“There will come a time when everyone understands that I’m a good man”

A qualitative study of Syrian refugee men’s negotiations of masculinity while attending the Introduction Programme for Refugees in Norway

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Content

Abstract

During the “refugee crisis” of 2015, Syrians represented one of the largest groups of refugees arriving in Europe. While some European countries build up reception centers and systems to attend to the refugees, other countries build borders to keep them out. In public discourse, refugee men were often pictured as problematic, and seen as inhabiting a hypermasculine and sometimes dangerous form of masculinity. Since then, thousands of Syrian men have settled in Norway and participated in the Introduction Programme for Refugees in Norway.

This study investigated Syrian refugee men’s negotiation of masculinity and gender while attending this programme, aiming to explore if the programme had influenced their views on masculinity and to identify possible changes in their attitudes toward gender and masculinity. Additionally, the study aimed to investigate which strategies the men adapted to meet the expectations of the Norwegian integration system.

Qualitative data was collected through individual, in-depth interviews with six Syrian men who had attained the Introduction Programme in Bergen or surrounding municipalities since 2015. The men were between the ages of 30-40 years and came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Over 10 hours of data material were obtained.

The study combines established theories from masculinity studies by R.W Connell (Connell, 2005), M. Inhorn (Inhorn, 2012) and B.H Kårtveit (Kårtveit, 2022) with acculturation theory by Sam and Berry (Sam & Berry, 2016). The study found that the participants portrayed themselves as modern men compared to other Syrian men who were portrayed as traditional and orthodox. These traditional men were constructed as the participants “Masculine Others”. As such, the men in this study could construct a self-image of themselves as modern and adaptive men. However, facing the Norwegian integration system, the men experienced being imposed with gendered and racialized expectations of “real male refugee” behavior and struggled to prove themselves as modern men.

Keywords: *Syrian refugee men, masculinity, gender, acculturation, Introduction Programme for Refugees*

1. Introduction

1.1 The refugee crisis of 2015

In 2015, Europe saw the beginning of what later has been named "the refugee crisis". This year alone over one million people crossed into Europe in search of refuge, 75% of which had fled war in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan (SSB, 2016; UNHCR, 2015). Many took the chance of crossing the Mediterranean by boat, and thousands lost their lives. Receiving countries in Europe had to adapt to the massive increase in asylum-seekers who sought refuge. While some, like Norway, saw an massive upscaling in the number of reception centers for asylum-seekers, other countries and the EU built borders and political agreements to shut people out (SSB, 2016).

Norway was among the European countries who received most asylum-seekers per capita in 2015 (SSB, 2016). In total, over 10 000 Syrians applied for asylum in Norway that year, out of which nearly 8000 were men (SSB, 2016; UDI, 2015). By 2017, Syrians had grown to be the third largest group of settled refugees in Norway (Enes, 2017). Their representation in the Introduction Programme for Refugees, which is a mandatory integration programme for all settled refugees in Norway, has remained high for the past eight years and was only surpassed by Ukrainians in 2022 (SSB).

1.2 Norwegian integration policies

In Norway, integration has for many years been the preferred strategy for including refugees and immigrants into society (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018). The goal of the government's integration politics is *"that all those who lives and stays in Norway will take part in the workforce, pay taxes, and participate as citizens"* (translated from Norwegian, Beredskapsdepartementet, 2015-2016, p. 9). In the government's integration strategy for 2019-2022, referred to as "Integreringsløftet" in Norwegian, language skills and education or work-qualification are seen as keys for successful integration (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018). In this strategy, low work participation among refugees is seen as one of the main challenges for successful integration, and it is problematized that only 30% of all refugees settled in Norway in 2015-2016 had higher education from their home countries (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018). Through education and work training, refugees will be better prepared to meet formal requirements in the Norwegian labor marked.

In a recommendation from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, dated 2015-2016, refugees are expected to start the process of learning Norwegian language and social values while they are still living in reception centers and awaiting their applications for asylum to be processed (Beredskapsdepartementet, 2015-2016). A 50 hours training programme in Norwegian culture and values became mandatory for refugees living in reception centers from 2018, with the main focus being that *"all should get information and an understanding of that which is Norwegian"* (translated from Norwegian, Utenriksdepartementet). The goal of this programme was to secure an early and faster integration process.

