Love and Responsibility:

An ethnography of Masculinities and Marriage in Urban Egypt

By Mari Norbakk

Acknowledgements

I would like to say a few thanks, as a work such as this is, just as the phenomenon outlined in it, never a bounded entity.

This thesis would never have happened if it were not for all my wonderful friends in Cairo, unfortunately unmentionable by name. Thank you all for letting me into your lives and sharing them with me in such a beautiful way. I will never forget you and you will forever have a big place in my heart. *Shukran.*

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Bobby, this is for you.

Contents

Transcription of Arabic

A short note on transcription of Arabic names or words:

As Arabic does not have an official transcription system I have to include this note. I have not chosen to apply a system of transcription such as the system used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. I have merely written out the Arabic names and/or words based on how they sound, without diacritical markings. In a few instances the reader may note that I employ capital letters to mark emphatic noises, meaning they correspond to the emphatic version of the sound as it is used in English. This technique was not employed for names as Egyptians are used to spelling their names in Latin letters and rarely note diacritical signs or emphatic sounds.Two sounds deserve additional attention, namely ع "ayn". This sound is noted by ' in my transcription of it. It is a "guttural stop pronounced with constriction of the larynx" (Cowan 1958:3). Another is the ء , the "hamza", which is also transcribated as '. Hamza is a glottal stop, much like a mild sigh. As for vowels, I use single vovels for "short" vovels, and double for elongated ones. These vowels would be spelled in Arabic using a vowelelongator, alif (ا), wow (و) or ya (ي).

a = ا	D = ض
b = ب	T = ط
t = ت	ZH = ظ
th = ث	' = ع
g = ج	gh = غ
H = ح	f = ف
kh = خ	q = ق
d = د	k = ك
dh = ذ	l = ل
r = ر	m = م
z = ز	n = ن
s = س	h = ه
sh = ش	w = و
S = ص	y = ي

This picture is from a wedding I attended in Cairo, in May 2013. Photographer: Nicolas Rigal

1 Introduction

In March 2014, a good year after I first met him and as I was finishing up this thesis, I received a text from Haitham, a young man from Cairo, inviting me to his engagement party the next weekend. Haitham was very happy and told me he wished to invite me even though he knew I would not be able to take part. However, he wanted very much to inform me of the joyful upcoming event. It meant that he was about to get married, and by doing so, fulfilling some part of the role of a full grown Egyptian man. It also means he had managed to accumulate enough capital required to marry, as he once said: "If I were not willing to have a family I would not need money that bad". By informing me of his impending engagement he was also informing me he had saved up enough money to put a down-payment for an apartment. It means he had been approved by his father-in-law to-be, as a decent, hardworking, good young man. It also means he had found a girl of the correct background, acceptable to his family. But most importantly, it means he had found someone with whom he hopes and desires to get to know and fall in love with. Haitham once said:"I guess it's all about love and responsibility".

Although the above vignette is based on something that happened a long time after I finished fieldwork, I wanted to start off with it because it captures what this thesis is essentially about. This thesis is about masculinity in Cairo, and how it is inseparably connected to "love and responsibility". I argue that the social basis for production and performance of Egyptian masculinity is interactional. I will show this by highlighting some aspects of masculinity production and- performance, based on ethnography I have gathered through six months of fieldwork in Cairo. I argue that men in Egypt have a strong male ideal linked to the provider role. I also argue that they have alternative arenas in which to perform at masculinity when times are unstable and insecure. This thesis is about how men live their everyday lives in the midst of turmoil and instability and still manage to find love, happiness and ways in which to fulfil their role as men.

Masculinity is a complex, fluid, ever-changing phenomenon. I draw on R.W. Connell[1]'s concept of *hegemonic masculinity* (1995[2005]) and the concept of *The New Arab Man* from Marcia Inhorn (2012). In the thesis I will show various forms of urban, Egyptian, upper- and middle-class masculinity. Masculinity involves things men do to be men. The basis for production and performance of masculinity is interaction (as I will show later on, this argument is based on G.H. Mead's theory of the self (1934)). Masculinity is not necessarily gender specific, but I have studied heterosexual men in their twenties and early thirties, and therefore the masculinities I explore are the ones they produce and perform. Defining masculinity is a difficult task and even my main inspiration, Marcia Inhorn, refrains from defining *masculinity.* However, she and also I, find it useful to use masculinity to speak of men and what they do. R.W. Connell does attempt to pin down masculinity, but concludes: "'Masculinity', to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture."(Connell 1995: 71).

Setting the Stage

When I first travelled to Egypt, in 2010 for my exchange-semester at the American University in Cairo (AUC), my partner and I discussed the security situation, as one does when one moves to a new country. At that point I had been made aware of Cairo as one of the safest

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[1] R.W. Connell is the gender-neutral name under which Raewyn Connell published before and during a gender switch late in life. I refer to Connell's work under this name as it is the name under which she published the seminal work "Masculinities".

big-cities in the world. With a very low level of street-crime, I as a woman, despite the ever-present male attention, felt extremely safe. My fellow female exchange-students and I would not hesitate in the slightest to go out and enjoy ourselves in a downtown bar, with a late night/early-morning trip home by cab. The only contingency we were asked to make (by my partner's company) was to be sure we had a bit of canned goods and water stored up should then-President Hosni Mubarak die. He was 82 years old at the time, and though no one expected him to die any time soon, some of my partners colleagues remembered how the army had sealed off the city after the assassination of former president Anwar Sadat. Therefore, it was a good idea to be prepared. Except for this, no specific areas or neighbourhoods were considered "off-limits", and as long as I was in the company of a friend, I would not hesitate to spend the warm summer nights enjoying Cairo's night-scene.

My partner and I returned to Cairo in January 2011 from Christmas break, to settle in for a spring filled with trips and, for me, Arabic studies. However, over the course of a few weeks in January, the mood changed. On the 25th of January 2011, a massive demonstration took place in Cairo and surprised everyone. The Tunisian president had been deposed on the 14th of January, and something had made Egyptian youth mobilize in a manner they had never done before. The January uprising, later referred to as the January 25th-Revolution, or "thawrat el shabaab" (the youth-revolution), was organized mostly by social media, such as Twitter and Facebook. The demonstration quickly grew, and people spoke of a "millioneyya", a million man march.

The police quickly got involved, and on the 28th of January attempted to empty Midan Tahrir (Liberty Square), the central place in Downtown Cairo. This ended in bloody clashes between the protestors and the police. They fought for hours as the protestors tried to enter the square, and were met by batons, rams, shotguns and snipers. In the end the protestors prevailed, and the police all but vanished from the streets. This was rumoured to be intentional from the side of the Ministry of Interior, and the Minister of Interior, Habib El Adly. The police vanishing from the streets corresponded with jail-breaks and the streets were flooded by rumours of thugs looting and exerting violence. As the authorities had cut the access to internet in all of Egypt, followed by cutting all mobile telephone-communications in Cairo, the rumours grew wilder and more violent as many people had no access to what was really happening, which in turn caused more people to enter the streets. Most of our information came through several international TV-stations. On January the 31st I flew to Berlin to get out of Cairo since my partner's company was evacuating all their personnel, and we met up two days later in Paris.

We spent the next three weeks there before we were allowed to return to Cairo after Mubarak's resignation.

The events came to an end (for the time being) on the 11th of February as the military announced Hosni Mubarak's stepping down. The country was euphoric for several days and in the weeks following the president's disposal optimism was high. This is the environment I experienced which I later refer to as "an ethnographic moment" (Naguib 2011). In this environment it was easy for me to further my contact with my current acquaintances, and my presence then was later used by my interlocutors and myself, to legitimize my presence once I returned for fieldwork.

Since then I have observed the deterioration of the situation. After Mubarak was deposed the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took over ruling the country in an interim period. This period was characterized by numerous protests, demonstrations and strikes. It was also instrumental in creating increased divisions among the different political factions who had previously stood united in Midan Tahrir. It was a time highlighting military brutality towards civilians. Several incidents of civilians being arrested by the military, only to resurface with marks from beatings and torture, emerged. There were also several reports of so called "virginity-tests" of female protesters, the most notable incident in the compound surrounding the Egyptian Museum. The country was faced with accusations and evidence of military personnel shooting, and even killing, protesters. The most vivid were the Maspero Massacre in October 2011 and the Muhammad Mahmood Massacre in November of the same year. After these incidents, there were widespread protests calling for a transfer of power to civilian rule. In June of 2012 Mohammad Morsi, a representative of the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidential election and was sworn into office. He ruled Egypt for almost exactly one year. Within this time, the Muslim Brotherhood became a strong force in the Parliament, and in the Constitutional Assembly. A new constitution was assembled, and a referendum approving it was held in December of 2012. This constitution was criticized for being heavily Islamic, and the assembly was criticized for being made up of mostly representatives of different Islamic parties. It was later disputed and protests were held in the winter of 2012-2013. I was told by interlocutors that "the liberals protest because it is too Islamic, the Salafis (Islamic fundamentalists) because it is too un-Islamic"[2].

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[2] The Muslim Brotherhood and its political party "The Freedom and Justice Party" are considered moderate islamists. They seek an Islamic state, but also pursue a neoliberal financial model, and do not wish to go into a fundamentalist, reformist type of Islam.

The situation was relatively stable in the spring and summer of 2013, while I was in Cairo performing fieldwork for this thesis. There were protests almost every Friday night, but they would most often be small and contained to a small area. There was some violence, and around the time of the anniversary of the January 25th revolution there were some ugly scenes of in-fighting outside of the Presidential Palace between protesters (Supporters of Morsi versus those who opposed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood), and between protesters and the police. Further on in the spring, things seemed to settle into a sort of routine where one could expect clashes, though not too violent, almost every weekend. As spring wore on and we moved into summer the clashes between supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi and those opposed grew increasingly violent. I experienced several times being stuck in traffic on the 6th of October Bridge[3] due to fighting in Midan Tahrir, and Abdel Monib Riyad square, just under the important flyover-bridge.

In late May and early June, tempers started soaring as it was getting hot, and we started to experience regular black-outs from power, and some periods of water-shortage. This happens most every summer in Cairo, as the grid is old and cannot provide for the amount of inhabitants running their A/C and fans all day. However, this year people blamed it on Morsi and his government, and claimed it was worse than ever before. In addition to this there was a full-out gas-shortage leading to people actually abandoning their cars at times, and people spent hours and hours waiting in line to refuel, or just to pass the congested traffic around gas-stations. At this time a group calling themselves "Tamarrod" (Rebellion or rebel, depending on the Arabic spelling) started a petition, to call for Morsi to step down, and call early Presidential Elections. This campaign had a slow start, but later on, due to other converging events described above, gathered momentum, and ended up spearheading the massive demonstrations beginning in the end of June and into July, 2013.

On the 30th of June 2013, massive demonstrations initiated by the "Tamarrod"-campaign commenced, calling for early presidential elections just one year after Morsi was voted into power. The military quickly began making gestures of popular solidarity; most memorably flying low over Midan Tahrir with fighter-jets, making smoke-tails coloured as the Egyptian flag, and heart-shapes in the air. They also flew over Midan Tahrir and Merghany Street (just in front of the Presidential Palace, the epicentre of this popular uprising) with huge Egyptian

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[3] The 6th of October bridge is a lengthy fly-over which connects Nasr City and Heliopolis to Downtown and Zamalek, an island in the Nile. It has taken on heavy symbolic value for protestors and authorities, as closing it down means paralyzing traffic in big parts of the city. It guarantees you to get on TV.

flags suspended from helicopters. On July 3rd, just four days after the protests began; Mohammad Morsi was unseated by the Military, in the figure of Field-Marshall Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. This led to a new wave of euphoria, but markedly different than in 2011[4].

This was the political backdrop of my fieldwork. As I finished up this thesis, on the 8th of June, 2014, Field Marshall Al-Sisi was instated President of Egypt, the election, and thus continuing a long Egyptian tradition of Presidents of military background.[5]

Since the disposal of President Mubarak in 2011 the security situation has deteriorated. This began with mass prison-breaks (or releases) during the January-unrest and followed with an influx of weapons, lax border control, security issues in Sinai, and police and military brutality towards protestors has made the general sense of security in Cairo worse. One could suddenly hear stories of muggings, car-jacking, and even street violence. This was nearly unheard of before the revolution, but after, and upon my return to Egypt in 2013, several of my contacts and interlocutors had stories of a friend, or relative who had been robbed. There was also an increased focus on sexual harassment, as stories of gruesome assaults on women in Midan Tahrir were printed in international media. I will admit reading the women's recounts of their assault and abuse scared me very much. And I had some misgivings about returning to Egypt as I prepared for fieldwork in the fall of 2012. I came to realize these horrible attacks were mostly contained to certain situations and places, and I decided to avoid these. I also realized the state of security in Cairo was probably not as abysmal as I thought. I began to compare to other big cities I know to Cairo, such as Paris, and I started to think the chance of street violence or being robbed remained much bigger in Paris. It was only in Cairo people were so used to being completely safe, that the small chance of someone driving past and snatching your purse was a big change.

Regardless, my sense of security in Cairo has changed since the fall of 2010, and this impacted the way in which I conducted fieldwork. I would stay away from most mass-protests, and I would try to avoid having to go long distances alone by taxi at night. I also avoided, to some extent, Midan Tahrir and its immediate surroundings. I also decided to cancel some planned events if there was a large protest and I was supposed to move through the area of the protest. The security situation as such, did not impede my research, but

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[4] For a better outline of these events, the Egyptian documentary: "The Square", available from Netflix, gives a good idea of how the events from 2011 until 2013 took place.
[5] Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak all had a military career previous to being president. And Nasser was saluted as being the first Egyptian to rule Egypt since the time of indigenous pharaonic rule.

influenced my ability to move. However, I felt quite safe in Cairo, and my interlocutors made sure I was, and for that I will always be grateful.

I will now outline the basis for my research, and in the next chapter I will outline in more detail the methods I employed in order to conduct research.

Research question

The ethnographic exploration this thesis is based on started with an idea to study marriage and men. I wanted to explore how marriage, and ideas concerning it, influence men. The questions which crystallized were:

- Do men have alternative arenas for asserting masculinity in times of financial insecurity?
- How do men deal with negative media-fuelled stereotypes of themselves?
- How do hopes and desires for their marriage manifest and influence both them and their society?

The aim of this thesis is to look at how interactional aspects of the young men's lives influence the way in which masculinity is produced and performed. I argue that the way in which men are made men is linked to their close, personal relationships. This means, in the early stage of adult life; the way males engage with their partner, or prospective partner, may allow insights into how masculinity is produced in the Egyptian context. In the question of how to deal with these interactional dynamics analytically I am strongly influenced by Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analogy from his "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" (1959 [1990]). I will use the analogy as a toolbox, from where I can draw some concepts and vocabulary to think with. The theoretical starting point for my interactionist view of persons is George Herbert Mead's work "Mind, Self and Society" (1934) which focuses on how the self is a social process.

I position myself alongside advocates for a heavy focus on induction in anthropological research (cf. Biehl 2013, Descola 2005, Hastrup 2004), and have strived to allow my experiences in the field guide the analysis and subsequent application of theory. Full induction is impossible to reach (merely an unattainable ideal), especially when the time in the field and writing is structured by the University. I believe this thesis will show that it is heavily based on ethnography, with a focus on letting the analysis being guided by the ethnographic material. I hope this thesis will be a contribution to the body of ethnography on masculinity in the Middle East.

My interlocutors

First, I must clarify that all names of research participants in this body of work have been altered to ensure privacy. Subjects reveal intimate details of their lives and therefore I keep their names private.

I primarily followed three separate circles of friends. One circle was made up of several married couples, and one couple engaged to be married during my time in Cairo. In this circle the oldest person was 33, and the youngest was 27. All members in this circle of friends were Christian, but a mix of Catholic and Coptic. Another was a circle of single young men, and occasionally some of their additional male and female friends. All of the men were 24 and 25 years old. They were all Sunni Muslims, considered themselves liberal, and not associated with any type of political Islam. The third circle of friends was made up of young people, some married, and some not, with a heavy international focus. Some of the members of this circle were not Egyptian; however, I focused mainly on the Egyptians. Here ages spanned from 22-31. All the Egyptians in this circle were Sunni Muslims. The internationals were Sunni, Shi'a, Christian, and Agnostic and some were also spiritual in ways influenced by mystical branches of Buddhism and Islam, particularly Sufism. What all these circles of friends had in common was their high level of education and fluency in English language, along with experience of travelling abroad. Outside of these circles of friends I also met regularly with a few other individuals who also agreed to be part of my research; a young woman, an engaged couple, some young men, and my Arabic teacher. The men whom I mostly base this thesis on are from the different circles of friends, and they reflect their respective circle. I also had contact with some family members and others connected to the main interlocutors who contributed to my background knowledge.

As a way to operationalize the topic of masculinity for my fieldwork, I decided to look at marriage. I have dealt with mostly young people; therefore, the thesis is focused mostly on processes linked to engaging in marriage, and the early years of married life. Some of the men I studied had yet to meet a prospective partner and the couple I dealt with who had been married the longest was due to celebrate their fifth anniversary.

Economy is a strong factor in Egyptian masculinity. As I will show throughout this thesis, production of masculinity, and the necessary preconditions to being an ideal man are closely linked to economic practices and consumption. In Egyptian culture, the male provider sits very central to what is conceived as masculine. As I often observed in weddings, the wedding

of a young Egyptian couple is rife with *conspicuous consumption* (Veblen 1899)[6]. Commonly a very large portion of a couple's life-savings is spent on the wedding, and necessary fittings for the home. As well as this, specific consumption practices are also linked to notions of class, and an idea of modernity which, as I will show, strongly influence the type of masculinity that is produced and the change it brings with it.

The people who participated in my study were all relatively well-off. They are all taking part in a specific type of "global" consumption, and have international connections through work, education, language and travels. The span of income of the people I chose to include in my study ranges from 2000LE (approx. 300-400USD) per month up to one man who runs a multi-million dollar company. Consequently what they have in common is not a specific type of job or a specific amount of economic capital, but a shared class identity on the basis of their education, travels, and certain consumption practices which tends to orient itself towards something vaguely referred to as "global". These types of consumption practices are outlined in Mark Allen Peterson's "Agents of Hybridity: Class, Culture Brokers and the Entrepreneurial Imagination in Cosmopolitan Cairo". He refers to those participating in these consumption practices as "the cosmopolitan[7] classes" (Peterson 2011). For my purpose, however, it is enough to demonstrate how the men I have studied share a certain set of consumption practices in which they orient themselves towards a global market, and claim participation in what they see as "modern". There is of course a difference in the amount of money spent each month, but the orientation towards consumer goods, and practices associated with "the West" and the big economies of East Asia, specifically Japan, is quite notable. Technology here is especially conspicuous with all individuals owning and interacting with smart phones and applications, computers, laptops etc.

The way I define class is therefore something akin to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of what constitutes class. This refers to a network in which factors connected to three types of capital – social, cultural and economic (Bourdieu 1986) , and embodied practices, such as taste, decide which class or with which individuals in the network one is seen to share class-membership with (Bourdieu 1979[1995]).

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[6] Conspicuous consumption is a type of consumption which is not necessarily linked to survival, or covering "basic" needs. It is a type of excessive consumption which is closely linked to class and status. One example of this type of consumption is to buy a designer handbag. You do not buy it simply because you need something to carry your things in, but you pay excessively to have a specific one, which others will recognize as expensive, and therefore more unattainable. This will then contribute to their definition of you as belonging to a certain class, or of a specific status. The concept derives from Thorstein Veblen's article "The leisure class" (1899)

[7] I will not engage in the debate concerning "cosmopolitanism", nor will I employ the term, the reference is merely to show that this type of class production and consumption is dealt with by others.

