should be expanded on active forums or platforms providing advice and assistance to individuals on various issues. This would increase its impacting power and continue developing the importance of the internet as a powerful too for CS (Beissinger, 2017, p.19). The very dividing policy of the government pushed CS organizations to decrease their importance, divide themselves and compete against each other. Therefore, such actions have been part of the “Reducing visibility” BC, as a way to appear less threatening. However, all through this research the lack of cohesion has appeared as a very deep issue for the efficiency of CS. Consequently, exploring alternative ways of collaboration and promoting cohesion within the society should be a stronger component of a “Long-term vision” plan for the activists. Creating a bigger front could also increase the international reputation of the NGOs and increase “Protection”. Moreover, on the “Reputation” BC, engaging in international communication more aggressively, even if it will not bring funds due to the law, it could increase “Protection” as well. Concerning the “Adapting the work” BC, exploring further projects around less controversial issues but in a vaguer way could allow organizations to keep treating vital problems as well. They could still aim to reclaim some of their needs that, as described by Marchetti and Tocci, are the root of conflicts and unsatisfaction (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009, p. 211). Becoming legal does not seem to bring any advantages for the NGOs except the possibility to prove a point, therefore CS should explore new ways to engage with the government if possible. Meanwhile, they should keep monitoring it as well (Paffenholz, 2010, p.8) as the government is still a threat to their safety. The current use of the “Risk assessment” BC is mostly freezing the work of the NGOs. In order to make it more efficient, when considering an activity or a project, an
organization should allocate a period solely focused on a risk assessment research. Ultimately, the organizations can still stay cautious but also be able to achieve the “Continue impacting” BC. Closely studying the government is important as Al-Sisi uses the Law of Coercive Responsiveness described by Davenport (Davenport, 2007, p.7). This cost and benefits analysis is a part of his anti-CS policy and this means that CS could find some space to develop their strategies and their work.

The model of the four strategies is relevant as independently of the context, they are necessary for the well-being of CS. The eight areas of the BCs can also be applied to different CSs in other repressive countries. However, the way CS will choose their behaviour will be according to their repressive context. It is important to keep in mind that the goal of the BCs is to fulfil the strategies. Therefore, the use of this model could help CS to understand which BCs could be adjusted to improve certain strategies.

10.2 Remarks concerning Further Research

Further research on the issue of funding due to the passing of the new law is required to explore new ways for CS to receive funds. It should also be assessed how the international community can act toward this issue and ultimately help the survival of CS. Regarding this research, it could be relevant to link it with researches on CS cohesion. The elaboration of a model to promote a better cohesion within repressed and divided CS would certainly improve the strategies analyzed so far. Moreover, the issue of the legitimacy of a government could be analyzed some more. Understanding how a state could reform its functioning in order to gain legitimacy would provide a necessary background to re-introduce such a government to a form of collaboration with its CS.

Concerning the model, it would be interesting to try applying it to other CSs in other countries with the same profile. This would determine if the generalization of this model is correct and the limitation it has.
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Appendix I:

List of interviews:

F1: Researcher at a Centre and think tank focussing on property rights, economic freedom, rule of law and individual freedom.

F2: Founder of an organization promoting Human Rights education in Egyptian universities. One of the main goals are to introduce Human Rights as a subject and to collaborate with the university teaching staff.

F3: Cofounder of a several minority rights organizations as well as a member of a NGO working on academic freedom, social justice and minorities.

F4: Director and researcher at a program of an association focussing on freedom of speech, thoughts and expression.

F5: Research on Human Rights and counter terrorism at an organization and think-tank, which mainly focusses on personal rights.

F6: Member and analyser at an organization aiming to develop a sustainable and efficient healthcare system in Egypt. This organization works together with many Civil Society actors.

F7: Member of an organization which works on freedom of information and transparency. This organization research on political decision which affects the freedom of information and the freedom of the media.

F8: Former University professor who requested that no information should be disclosed on his former profession.

F9: Research and advocacy officer at an organization promoting women’s right. They aim to promote women in the political sphere, protect women from violence in general (domestic violence, sexual violence) and offer help to women in need.
Appendix II:

Thematic Map: Background of the repression:
Appendix III:

Thematic map: The Civil Society and its Functioning

Needs
- Sustain activities
- Sustain funding
- Sustain reporting
- Sustain informing

Means to work
- Internet
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Fundraising
- Organize events
- Legal actions

Facing the repression
- Avoiding harassment
- Continue impacting
- Protection
- Long-term vision
Appendix IV:

Thematic maps: Choice of Strategies:

Response from the activists I

- self-censorship
- Omission of names
- Reducing / Modifying collaboration
- Meeting Carefully
- Less targeted field
- Law firm or private company
- Social network
- Media platform
- Leaving the country
- Downsizing or going underground
- Social network
- Language
- Reduce visibility
- Manipulating the law
- Use of social media and internet

Response from the activists II

- Becoming legal
- Reputation
- Reducing obvious activities
- Freelancing
- New organizations
- Minimizing activities
- Slowing down
- System D
- Volunteering
- Delegate work
- Adaptation of the job
- Being recognized by the state
- Using one’s reputation
- Risk assessment