In 2016, special "Integration reception centers" for asylum seekers, "Integreringsmottak" in Norwegian, were established in Norway (Utenriksdepartementet). These special reception centers were established to secure an earlier integration process for highly motivated and educated asylum-seekers, through basic training in Norwegian language and culture and work-related training and preparation (Utenriksdepartementet). As of 2023, there are only two reception centers of this kind in Norway (Utenriksdepartementet). While the basis for Norwegian integration politics is that refugees should learn the language, participate in the workforce, and adapt to Norwegian values, it is the Norwegian state and municipalities' responsibilities to provide necessary facilities and arenas to secure this process (Beredskapsdepartementet, 2015-2016).

1.3 The Introduction Programme for Refugees

The Introduction Programme for Refugees is a mandatory programme for newly settled refugees and asylum-seekers in Norway who have attained their residency (IMDI, 2021c). Family members of settled refugees and asylum-seekers are also offered participation in the programme (Regjeringen.no). The programme has an age limit for participation, set to 18-55 years of age (IMDI, 2023).

The Introduction Programme is executed in accordance with policies which are governed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Inclusion (IMDI, 2023). As of 01.01.2021, the old Introduction Act of 2003 was replaced with the new Integration Act (introduksjonsloven, 2003) (inkluderingsdepartementet, 2020). While those who entered the programme before January 2021 were offered a two-year programme, the participants who started later will attend for 3 months to 3 years, depending on their goals and needs for qualifications.

It is the Norwegian municipalities who organize and run the Introduction Programme locally, and the content of the programme can to some degree vary between the municipalities (Beredskapsdepartementet, 2015-2016). The over-all purpose of the programme is however the same no matter where in the country one is attending. The goal is to provide Norwegian language training and ensure that the participants get sufficient individually tailored training to secure transition into eighter work or education after ending the programme (IMDI, 2023). The success of the programme is measured by the number of participants who transition into paid work or education within one year after finishing, with the goal being a minimum of 70% (SSB, 2017).

According to Statistics Norway, men have a higher succession rate in the Introduction Programme than women (Enes, 2016), meaning that more men transition to work or education after ending the programme. Further, young participants do better than older ones, individuals with higher education from their home countries do better than uneducated ones, and unmarried individuals succeed better than married ones (Enes, 2016).

The content of Introduction Programme should be personalized based on the goals and education or skill level of the participants (Regjeringen.no). Some elements are however mandatory for all. These include Norwegian language training, 50 hours of Norwegian social science (samfunnskunnskap) and elements which prepare the participants for eighter work or education (Regjeringen.no). In accordance with the new Integration Act, all participants should now also finish a course in life management, and parents are expected to go through the International Child Development Programme (ICDP), which is an acknowledged guidance tool for parents (Regjeringen.no) (IMDI, 2021a).

All participants who attend the Introduction Programme receive a monthly salary called “introductory benefits”, as long as they attend all mandatory activities (IMDI, 2021b). Single participants over the age of 25 receive two times the National Insurance scheme’s basic amount (IMDI, 2021b). In 2015, this constituted a monthly gross payment of 15 012 nok, which by 2021 had increased to 17 734 nok (NAV, 2023). This is well below the baseline for what is considered a low income salary in Norway by Statistics Norway, which is the same baseline used by the European Union to measure how many are “at risk of poverty” (Hattrem, 2023) (SSB, 2023).

1.4 Structure of the thesis

In chapter two, the relevant theoretical frameworks will be presented and their relevancy for this thesis will be explained. The relevant theories regarding this thesis are masculinity- and acculturation theories.

In chapter three, relevant literature related to the research questions will be presented. Search strategies during the literature search and research gaps will also be presented.

In chapter four, the problem statement and research questions will be presented. For my thesis, I have formulated one main question and two sub questions which serves to investigate Syrian refugee men's views on masculinity and gender, and their experiences with the Introduction Programme for refugees in Norway.

In chapter five, I will present my methodological choices throughout the planning and conduction of my research project. This chapter presents my stance on philosophical questions and the methods for data collection which I have seen best fit to answer my research questions. My reflections on reflexivity and the quality of my research are also included in this chapter.