My research participants all have a high education; all have or are in the process of obtaining a university or college degree. They are all employed, with the exception of a few women who are homemakers but who are university or college educated and held jobs before getting married. All have travelled to Europe and/or North America and some have even lived abroad. They all speak at least one language in addition to Arabic, and most have some knowledge of a third, even forth language.

Theoretical framework

This thesis will deal with what it means to be a man in Cairo, Egypt, at a time of uncertainty. The ethnographic backdrop is a time of upheaval, and also, hope for change.

First and foremost, I must clarify that I work with masculinity as a situational, relative concept. This means there is no more or less "masculine cultures" (whereas, for example this website where masculine and feminine are defined as fixed values which makes it possible to say one culture or country is more or less masculine/feminine http://geert-hofstede.com/norway.html, see Hofstede 2001, 2010). That is, masculinity in the Egyptian context does not necessarily mean the same as in the Norwegian, American or Indian context. In this thesis I therefore deal with Egyptian, urban masculinity, as it is influenced and produced specifically by the people and conditions of Cairo, Egypt. I do, however, employ to some extent a comparative aspect in which I compare, and analyze my data with the help of Mathew Gutmanns work on *machismo*, and Jennifer Hirsch's work on *love* in Mexico. This is to show how, at an abstract level, there are some concepts which may be applied in both contexts. To be able to theoreticize and discuss my findings a certain degree of generalization and abstraction is necessary,

Masculinity is closely tied up with manhood and male gender, though it is important to note that is it not exclusively linked to that, as also women may be perceived as masculine. In the Egyptian context, the understanding of gender may also be closely tied up with age and generational change, which may mean some older women take on some masculine traits later in life. Again, my focus is on young, heterosexual men.

Allow me to clarify some analytical concepts I employ throughout the thesis. The basis for the analytical lens is strongly influenced by George Herbert Mead's work on the basis for social systems (G.H. Mead 1934). He presented and formed part of the basis for what is now referred to as *symbolic interactionism* (Barfield 1997:413). G.H. Mead bases his ideas on the basic socialization of children, and how the development of self-consciousness and the self is

based on interaction with others (G.H. Mead 1934). This forms the basis for social organization, in that the basic force ensuring social order is the self-control and self-critique one exerts on oneself. In his famous lecture "The 'I' and the 'Me'" (Part of G.H. Mead 1934[8]), Mead maps out how the "I" as the reflective "self", observing, controlling and adjusting the "me", which is the part of the self the "I" displays to others. However, the "I" is not a pre-existing, pre-social entity but the aggregate of the experiences of the "me" formed in a continuous process between the "I", the "me", and the other (1934:175-178).Conclusively, the person, the individual, the self, is a social construct made, expressed and continuously developed though interaction with others. As such, it forms the basis for society.

Working with masculinity creates a need for engaging with patriarchy. Lila Abu-Lughod's work in "Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society" (1986) provides an entry point that resonates with the way my interlocutors spoke about being an Egyptian man. As Haitham says, in the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, "[...] it is all about love and responsibility". As demonstrated in Suad Josephs work on *patriarchal connectivity*, love and responsibility are closely connected to patriarchy. She shows us how love and men's exertion of power and care over their sisters are two sides of the same coin, and are central to the maintenance and legitimization of the patriarchal structure (Joseph 1993, 1994). In her book, Abu-Lughod deals with how patriarchal structures are maintained and empowered by a lack of display of love and intimacy in the conjugal relationship. I will therefore base part of my own argumentation on her seminal work (1986). In it she explores the idea of honour and how it deeply permeates the Egyptian Bedouin society she studies. She argues that honour as a basic concept in the Awlad 'Ali tribe structures gendered interactions and maintains the division of genders. She argues she observes this structuring in how intimacy between spouses is avoided, and rarely displayed in public. Due to the lack of connectivity, and solidarity in the conjugal unit, she argues that the primary solidarity is between an individual and the individual's paternal lineage. This, she claims is what upholds and legitimizes the patriarchal structure. She writes: "Sexuality, together with the bonds it establishes between individuals, is not just a conceptual threat to the conceptual system that orders social relations, but a threat to the solidarity of the agnatic kin group itself."(1986:145). On the other hand, Abu-Lughod describes how an idea of love and what I, in this thesis, will analytically refer to as *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 2012:99, 1996:86-150) is very prevalent in oral poetry (Abu-

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[8] G.H. Mead never wrote the work I refer to here; it was compiled posthumously by his students based on notes from his lectures (Turner, Beeghley and Powers 2007:339).

Lughod 1986). She frames this poetry as a type of resistance, and a "gendered" practice, as it is only performed by women among other women (234). The poetry is used to express feelings and sentiments "not culturally appropriate" (221). As such, the poetry is a sort of steam valve to express sentiments not accepted in the patriarchal structure.

An important point to note here is how our fieldworks differ. She has worked with Bedouins in the Western desert of Egypt, which stands in stark contrast to the anthill which is Cairo. In addition, her work was with women while mine was with men. Despite this, as I will show in this thesis, I believe it is relevant to utilize certain points of her analysis of the patriarchal system. I, therefore, choose to focus on the portion of her argument, which claims a cultural model where honour, and with it modesty, are basic factors in a structure which favours solidarity in the agnatic kin group and upholds a patriarchal model. This argument then allows me expand the context to my own framework within urban Cairo. My argument poses that love, as an explicit idea and as a central endeavour to the men I have studied, contributes to a change in the patriarchal structure as the focus turns away from agnatic kin and focuses on the conjugal unit. This is also influenced by other factors such as the couple moving to a separate household and often relying on both partners to work.

Agency, as I employ it in this thesis is based on Martin Sökefeld's definition of agency (1999). He views agency as a capacity in humans closely linked to the difference and balance between the "self" and ones "identity". Sökefeld defines agency as the self's ability to read, and thus interpret, impressions gathered from ones surroundings in order to play the correct role within society through highlighting a certain aspect of identity and group membership. He views agency as the capacity the self has to manipulate and "perform" different aspects of one's identity (1999). On these terms agency is not necessarily connected to a direct engagement and confrontation of structure, but can also be a capacity to manoeuvre around structures or even between interrelated structures. This is how I choose to employ agency in this thesis, and at the same time show how this agentive capability can at times appear to be ambiguous, reflecting the ambiguity of Egyptian masculinities, specifically during an uncertain political period. This way of defining agency links closely to an interactional understanding of social process, addressed in G.H. Mead's lectures. Sökefelds definition of agency is actor-centered in that it shows how the agent can to some extent manipulate the structure. I favour this view of agency over the more structure-biased models, such as Pierre Bourdieu's (1999), which tend to conclude with structure being all encompassing and rigid. I, on the other hand argue that men, and the people they surround themselves with, contribute to

a slow and *emergent* (Williams 1978 in Inhorn 2012:58-59) change of the structures they are part of. I employ Sökefeld's definition to show how interactional aspects of masculinity production and performance bring about structural change in the long run. The people are central, and it is through their dealings with each other that social structures are formed, maintained, performed and changed.

Stemming from the same school of thought follows the idea of how *stereotypes* influence the people whom they are supposed to encompass. This, as will be further discussed later often leads to confusion and navigation which may eventually lead to change. This form of stereotype is what Marcia Inhorn refers to as a toxic traits list (Connell 1995 in Inhorn 2012:57), which she claims: "[...] in the context of the Middle East, condemns all men as oppressive patriarchs, polygamists, religious fanatics, and terrorists" (2012:57). This stereotype proved an important factor in my fieldwork, as most of the participants in my study often would refer to a western, media-fuelled stereotype they thought I held of them. In most of the navigations and agentive manoeuvring I observed my interlocutors engaging in, there was an element of the men trying to distance themselves from this stereotype, though at times they would explain actions which "fit" the stereotype by referring to it. Stereotypes influence the way in which people act, by either the wish to avoid being labelled by them, but also called upon to "excuse" behaviour or opinions which may actually correspond with the stereotype.

I also view emotions and expressions of emotions in the light of G.H. Mead's insights. Emotions are also enacted and reacted upon in an interactional manner. Emotional responses are socially structured through children's socialization. As such, love is also a social phenomenon, and the way in which it is enacted, felt and legitimately expressed is culturally specific. Therefore, I decided not to use the term "love" analytically in this thesis, although there are persuasive works advocating just that (Hirsch and Warlow 2006; Padilla, et.al. 2007). Instead I decided to employ another term, developed by anthropologists of the Middle East, namely *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 1996, 2012). Conjugal connectivity is Marcia Inhorn's adaptation of Suad Joseph's concept, *patriarchal connectivity* (1994). Joseph originally employed the concept to show how brother/sister relationships involve maintaining a disproportionate power-relationship through the brother's parallel exertion of power over his sister, performed as an expression of love and dually as production and maintenance of patriarchal structure (Joseph 1994) Inhorn, however, has employed connectivity in the conjugal unit, in the relationship between husband and wife. *Conjugal connectivity* is a sense

of caring, loving and connection in the conjugal unit (Inhorn 2012:99), in which the selves, the individuals involved are unbounded, fluid persons, engaged in each other. I employ *conjugal connectivity* to assess love and how an idea of love is closely linked to the idea of an ideal marriage and partner, in addition to being influenced by religious ideals. I will proceed to demonstrate how an idea of love or, as I frame it analytically - conjugal connectivity, is central to how young men imagine their future marriage. Following Inhorn, and coming back to Abu-Lughod's argument (1986) as to how the suppression of intimacy in the conjugal unit strengthens patriarchy, I will then argue that conjugal connectivity contributes to changing the patriarchal structure.

The concept of *emergent masculinities,* as applied in this thesis, is influenced by the adaptation Marcia Inhorn does to R.W. Connell's influential concept of *hegemonic masculinity* (Connell 1995[2005])*.* Inhorn argues that hegemonic masculinity as a concept is not necessarily optimal in the Middle Eastern context (Inhorn 2012:48-62). She proposes to expand the term, by borrowing the idea of *emergence* (Williams 1978:121-128 (as referred to in Inhorn 2012:58-59)) from Raymond Williams, and adding pluralism to the concept by making *masculinity* into *masculinities.* This is done to expand the idea of masculinity to encompass "[T]he lived reality of different forms of masculinity as *ever-changing social strategies* enacted through practice. Actual men's performances of gender are constantly in flux and may change radically as their social and physical circumstances change." (Inhorn 2012:45, original emphasis). *Emergent masculinities* open the way we view masculinities in the Middle Eastern and the Egyptian context. The idea of masculinities being both plural and *emergent* (Williams 1978) means we can begin viewing them as transformative, and as an interactional process inherent in structural change. Here closing the loop back to interactionism: the small-scale, socially constituting *interactions* are then what create societal structure. Such as patterns of natural emergence, for example an ice-crystal, *emergent masculinities* are ever changing, dynamic and in flux, but at the same time make up and reproduce society's structure. This structure is simultaneously reproducing itself and changing, and in their micro-interactions the agents are thus reproducing and ever-changing the structures.

I also demonstrate certain aspects of the interactional processes which make up Egyptian masculinity, with a focus on the interaction young men have with society, and their partner in the early stages of marriage. This is to shed light on some of the processes which contribute to

shape masculinity in Egypt. I have decided to; based on my ethnographic material, focus on three interrelated aspects of this:

- The way men, through navigating different arenas, manage to fulfil an idea of a masculine ideal as provider, despite not necessarily always managing to be completely financially responsible for their household.
- The way men extend their space of action through actively playing up and down different aspects of their identity.
- How men hope for and desire a relationship built on love with their partner, and how these hopes and desires (cf. Moore 2011) contribute to change the confines of the patriarchal structure.

Chapter overview

In chapter 2, I will deal with method, and give a short background to frame my field. I will look at some issues regarding my presence in the field, and their epistemological consequences. I will exhibit how I conducted participant observation, and explain the choices I made with regards to method.

In chapter 3 I will look at ideals, and show how emergent masculinities are at play in an Egypt rife with uncertainty, and political instability. I will here focus on how men can rely on alternative paths to ideal manhood, and how especially the recent revolution (January 2011) has opened up alternative narratives of manhood. In this chapter, bravery and the male provider will be central.

In chapter 4 I look more directly at the agentive capabilities of young men in Cairo, and how having a "claim" to uniqueness opens up ways in which practices not traditionally associated with masculinity in Egypt can become legitimized. In this chapter, global consumption patterns play an important role, and demonstrate how class-membership, and the possession of capital of various types (cultural, social and economic), allow for greater space of action. It also analyzes how ambiguity is important in observing masculinity in Egypt, as there is at once an idea of the traditional Egyptian as backwards and negative, and as authentic and positive.

In chapter 5 I will deal with the idea of love, and how love is central to young men's hopes and desires for the future, and their marriage. I will argue that love, viewed analytically as "conjugal connectivity" (Inhorn 2012), may contribute to weaken the patriarchal structure. Conjugal connectivity and love is thus part of an emergent masculinity, and as such produces certain structural changes.

2 Method and Background

In this chapter I will look shortly at my motivations for choosing the topic of masculinity and the field site of Cairo. I will further look briefly at some of the methods I employed to gather the data this thesis is based on. I will briefly discuss some of the epistemological consequences this had, and in the end I will round off by presenting the city of Cairo and the religious make-up of Egypt, Cairo and the sub-urban area of Heliopolis, where I chose to base myself for fieldwork.

Motivations

As a small child I spent most Saturday mornings in front of the television. Around the time I was 7 or 8 years old, my father had mail ordered a set of video cassettes, called "Ancient Civilizations". One of these videos was about ancient Egypt and my little sister and I watched this video until the tape broke. Since then I have always had a very strong pull towards anything Egyptian and as I got older my mother, in an attempt to answer my endless questions, gave me novels about the Middle East. I grew up believing all men in the Middle East were brutal, unfair patriarchs. Once my secondary education was completed I realized that I was most likely both naive and ignorant on these issues, so I decided to study the Middle East in order to understand better. As my fourth semester at the University of Bergen finished, I prepared to visit the Middle East for the first time. In August of 2010 I moved to Cairo to study abroad for a semester, and then to take one more semester off in order to study Arabic and see more of Egypt. I spoke some Arabic before arriving in Cairo, but quickly realized the Egyptian dialect was very different from the Modern Standard Arabic I had been taught in my home University of Bergen, Norway[9]. As time wore on I grew very fond of Cairo and decided early on to return there for fieldwork, in spite of the upheaval and insecurities I outlined in the previous chapter. So, I left my partner behind in Cairo (he ended up spending a total of three years in Cairo) and went home to complete my Bachelors degree, and began to prepare for the Masters.

In August 2012, I went to speak to Nefissa Naguib, as she had given me some great tips and insights for my Bachelor's essay. I asked for advice in regards to my project proposal towards this thesis and told her I was insistent on going back to Cairo. She then asked me the most

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[9] I now speak basic Arabic. This made my daily dealings with Cairo during my fieldwork easier, and also opened up for me the opportunity of working with an Arabic-teacher. In addition, it let me access certain jokes and I was presented as someone who "got it" as I knew some slang, foods, and also about the revolution.

exciting, and actually, obvious question: "What would you think about studying men?" I had previously written about women and was planning to continue with that, despite most of my network being made up of young men. She then directed me towards the book "The New Arab Man", by Marcia Inhorn (2012), and I was sold. Dr. Naguib went on to become my supervisor, and I became a student of masculinity.

Anthropological Knowledge

Just as I was preparing to go on fieldwork, a TV-commercial was released in Egypt warning Egyptians not to reveal information to foreigners, as they could be spies. This was concerning me and I was worried I would be met with suspicion. I decided to refrain from using a recording device, as I often conducted my informal interviews in public spaces. I also avoided carrying around a camera most of the time, I used the one on my phone, and I rarely noted down conversations as they happened. Most of the time I wrote down my notes after the conversation or situation had taken place, as scribbling on a notebook during relaxed sheesha[10] sessions or fun-filled sports events would just have been plain awkward. This often led to quotes and events being "filtered through my memory" (Trawick 1996:51). Luckily, though, I was never questioned or met with any type of scepticism, perhaps because I looked nothing like the burly American man in the commercial, but also because I spent most of my time with people used to foreigners. So I was never accused of spying, and I cannot remember a single situation in which I was rejected when I asked questions.

In addition to participant observation, what I relied on the most was informal interviews (Bernard 1994:208). I often let my interlocutor decide topic and direction, and sometimes I would have a topic prepared if I was curious or wanted specific information. Luckily a lot of the conversations often turned onto family, marriage, love, children, etc, as my interlocutors knew what I was researching. However, often times their daily grievances or triumphs were surprisingly connected to the topic I was there to study, though I did not always realize until later on.

On a few occasions, I conducted more semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Bernard 1994:208-220), specifically with my Arabic teacher. I wanted to gather data on how the word

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[10] Sheesha is a water-pipe which one smokes tobacco with. The tobacco is often fruit-flavored, but the "original" one is merely tobacco blended with black honey "ma3assel". It is a common sight in most of Cairo and is smoked and enjoyed in many class and gender-denoted ways.

masculinity was made up and which words had the same root[11], and what they meant. These interviews almost always ended up with him telling me about his latest argument with his fiancée, or what he thought was perceived as masculine in Egypt.

Ethics

As in all anthropological ventures I had to consider some ethical aspects of how I decided to conduct fieldwork and the fact that I employed existing networks was one. I asked myself whether it was unfair to ask my friends to provide me with access to their networks. At one point I was worried my friends would feel obligated even if they did not want to. I solved this through first explaining my project to them without asking if I could document *them*. What often happened was that as soon as I finished explaining, they would laugh, and then often proceed to offer me to come to their wedding, or offer to help, or offer to introduce me to their contacts. I then would ask explicitly if they would be comfortable with me documenting their everyday lives. To some of the interlocutors I also sent an information-sheet containing more formalized information on my role and attachment to the University. This was not necessary with all interlocutors, but for some I felt the document made the relationship more formal. Most of the research participants have since expressed a wish to read my thesis and I will provide all of them with copies once it is finalized. I feel this is only fair as I understand their wish to see how I portray them. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, I have changed all names in this thesis to maintain the privacy of my research-participants. They may not have shared "dangerous" information, but they have shared very intimate knowledge, and let me into their families and homes, and therefore I insist on keeping them anonymous.

Another ethical dilemma which I struggle with, even as I am writing up this thesis, is how to use social media. Cairo is a city where one "has to" be online. If you wish to contact someone, it is via "Facebook". If you wish to find out where to get a hold of any type of item, you go to "Facebook" or "Google". If you want to keep up with your friends you follow their "Instagram" account, and text them on "Whats'app[12]". This way of communicating made a lot of sense in the field, but has afterwards made me struggle over how to make sure my

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[11] In Arabic most words are built from three "root" letters. These letters can then be placed into different "molds" which will change the meaning slightly, but the inherent logic is often connected. The most basic form of meaning is the past-tense verb. Example "kataba"means "he wrote". And then an abbreaviated from of this could me "maktaba" which then means "library" or "the place one writes" And "kitab" means "book".