In chapter six, the background of the participants in the study will first be presented. After this introduction, the reader will be presented with my findings. These have been chronologically ordered into three time periods which were the focus during my interviews. First, the reader will be presented to findings related to the participants' upbringings and lives in Syria. Second, findings related to their time in the Introduction Programme for Refugees will be presented. The chapter will be concluded with a section presenting findings related to the participants' present lives and the time after they finished the programme.

In chapter seven, I will discuss my findings. The chapter will start with a discussion on the topic of masculinity, before continuing to the topic of acculturation. The findings will be connected to relevant theoretical frameworks which were presented in chapter two, and the existing literature presented in chapter three. Lastly, I will reflect on some of the challenges I have faced throughout the research period and present my recommendations for future studies.

In the last chapter I will sum up the study's most relevant findings and show how they answered my research questions.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the theories which lay the foundations for this study and analysis will be introduced. First, the most dominant theory within masculinity studies, Hegemonic Masculinity (Connell, 2005), will be briefly described. This will serve as a foundation to understand how men and masculinity have been studied in the global north throughout the last 30 years. Further, some of the critique and challenges of this theory will be presented, as this has been a catalyst for the development of alternative theories which aims to capture other aspects of masculinity which might not be the center of focus for Connell. The reader will then be presented with two closely related theories which offer alternative perspectives on the study of men and masculinity, Emergent Masculinities (Inhorn, 2012) and Masculine Others (Kårtveit, 2022). These theories aim specifically to analyze masculinity in the global south, and both Inhorn and Kårtveit have long experience conducting studies among Arab men in the Middle East. Lastly, Acculturation Theory will be presented, as this study will aim to look at the potential individual changes and challenges which arise when Syrian men encounter a new culture and are incorporated into the Norwegian integration system. The chapter will finish with a short section summing up the relevancy these theories have for my own study.

2.1 Hegemonic Masculinity

2.1.1. Explaining the theory

Raewyn Connell's Hegemonic Masculinity (Connell, 2005) has since the 1990's become somewhat of a cornerstone framework for understanding and conceptualizing masculinity. To understand this theory, it is essential to first give a brief summary of her understanding of gender. Connell sees gender as relational and as such as a foundation by which our social practices are ordered (Connell, 2005). Further, masculinity (and femininity) is seen as a way of doing gender, meaning they are socially constructed differences between men and women which are produced and reproduced through everyday actions and activities (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Although these practices are based on what our bodies can do (reproduction), they should not be reduced to what the body is (biological essentialism). In her book Masculinities, Connell (2005) presents a model for understanding the structure of gender relations based on the following three elements; power, production, and cathexis (Connell, 2005). In this model, the patriarchy is seen as a key element for how gender relations are structured in the global north, which explains women's subordination by men.

This key element further lays the grounds for gendered labor divisions, and differences in wage and accumulated capital. Lastly, cathexis, or the object of one's emotional and sexual desire, is seen as a basic element of gender relations (Connell, 2005). Understanding this intersection of gender relations, class and sexuality is essential for further understanding Connell's theorization of masculinity. Hegemonic Masculinity is in this framework defined as *"The configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women."* (Connell, 2005, p. 77). She states that what constitutes the hegemonic position will vary across time and place, and the criteria that constitutes hegemony will vary and change accordingly (Connell, 2005, 2016). Recognizing that many men might not identify with or meet the current standards of Hegemonic Masculinity, Connell continues to identify three other kinds of masculinities which might gain or lose from the patriarchal structure, namely the Subordinate, Complicit and Marginalized (Connell, 2005). Subordinate men are placed low in the hierarchy of masculinity, and Connell connects it specifically, but not exclusively, to homosexual men who symbolically are associated with femininity, and who are often oppressed and discriminated against. The complicit are men who do not embody hegemonic masculinity, but still benefit from the patriarchal structure. Lastly, marginalized masculinities refers to men who are subordinated due to their class and/or ethnicity, and through their intersectionality become dominated by the hegemonic masculinities of the dominant culture (Connell, 2005). Building on the view of gender as relational and not strictly biological, this study aims to examine how Syrian refugee men develop their identities and perspectives on gender through human interactions and relationships. It will however move beyond Connells focus on categorization built around level of patriarchal power to better capture the men's individual experiences.

2.1.2 Critique

Although Hegemonic Masculinity has become widely popular within gender studies, Messerschmidt states that it has also gained critique from many scholars (Messerschmidt et al., 2018). It has been called out by some scholars for constructing masculinity as something static and binary which stereotypes men in a negative way (Ingvars, 2019; Inhorn, 2012; Messerschmidt et al., 2018). Inhorn (2012) is critical of Connell's theory, and its risk of reducing masculinity to categories of men based on their struggles for power and hegemony,

thereby reducing masculinity to a "toxic trait list" (Inhorn, 2012). Although Connell underline the importance of not seeing Hegemonic Masculinity as a static category (Connell, 2005), according to Messerschmidt (2018) it has been argued that the process of making and naming categories in itself reduce masculinity to a static hierarchy of one-dimensional stereotypes.

Furthermore, Hegemonic Masculinity is a theory created by a Australian scholar attempting to theorize men in the global north. From a post-colonial perspective, it would be problematic to use this theory when studying masculinity in other geographical and cultural locations, as one would run the risk of cultural essentialism and negative stereotyping (Inhorn, 2012). Ingvars (2019) states that this framework, when applied to foreign men, often end up portraying them as "*barbarized, feminized, or infantilized"* (Ingvars, 2019, p. 241). Accordingly, when studying Middle Eastern men, the framework runs the risk of becoming a reductionist tool echoing the Western discourse of Middle Eastern men as cultural "Others" (Inhorn, 2012). In this image, the global north is often constructed as a cultural inversion and as morally superior (Mohanty, 1988). This reinforce what Mohanty (1988) refers to as discursive colonialism, whereby the West becomes *"the yardstick by which to encode and represent cultural "Others""* (Mohanty, 1988, p. 336). Therefore, many authors are recognizing the need for alternative frameworks which are more dynamic, and which brings into context the history, positionality, and geography of diverse forms of masculinity (Ingvars, 2019). While this study draws on some of Connell's basic ideas of gender theory, the works of Ingvars (2019) and Inhorn (2012) indicates that it might be necessary to find alternative theories to study masculinity as a phenomenon which avoids the pitfall of cultural stereotyping, and allows men's individual experiences to be better highlighted.

2.2 Alternatives to hegemonic masculinities

2.2.1 Emergent masculinities

One alternative to Hegemonic Masculinity has been presented by social anthropologist Marcia Inhorn (Inhorn, 2012). She distances herself from Connell and what she sees as a framework which stereotypes Arab men into static negative masculinity categories (Inhorn, 2012). In her critique, Inhorn introduces the reader to "Hegemonic Masculinity, Middle Eastern Style" - a caricature of the ultimate patriarch - which in Inhorn's view becomes the unfortunate result when applying Connell's theoretical frame in a Middle Eastern context (Inhorn, 2012). This, she writes, echoes the "Western" discourse on Middle Eastern men and creates a new kind of

Orientalism (Inhorn, 2012; Isidoros & Inhorn, 2022). Through her many years of studying Middle Eastern and Muslim men, she has developed an alternative framework, with the goal of capturing masculinity as something dynamic and ever changing, as men in the Middle East (and all over the globe) are navigating their social worlds (Inhorn, 2012). She does this by borrowing Raymond Williams' concept of "emergence" to describe how *"new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kind of relationships are continually created"* (Williams 1997, in Inhorn, 2012, p. 59). Although her focus on gender and masculinity is, as in Connell's theory, relational, she rejects the focus on hegemony and rather choose to focus on what is "new" (Inhorn, 2012). Inhorn then connects the concept of what she coins Emergent Masculinity to the concept of Embodiment as she studies Middle Eastern men's changing perceptions on masculinity and modern fertility technologies.(Inhorn, 2012) In her storytelling, she succeeds in capturing her subjects as loving husbands with vulnerabilities and normal struggles, by refusing to classify men into categories of "different kinds/types of men" and rather seeing them as individuals living their lives and responding to their historical, geographical, and timely surroundings. Her end goal being to capture how men act out *"gender in practice - of men acting as men, in relation to women and to other men – rather than as mere representatives of nation-states, religious sects, political parties tribal grouping, and the like"* (Inhorn, 2012, pp. 60-61).