[12] Instagram and Whats'app are two "apps" for smartphones. Instagram is a picture sharing-service where people can upload their pictures to share with the world. What'sapp is a chatting-app which allows one to connect with, and communicate by text, and files (GPS-coordinates, picture-uploads, etc.) via the internet. This service is very popular in Cairo as it allows one to chat without paying SMS-prices. Also supposedly, the Egyptian government cannot intercept and read these messages, in the way they can with SMS.

interlocutors are not exposed. They loved to post pictures of us together on "Facebook", and they would "tag" me in the images. They would comment on my posts, and send me articles, films and other links they believe I would find interesting on "Facebook". I dearly appreciate this as it means I can be in touch with them anytime, anywhere, if I wish to; however, it makes it harder to anonymize. I tried to solve this through closing down most of my profile, making it impossible for anyone not related to me, or those actually in the picture, to see pictures I am tagged in.

I could have just refused to be on "Facebook", but in my experience this would have limited my access a great deal, and my interlocutors would actually ask me to show them pictures of myself, or why I had not yet accepted their tag. I felt if I had been very conservative in this manner they would assume I was being insincere, or holding back too much, which risked making our relationship very one-sided and unfair. I believed as the anthropologist asking them to let me into their intimate relationships, I had to share a bit of myself to make them feel less vulnerable. This is not to say I would share uncritically, but I let them have glimpses into my life, as they let me into theirs. So, I let them access parts of my "Facebook" profile, and I let them meet my mother and sister when they visited, and I would share everyday grievances as they shared with me. I believe one cannot go be a non-person in the field, and this is why we focus so much on reflexivity, because as whole, complex persons we enter the field and have to be ourselves.

Gender

As a young Scandinavian woman I had some concerns when it came to whether I would gain access to men in order to gather the data I needed for this thesis. First of all, I need to mention that I brought along my partner into the field. We lived together and most people assumed we were married, which I did not refuse. As a "married" woman I also had a clearly defined role in front of my male interlocutors which contributed to me never having any uncomfortable situations around any of them. Also, the wives and fiancées of the men knew I was married so therefore they did not have a problem with me texting, chatting and spending time with their partners. I took great care to cultivate good relationships with these women to further insure them I was in no way intending to "steal" their partner.

Being a "married woman" strongly contributed to the type of analytical focus my thesis took on. The inter-relational, emotional aspects of masculinity were what often played out, and what was often discussed. Things such as weddings, future hopes and dreams, babies and

children, jobs, and financial worries and triumphs were topics of many conversations. Love, the first meeting, the initial phase of the courtship, and some joking references to both intra- and extramarital sex were topics often discussed around the dinner-table when we married couples met to spend time together. This factor consequently had a much larger impact on the focus of my thesis than I was planning.

As a woman, I benefitted immensely from my mother and sister visiting. I was initially hesitant, but ended up bringing them along to meet with some of my interlocutors during events I took part in while they visited. I also arranged for the youngest men I worked with to meet with us, as I wished for them to meet my mother, and I believe this was most beneficial. In the Middle East there is a reverence for the parental generation. Lila Abu-Lughod was introduced into the field by her father, and was thus received as a daughter, which provided her with a role to play (Abu-Lughod 1986:11-16). When I introduced my mother to the young men I spent time with, it seemed to increase their respect for me and our connection now that they had a connection to my mother. This also made me a full person to them, as a connected, embedded person with a family. After this meeting my interlocutors would often ask me to give my mother their regards, and when I left they even brought me a little gift to give her. My mother essentially placed me in their protection as her daughter by "trusting" them to look after me, and they honoured this "trust".

Epistemological consequences

I believe I have gathered a rather different set of data than perhaps would a male version of myself. As a woman I was granted access into the homes and relationships of the men and women I studied, and as a result, this thesis has a rather relational and emotional focus. And as one female interlocutor told me: "Mari, you have to remember to explain that the access you have is connected to who you are", meaning I was a woman, young, Scandinavian, and often also close to the wife or fiancée of the men. She meant that my data was very coloured by this and that according to her I held a very special position. For example, she had introduced me to her husband and "allowed" us to have a personal relationship where my being non-Egyptian made it legitimate for him to spend time alone with me What she also meant was that I cannot, on the basis of my fieldwork, claim to "know" masculinity in Egypt because I gained access to only a certain part of what one may claim is Egyptian masculinity. This returns us to the issue of anthropological methodology and what kind of knowledge, what kind of "truth", is produced.

I have tried to capture the individuals' take on their own everyday life. This means the truth I am left with is partial, contextual and strongly influenced by what all individuals involved, including me, brought to the table. I assert that this does not make it untrue since we wish to explore "the human condition" and the human condition is something that is explored, and played out in the meeting between individuals, as a type of situated knowledge. As such, my account and analysis of the ethnographic data I present in this thesis is valid as a partial, contextual account, of some young men and women in Cairo, and how their thoughts, hopes and actions are at play.

Anthropology "at home"[13]

Although I have been in a location considered unfamiliar to me, I still have a sense of familiarity with my interlocutors because we have many things in common. We all have a higher education and I was often the person in the room with the lowest level of education as I have yet to finish my Master's. As for economy, most of my interlocutors earned more than I did, and we could discuss things, such as shoe brands, because we had the same type of purchasing power and also similar desires regarding the products we would prefer to buy. We had travelled to many of the same destinations, and some interlocutors had been to numerous places throughout the world. We also read some of the same books, watched the same TV-shows online, listened to the same music, and the list goes on. The point being, my interlocutors and I were not necessarily always "others" to each other.

As for the educational aspect, several of my interlocutors had experience with social science and a few of them had taken anthropology courses. As I will recount in chapter 4, sometimes they also advised me on how to do my research. They did not necessarily see themselves as "others" to me, and a lot of times I had to explain that I was more interested in them, than for example small minority religious groups, or traditional small scale villages, etc. Some of the ladies participating in my research also wanted to help me set up an interview guide and help me make a representative sample so I could accumulate the required data. Sometimes I just ignored this, as they seemed to confuse me with a sociologist, and also I did not feel the need to have people running all over town with questionnaires because it was not the way my research was designed. At other times I heeded their advice. The central epistemological questions I eventually asked myself were based on conversations I had with my interlocutors.

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[13]There is a body of work concerning anthropology"at home", focusing on topics related to anthropologists either studying their own society, or someone "similar" to themselves. See for example Halstead, Hirsch and Okely (2008).

Due to their knowledge of the issues involved in social science and reflexivity, they were very helpful in pointing out important realities such as the fact that my access and presence influenced which data and information was available and relevant.

The tool I employed with the greatest success and which helped me in most situations in Cairo was humour. Egyptians love to make jokes and laugh, and if you can laugh with them, or even let them laugh at you, even the tensest situations can be diffused. In some situations I sincerely believe I could have been in serious trouble had it not been for a joke or two. I also quickly learnt, in dealings with traffic-police or bureaucrats that tears would get me nowhere. A joke however would very often make sure we got off easy, and often my attempts at sweet talking a police officer in my broken Arabic would be a joke enough. Getting mad, scared or sad would rarely, if ever, help because people would laugh at me regardless. So why not at least pretend I was laughing too since most of the time I was. There is a concept, which Egyptians are noted to hold dear, namely "dam khafeef" (light heartedness). Elizabeth Fernea writes in her memoirs from Egypt:

> Nasser was supposed to have laughed at this joke, as he supposedly laughed, like all Egyptians, at jokes about themselves, their troubles, their failings, jokes which have been a feature of Egyptian life for many generations. 'To be truly lighthearted or dem-khefeef,' Omar had said when asked for a precise definition of that highly prized element of the Egyptian personality, 'one must be able to laugh most loudly at one's own absurdities'(Fernea 1970:279).

This, to me proved most true, and once I understood this, I could employ this idea myself. One of the reasons I very much enjoyed fieldwork in Cairo, despite uncertainties and unstable times, was this wonderful capacity most Egyptians I have met have, to laugh, at anything. The bleaker the outlook, the more we laughed.

Ethnographic Moment

My presence in Egypt in 2010 and 2011 as an exchange student granted me legitimate access to certain stories, and was also highlighted when I was introduced to people. The events of January 2011 also cemented my relationships before I left, leaving the field open for me to re-enter in January 2013. I was sometimes introduced by "she was here for the revolution", which occasionally seemed to make some people more interested in talking to me, or even made some seem less hostile towards me. I think it had to do with the revolution being felt as a personal, but also collective, experience that all had a strong emotional connection to.

Nefissa Naguib describes the revolutionary events on Midan Tahrir as *an ethnographic moment* (2011:383). I experienced a similar thing in the aftermath of the events, and this is an important factor in my ability to gain access to the field once I returned. This was due to a sense of disillusionment, and media reported of increased xenophobia and disenchantment with the international community since 2011, until 2013. For example, during the events of the summer of 2013 I observed posters with a picture of Obama, with a big red X, and a picture of a crowd, supposed to represent the American people with a green "check" mark on it. This represented that the Egyptian people were against the US government, but not its people. However, this sometimes manifested in Egyptian people rejecting foreigners on a social level, because they felt there was nothing to gain from talking to them, and that they did not understand what was going on in Egypt. I believe the fact that I could say I was there in 2011 allowed them to be more inclined to talk and share their stories with me.

Cairo, Egypt

I conducted my fieldwork in the capital city of Egypt, Cairo. Cairo is the largest city on the African continent (Sims 2010:1), and until recently had the only metro-system on the continent. The size of the city is hard to determine, both in areal, and in the number of inhabitants due to its sprawling informal buildings, and numbers from censuses are unreliable. David Sims works with the number 11,7 million inhabitants in Greater Cairo Proper (Sims 2010:7), and adding on 4,5 million for Greater Cairo, encompassing the Giza areas and the desert satellite cities. These numbers are from 2006, and I believe it is safe to say these numbers have increased since then. A number I have often heard mentioned "on the street" is 17 million inhabitants as a rough estimation. This does not include all the people who travel to Cairo to do business, or have paperwork processed, visiting relatives, and so on.

Cairo is placed north in Egypt, just where the Nile delta branches out towards the north on its journey towards the Mediterranean. It is considered as part of Lower Egypt (the northern part), but Upper Egypt (southern part) is considered to begin just south of Cairo.
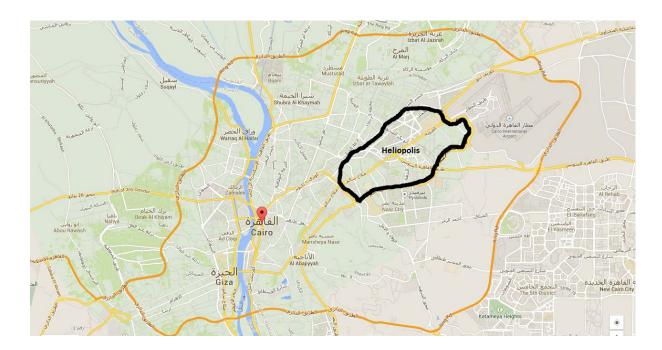
Cairo is a young city by Egyptian standards, a mere thousand years old. The name El Qahira (in Arabic) means "The Victorious". The city was founded by the Fatimids who conquered the city around the year 1000 A.D. (Abu-Lughod 1971:3). The area was already inhabited, and the ancient sites of El Fustat, Memphis and Heliopolis are part of the area now referred to as Greater Cairo.

The city as seen today is an exhilarating blend of the ancient, old, and the new. The oldest parts of the city are clearly influenced by early Islamic architecture. The streets in this part of the city were built long before the invention of the car, and therefore are perceived as narrow and winding. "Islamic Cairo", as it is referred to, is recognized by the dense "forest" of mosque minarets lining the sky viewable from specific vantage points. There is a blend of various styles from different eras which makes for exciting, but confusing and bewildering, sightseeing. The city centre of Cairo referred to as: "Wust El Balad" (city centre), or "Downtown" in English, is located on the eastern bank of the Nile, and runs over into the Islamic Cairo further east, towards the Muqattam Hill, Cairo's only naturally elevated area aside from the Giza-plateau. Downtown is recognized for its "shabby-chic" look, consisting of French styled early 20th century apartment-buildings that were intended to make Cairo the

Paris of the Middle East. Today, unfortunately, most buildings suffer from a lack of maintenance making them appear worn down, and often discoloured by pollution and sand, adding the "shabby" to the "chic". Nevertheless, it is a very vibrant area of the city filled with people and outdoor cafés, restaurants and shops. Cairo is enormous and I will not describe all the areas of the city here[14]. Suffice to say the city is a sprawling, congested, polluted, vibrant, warm, noisy and diverse place. Constantly filled with people it is an extremely social place and it is impossible to go about your daily doings without engaging actively with the people surrounding you. In my opinion, it makes a wonderful place for anthropological exploration.

I chose to base my fieldwork in a semi-suburban area attached to the rest of the city by the metro, a tramway and several highways and flyovers. The area, called Heliopolis, is located somewhat to the north-east of Downtown Cairo, and the Nile. It is close to the Cairo International Airport and the Ring Road circling the city. Heliopolis was founded in modern time by the Belgian Baron Empain. The lands were purchased and work begun in 1905-1906 (Raymond 2000 [2007]:329). It was designed with mostly villas set in green, secluded gardens, and connected to Cairo by a tramway. When it was first inhabited it was considered a separate city, but was eventually swallowed up into Cairo proper as the city rapidly expanded, filling the gap between the two.

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[14] For a thorough volume on Cairo's history, look to Abu-Lughod 1971 or Raymond 2000 [2007]. See Sims 2010, for more on the demographic aspects of the city

Screenshot,from:https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kairo/@30.0599153,31.2620199,13z/data
=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x14583fa60b21beeb:0x79dfb296e8423bba and I have added the
markings to show the approximate location of Heliopolis, as a Cairo neighbourhood it has no official boundary.
The red marker shows almost exactly the location of Tahrir Square. The distance from there to where Heliopolis
starts is approximately 8KM, as the birds fly. It takes 20 minutes to drive between the two places, when there is
no traffic.

In later times the villas have mostly been turned down in favour of high-rises and apartment blocks. As most of the foreign dignitaries were expelled or chose to leave the country in the period after the revolution in 1952, the class- and national make-up of the area changed as well. Today Heliopolis still has a flair of "Upper-class" as one can observe a few remaining villas, and the area called "Korba" still flaunts several jewellery-makers and gold-smiths catering to the rich, and one can observe the luxury cars lined up outside the trendy shisha-lounges, restaurants and snack bars lining the streets. However, just next door one can also see the middle class mother, awaiting her son to pick her up in the family's well maintained, but far from new, Peugeot.

The area also has a fairly large percentage of Christians, made clear by the density of churches, and considered higher than in other areas and neighbourhoods of the city[15], although not as high a percentage as in predominantly Christian areas. This is not to say only Christians live here, but make up a larger percentage than average throughout the city. It also means one may as well wake up to church-bells tolling on Sunday in addition to the Muezzin calling to prayer (I lived with a mosque on the street in front of my house, and a church just around the corner).

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[15] Janet Abu-Lughod notes this was also true for Heliopolis in the late 1960ies 1971:216-217.

I found choosing an area to base my field was helpful because it meant I could spend time with my interlocutors without having to travel extensively. It also made my snowballing, and time spent roaming more contained. I did also end up also working with a couple living far off in one of the desert satellite-cities surrounding Cairo, and a couple of the young men I also got to know lived in Nasr City, which is the newer and more clearly middle-class area neighbouring Heliopolis.

Religious Make-up

As I mention above, Heliopolis, where I was based, has a high percentage of Christians living in it. Egypt is an Islamic country in several aspects. Firstly, the majority of the inhabitants are Muslims, mostly Sunni. The second aspect is that Islam is applied as a guiding principle for all matters in the constitution (Brown and Dunne 2013). On the other hand, Egypt has a large minority of Christians. They make up around 10% of the population, although some Christians have told me the number is higher, but the government hides this fact.

The most common Christian community in Egypt is the Coptic Church. Alexandria, Egypt's second largest city hosts the seat of the Coptic pope, which is the supreme authority in the Coptic Church. Egypt is often stated to be the oldest Christian county in the world, and the Egyptian deserts and mountains host several very old monasteries with equally old monastic orders. The most famous are St. Catherine's in Sinai and St.Anthony's in the Suez Governorate, amidst the northern Red-Sea Mountains. They are both considered to be amongst the oldest monastic orders in the world.

In Egyptian politics and propaganda, harmony and solidarity despite religious differences are highlighted. Some of the most striking and beautiful scenes broadcasted from the revolution of January 2011 were displays of this solidarity. The most famous display was when Christians made a human shield around Muslims praying in Tahrir square. However, on the every-day level, there are discriminatory practices, such as the government delaying or refusing licences to build churches. Although Christians and Muslims intermingle, inter-sectarian marriage is very rare, and violence occurred several times in 2011-2013 due to religious conflicts.

In the aftermath of the disposal of Morsi and the violent crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, churches and other buildings and sites associated with Christians have been targeted with bombings and other violent actions. This is an ugly face of what is often referred to as Islamism or Political Islam. Political Islam is not necessarily a violent project, but

merely an Islamic political ideology. The Muslim Brotherhood is especially famous in this regard, and for one year held the Presidency and a majority in the Egyptian Parliament.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt, by Hassan El Banna, in 1928. It has since enjoyed periods of relative power, followed by periods where the organization has been completely outlawed. Out of the Muslim Brotherhood political project has sprung several off-shoots dedicated to more or less violent strategies. It is considered to have been one of these off-shoot groups which executed the assassination of then President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, in 1981. He was preceded by Hosni Mubarak, who used the religious violence as a pretext to tighten security in the country and to imprison several members of different Islamic activist groups. During the early 1990's Egypt was terrified by a series of horrific terrorist attacks on both their own population and visiting tourists. The Mubarak administration used this wave of violence to further tighten state security and maintain a highly autocratic rule until he was deposed in 2011.

It is extremely important to note that in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood has been very popular. The organization has been involved in relief work, and building schools and hospitals for almost 80 years. President Muhammad Morsi was elected president by a democratic majority. In rural Egypt, and especially the Nile-delta, the organization is very popular, and during protests the Muslim Brotherhood was known to bring bus-loads of supporters to Cairo from surrounding smaller cities.

Another aspect of political Islam is the Salafi movement. This is not a unified movement or organization, but there is a political party, Al-Nour, dedicated to the cause. Many people with Salafi sympathies voted for this party. Salafi ideology is what one may refer to as fundamentalism because they wish to return to the fundamentals of Islam. They often adhere to a very traditional interpretation of Islam, and can often be distinguished by their dress. The men tend to have long beards, and wear the galabeyya, the traditional men's garb. Sometimes they wear the type of galabeyya often affiliated with the Gulf counties and Saudi-Arabia. Some women who affiliate with them wear the niquab veil that covers most of her face. Their political project appears to be to make Egypt an Islamic state, guided by the Quran and Sharia law.

In the following chapters I will outline my ethnography from Cairo and engage in analysis.

3 Ideals: Providing and Bravery

The brave men are brave
The cowards are cowardly
Come with the brave
Together to the Square

-Ahmed Fouad Negm

Introduction

In this chapter I will look at ideals of manhood in Egypt. I wish to look at how, in spite of economic uncertainties, and failing to live up to the parental generation's ideas of manhood, young men today have found alternative paths and arenas through which they manage to fulfil their role as men. I will look to one of my informants in particular, because his case was very telling of this, as I followed him through the last months before marriage and for some time in the beginning of married life. I will employ Marcia Inhorn's concept of *emergent masculinities* (Inhorn 2012) to show how masculinity is not just one thing but rather dynamic, ever-changing, and opening up ways for young men to negotiate and live up to some kind of male ideal. The interlocutor whose story I recount here is a young man who graduated from one of the most prestigious universities in the Middle East. He has an upper-middle-class background, and has several friends from around the world. He is not representative for all of Egypt (who would be, in such a massive land), but he is representative for the social level of people in Egypt whom I have primarily worked with.

To frame this discussion I will start off with a couple of quotes from some of my research participants. One of the conversations concerning this was held in my very first month in Cairo, as I was just starting my semester as an exchange-student. I was having dinner with Youssef, a friend, and we got to talking about marriage. He explained to us, the three Norwegian girls at the table, how marriage is instigated. First, he explained arranged marriage was not as common anymore amongst the upper-middle class he found himself part of. He explained he would need his parents support to get married, because, he said, he respected them and if they were not supportive there was probably a good reason. Then he went on to explain he would not mind his wife working, but he would provide for them. We asked what if she was earning a lot, would it not be nice to have two salaries? He said no and continued that if she earns money, it is for her, and hers alone to spend. He explicitly believed the household should be supported solely by his salary. When I was back in Cairo again in 2013

doing fieldwork I brought this up with one of my interlocutors, Muhammed. He agreed with what Youssef had said, that he would absolutely not rely on his wife to support their household, and although he would not mind her working, he would definitely provide for them, and all of her earnings would be for her to use on herself or their children as she wished.

Ideals do not always correspond to reality, but the point of these conversations is that the male ideal is being the provider for the family. As I would learn and realize, this is closely connected to the man's status as head of the household and in charge of the household's economy. As yet another interlocutor told me, "I earn all the money, and I decide. I will listen to my wife but, in the end, I decide". So the ideal for these young men (all unmarried at the time of these conversations) is very clearly to be the sole providing head of the family. As I will show throughout this chapter and thesis, however, that is not always realistically possible. As Egypt is facing very unstable times politically, the economy follows suit, and although none of my research participants ever go hungry or are poor in any way, they struggle to manage to provide the required lifestyle for themselves and their wives as they engage in marriage. This chapter deals with how the recent political turmoil and the revolution of January 2011 have provided alternative arenas in which to be masculine, and also to reach alternative ideals of manhood. The revolution is used as a masculinity narrative, in which values such as bravery are highlighted, making it possible for the young men to compensate in one arena should they not be able to fully provide in another arena.

This chapter will start off with the story of Saleh and his wife, Christina. I will describe their wedding and the time after it, when they moved into their new house. I will show how Saleh's claim to masculinity is framed within a revolutionary narrative and gives him leverage. I will show how reality does not always correspond with the ideals. Further on there will be a short note on the unstable economic situation and how it influences the young men and their hopes to become a male provider. In the end I will make a short note on the idea of the house in Egypt, before I look at how this all feeds into the *emergent* quality of the masculinities produced and performed (Inhorn 2012).

Saleh

Saleh moved to Egypt when he was 15. He grew up and spent most of his childhood living in Saudi Arabia with his mother, father and older brother. He is born in Egypt, and has Egyptian nationality, but spent his formative years living in a compound in Saudi. After returning to Egypt, his brother left the family and moved to the US to study. He later got married and settled down in there, where he still lives today. Saleh finished his education at the American University in Cairo (AUC). After school he spent some time in the army, but was dismissed before serving his entire term, due to a medical issue. Now Saleh works in a software company, and earns a respectable salary. He lived with his parents in Doqqi[16] until he got married, and after getting married he and his wife spent some time living with his mother because their apartment took longer to get remodelled than they had planned. Saleh's father unfortunately died after being sick for some time the year before his son married.

I got to know Saleh some months before his wedding was due to take place. The first time I met him was at a restaurant with one of his friends and his fiancée. I had spent the day catching up with his fiancée, Christina who is a friend from when I had studied abroad at AUC. She had been telling me all about their planned wedding and she was very excited to share it with me. She had told Saleh beforehand about me, and made it clear to him I was planning to write about them for my thesis. Saleh asked what my topic was, and I said I wanted to look at masculinity in relation to weddings and marriage. The boys looked at each other and laughed, and then Saleh said, "Marriage breaks masculinity", and indicated breaking something with his hands over his knee. This he repeated several times throughout the evening, and joked about this with his friends. Saleh is a funny man. He speaks fluent English with a very "American" accent. He jokes a lot, pulling faces and making funny voices. He also makes a lot of jokes making fun of his fiancée. She pretends to be insulted (and sometimes, I'm sure she is) but he seems to know very clearly where the line is drawn.

When I met with them in January they told me about their plans for the spring and the wedding invitations had already gone out. The faraH (the wedding party, the word may also mean joy, and happiness) was to be held in the end of March and hosted in a castle in Taba, a small town in Sinai, bordering on Israel. Before that they will try to finish rebuilding (or actually building, as it is new) the apartment Saleh's parents have bought him. The apartment they would live in was purchased some time before, Saleh's parents were planning and saving

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[16] Doqqi is a neighbourhood in central Cairo.

to make sure he would be able to marry a girl of the correct social layer. A common occurrence in Cairo is for apartments to be purchased as "shells" that are completely stripped. Because of this, windows, doors, toilets, sinks and kitchen appliances must all be purchased and installed by the new owner, Saleh. This makes sense, since young men rarely move out before they get married, and so the bride will get to decide which fittings she wants for her home. The groom normally pays for this and the bride or her family will most often pay for the majority of the furniture. In Saleh and Christina's case they did not do this rigid split of costs since Christina is not Egyptian (she is from a Northern European country) and Christina works and earns a decent salary. However, the couple is facing big costs this year as they have to pay for a wedding, a honeymoon and the apartment.

Although Saleh and Christina are considered an affluent couple by Egyptian standards, the costs of establishing a separate family unit are paralyzing. As upper-middle-class members, Saleh and Christina meet certain expectations from their social group when it comes to spending and consumption in regards to their wedding, and unfortunately with Saleh's father deceased, they will not receive much help. However, because Christina is not Egyptian they can get away with certain things considered un-traditional. Saleh claims he does not mind this, although Christina tells me he is surprisingly traditional, based on their discussions about several issues. She laughs when she tells me this because he keeps professing his wish to have a different and untraditional wedding because he, as a lot of young men in that age, finds weddings very boring, repetitive and excessive. (Some of my interlocutors in the right age segment attended probably 30, or more, weddings this "season".) Still, the wedding will be an expensive affair.

Saleh and Christina told me they chose to get married in Taba mostly because they love the venue, but also to keep it small. They explain that if they hosted it in Cairo it would require inviting 400 or more guests, as social obligations would demand. However, due to the wedding taking place outside of Cairo, a lot of potential guests would not bother coming, especially since it is in Sinai and will require at least one over-night stay. Also the "drop-in's"(it is not uncommon for invited guests to bring friends and family, and also for colleagues, distant family members or neighbours to attend the wedding) will be avoided and make the number of guests much smaller. In the end they had 80 confirmed guests.

Unfortunately, because of a kidnapping just the week before the wedding[17], some people ended up cancelling and in the end there were 67 attending guests, which by Cairo-standards is a *very* small and intimate wedding.

"A small, intimate wedding"

I spent some days with the couple and other guests at a resort before the wedding took place. Saleh and Christina were very stressed and busy taking phone-calls most of the days. Saleh got loads of calls asking about the safety on the roads, the fuel-situation (there were fuel-shortages, and people needed to know if there was fuel available in Taba and Dahab, so they knew they would be able to get back to Sharm El-Sheikh to refuel for the drive back to Cairo.) He also got calls to cancel and other questions. He was very frustrated and sad because he had been responsible of getting the napkins (specially sourced in Cairo to match the colour-scheme) to Taba from Cairo, but had left them behind. He had also been responsible for transporting the dresses for the bride and bridesmaids, and other things. He did not want to tell Christina about the napkins because he worried it would add to her stress. He was very frustrated, and at one point he told me he was no longer looking forward to the wedding, just until it was over. "The man who invented the honeymoon is a genius!" he exclaimed, and said he was looking forward to that, and to relax and be reminded of why he wanted to marry Christina.

Later that same night, while the girls were all at Christina's bachelorette party, Saleh spent his bachelor party folding white napkins in his hotel room, to replace the beige ones he had forgotten in Cairo. As the wedding party discovered on the night of the faraH, Saleh had all his male friends come over to his hotel room and they had folded napkins all night. He was luckily able to borrow white napkins from the hotel, and as we got to observe from the pictures posted by the groom's friends on Facebook, it seemed like they had a good time folding them. Saleh also told Christina about the drama and his mistake, because he could no longer stand hiding it from her and she took it very well. He also fussed a lot with the vows that he was supposed to write himself to declare at the faraH. (Saleh and Christina got married, officially, in a ceremony known as katb el-kitab[18], two months before the faraH, but Christina wanted to do a small ceremony exchanging vows and switching the rings at the

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[17] A Norwegian woman was kidnapped and held for about a week by some members of a Sinai Bedouin tribe. When released she told newspapers she had been treated well. The bedu wanted the Egyptian government to release some young men from the tribe who were being held over, supposedly, false accusations.

[18] "The writing of the book" Official, religious ceremony in which the marriage-certificate is signed by the couple, or the husband and the bride's father or guardian. Often overseen by a ma'azuun, a religious clerk, but in this case a clerk from the Ministry of Justice performed the same duties.

faraH, since her family and friends did not get to take part in the katb el kitab) Saleh joked a lot about the vows, procrastinating, saying it felt like an exam, and that he wanted to ask Christina for a word-count. One night before the faraH he broke down and confessed he had not written them so Christina let him read hers to provide some guidance. In the end he wrote the vows, and they were beautiful, and as he read them to her he choked up and the ceremony was very emotional. My account of the evening follows below.

The view was stunning from the castle. All of the guests went into the castle through an overhead gate. We came into a little courtyard and from there into the dining-hall. The walls were bare, yellow rock. The floor was slightly uneven, and the ladies had been advised to not wear stilettos. Inside the dining-hall tables had been set up with benches to sit on. The windows were uncovered and held beautiful views out over the sea. From there we were shown out onto an open air terrace which was built out on the edge of the cliff, making it seem to hang over the road below. The decorations throughout were discrete, some flowers and candles were mostly it. On the terrace, an hour after the guests had arrived and Saleh had changed into his beige suit, Saleh and Christina, in the silence of the late afternoon, exchanged their wedding vows:

 "Christina, no matter how long my vows are, no amount of words can ever describe what you mean to me (Saleh's voice cracks), or how much I love you. You are my partner, my soul mate, my best friend. I love you for many reasons. I love you because of your sense of humour. I promise I'll try my best to make you laugh every day we spend together. I promise you more good jokes, and less bad ones. (People laugh) I promise. I love you because you're a great cook. I promise to eat anything you make me, even if it's vegetarian (Christina laughs and cries, and the audience laughs too). I promise to try and be a better cook, to make up for that spicy pasta I made for you (referring to an anecdote in Christina's vows). I love you because of your creativity; I promise I'll sit through the weird movies that you like to watch. I promise to cut down on the beige colour, (people laugh, the wedding-theme is beige, and so were the napkins he forgot) and add more white. That's why I forgot our original, beige napkins in Cairo and replaced them with these white ones. I hope you like them (everyone laughs throughout). I love you… because you fill my life with so much joy. I promise to share this joy with you, and try to make you happy each day. I love you, because you make me a better man."

The wedding turned out a success, and I overheard some of Saleh's female – and male friends talking amongst themselves, making comments such as "It's so small and intimate, it's nice". And people were gushing over the food, which was very good and original, compared to the usual overstuffed buffets normally served at the big weddings in Cairo. The food was ordered per person, and there were nametags on the tables and a chart to tell people where to sit. The guests found this to be much fun, and the chart was made to look like a treasure map. The nametags were small glass bottles filled with sand and a piece of yellowed paper with their name on it. I heard some ladies at my table redirecting a girl sitting in the wrong place and showing her the nametag. I also saw some ladies slipping the bottles into their purse to keep as a memory. Christina told me earlier that Saleh was mortified when she told him they would have seating-charts. He was horrified they would tell people where to sit, "What if people don't want to sit where they are told to?!" However, it seemed to work out just fine, and people appeared to find it amusing. After the main course had been eaten, Saleh spent some time wandering between the tables, chatting with the guests and making people laugh. He seemed very relaxed at this point and I asked him what the program for the rest of the evening was. He told me he did not know, and said laughingly, "I'm here, wearing the suit". Christina seemed busier and didn't have time to chat at that point. Eventually everyone cleared out of the dining hall back onto the terrace overseeing the Red sea and the shared Jordanian and Saudi Arabian coastline. There had been a gorgeous sunset, and as it was getting darker friends and family of the couple gave small speeches.

Revolutionary Narrative, Saleh's Bravery

One of Saleh's friends, Ahmed, gave a very moving speech about him. He talked of Saleh's part in the revolution in 2011. He told the stories of how they decided to camp in Tahrir, and Saleh pitched his tent there. Later on more people did the same, and as the square filled up Saleh and his friend let people stay in their tent. They also got hold of food which they shared with others. Ahmed told the story of their experiences together as a part of his speech about what a great guy Saleh is. He held up values and virtues such as his humbleness and bravery, generosity, cleverness and positivity. He told us Saleh is so humble "he doesn't even have a Twitter account[19]". He also explained how he, Ahmed, has travelled the world to talk about the revolution and his experiences, and Saleh never wants his name mentioned. Ahmed went on to tell us about how brave Saleh is, as he proved when he went to Muhammed Mahmoud

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[19] Twitter is a micro-messaging social media where one can post messages of maximum 140 signs. It is very popular in Egypt, and Ahmed's comment is meant to be a funny comment on how it is almost unheard of for a young person, especially involved in the revolution, to not have a profile on twitter.

Street to fight the army and the police in November 2011. He also shared the story of how Saleh got shot in the face and ended up in hospital[20]. At this point several of Saleh's male friends protest loudly, because they want to spare his mother the horrible details, and to "cover Saleh's ass" because his mother does not know the entire story. Ahmed explains how the tent in Tahrir was Saleh's idea, and how he shared the tent and food with others, and how clever he was to come up with the idea. He then told us that Saleh went home for a couple of days during the camping in Tahrir. Ahmed goes on and says "I know it's not really related, but I felt like when Saleh was away, the revolution slowed down and almost was stopped, but then when he came back it gathered momentum again[21]. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I felt like, if Saleh was there with me it would be fine, and we would succeed". He constantly keeps the speech positive and funny, and people laugh when he talks of Saleh getting shot, because everyone knows Saleh himself tells the story with a lot of humour (look to reference on "light heartedness" and humour in Egypt in the preceding chapter), and it is doubly funny because he lied to his parents and his employer to go to the square that day, and got caught because Ahmed tweeted "Saleh got shot!". Saleh of course had to go home and confess his lie to his parents because he could not hide the birdshots he had taken to his face, torso and arms. Ahmed's speech ends with how Saleh was "The core of the revolution" and "just looking to fulfil his purpose in the revolution".

The evening of the wedding ended with dancing in the candlelit desert night, and the couple eagerly retiring to their bridal suite, as they were completely exhausted by the wedding, though very happy it had come together in such a nice way. When they woke up the next morning they left for their honeymoon and spent two weeks abroad before returning to start their everyday lives as husband and wife.

The Wallet and the Wife

Their first couple of months were somewhat rocky, as they faced lots of delays with their apartment which was being finished and they had to stay with Saleh's mother for the first two months. The last thing to happen on the day when they finally moved all their things to their

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[20] Saleh was hit in the face, upper body, arms and hand by birdshots. These are small metal fragments (often lead) fired from a shotgun. Instead of a bullet a cartridge filled with these small fragments is used. They can be lethal if fired from a short distance on a sensitive spot, but luckily, in most instances they are not, and leave only small scars, but often the metal fragments are left in the person's body. Saleh was injured and looked terrible, but he was well enough to be sent home after a quick patching up, and today one can barely see the traces. Several of my research participants had been shot with this type of ammunition.

[21] The days Saleh spent at home coincided with the days after the 25th of January when the movement seemed to die down, before everything exploded as the police attacked the protestors on the 28th of January.

own house was that they discovered bumps in their brand new wooden floors. They had to cut the floor open and leave it to dry before they could have parts of the floor refitted. Finally they had all of their friends over for a housewarming party in early June. Christina proudly showed us around and the place was beautiful. The apartment had three bedrooms, two full bathrooms, a half bathroom with just a toilet and a sink, a big kitchen with a dining area and a spacious salon/living room, as well as a small balcony. They had also adopted a dog from a shelter, which was timid, and shaved because he had an awful rash. Saleh told me he seemed to be scared of men and actually tried to bite him at one point when he came back home late one evening. As we were waiting for food to get ready, and for everyone to arrive, I sat with Saleh and a friend of his outside. I asked him what was different about married life. He quickly, with a sarcastic grin said, "my wallet", and his friend laughed. "Before I could just take a weekend off and go diving if I felt like it, and spend money on myself without thinking.", he said. Saleh's friend asked, "But doesn't Christina work?", and Saleh replied, "Yes, but anyways it's different now". And then he said, voice dripping with laughter, "Well, it's nice, that someone is always there and all of that. "

Saleh told me some weeks later, when I stayed with them for a couple of days, that he and Christina have a shared economy. He pays for all he can, such as bills, household expenses, and so on, but when he runs out of money Christina pitches in. However, with the expenses of finishing the apartment and the wedding, on top of monthly expenses like phone bills, gas, electricity, their driver (Christina cannot drive, so they have hired a driver to take her to work and back on weekdays) dog food and people food, they cannot afford as many luxuries. However, as Christina explained to me when I expressed concern for them, they do not have any mortgages. When they are done paying for the credit card bills and the expenses related to the work on the house, they will not have many big expenses. And as another one of my other interlocutors once commented, in Egypt, they live life when they are young, "not like Americans", who have to pay back their mortgage until they are sixty before they can enjoy their riches. This of course applies only to those who have managed to purchase their married home, or whose parents have been able to secure an apartment for their sons.

Another interlocutor who is a banker has explained to me that Egypt has a cash-based economy. This does not mean they do not use banks and credit cards, but that most purchases of a certain size are made "in cash". For most people it would be impossible to buy a house with a mortgage, because interest rates are extremely high. This means people save up and buy apartments and cars with their funds. Also, parents of sons will put their savings into real

estate if they have the chance to because they wish to secure their sons ability to marry a girl of their own social-economic standing. The boys whose parents have not been able to get them an apartment are faced with the task of working to save up and buy their own apartment. One of my interlocutors, Haitham , who I will return to in the fifth chapter, got an opportunity to go work in Saudi Arabia. He told me he wants to work there for two to three years to save up and buy a home and car, then move back to get married. He also tells me he will need a good amount of funds, because not only does he have to buy the apartment and car, he also has to have enough money to finish the apartment once he gets engaged, of course to his fiancée's liking.

The cost of the apartment, car and finishing will vary according to the social standing of the bride (and groom). As a friend told me, the mother of a girl he was seeing told him he would not be allowed to get engaged to her because he couldn't provide more than a small, basic apartment, to start with since he was still in the start of his career. The girl's mother explained to him that she could not let her daughter enter into a lower standard of living than the one the girl was being provided with by her father. My friend found this unfair because it meant he would have to match the girl's father's income level, which would be impossible for him as a young professional, since the father had spent 20-30 years gaining his status. The mother told him it didn't matter; she would not let her daughter "marry down".

"Come with the brave – Together to the square"

As I have shown, the Egyptian male ideal of the family provider is central to young men who are in their establishing phase. A good man makes sure his family eats, has a roof over their head and is happy. He protects them. The poem in the beginning of this chapter leads to this. The brave men are brave, and should prove it by coming to the square. In the square they protected their families and their futures through demanding a better future for Egypt. Saleh came to the square, and this is what his friend Ahmed is saying in his speech, as recounted above. Ahmed was attempting to convey to Christina that she could rest assured she had married a good man, because a good man is a brave man, and Saleh had proved this through being in Tahrir and displaying his bravery there. Luckily on an everyday basis Christina does not need to see displays and confirmations of her husband's bravery, but she can rest assured that when needed, Saleh will step up. Bravery as a male ideal is not a new phenomenon, but what is interesting in the contemporary post-revolutionary context of Cairo, is how the revolution is used to narrate Saleh's claim to manhood. Midan Tahrir becomes the "ultimate test" and through the January 2011uprisings Saleh proves himself. In other words, through the

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arena of the revolution, Saleh has been able to perform a masculine ideal, bravery. This means that even when he sometimes fails to fully provide he has an alternative arena in which he can assert and maintain his masculinity. And when Saleh says, "Marriage breaks masculinity", he is jokingly referring to how his wife interferes with his life, but there is also the sense of losing his independence. He is financially tied down, and no longer able to just take off on a trip to dive with his friends, and since he is not the sole provider he has to compromise more with his wife. He makes the jokes, as jokes, because he enjoys life and loves his wife, but the jokes speak truth of an underlying idea. As Mary Douglas writes about jokes, "For a moment, the unconscious is allowed to bubble up without restraint, hence the sense of enjoyment and freedom." (1968:364). The way I see Mary Douglas' insights in relation to Saleh here is that he makes mention of his failure to completely reach the ideal but without letting it become a real problem. The joke becomes a comment to an underlying idea, putting it into relation with reality, but still maintaining the Egyptian manner of "dam khafeef" (light heartedness, see Fernea 1970:279, I mention this concept in chapter 2, as a methodological tool). Seeing Saleh has his story of Tahrir, and with it its revolutionary narrative of his claim to manhood, it does however not become a real problem.

The stories of Tahrir are of course *stories*[22]. Most young people these days have some kind of "revolution story". It is a selective piece, often told in a specific way, with a build up, and usually outlining how the young person "learnt" to be a protestor and fashioned him or herself into a fighter. They start out as passive, naïve, idealistic youths, and through the story they become disillusioned, and often they speak of rage. The stories almost always have a dramatic highlight, either getting hurt or taking part in one of the "famous" televised scenes. For example, the scene where Muslims praying were showered by water cannons, the storming of qasr el nil bridge, or "the battle of the Camels". Or they helped carrying people with lethal injuries to the hospital. The stories most often end well, with memories of acts of kindness, or with the elation of the 11th of February, when Mubarak stepped down.[23]

These stories, these masculine narratives, are the way in which young men create and maintain arenas in which to take alternative paths towards the male ideal. Tahrir Square

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[22] Nefissa Naguib defines stories as "[M]emories of the past merging with current life" (Naguib 2009:141). In the context of my fieldwork this makes sense in that the stories take on a certain character, depending on who is listening, and where the telling of the story takes place, etc.

[23] I have been told several of these stories, some I have recorded in my notes, as they were being told, some I have unfortunately been told in situations where I was either not able to note it down.

became a physical arena, and these stories are a way for the men to take this arena with them after the physical event has taken place.

What I observed with Saleh, and some of the other young men who participated in my study, is their struggle to live up to the idea of what a man should be. This manifests when they are planning or thinking of getting married. They need to be able to provide and providing regularly takes on a very materialistic dimension. The "symbols" of a providing man essentially manifest as a home, a car and the "shabka" (the gift given to the bride). In addition, the young man needs to be employed and earning a salary to cover living expenses. When they struggle to do this, for example in Saleh's case where he admits that even thought he earns a good salary he sometimes has to ask Christina to pay some of the living expenses, there may be some leverage provided by the revolutionary narrative. Saleh is providing, but as he jokes about several times, he is often broke at the end of the month. However, on the other hand, it is alright he has proven himself. He *is* a good guy, a good man and husband because if all else fails he is brave, and willing to sacrifice for his wife, his family and his country. Saleh is not failing to provide for his wife, but if he is late to buy a car, and slow getting his wife moved into their own house, it's still acceptable because he was brave in Tahrir.

The Unattainable Car

In the end of January and beginning of February 2013 the Egyptian economy took a serious beating and there was a dramatic plunge in the currency. The Egyptian pound dropped in relation to the dollar and this made the price of imported goods jump dramatically. This very clearly manifested itself to me in the case of Muhammed, one of the young single men who took part in my research. He had been saving up for quite some time to buy himself a car. He had been able to use his father's car until now, but he told me he wanted to buy one that was *his* so as to not be a burden on his father. He was very excited about the car and had thought about which model he wanted for a very long time. Muhammed decided he wanted a foreign car, and not a kit-car[24] assembled in Egypt. He was concerned with the cars performance level, but also with the design, and details like colour and practicalities related to the poor quality of the roads in Egypt.

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[24] A kit-car is a car that is designed and partly manufactured in another country, but is assembled in Egypt by a franchise. These cars are cheaper than imported cars as they do not have import-tax levied on them. However, they are considered to be of lower quality, and have smaller engines, and tend to break down more easily. There are exceptions, though. BMW-cars are considered very good even though they get assembled in Egypt. They are, however, quite expensive, but that is due to the high price on the franchise.

One evening we were jammed in the backseat of one of his friend's car driving home from Downtown. We had been to see the first screening of a film Muhammed was in[25] and we had gotten a ride from a friend of his back to Heliopolis. As we sat jammed in the backseat of the rather microscopic car, Muhammed said, "Oh! I have to tell you something! I went to buy my car last week. I got to the dealership and had finally decided on which car. I carried cash and was ready to put down the money and take the car home. And then, just like that, the price of the car had jumped 15 000 LE in one week!" (15 000 LE is approximately 2000-3000 USD, depending on the exchange-rate, which at this point was rapidly changing). He went on, "that's like a full year's savings, or more, in one week!". He was very upset and told me of course he had not been able to buy the car and had to go back home. He later on decided he was not going to buy a car at all, and continued driving his father's car.

This demonstrates the type of frustrations and challenges young men face every day in Cairo. The unstable economic situation, teamed with a lack of relevant jobs, makes getting married and having a private love life difficult for a lot of young men, however, they still do it. They save and save, and then blow their life-savings on a big wedding, furnishings for a house and expensive jewellery for their prospective wives. The question now arises as to why that is, which I will attempt to answer part of this question here.

Costs and Babies

The young men who participated in my research work very hard to fulfil the male ideal. This is because you cannot really become a full grown man unless you are married and have a family of your own. As I have observed, there is a strong hope for love (this I will get back to in chapter 5), and of fathering children. I asked my interlocutor, Muhammed, about this at one point. I had started thinking marriage was a *black-box* (LaTour 1987), meaning it was impossible to think outside of the idea of getting married. I thought this because most young unmarried men, and some married men, talked about how the wedding is a complete waste of money because one is, "feeding lots of people I don't know", and spending ridiculous amounts of money on things like flowers, table settings, wedding-planners, photographers and venues for just one night where, "you don't even get to taste the food!" (according to Magdy, one of my interlocutors). However, none of them mentioned or suggested not getting married at all. So I inquired about this to Muhammed while we were having coffee and doing homework together one night. He looked at me and told me marriage was not the issue at

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[25] Muhammed took part in a small art-film made by some young filmmakers. It was based on a play about the young actors' experiences during the revolution.

stake. People could still have relationships, and enjoy sex outside of marriage; the issue at stake was that a man could not have kids outside of marriage. As I thought about this it made sense. If the couple is not married then the father's name will not appear on the child's birth certificate, and so technically and bureaucratically he will not be the father. The child will be a bastard, without a name or an identity. So, for the young men, the point of footing this huge cost was to be able to have a family with children.

The costs are often linked to the wedding, but it is not the wedding which is the biggest and most important investment. My Arabic teacher once corrected me: "It is not about affording the wedding; it is about affording the marriage". Much more central is the place in which the couple will reside and eventually raise their children, that is their *house*.

 A place where "love and responsibility", as my interlocutor Haitham claims it is all about[26], truly manifests physically in the family's home; the *house*[27]. The house becomes, in a sense, the manifestation of masculinity. As I have shown, being a male provider and actually accessing marriage is strongly linked to being able to provide a house or an apartment. The young men who participated in my research all showed me how owning an apartment is the ultimate pre-requisite (for their class) to be able to get engaged and eventually married. It is in this way the house actually reflects their standing as a man. In Saleh's case, for example, he or his parents owned the apartment before he met Christina, but once the house becomes a home through being furnished and fitted with whatever designs the couple chooses, it stands to reflect them both. To Saleh it becomes the manifestation to his claim to being an adult Egyptian man. To Christina the house symbolizes a whole array of values which will be connected to her social status. Eventually the home will come to reflect their children's status and class, once they are born, as it will be filled with all the *things* children need, want, and what their parents believe they will want. The house is where "love and responsibility" intersects and becomes something tangible.

In his article, "People into Places: Zafimaniry Concepts of Clarity" (1995), Maurice Bloch explains how houses eventually, as they are built of increasingly durable materials, come to be physical, durable symbols of the people who built them. They become imprints of the couple who constructed it, and eventually a physical memory of them, and the relationships they were part of (ibid.). The *house* in Cairo can, to a certain extent, be viewed in the same

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[26] In the vignette to the introduction-chapter.
[27] House here means place of residence, in that it does not only denote a separate dwelling, it can also mean an apartment.

way; as the manifestation of the relationship of the couple, and the relationships they engage in. Because masculinity is an interactional phenomenon, the house is then also a manifestation of the man's ability to provide, and thus a memorial to his masculinity. The home is central to the Egyptian family's life, and in a sense, without a home there is no family.

Concluding Remarks and *Emergent Masculinities*

In this chapter I have shown how young men, when faced with difficult economic times have other arenas in which to perform at masculinity. I introduced the reader to Saleh, and retell the story of his wedding. Through his friend Ahmed's speech at this wedding I show how the revolution of 2011 was used as an arena for Saleh to perform at masculinity. Here I would like to employ Inhorn's concept of *emergent masculinities* (2012) to assess how the young men I have gotten to know are navigating and negotiating the male ideals, and the difficulties they face due to an unstable, insecure economic situation. The ideal is a man who can provide for his wife and children, and still have growth and build a reserve of funds which will in turn help their sons and daughters to start their life once they move away from home. This is how their parents managed to provide them with a good education, opportunities to travel, and eventually the funds to get a home. However, the reality on the street today appears less straight forward. The jobs are scarce, and even with a good college degree, you will not necessarily be guaranteed a substantial salary. And even if you manage to land both a job and a decent salary you risk the salary being withheld, or frozen, which means you will not have a raise. With the way the market has been taking turns since the events in 2011 this means one might not be able to access the correct "symbols" of social standing which could also make wooing the girl you would like a future with difficult. Luckily, as times change so do people, and these young men find alternative narratives and venues through which they manage to reach a certain male ideal. The young men maintain and reinforce a prevalent ideal, but open up and engage in alternative paths to reach it. Thus, *emergent masculinities* means at the same time maintaining some elements while changing and moving others. And, as such, masculinity is ever-changing and in flux (Inhorn 2012:45). For the young men of today's Cairo, the recent revolution opened alternative spaces to act and be present in and gives them another claim to masculine ideals. In Saleh's case, he might be broke at the end of the month, but he did get married. And even if he has to ask his wife to pitch in, that is fine. He has proved his worth, he is brave, and he came down to the square (to answer the late Ahmed Negm's call in the poem cited in the beginning of this chapter). So the practices and ideals are

elastic and *emergent* (Williams 1978, in Inhorn 2012). They are also plural, meaning Saleh can reach *a* masculine ideal, of which there are several other parallel ones.

Although Saleh might be engaging in certain practices perhaps viewed as un-masculine by his father's generation, for him it is about being modern and taking on the world as it is constituted today. Also, through differentiating himself he is confirming his individuality and independence. He deeply respects his parents but he also finds them, as do most young people, a bit old fashioned. Through establishing new traditions, routines, and activities in his own household he is becoming a man in his own sense. He is upholding traditional values in one sense, and in another fashioning them anew. As the head of a separate family unit, a husband, a father (hopefully, in time), he is in control, even if his mother can't quite wrap her head around just why Saleh sometimes has to cook his wife dinner when she works late.

As I demonstrate here, young men in Egypt can access masculinity because it is emergent, dynamic, and elastic. This also means when there is a state of crisis there are still alternative paths to masculine ideals. Saleh's friend tells us how, through Saleh's participation in the Square (Tahrir square, that is), he displays his masculinity. This is of course a continuous process because Saleh has to keep up the performance now that he has acquired a reputation for being "revolutionary", fair, brave and un-selfish. However, that also means certain demands are made of him. In the build up towards the events in July, 2013 (where President Mohammad Morsi was ousted by the Military leadership, after 3 days of massive demonstrations), Saleh was continuously being asked to make a stand, choose a side, and to participate on the 30th of June, the day protests were called for, his friends expected him to come with them to the protest in Tahrir square.

In the next chapter I will look into how young men of a certain class background tend to claim they are unique. This is to assert the claim that they are not "typical Egyptians", and I will exhibit how this is linked to agentive manoeuvring of cultural and social structures.

4 Uniqueness: Agentive Capabilities

In the beginning of February I was invited to Magdy's house for a Friday-brunch with a group of his friends. I got in a cab and went over to the house and on the way I could hear the call to prayer, as it was midday. The streets were almost empty, but as we neared Magdy's house I could see several men and boys, with wet, shiny hair going to the mosque next door. It was a beautiful day with a clear sky and low smog-levels, the air felt fresh. I got out of the cab and went over and rang the doorbell. Magdy answered by the intercom and came out into the garden to let me in through the gate in the garden-wall. He was nicely clad in a crisp, white shirt and jeans. He greeted me with a kiss on each cheek, and we went together into the house, through the salon-area and into the kitchen, where Girgis and his wife, along with Magdy's wife, Jacqueline were waiting. The kitchen was quite large at the back of the house. It was a bit dark as it had only one window. It had dark wooden cabinet-fronts, and the counter tops were all made from polished stone. There was a six-burner stove, with a big fan over it. There was also a large, double-door fridge. The room was not for eating in, but there was a small table with attached benches to sit on and this was where the two wives were seated. They also greeted me and I was asked to sit down with them. Magdy went over to the fridge and got out a net of oranges. He cut them in half and squeezed them by hand on a citrus press. He then poured glasses of champagne, and added the orange juice to them, and served us all. Girgis only greeted me briefly because he was preoccupied with the 2 frying pans and the 2 cooking pots on the stove. I went over and asked what he was cooking and he showed me two pots of "foul" (Egyptian dish of favabeans, slow-cooked with spices and other additives). He said he had made two variations, based on canned "basic" foul; one "plain" and one "spicy", and the spicy one had paprika and chili in it. He also had two types of eggs in the frying pans, one was a plain omelette, the other had scrambled eggs with "basterma" (Egyptian style cold-cut made from pressed, dried beef). He was working fast, moving the pots and pans to not allow anything to burn. Magdy was cutting vegetables and salads and putting them on plates. The mood was very cheerful, it was the weekend, the weather was pleasant, and we were all looking forward to a nice meal. I didn't know Girgis also enjoyed cooking before this day, so I asked him about it while we were discussing the dishes cooking on the stove. Girgis told me he enjoyed cooking, "As a hobby", and that he often cooked the meals at home. His wife nodded and said she doesn't know how to cook. Girgis laughed and admitted neither did he, but "there is no right and wrong in cooking. If you just learn some basics, it's very easy to do variations".

Introduction

In the story above, I recount one of the several sessions I spent at Magdy's house with him and his circle of friends. In this chapter I will argue that the men who participated in my research create additional space of action for themselves. I will deal with the way in which some men in Cairo view them self as un-typical, un-authentic and unique. They claim this uniqueness through playing up and down different aspects of their identity and through doing so they exert agency in an interactional manner. I lean on theoretical insights from Martin Sökefeld as the way he defines agency in his article "Debating Self, Identity and Culture in Anthropology" (1999), resonates with the interactional basis I argue masculinity production and performance has. I compare the agentive manoeuvring of Magdy, and other men in Cairo, to the way Martin Sökefeld recounts one of his informants from Gilgit, Pakistan, who navigates a complex set of identities linked to his membership in several conflicting groups (1999). Sökefeld shows how his informant Ali Hassan plays up and down different, conflicting aspects of his identity depending on the social arena he is in, and this skilful manoeuvring renders him an expanded space of action. Sökefeld views this as Ali Hassan's agentive capabilities. Ali Hassan's *self* exerts this agency, as an interactional process between his self, his identity markers and the surrounding others (1999: 424-425,430).

In traditional Anthropology men played the main characters in most works on the Middle East (see for example Naguib 2013, Inhorn 2012). In later times, with the critical and postmodern turn (see f.ex Abu-Lughod 1986) women became the focus of many anthropological works on the Middle East. Since the late 1960's, anthropology in the Middle East has, for a great part, been occupying itself with subalterns: women, colonial and post-colonial subjects (Hopkins 2001:1-4). These were, and still are, subjects in need of scholarly work; however, most of the time men were rarely viewed as gendered subjects[28]. If one spoke of gender in the Middle East it was female gender, and the men who were studied were either seen as patriarchs (often through the lens of the women they lived with – cf. Abu-Lughod 1986 and Kandiyoti 1988), as subalterns who were resisting some form of power-structure (cf. Peteet 1994), or as subjects engaging in some fascinating activity. Lately there has been a call for studying

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[28] This is not to mean I don't recognize the extensive work on men as men in other regions, or even to skip works on masculinity in the region, but compared to the amount of work conducted on women, and men (but not as gendered actors) this unfortunately has a tendency to disappear. However, I owe great thanks to the (more) extensive work on masculinity in Latin America (notably Gutmann 1996, Archetti 1993), and also in other regions (notably Hertzfeld 1988, Connell 1995, Kilshaw 2009, Bourdieu 2000). And of course the work done on masculinity in the Middle East (notably Inhorn 1996, 2007, 2012, and Ghannam, 2013).

Middle-Eastern men as men[29]. Most Notably Marcia Inhorn (2012) and Farha Ghannam (2013) who both propose in their monographies a turn to the study of the gendered processes involved in producing men and masculinities, in the Middle East. They both build on extensive work from other regions but note the lack of ethnographic accounts of masculinity in the Middle East.

In this chapter I, inspired by Farha Ghannams book, "Live and Die Like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt"(2013), will look at how men, as agents, navigate different arenas to expand their space of action. I believe looking at men as gendered agents can be an interesting analysis of how they navigate in their everyday life, how and what it means to be - an Egyptian man. What is interesting to me is how prevalent stereotypes of Arab men clearly influence also the Arab men themselves[30]. This makes for some exciting navigation as they find some parts of the stereotypes negative and struggle to prove how they do not embody this stereotype, and at times even attempting to prove them wrong and taking pleasure in the surprise of doing what is perceived as opposite of the stereotypical. However, they sometime evoke the stereotype as if to hide behind it when they act along the lines of it.

I will base the analysis in this chapter on the case of Magdy, the man from the above vignette, a young, well-off man I met and got to know in Cairo in the spring and summer of 2013. He strikes me as my most *typical* example of this group of *un-typical* Egyptians. I will outline the stories first and then I will engage in looking at how Magdy is exerting agency in the way I am proposing, namely through gaining knowledge of and then playing up and also down different facets of his identity[31], and engaging with different parallel discourses to carve his own space for action.

I started the chapter by showing how men as gendered agents have not been a well studied phenomenon in Middle East-anthropology. I will here present some theoretical concepts, before I tell the story of Magdy, and his hobby of cooking. I will show with the help of his story how he deals with a Western, media fuelled stereotype of "Arab men" and how I analyze this as a type of agentive manoeuvring. My analysis is based on manoeuvrings outlined in Sökefelds article (1999). I will look to Saba Mahmoods work on agency in the context of women in the Mosques of Cairo (2001, 2005), and Farha Ghannam's critique of

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[29] Here I mention specifically Inhorn (2012), but to a certain extent also Abu-Lughod (1989), calling for scholarship outside what she termes "the Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World".

[30] For a look at what this stereotype looks like see the introduction chapter where recap Inhor's "toxic trait's list"(Inhorn 2012:57) often linked to Arab Men.

[31] I use the word identity here as I see in Sökefeld 1999.

that work (2013:63-64). In the end I will link my findings and analysis up to a general tendency of *degendering* noted in Matthew Gutmanns work from Mexico (1996), and show how this tendency may be viewed as a part of the *emergent masculinities,* Marcia Inhorn propose (2012).

The Case of Magdy

Magdy is a young man, not yet 30. He has been married for almost 5 years, and has two children with his beautiful wife. He runs a multi-million dollar company and is well-off. He travels extensively through his job, and speaks several languages. He grew up in Cairo, but spent parts of his childhood in Europe, and attended a European Catholic school in Cairo. He and his family are Catholic Christians, and although he deals with Muslims extensively both through work and in his social life, most of his close friends are Christians[32]. When I told him of my research and asked if he'd be willing to help and let me write about him and his family he agreed straight away. However, he told me that I should be aware that he was, as he put it, "not a typical Egyptian". He and several others in the group of research participants, among them his wife, agreed with him and they spent some time telling me how I should work to construct a "representative sample". They told me I should really not work with them but with poor men. They also referred me to the popular areas in Cairo, such as an area called El Gamaleya, which they saw as more "authentic" than their neighbourhood and them.

I spent quite some time with Magdy throughout my fieldwork, and in most situations he would maintain his atypical "Egyptianness". However, we mostly met in his house, or his friends' houses, or in a bar. In these settings we would often engage in activities, by us, and him, viewed as untraditional[33] because we often consumed alcohol[34] and enjoyed exclusive food from a variety of cuisines. Magdy was very interested in food in general, and he told me early on that he enjoys cooking. He had taken cooking classes in Europe, and he once said he wanted to do a sommelier-course to learn about pairing wine with food. This was not because he would have liked to work as a sommelier, but to be a better cook and to make meals for himself, his family, and friends.

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[32] None of the couples I met with or studied were intra-religious. However, one couple was made up of a Coptic-Chritian woman who convertet to Catholicism when she married, as her husband is Catholic.

[33] Untraditional in the contemporary sense, as Egypt has changed back and forth between different levels of religious conservativism. However, at the moment Cairo is seen as a fairly religiously conservative city, and for example alcohol is only served in certain places and contexts.

[34] Most of the Muslims I know in Egypt will not drink alcohol, although some do, though it is considered "Haram", (forbidden, in Islam). Christians, especially the ones I studied, tended to drink alcohol.

Magdy loved to cook when his friends were over, and always cooked European-style meals using imported food-stuffs and exclusive products he had bought himself on his travels to (mostly) Italy and France. Only once did he serve us a "traditional" Egyptian dish for dinner and he admitted a cook had prepared the meal (stuffed pigeons) which he merely reheated on the grill. This he served, however, alongside grilled salmon (imported from Northern Europe) and salad served with an Italian balsamic vinegar dressing. He often invited all of the guests into the kitchen to have wine or champagne and chat while he cooked. Sometimes we also helped out and Magdy's childhood friend, Girgis, always helped, smelled, tasted and commented on the food. Girgis also cooked as a hobby, and when we visited them at their house he was the one preparing our snacks while his wife received guests and waited with us.

What I realized, however, was that when it came to "everyday cooking" it seemed Magdy was not as interested, and when it was time for his oldest sons meal (he was 3 years old and would not eat with us when we visited) a nanny would come into the kitchen to prepare little Michael's omelette. He also told me, on the topic of the pigeons, that they very rarely cooked traditional foods from scratch themselves because it takes a very long time. It was preferred to have a cook come to the house and prepare a lot, which was then kept in the freezer.

I felt that through claiming to not be typical Egyptian he opened up a space in which he was modern, urban, global, and "western" oriented. It seemed to me that he and others were embracing the non-Egyptian to be "modern". It also legitimized some acts, such as serving alcohol during Ramadan (the Muslim month of fasting) and serving us pork (French dried sausages). Also, when we discussed politics, Magdy and the others would express disagreement with the current regime of Muhammad Morsi, and complain about political decisions and the abysmal state of the economy. It is important here to note that as a Christian Magdy was not bound by Muslim dietary laws and could therefore consume pork. Also, as a Christian, he was very sceptic of the Muslim Brotherhood, and by extension Morsi and his government, since Christians feared the Brotherhood would influence the Egyptian Government in a direction which would disfavour them. That is not to say I still didn't see Magdy playing up his non-Egyptianness. He often used the word "them" when he spoke of Muslims, but also of other Egyptians from other class segments or of a different background.

When my French partner and I were with Magdy and the rest of the group, they would play up their European connections. Magdy often alluded to this and would bring my partner to the kitchen to show him how he had imported French wine or foodstuffs. They would also joke

about it if Magdy had opened a bottle of Italian or Egyptian wine. Our presence obviously influenced which parts of his identity Magdy chose to play up and down. He also seemed to be strongly influenced by a sort of "Western", or perhaps even "American", media-fuelled stereotype of Arab men, which he originally assumed me and my partner held. Therefore I often experienced Magdy holding up this stereotype as a reference, often distancing himself from it, and almost being apologetic when he felt he approached or lived up to it in any sense. This stereotype looks a lot like what Inhorn calls a "toxic trait list" (2012:57), which she expands as meaning, " in the context of the Middle East, condemns all men as oppressive patriarchs, polygamists, religious fanatics, and terrorists" (ibid.) Magdy, as we will see, was most concerned with the part of being seen as an "oppressive patriarch", seeing the other points tend to be seen as issues related to Islam.

Magdy's Space

In some settings, as I will show here, Magdy would play up different aspects of his identity. Once we were in Khan El Khalili[35] to show some friends of his visiting from the United States around. We spent some time looking in the shops and at the beautiful buildings before we sat down to have tea, juice and *sheesha* (water pipe) at the famous El-Fishawi cafè. El Fishawi is located in an alleyway a block from the famous Hussein mosque. There is an indoor space, which is roofed, but with the doors and windows completely uncovered, so the people sitting inside can take part in what is happening outside. The inside of the walls are covered in mirrors and benches, tables and chairs are spread all around for guests to sit on. This café is one of the most popular touristic points in the area and tends to be busy. With the decline in tourism after the unrest in 2011 it is now filled mostly with Egyptians, Arab tourists, and the random mix of foreign students, freelance photographers, and the odd guided group of tourists. But the European and American tourist groups that used to be a very common sight there are now rarely found.

El Fishawi serves decent drinks, both hot and chilled, like grape juice, Turkish coffee, mint-tea, hibiscus-tea, and the ever present glasses of chilled water. They also serve *sheesha* with different flavours of tobacco on offer. During the daytime the café is quieter, and with the sun peeking in over the partially covered roof it is a very nice place to have a rest during a day of

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[35] Khan El Khalili is one of Cairo's biggest tourist-destinations. It is a market, located in an area called "Hussein" close to downtown Cairo. It used to be the old marketplace, and the architecture is stunning. The area is now filled mostly with souvenir-shops, but there are also hidden gems, old workshops for copper-ware, gold-smiths, leather-workshops, furniture shops, antiquities and even a shop selling old movie-posters, records and comic-books. It also houses Cairo's arguably most famous café El-Fishawi.

exploring and shopping. The place is famous in guidebooks, and is presented to be the longest continuously open café in the world (Lonely Planet 2008), but more so, it is rumoured to have been the place where famous novelist Naguib Mahfouz would sit and ponder his stories over a drink. It is a fascinating place because it is part of a tourist-attraction, but at the same time holds historical importance. It is a space of "authenticity", especially to my research-participants who rarely visit the more popular areas of Cairo.

It was a nice evening in March and El Fishawi was full with mostly Egyptians and a few tourists sitting around enjoying the good mood. There were lots of musicians playing traditional Egyptian instruments and singing at the tables. It was a Sunday[36], but the place was packed. Magdy, his sister, his wife Jacqueline, and their young son were there with us along their American houseguests. The mood was festive and Jaqueline danced and sang with the musicians. We had tea and snacks and enjoyed our selves. Magdy and his wife commented on the "authenticity" of the surroundings several times. At one point Jacqueline stated, "These are real Egyptians around us, not like us", and referred to the Egyptians and musicians present.

Magdy was sat and talked to one of the waiters at the café who was having a break after we had ordered. They spoke of the revolution and the current state of affairs. They spoke in Arabic and Magdy seemed very interested, agreeing a lot with the waiter. He was clearly playing up his Egyptianness in this setting. A previous time when we spoke of the revolution he said "Aren't we clever, us Egyptians, we managed to do this revolution". It is in this context he uses the pronoun "us", where in previous settings such as his home, he would refer to other Egyptians or Egyptian Muslims as "them". However, possibly due to reasons linked to potential conflict arising, when we sat in this "authentic" Egyptian place, speaking to "authentic" people about the most important recent event (the revolution) he very clearly found a value in playing up the "we", and thus included himself in the group of revolutionary young people of Egypt. At this point in time it would have also been bordering on nonsensical to not have included himself, although to my knowledge, Magdy did not take part in any of the protests or demonstrations in 2011. Because the entire evening was about Magdy displaying "Egypt" to his guests, in this setting it was also important for Magdy to show how he saw himself as fitting into, and being part of, this "authentic" space where Egyptianness was being played out.

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[36] Sunday is the first day of the working week in Egypt.

On another occasion, just a few days after the visit to "El Fishawi" recounted above, Magdy expressed that he was glad to be "conservative". This was related to a statement he made about sexual promiscuity in the US. He claimed young women there, 22 or 23 years of age, could have had on average from 10-30 sexual partners, and this he was against. What he explained was that he was happy to have a connection to the US (he studied there for a year, recently, and is now looking to buy an apartment there), because of the modernity apparent in society, and the freedoms enjoyed, but he would never settle down there fulltime because he found parts of the culture, like female sexual promiscuity, unacceptable. "I like that I'm conservative" he said. At this I understood him to mean he was happy he lived in and could always return to Egypt where this conservatism is the general norm. As he put it, he would like to live in America, but not to become an American. Also, he was very restrictive when it came to female sexual promiscuity. At this point, I experienced Magdy as quite apologetic because in this manner he was living up to the idea of being an "oppressive patriarch" as mentioned in Inhorn's list of toxic traits (2012:57). Although Magdy would challenge the stereotype in some areas, and challenge what was seen as "manly" at times, he would also contribute to upholding certain gender structures because in this he was traditional. In other words, he is at the same time challenging patriarchal gender-norms to some extent, while at the same time upholding others. This is what I see as the *emergent* (Williams 1978:121-128, in Inhorn 2012:58-59) character of the masculinity that Magdy, and others, produce and perform. I found that Magdy, through travelling, education, work, languages and knowledge constructed his own space of action. This space let him make individual choices based on what he wished to accomplish. In some settings, he wished to play up his modern, global side[37]. And in the creation of this space for manoeuvring, through micro-interactions connected to his sense of *self* (in the sense of Sökefeld 1999, and G.H. Mead 1934) and identity, he is contributing to structural change.

Magdy's Audience

Magdy playing up his "global modern" side often corresponded to having an international audience. For example he played down his Egyptian heritage which let him, without jeopardizing his identity as a man (because he was not a "typical Egyptian man"), engage in his hobby of cooking. I see this as Magdy's capability to read the arena, define the situation

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[37] Here I do not mean this to imply that global and modern is opposite to Egyptian, local and traditional, and I do not mean modern to mean good and traditional to mean bad. However, what I observed in Magdy, and others is that there is some idea of how Egyptian, and often that linked to fundamentalist Islam, the conservative and traditional is viewed and stereotyped outside of Egypt to be bad, backwards and linked to Islamic extremism, and they do not wish to be associated with that.

(cf. Goffman, 1959[1990]:86-88). What is important to keep in mind about Magdy, is of course how he had the resources necessary to navigate the structure and discourse of European culture through his class status and access to economic, social and cultural capital (cf. Bourdieu 1986, but also, in different terms, Veblen 1899). This gives him an advantage in the play on structure and agency since he can play up and down the two interrelated systems. This is strongly linked to his role as a member of the upper-class, but also to his extensive knowledge of, and habituating into another structure, namely French "culture". I obviously cannot argue that Magdy would be accepted as a full member into the French upper-class, but having the ability to negotiate inside multiple structures[38] lets him create a unique space for himself to personally navigate. This I see as comparable to what Sökefeld observes in his interlocutor Ali Hassan doing. Ali Hassan "[...] embraced and enacted a number of different identities" (1999:422) related to his religious membership, kin-relations, geographic location, and beyond.

I also observed Magdy as knowing when and where to not emphasize his un-Egyptian traits, but rather play up his Arabic language and Egyptian heritage, like in the cafe scene recounted above. Here Magdy clearly played up the "we" aspect, and sought to join in the revolutionary movement in Cairo. In this setting it was more important for him to play up his approval, and to some extent participation, in this national event which took on a strong rhetoric of "bravery" and "manhood" because the youth on Tahrir square were seen as protectors of the nation, and by extension their own families. Although the protests were strongly participated in by women and girls, there was a clear call to the men and boys to join (As covered in Saleh's story in chapter 3). Therefore Magdy played up his role as participator in the national event of the revolution in the "authentic" space of the cafe. He knew that not doing so could prove unpopular but it also allowed the idea of the brave, male protector and provider reflect on him in this popular space mixed with foreigners and Egyptians. Through these examples I witnessed Magdy as being a very active agent. He skilfully reads his arenas, and through his reading of the context, without "lying" or being a "cynical actor" (cf. Goffman 1959[1990]: 28-30), simply highlights certain aspects of his identity. This grants him legitimacy, and a certain status in various situations, and provides him with a larger space of action.

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[38] This is not to mean I view Egyptian "culture" and French "culture" as two, whole, bounded entities, but I use the wording here to show how playing up and down different sets of cultural capital gives Magdy the ability to manipulate the space he is acting in.

I cannot claim this is unique to Magdy especially because of the increasingly interconnectedness of the world and its cultural and social capital (cf. Bourdieu 1986) now accessible from numerous sources. This means that with internet access, television, music and radio, one does not necessarily need be very affluent to learn to navigate and negotiate another set of dos and don'ts to the extent where it may provide an alternative discourse when one may wish to extend the space for action.

The Unique Agent

I view Magdy's negotiations of different aspects of his identity as a way of increasing and exerting his agency. My viewpoint on this is inspired by Saba Mahmood's look into the Islamist women in the mosques of Cairo and her assessment of their use of Islamic discourse and literary sources as a way of constructing and maintaining a space for agency (2005). What these women do is open up and navigate through the structure by finding already present openings, and also by creating new ones. This is done through seeking and accessing knowledge (ibid). Mahmood speaks of "docile agency" (Mahmood 2001, 2005), in which apparent docility and piety can also be viewed as agency rather than lack of it. However, her point that I find relevant to my work with these men, is how she argues that agency must always be understood on its own terms; as an embedded, contextual, historical phenomenon (2005:34). As she puts it: "[,] I am not interested in offering *a* theory of agency, but rather I insist that the meaning of agency must be explored within the grammar of concepts within which it resides" (Mahmood 2005:38).

Mahmood has been criticised for her concept of docile agency recently in Farha Ghannam's book, "Live and Die Like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt" (2013). Ghannam criticises Mahmood for being too narrow in her work on how the women in the mosque "[...] cultivate a virtuous self" (Ghannam 2013:63). Ghannam seems to think that Mahmood is being one dimensional by focusing on how women employ religion to assert agency through selective and conscious discipline of their bodies. However, I believe that Ghannam, through looking at the specific context in which the men she has worked with for 19 years are constituted men and agents (Ghannam 2013), she is doing just what Mahmood calls for when she asks we explore "[...] the meaning of agency [...] within the grammar of concepts within which it resides".(Mahmood 2005:38).

When some of the men who participated in my study claim uniqueness and say, "I'm not a typical Egyptian", I consider this is a way of extending their space of action. Through

claiming this uniqueness away from Egyptian "culture" they allow themselves the space to act in non-"traditional" ways. This means that in some situations they can avoid sanction for actions because these actions are allowed in the cultural space they claim, as "unique", "globalized-", "modern" men. This often links them to an idea of "Western culture" that they lay claim to on the basis of having lived abroad or done extensive travelling. This becomes a manner of bridging what Henrik Vigh refers to as "[A] seemingly unbridgeable schism between the culturally expected and the socially possible" (Vigh 2009b:95) [39].

Through claiming this uniqueness they don't claim to completely be foreigners, or to fully embrace the "Western culture", but they appear to be doing it as a way of explaining to me that they are not "others" to me, and also as a distancing from a *stereotype* of Egyptian men. For example, when they advise me on how to do my research and to have a representative sample they point me towards the area of Cairo which, to them, is most associated with some sort of "traditional" lifestyle that seems to be associated with a national idea of good/bad masculinity. I find this quite ambiguous since the "Egyptian man" is often seen as the traditional upholder of honour; wise, generous, fair and well spoken. He is also traditional, old fashioned, honour bound, stubborn. He is at once an ideal, and at the same time the embodiment of a caricature often ridiculed. (One example of this type of ambiguity I find very well described in Naguib Mahfouz beautiful "Cairo Trilogy" (Mahfouz 2001). Although it takes place in the beginning of the 20th century, I still find it a good example of the way masculine ideals are often viewed ambiguously). Ironically, parts of what my interlocutors hold up to me as the "Egyptian man" is at the same time something they themselves distance themselves from.

Stereotypes

As I mention in the introduction chapter, Marcia Inhorn defines a media-fuelled, Western stereotype of Arab men, which she calls "a toxic traits list" (2012:57). In this list all Middle Eastern men are seen as, "[O]ppressive patriarchs, polygamists, religious fanatics and terrorists" (ibid.). She demonstrates how this stereotype is viewed negatively by the men it is supposed to encompass and who actively try to show and claim they do not embody it. And, more importantly, when the stereotype is viewed negatively there is the need to continually distance themselves from it (Inhorn 2012). Contrastingly it also leads to defending their acts when they embrace parts of what they see as the stereotype. This process is part of the

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[39] An important note here is how the men I have studied actually have the resources to have "social possibilities", as for where Vigh's informants are migrants, without very many resources.

socialization and *selving,* G.H. Mead speaks of (1934). Selving here is the way in which men are influenced by the idea they believe society, and others, have of them which in turn influences the way they view themselves, and more relevantly, how they behave or *perform.* Magdy is doing just this when he speaks of being happy to be conservative. He underlines that he is "modern" and "liberal" and not judging, but he is glad he will not have to be part of certain sides of "the American lifestyle" as he is more than happy to condemn what he sees as female promiscuity in the US and Europe. Magdy knows, or believes he knows, what other people think about Egyptian men and, to an extent, he believes it himself. Magdy does not wish to be limited to and constrained by a stereotype. Through his negotiations within and navigation around the stereotype of an Arab and Egyptian man, he creates more legitimate space for his actions.

Changing Practices and *Emergent Masculinities*

Certain practices, such as cooking, may have specific cultural connotations in relation to being gendered or connected to specific groups of people or identities in some way. For example, Magdy enjoys cooking, and through mastering the art and sharing the hobby with friends and family (both in person, but also online) he is part of something which can be seen as *degendering* (Gutmann 1996[2007]:243) a formerly female practice. Magdy takes part in a group of "foodies[40]" with his cooking, which has a global outreach. Gutmann speaks of similar changes in gendered practices in his book, but related more to alcohol consumption and domestic chores (244). Therefore, identity markers are moving, and what were formerly gendered identity markers are now becoming degendered group identity-markers.

Using the termdegendered is to explain that some practices or gendered demarcations are changing. I borrow the term from Gutmann who explains it, "[…] as when certain activities become less associated with particular gender identities and more with other groups such as adolescents, truck drivers, mestizos, or the rich" (243-244). Gendered practices are changing through a continual process of negotiations and re-negotiations. I saw in the groups of men I worked with that the clear division of labour is becoming more fluid. I observed this in the way in which cooking has become a type of knowledge which functions as an identity marker and that the status of this knowledge is also changing.

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[40] "Foodies" is a nick-name for people who enjoy cooking, eating, learning about and sharing information about food.

The fault lines are not necessarily drawn at gender, but also class-differences, education, age, occupation, hobbies and geographic location. Even where one travels for work or studies abroad could construct groups with separate identities. By taking part in these *emergent* (Williams 1978 in Inhorn 2012:41) practices Magdy is using this idea of uniqueness and authenticity to juggle his space of action, and consequently changing the way he engages in gendered and gendering structures. Thus, the way his masculinity is produced and manifested is changing. His ability to play up or down aspects of his identity, based on the arenas he engages in, lets him explore and maximize his agentive capabilities.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have dealt with the way most of the men I have studied in Cairo view themselves as "unique". I show how the "uniqueness" is a way for the young men to navigate the gender-structure and create more space for them to act in. I view this as a *contextual agency* (cf. Mahmood 2007) enacted by the men to juggle several aspects of their identity to suit different *situational definitions* (cf. Goffman 1959[1990]:86-88). I compare this manoeuvring as an agentive capability similar to the one displayed in Sökefeld's exploration of the connections between self and identity (1999).

I began by recounting a cooking session at one of my interlocutor's home. I then used him, Magdy, as an example throughout this chapter, to demonstrate what I mean by "uniqueness" and how some men use this claim to expand their space of action. I then addressed Saba Mahmood's concept of agency, and Sökefeld's work on how emphasizing different aspects of one's identity can be seen as an agentive capability. I then showed how Magdy also uses the "authentic" and plays into the idea of a stereotype and "Egyptianness" to make space for action, when he deems that necessary. I then connected Magdy's cooking to what I view as a *degendering* (cf. Gutmann 1996[2007]) process, which I perceive as very similar to what Inhorn calls *emergence* (Inhorn 2012:58-59).

I believe the way my interlocutors exert their agency, as displayed in this chapter, is part of an ongoing negotiation and re-negotiation of masculinity. I have been strongly influenced by Marcia Inhorn's book, "The New Arab Man"(2012), in relation to this thesis, and I view the negotiations of Magdy and the others as a part of what she terms *emergent masculinities* (Inhorn 2012:58-62). By viewing masculinity as something dynamic, elastic, and pluralistic, as Inhorn proposes, these negotiations and the de- and re- gendering of practices formerly gendered (or un-gendered) are most definitively part of this emergence. It means that

masculinity needs not be measured as more or less hegemonic (as formerly proposed by R.W. Connell (1995[2005]), but may additionally be viewed as diverse and dynamic. Of course one may speak of hegemonic masculinity, but for my purpose this is not useful. I wish to display part of the multitude of ways available for young Egyptian men to assert themselves as "ideal men".

In the next chapter I will introduce another young man called Haitham. Through recounting parts of his story and some conversations I had with him and others, I will show how an idea of love is central to their hopes and desires for the future. I will treat love analytically as *conjugal connectivity*, a concept I borrow from Marcia Inhorn (1996:186-151, 2007:141, 2012:99). I will show how *conjugal connectivity* and love is intrinsic to the way masculinity is produced and performed and how both love and conjugal connectivity is interlinked with the changing and maintenance of the patriarchal system.

5   Love: Conjugal Connectivity

On the night of February 1ˢᵗ, a group of friends, and I decided to go out to celebrate the birthday of one of the girls. I sat with Mark and his fiancée most of the evening. They were due to get married in the spring, and had been together almost for a year. All evening they sat closely, and Mark kept his arm around her shoulders. He sometimes leant over and fed her little pieces of bread and labnah (cream cheese, often served with spice or f.ex.: pieces of tomato mixed into it), a bit of hummus, a piece of chicken. He saw me watching, laughed and gave me a big smile. After eating a bit we sat and chatted, holding our drinks. The place was crowded and the music pretty loud. Sara (Mark's fiancée), was trying to keep me in the conversation, so she leaned forward to talk to me. While she was leaning, Mark was sitting, relaxing in his chair, looking at her and running his fingers through her hair. He interrupted us, and asked me if I knew Sara's nickname? I told him no. He smiled at her and told me "Sarsoura". He caressed her lovingly, and sat back to run his fingers through her hair again.

Introduction

The way I saw Mark caressing and looking at his fiancée was one of the reasons I started looking into the concept of *conjugal connectivity* and love. The scene above strongly reminded me of a scene in Marcia Inhorn's book "The New Arab Man" (2012:99). In this last chapter I will elaborate on how my interlocutors showed and spoke about love. I will explore how the idea of love is linked to young men's hopes and desires (cf. Moore 2011) for the future. Henrietta Moore has been an inspiration because of her idea of directing the focus of anthropological study towards people's happiness rather than always focusing on the sad and destructive processes which are often linked to modernity and globalization (2011). Regarding my fieldwork, I studied Egypt at a time in history defined by upheaval, but in the midst of insecurity the young men and women who let me into their lives were looking for and found some kind of happiness.

As I have worked on this thesis, both in the field, and also when returning home to start writing, I kept asking myself "why?" Why do they go to such lengths and spend so much time and effort to accumulate the required capital and position to get married (see chapter 3 for examples on this)? Throughout this thesis I am looking at how men are affected by and reproduce structures of masculinity. This chapter will focus on how some young men speak of love, and how this may provide them with satisfactory outlets of happiness, while for others the thwarted attempts at fulfilling these may cause frustration and unhappiness. Analytically I

will treat love as *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 1996:86-151, 2007:144, 2012:99). That is, as a sense of connection in the marital relationship where the couple involved feel like parts of each other.

Haitham – A Man Looking for Love

Haitham is a young man, 25 years old. When I met him he still lived with his parents in Nasr City, Cairo, but recently he moved alone to a big city in the Gulf. He was a very thoughtful young man and spends a lot of time thinking and philosophizing about his life, himself, and the future. He enjoys a laugh, likes to tease his friends, never gets embarrassed, and always has a sly response.

During the spring of my fieldwork, Haitham invited me to his sister's marriage ceremony called the "Katb El Kitab" (literally: writing of the book, a religious ceremony conducted in a hall connected to a mosque, presided over by a Ma'azuun, a religious cleric). He never invited me to his home, but he introduced me to his siblings and his father at the ceremony. Rather Haitham and I would usually meet at cafes to hang out during evenings and afternoons. Very often we were in the company of our mutual friend Muhammed, who had introduced us.

Haitham enjoyed discussions. He once pleaded me to disagree more often in order to make our conversations more interesting. He was single when I met him, and we spent a lot of time discussing relationships, love, marriage, and family. Haitham was a practicing Muslim, and we often talked about religion together. He once told me that the problem in a vast part of the Muslim world was that people believed with their hearts, not their brains. He explained to me that the first bidding in the Quran is to read and understand to him this meant to seek the meaning in the practices of Islam. So, he would not fast, just because good Muslims fast. Rather he would seek to understand why it has been decreed, and then, when understanding it, he chose to fast. He felt assured and secure that what has been decreed by God is true and good, but if he did not seek to understand why he did not fully practice his religion.

The first time I met him together with Muhammed, our mutual friend, he asked me if I knew the purpose of fasting for Ramadan. I told him I thought it was a time for thought and reflection, to deprive the body of food, and to feel the closeness to God. Haitham and our friend Muhammed nodded and then Haitham said "Yeah. That's part of it, but there is another part which is more important". Haitham moved our teacups and water glasses out of the way and drew a circle on the table with his finger. He explained: "This circle is all that is Halal (allowed, in Islam), and outside it is all that is Haram (forbidden). Most of the year we move

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along the edge of the circle (he moved his finger along the circle to demonstrate), and enjoy and take full advantage of all that is Halal. But, when we step on the borders for so long it's very easy to overstep them, because we always want a bit more. Therefore, for one month each year we should stay away from even all that is Halal. (At this point he moved his finger to stay in the middle of the circle.) In this way we let our spiritual part beat the animal part." He explained to me that it is about rising over material needs, above the object, above the body, to be truly human and refuse the animal needs to strengthen the mind to withstand physical but also psychological needs throughout the rest of the year. Through withdrawing from the borders of what is Halal, in this way, once a year it makes it easier not to overstep the boundaries for the rest of the year. Haitham continued "also, modern research shows that the fasting is also healthy, and good for the body. This shows the Quran is true. God made man, the body, why would he not know what is best for it?"

Haitham spoke of Ramadan and fasting but later on that evening, he started talking of and linking this up to the use of the *Higab* (Hijab, the head-veil many Egyptian muslim women use to cover their hair but not their face). Haitham thought Islam, the idea of fasting, and as he explained to me, the Higab, is linked to the mind controlling and overcoming the physical, bodily needs. He used the word "objectifying" and told me that for him the Higab is supposed to be a contributing factor to de-objectifying women. Furthermore he informed me that he thought that when women cover their hair and the shape of their bodies it is supposed to help men choose a spouse on the basis of intellect and personality. This is because it removes the bodily factor of erotic lust and makes men more aware of the way the woman's face and eyes, mirror her soul. Haitham said he understood the argument Muhammed made about how the Higab perhaps does the exact opposite. Muhammed also referenced how Egypt has become increasingly strife with harassment in spite of an increase in the use of Higab, and also *niqab* (veil covering all of the face, save the eyes). Haitham agreed to this but argued that this was because he believed that a lot of people believe with their hearts but not with their minds. As such they do not seek the reason behind the Godly decrees, and therefore do not understand and respect them, leading to the Higab, for example having the opposite effect. However, his point was that he sees it as Islam's goal and purpose to facilitate, and help produce a society in which the subjective person, and the mind and intellect should be raised above the bodily, objectifying needs. As he explained to me later on, in a conversation I restate below, to him Islam meant meeting on an intellectual level. Futhermore Haitham saw love as a meeting of intellects, of minds, before engaging in the physical acts and motions of marriage.

As written in Inhorn (2007), love is an important part of the spiritual life of Muslims. She refers to the extensive work on love or *Hubb* (Arabic translation) as integral and central in the Sufi-branch of Islam. Sufism is a type of Islamic mysticism which regards love of God as the central focus of their devoutness. She writes:

> Love of an inherently loving God continues to be extolled as one of the most important elements of Islam, not only in its mystical form. [...] Yet it is important to note that love per se – including conjugal love and affection- receives no particular ideological valorization in the Islamic scriptures although expectations of sexual fulfilment and fidelity are mandated (Musallam 1983 in Inhorn 2007:143).

As I see it, Haitham's view of love also in the marital sphere is strongly influenced by Sufi-philosophies about love and love within Islam. However, he made no notice of it himself, and my focus here is on how he and others with him hope for and desire love in their marriages. That is the reason I follow Inhorn and term it *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 2007: 144). I will get back to this term shortly.

The Friendly Lover

Haitham and I very often talked about relationships, love and philosophy. He was a conservative, yet very "modern" young man and was one of these "first-rate informants", as Paul Rabinow would describe it (1977:73). Haitham had given his own society and his own person a lot of thought and was therefore very adept at putting into words more abstract concepts in his own society and culture. Also, being a young Arab and Muslim man he has had to formulate his opinion, his values and his beliefs often enough, to try to show how the caricature and stereotype of "The Arab Man" (ref. to Inhorns list of toxical traits, Inhorn 2012:48-51 and the introduction to chapter 4 in this thesis) is not necessarily fitting. This means he has very carefully thought of and evaluated himself as an Arab man and had changed his point of view on certain topics, he told me, due to discussion, good arguments and thought.

He made it clear to me, as a friend, that he wanted me to feel free to ask anything, and he never displayed any discomfort discussing any topics I brought up. Also, being a young man, in a *glocal* world he often brought up the intimate topics himself or in conversation around the table with Muhammed. However, he also made it clear to me what was and was not social code when he brought me to meet his girlfriend (because, yes, Haitham met a girl he intended to get engaged to while I was in Cairo and as we saw in my introduction they got engaged the

next year). Normally, when we greeted each other we hugged and kissed on the cheek in a "Mediterranean" manner. But, before he took me to meet the girls he let me know that was not the norm around the girls. I could greet the girls in that way and he the guys but not across genders. This made Haitham an invaluable teacher. He let me behave and ask questions in "improper" ways but also made sure I knew what the "proper way" was. As my partner once brought up sexual relations in a conversation between Haitham, Muhammed and us; Haitham answered my partner's questions and partook in the conversation but also told my partner that sex is normally a non-topic between young people of the opposite sex. Even in relationships, he said it's a rare topic for conversation. However, between him and the foreign friend and the anthropologist these things were not necessarily off topic:

Haitham: "I think it's important that the partners learn and experience sex together for the first time. That way, none of them will ever be disappointed or wish for anything else because they only know each other. Then, they can learn and practice and become the best for each other."

Haitham told me this one evening we hung out over a cup of coffee. The day after, he sent me a link to an article dealing with the platonic types of love "Eros" and "Philos". He told me that this was what he was talking about the evening before. What he meant was that he believes that the two partners need to meet and connect on an intellectual level, to get to know each other as friends, and intellectual beings before the erotic love can be developed. He therefore thought a short period of courting was important. However, he was conservative and told me that a young man needs to make his intentions clear early on. And he saw the engagement period as a time for the couple to get to know each other and to check if they make a good match. Not in a sexual manner but on a "platonic" level. That means they should spend time together in order to get to know each other, be friends, and fall in love on an intellectual level before they get married. Then, he believes, the erotic love will grow and flourish in the marriage, eventually. For him, it appeared to me; the reason for marriage then, was not merely sexual or reproductive but a desire to develop a loving relationship. This love is a thing that grows and is fed by two partners meeting and connecting on an intellectual level, which then moves into a physical relationship. And as he said, he thought this physical relationship would evolve and get better through time, as long as it was based on the mutual understanding of learning, a process of getting to know one self, and one's significant other.

Haitham, a couple of months after this night in the café, left Cairo and moved to the Gulf to work. When I asked him why he wanted to go there he wrote[41]:

Haitham: "I want more (professional) exposure, big projects, as you know the Egyptian market doesn't have budgets now. Also the political situation (is difficult), and it's not a healthy environment to live (in). And earn more money. In a short time"

Anthopologist: "In the end, why do you want to have more exposure and build a good career? What will be the final result? What will be your ideal life in ten or twenty years?"

Haitham: "Well, I want to live in high standards. Which my country doesn't provide for free, like Western countries. We need money to survive, I mean, education, health, everything. And more and more to live in high standards that equals moderate standards in Western counties. Then, when I achieve that I will be able to re-evaluate what will be next. And along the way I want to benefit this world or do any change, through enabling technology, or solving their problems through technology."

Anthropologist: "Can I ask, what about family life? Are there any motivations linked to that?

Haitham: "Yeah, sure. 80% of it is for family. If I were not willing to have a family I'll not need money that bad. Because I already live with my parents in a nice home, I will only need money to travel or to do shopping, or buy a nice car, or to start my own business.

Anthropologist: "Why do you want to have your own family?"

Haitham: "Because if you tried to be with someone you will know that you should not be alone. And it's human nature. And for sure I cannot live with a girlfriend! She should be my wife.

Anthropologist: "What about love?"

Haitham: "I guess it's all about love and responsibility. And I'm not a big fan of responsibility".

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[41] This conversation took place after Haitham had moved to the Gulf, and we had talked about love, philosophy, marriage and relationships several times. That is why I chose to ask him about love in this connection, because he had already mentioned it several times before, and I therefore felt that I was not leading him with my questions. It was also held over a chat program, which is why I can retell it here in such detail.

The Study of Love

The anthropologist Jennifer Hirsch has co-edited a couple of volumes where love, intimacy and companionate marriage are recurring themes ("Modern Loves" 2006 and "Love and Intimacy in a Globalized World" 2007). In her chapter in "Love and Intimacy in a Globalized World", Hirsch writes about romantic love and companionate marriage in the Mexican context (2007:93-107). She portrays it as an emergent concept and idea which has come to Mexico alongside "globalization". Through her fieldwork she finds that the ideal of marriage has changed and how the desire to have a loving, companionate marriage is an idea that has entered Mexican society through various channels. Such as television, films, and the migrant workers who work in the US but return to visit and bring with them ideas of modernity, consumption, individualism and romantic love (Hirsch 2007). This is a good argument but for the Egyptian context I don't think the idea of companionate marriage and romantic love is exclusively a new and imported idea. Marcia Inhorn argues in her chapter in the same volume:

> Furthermore, what Jankowiak and Fisher call 'the validity of an affectionless past" – that love is a fairly recent European invention with no historical tradition outside of the West – is patently untrue. As shown by anthropologists working in non-Western societies around the world, 'long traditions of romantic love' (Smith 2001:130) may be found and even valorized in many societies through fables, songs, poetry, and other forms of popular culture (Larkin 1997). (Inhorn 2007:142)

Following Inhorn, I too believe there is and was an idea of love and romantic companionate marriage in Egypt before for example the influx of television. Examples of this type of marriage are found, amongst other places in classic Egyptian literature (see Mahfouz 2001). Furthermore even in the nation-building propaganda from the early 1900's, Lisa Pollard shows us how the idea of a *"romantically companionate marriage"* (Inhorn 2012:98), was central to the Egyptian Nation building (Pollard, 2009). Pollard displays in her article "From Husbands and Housewives to Suckers and Whores: Marital-Political Anxieties in the 'House of Egypt', 1919-48" how the satirical comics changed character, as the idea of nation, and nation building in Egypt changed in the early 20th century. However, the idea I have chosen for my own analysis is how Saad Zaghloul[42] and his wife, Safiyya, were put forward as a national symbol. They were childless, considered as "modern" and intellectual. Saad Zaghluul

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[42] Saad Zaghloul was an exiled nationalist leader who was, after the revolution of 1919 instated for some time as prime minister in the kingdom of Egypt, under British occupation. He is still today considered as one of the "fathers" of modern Egypt, and a hero of Egyptian Independence, although he did not experience an independent Egypt in his lifetime.

and Safiyya were famous for their loving relationship. In Pollard's article she shows how this ideal was used to propagate a type of family and national subject which was supposed to rebuild Egypt, for Egyptians (Pollard 2009). The discourse was not one of love but of a certain perspective on what type of marital structure was desirable and productive if Egypt was to become, once again, a great nation (ibid.). This idea of the married couple being the ground on which the Egyptian nation was built strongly reverberates with my argument, as will be shown, that "conjugal connectivity" (Inhorn 2012:100) may influence larger structures such as the patriarchal organization Lila Abu-Lughod describes (1986).

After speaking with my interlocutors, their wives, girlfriends, parents, and colleagues there seemed to be two topics we kept coming back to; namely the desire to have a family, children (as I show in chapter 3), and the wish to love and be loved. As Haitham said "[...] it's all about love and responsibility". In this chapter I will use two terms to speak of what my interlocutors called "love". The word "love" is used because this term was used by my informants during our conversations. Furthermore I will use *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 1996:86-151, 2007:144, 2012:99) analytically because I believe that as an analytical term this term covers a lot of what my interlocutors refer to and mention when they speak of love. Conjugal connectivity is a term I borrow from Marcia Inhorn (2012, 1996) who in turn borrowed it from Suad Joseph's work where the term is outlined as *patriarchal connectivity* (Joseph 1994, 1993) (also, look to Naguib's use of *connectivity* in "For the love of God: Care-giving in the Middle East" 2010). Conjugal connectivity, as Inhorn writes, describes a sense of connection and belonging that she sees in her work with Middle Eastern couples seeking help to conceive from reproductive technology (Inhorn 2012:99). I found this term very useful because it deeply reverberated with my own ethnography, as I have shown, in the introduction of this chapter. The original use of connectivity in Joseph's work was to describe *patriarchal connectivity* (Joseph, 1994). Joseph also links *patriarchal connectivity* to love and even to the production of masculinity, as she writes about the deep affection and love felt by brothers and sisters for each other (1994:235-236). However, she views this love as the other side of power, and the way young boys and men "practice" masculine assertion of power, and reproduction of gendered inequality when they chastise or discipline their sisters (ibid.).

The way I look at love and conjugal connectivity is in how it is more closely related to the young men's hopes and desires (cf. Moore 2011) as they prepare to enter into married life. As such, conjugal connectivity will most certainly be linked to re-production of gendered structures in the home and the marriage. In their young, unmarried, or newly married lives

their ideas of love are still closely linked the ideal marriage and ideal wife/woman (as well as their own ideal role as husband and man) and hopes and desires for the future. Furthermore it is also closely linked to their sense of selfhood and identity, and therefore will impact the way in which they perform masculinity. Suad Joseph writes about *connectivity* and the process of selving in Lebanon: "Boundaries between persons are relatively fluid so that each needs the other to complete the sense of selfhood." (1994:234). The young men's desire for "love" or conjugal connectivity may never become reality, but as a type of imagination it holds a certain "agency of intentionality" (Ortner 2001) and will contribute to shape their marriage. This is because, through conjugal connectivity, the men's selves actually become influenced.

Following Marcia Inhorn's work, I argue that love and conjugal connectivity in marriages are increasingly important, especially in the urban context of Cairo and the "cosmopolitan classes" (cf. Peterson 2010). That is because traditional patterns of patriarchal reproduction tend to lose both prevalence and relevance. As a result, romantic non-FBD-marriages[43] are becoming more widespread and normal in the context of my fieldwork, as I worked with upper- and middleclass couples. This may not be true in other layers of Egyptian society. I claim this as in my fieldwork cousin marriage was never mentioned, and none of the couples who participated in my study were closely related. Because of this the bonds between the partners in marriage become more important. In addition, changing living-patterns influence the way patriarchy is reproduced and maintained. This is because the changing urban realities of Cairo often bring young couples into new neighbourhoods without familial attachments to either's family. Further, increasing pressure on families to have dual incomes means that partners increasingly rely on each other for support and cooperation. This I believe is also influenced by an idea of the "modern", of the nuclear household, and of the very prevalent need of the youth to believe they are surpassing the parental generation in knowledge, building on the need to differentiate, and find a way of doing things for one self. My argument being here, that, at least for the context of middle- and upper class Cairenes, the traditional patriarchal patterns of marriage and thus gender-structures have changed and moved towards a stronger focus on the bonds between wife and husband. This is what I mean Haitham reflects when he spoke to me about love and the need to develop a strong conjugal connectivity with his wife to-be. As he expressed it so nicely: "[...] it's all about love and responsibility".

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[43] non-father's-brother's-daughter – marriage.

This is not to suggest that everyone finds love or marries the person they are in love with. Neither do I suggest marriages end happily for the rest of their lives, nor that people do not change their minds or fall out of love. However, I strongly believe and have been influenced by my readings that love as an ethnographic intake and conjugal connectivity as an analytical concept, yield interesting views on how masculinity is produced.

Bargaining with Patriarchy?

Inhorn writes of how her male informants, out of love for their significant others, choose to go against prevalent ideals of fathering children and remain with their infertile wives. She beautifully describes how they hold their wives' hands through painful IVF[44]-treatments (Inhorn 2012:111-112), and stroke their hair during interviews (100), as I saw Mark doing in a loving manner as I describe in the vignette introducing this chapter. Inhorn argues that "[…] the success of so many infertile marriages in the Middle East bespeaks the strengthening of conjugal connectivity at the expense of patriarchy, legal or otherwise, that is being undermined." (Inhorn 2012:99). While I agree with her, I argue that it is not only in infertile marriages one finds this. In my opinion, the young men I have interviewed and observed tend to express a wish to find love in their marriages. I felt a strong sense of understanding when I read Inhorn's writings about this concept, as I thought back to some of the conversations I had with my interlocutors which I re-tell above. Especially in my conversation with Haitham in Cairo and the behaviour I observed in Mark and Sara's relationship. When Haitham spoke of love and about wanting to learn about love and sex with his partner, I think Inhorn's concept of conjugal connectivity is precisely what I describe Haitham as looking for and desiring. There was a strong sense in him to have a private, loving, intimate relationship with his future wife, which no longer always has to do with reproduction and their extended families. It was a personal hope for an interpersonal, conjugal connectivity.

The young men try to gain conjugal connectivity through "bargaining with patriarchy" (cf. Kandiyoti 1988) in their own way. They look for an intellectual connection (as Haitham spoke of) which they can build upon to gain conjugal connectivity – or in Haitham's words: love – with their partner. They try to influence this through working with their parents and networks to meet and potentially marry a person they believe they can reach conjugal connectivity with. Or, they scout their own potential spouses and then they involve their family to make sure the relationship is built upon the values familiar to their families. Inhorn identifies that there is a

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[44] IVF: in vitro fertilization (Inhorn 2012:340).

prevalent fantasy of the *romantically companionate marriage* (Inhorn 2012:98). It is either reached through the way of finding your own spouse, then working your family into the deal, or by way of arranged marriages, in which they then attempt to build companionship and conjugal connectivity. This I see as bargaining with patriarchy (cf. Kandiyoti 1988), because through the medium of the family it is a way of trying to build a relationship based around the idea of romantic companionship. Which, if we look to Abu Lughod's argument in "Veiled Sentiments" (1986) actually will undermine the patriarchal structure. This is because, as she argues, the lack of closeness and intimacy in the relationship between spouses is a way of maintaining primary loyalty to one's paternal lineage.

What I argue is that the young men and women, who participated in my research, are focused more towards intimacy and love in their marriage, as the urban couple described in Abu-Lughod's book (1986). Furthermore I feel that as a consequence this may in time change the patriarchal system, as people find that their primary connection, loyalty and trust are based more within the conjugal relationship. This is not to say kinship and patriarchy in Egypt is gone or even weakening but it means that, as always, the way people live their lives and structure their surroundings is changing.

Notes on Unhappiness

As in all other places where people dream of love and happiness, there is always unhappiness and unlawful desire. "I had an affair" Ibrahim said. He told me he had been unfaithful to his wife. He was still young but had been married for some years. His job required some travelling and it was during one of these trips that he met another woman. "I didn't know what love was. And now it's too late. I'm married. I have my kids, I have responsibilities." He was surely not the only man to have done this. However, the way the unfaithful men talked about their unhappiness and infidelity varied. Another man who admitted to my partner of having been unfaithful while working abroad explained this by saying he had never been erotically interested in his wife. This was because she was his cousin and therefore he only loved her in a sisterly manner, and sex with her was merely for procreation. He therefore felt entitled to some erotic adventures when he was away working for long durations of time. The relationship he had to a "girlfriend" abroad was purely erotic; it had absolutely nothing to do with his marriage or his wife or even love. It belonged in another "box".

However, coming back to Ibrahim, he seemed more distraught. He told me the affair had gone on for some time but had ended. Furthermore he informed me that his wife knew but was very

sad about it. However, he felt distraught mostly for himself because he had realized "I don't love my wife". Ibrahim seemed to wish to be with his lover, but because of the children he would not leave his wife. For him the affair had seemed to be more about love and about finding a partner. But, as the "honourable"(in his own eyes) family man he was, he would shoulder his responsibility and remain with his wife and kids. As with happiness and unhappiness, there is also love, and then there is the absence of love. And, as Ibrahim was a Coptic Christian it is very difficult to get a divorce. Should his wife even desire it, as she would lose her status, there would be financial issues and the very difficult question of what happens to the kids.

The reason for retelling these stories of unfaithfulness is to show how *conjugal connectivity* is also closely linked to welfare. Welfare is intrinsic to what the men mean when they say "responsibility". As we saw on page 69 with Ibrahim, and with Haitham when he told me about why he moved to the Gulf to work, responsibility means providing welfare for one's family In Egypt one's family is one's safety net and Ibrahim for example cannot leave his wife and children, as they are dependent on him for their welfare. On the other hand, he is also dependent on them because his wife cares for him and maintains his house which is the symbol of his masculinity, in one sense (as I show in chapter 3),, as well as their children. If he were to divorce her, he would need someone to look after his children, as in Egypt, the father tends to be granted custody should he wish so. His house would need maintenance. The love and conjugal connectivity are also thus linked to the safety of the family (or care-giving, in the sense Naguib employs it, see 2010). Furthermore as Haitham mentioned in the conversation I retell above: "Well, I want to live in high standards. Which my country doesn't provide for free, like Western countries. We need money to survive, I mean, education, health, everything". Being able to afford a marriage, and having a good relationship based on love is therefore also closely linked to welfare. In Ibrahim's case, it is an important reason as to why he forsakes the love he has for his mistress and stays with his wife. So, he looks for love outside his marriage but at the same time love, or rather conjugal connectivity is what is stopping him from leaving.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have showed how young men hope and desire (cf. Moore 2011) love in their relationships. I have analyzed love as *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 1996:86-151, 2007:144, 2012:99) and shown how, following Abu-Lughod's argumentation of the maintenance of the patriarchal system (1986), this conjugal connectivity may contribute to change the patriarchal

structures. As the economic, demographic and infrastructural facts are changing in Cairo, they, in addition to a desire for a deep, loving, personal relationship in one's marriage, change the way in which young Egyptians deal with marriage. This, I argued contributes to a change in how one orients one's solidarity. The focus of this chapter has been how young men speak of and hope for love in their future marriage. In this, I agree with what Marcia Inhorn is outlining when she writes "[T]he challenge for anthropology is to interrogate the very real possibility that love exists in 'unlikely places', including, from Western eyes, the supposedly violent and loveless Middle East" (Inhorn 2007:142). I found through my personal experiences during my fieldwork and through my analysis that love is most definitively found in the Middle East. I strongly believe that as an Anthropology student based in the Middle East it is my duty to convey these insights, as part of my hope of deconstructing the stereotype of the Arab Man.

Young Egyptian men hope for and desire love in their relationships. *Romantically companionate marriage* (Inhorn 2012:98) is an ideal sought for by these young men and whether or not it comes about as an arranged marriage or not, love and *conjugal connectivity* is an ideal. Love is closely linked to an idea of responsibility. As Haitham says in this chapter "it's all about love and responsibility". The responsibility part, as I have also shown in chapter 3, is intrinsic to the masculine ideal of a male provider. The provider's job is to provide welfare and security for his family. However the way these young men see it, responsibility, welfare and providing goes hand in hand with love. That is why I claim *conjugal connectivity* is contributing to change, but at the same time, maintain the patriarchal structures of Egypt.

In the next chapter I will conclude this thesis.

6 Conclusion

In this thesis I have shown how masculinity is an interactional process; it is the tings men do to be men. As I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, men produce masculinity in interactions with their society and the people they are surrounded by. Central to this process are, for the young men, their wives and prospective partners. In the span of their lifetime, the people who are the most important to them and their process of becoming masculine vary. Masculinity is dynamic, ever changing, plural, and interlinked with other aspects of society, culture, cosmologies, bodies, and gender. As such, masculinity is in the Egyptian context closely linked to family. I have shown why that is and how things such as a home, a wife, children, and love are central to young men's lives and hopes and desires for their future. Plenty of volumes, news-articles, and documentaries are about the difficult situations young people in Cairo are faced with. This thesis is about how they deal with these difficulties and still manage to carve out a life and a place in which to pursue happiness.

As I have shown throughout this thesis, masculinity in Egypt is a complex phenomenon. This thesis has been an explorative, ethnographic project in which I have shown aspects of the interactional basis for masculinities. Following existing literature I have found *emergent masculinities* (Inhorn 2012) to be a useful tool in dealing with manhood and masculinity in Egypt. This thesis, has dealt with only one part of Egyptian society, namely the upper-middle and upper-class, and one age-segment, that is men between the age of 20 and 35 years. However, it still sheds some light on some processes, practices and ideas concerning masculinity in urban Egypt.

In chapter 3, I introduced the reader to Saleh, and used the story of his wedding and early stages of marriage to show how men, despite of an insecure and difficult economic situation find alternative arenas in which to perform at masculinity. In Saleh's case it was about how there was a revolutionary narrative which let him bring the arena of Tahrir Square with him into his everyday life.

In chapter 4 we met Magdy, and I used the story of his hobby of cooking to show how he dealt with a Western media-fuelled stereotype (Inhorn refers to it as a "toxic traits list"(2012:57)). Magdy both rejected and embraced the stereotype, and I showed how he played up and down different aspects of his identity in different arenas depending on the audience he is surrounded by. I likened this to how Martin Sökefeld defines agency (1999) and used this understanding of agency to analyse how masculinity is part of an ongoing

production and performance of a male self in relation to society and the people men surround themselves with. This was done in order to underline my argument that masculinity is an interactional process. This view of agency and masculinity then led into the idea of *emergent masculinities* Marcia Inhorn proposes (2012).

Further on I introduced Haitham in chapter 5 and showed how he claimed "it's all about love and responsibility". In this chapter I dealt with how young men spoke about and desired love in their marriage. I looked to Lila Abu-Lughod's work on patriarchy (1986) and argued that an increased focus on *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 1996:86-150, 2012:99) is contributing to change the face of patriarchy. I also showed, in this chapter, how the ideas of love actually not necessarily weaken patriarchy, but feeds back into and change it. This is again due to what Haitham said: that it is all about love and responsibility. Meaning, that the way the young men speak about and look for love contributes to maintain certain patriarchal norms.

I have shown how masculinity is closely linked to ideals, and how these ideals are hard to live up to. Furthermore I have discussed how this can be dealt with through the opening up, and manoeuvring of alternative arenas for masculinity. This follows Inhorn's argument of the *emergent* (Williams 1978) nature of Middle-Eastern masculinity. It is dynamic, fluid, and in flux. And as some things *emerge* and become *dominant*, others *emerge* merely to disappear (Williams 1978, Inhorn 2012:58-60). At the same time, Inhorn's insistence that one cannot speak of *one* masculinity, but *plural* masculinities (2012:60) reverberates with what I have observed because there are several ways in which to be masculine. This feeds back into the *emergent* nature of it, as some arenas, and ways in which to be masculine may stay on and become *dominant*. At the same time, most likely some of these arenas and ways in which to be masculine will likely disappear and never become dominant, and as such, the structural change may seem haphazard, but, in hindsight will appear to have been the only rational way "forward". However, in the on going process of emergence, there will always be a plurality of options that open up and close down, or are maintained, and this is the *emergent masculinities* I mapped out in this thesis. As for tracing actual structural change, the duration of my fieldwork was a bit too short for me to engage in it directly, but based on background knowledge and the idea of social process I will bravely say I believe the manoeuvrings my research participants engage in during their everyday lives are parts of bigger structural change. This makes absolute sense, as no society or social structure is ever at rest. In the words of Henrik Vigh: "It merely builds on the theoretical premise that as an emergent property the social fabric is a developing reality (cf. Kapferer 1979:3)" (Vigh 2009a:431).

Haitham, one of my interlocutors told me how he was being a man: "it's all about love and responsibility" and marriage brings this forward. At the moment he was talking of why he chose to live abroad to work, far from his family and friends, but to me he summarized Egyptian masculinity. He also summarised this thesis. As we see throughout, with Saleh, getting a house and providing for his wife. We see it with Magdy, as he navigates and struggles with stereotypes, and trying to redefine how to be responsible, and how, when he is and has the resources necessary he can go beyond. And we see it with Haitham and Mark, as they express and desire love for their young partners. We see it with Ibrahim, who decides to stay with his wife and kids.

Lila Abu-Lughod argues that love and intimacy in the conjugal unit threatens the stability of the patriarchal structure (Abu-Lughod 1986). As I argued in this thesis I agree with her but through my own work with this thesis I have found that there is more to this picture. As the young men, who participated in my research, engaged in love, they at the same time claimed responsibility. The young men moved away from traditional notions of marriage, and searched for "romantically companionate marriage" (Inhorn 2012:98). As they did this they were challenging patriarchy (cf. Chapter 5 of this thesis), however, in challenging it and moving away they also maintained and reproduced it in other ways. They claimed responsibility for their wives and families, such as Ibrahim, for example (chapter 5), and Saleh (see chapter 3), and by doing so they upheld the ideals central to the Egyptian patriarchal structure. However, they claimed they did it out of love, making the upholding of the patriarchal ideals an inherent characteristic of *conjugal connectivity* (Inhorn 1996:86-150 2012:99).

This means, the things men did to find love and the things men did out of love fed into the patriarchal structure. They used words such as "love", "spoil her", and claimed it is all for their wife or prospective partner, and eventually for their children, and through it they upheld the type of "patriarchal bargain" Deniz Kandiyoti once outlined (1988). In addition, the way love is produced and performed as *conjugal connectivity*; means the production of masculinity and male (and female) selves is intimately linked to this patriarchal structure (cf. Joseph 1993, 1994, 1999). However, as Sökefelds insights show us (1999), these selves are the actors, and agentive capabilities which produce, perform, uphold, and change these structures.

The young men I described in this thesis are representatives of their respective circles of friends, their families, and their class. They showed me how young men today through

interaction with society and their families, produce, and perform masculinity. They showed me how masculinity is best studied on the micro-level, as an intersubjective, interactional phenomenon. I learnt how people on street level are affected by, and contribute to producing the macro-level structures and my interlocutors showed me why it is important that we focus on them, the people. At the end of the day, what people live through and how they respond to it is their reality and as anthropologists it is our job to document and explain this reality to others. To me Anthropology is a political project because its basic task is to show people how our differences are perhaps not so different after all. We should show how "love exists in 'unlikely places'" (Inhorn 2012:146), and by showing that we can perhaps add a bit of understanding to this world.

When I started writing this thesis someone once asked me "what is the purpose of your thesis?" I immediately responded: I wish to deconstruct the stereotype of "The Arab Man" and indeed that is my purpose for writing this thesis. I hope someone might read it and see; as I have seen how people are never the caricatures we consider them to be. Rather people, *persons*, are much, much more. I can never render justice to the fabulous people I have met, however, I hope this thesis in some small way can show a little part of these complex, beautiful people who let me into their lives.

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