By drawing on elements from Emergent Masculinities in my analysis, the hope is to capture how masculinities change through time and place, to get a more dynamic picture of how masculinity can be understood and acted out. Furthermore, it will work towards deconstructing what Inhorn sees as a Eurocentric and neo-orientalist discourse on Middle-Eastern men, by applying a theoretical framework more fitting for their cultural context (Inhorn, 2012). Lastly, Emergent Masculinities gives the opportunity to move away from Connell's focus on power as the cornerstone of masculinity studies and rather focus on other kinds of relations which might have a much bigger focus if men are allowed to tell their stories on their own premises.

2.2.2 Masculine Others

Another anthropologist who has sought to challenge Connell's theory is Bård H. Kårtveit (Kårtveit, 2022). In his study of masculinity among young middle-class men in Egypt's city of Alexandria, he argues that men from different social backgrounds often embrace different masculinity ideals which are not hierarchically related (Kårtveit, 2022). Building on previous

works by Inhorn (2012) and Anderson (Anderson, 2005) he merges the concepts of Emerging Masculinities and Orthodox Masculinities, as he observes young Egyptian middle-class men perform a new and emerging masculinity in opposition to the more traditional or orthodox masculinity of the working-class (Kårtveit, 2022). He states that Western negative stereotypes about Arab men are internalized by Arab men themselves and serve to justify and reinforce social divisions between different socio-economic groups in Arab communities (Kårtveit, 2022). The Masculine Other is associated with a more traditional set of indicators, which are often negatively stereotyped by men who identify with other masculinity ideals, often portrayed as more modern and civilized. Kårtveit further concludes that for new masculinities to emerge and get a foothold in society, they must be seen as more positive than other, more traditional forms of masculinity (Kårtveit, 2022). Those who favor new and emerging masculinities will therefore often picture themselves as morally superior to their Masculine Others and otherwise construct the Other as all the negative things which they themselves are not (Kårtveit, 2022).

In his analysis, Kårtveit (2022) states that Masculine Others can be identified in all societies. As this study seek to explore Syrian men's perceptions on masculinity, it is relevant to understand who they construct their masculine identity in opposition to. Further, by building on the idea that there can exist a plurality of masculinity forms which are not hierarchically related, my aim is to have an analytical perspective freed from the patriarchal and hegemonic power struggle, which sets the premise for Hegemonic Masculinity.

2.3 Acculturation theory

Acculturation can be defined as *"Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of eighter or both groups"* (Redfield et al., 1936:149. Cited in Sam & Berry, 2016, p. 11). This is a reciprocal process, where changes can occur in varying degrees in both the dominant and non-dominant cultures of a given society, both at group levels and at the individual level (Sam & Berry, 2016). When acculturation takes place on an individual level, it is referred to as "psychological acculturation", and might affect personal identity, values, attitudes or behavior (Sam & Berry, 2016).

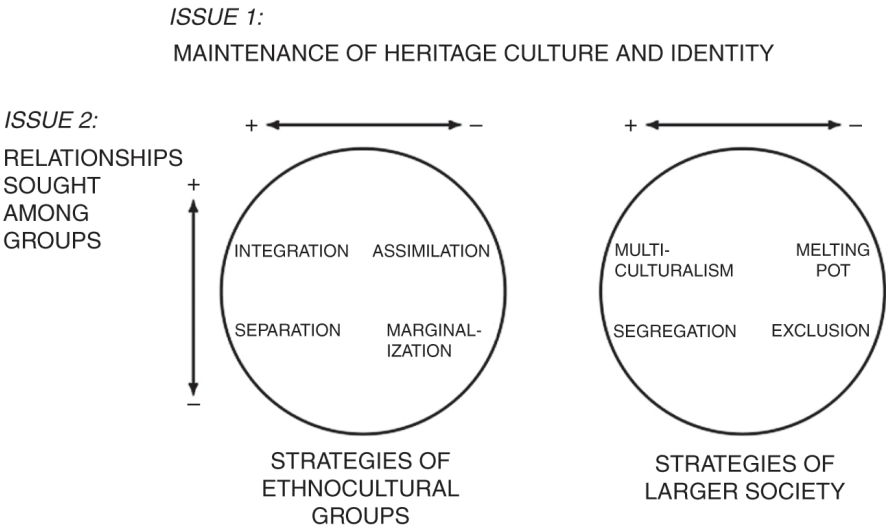
There are three building blocks of acculturation which are important to take into account when applying this framework: contact, mutual influence, and change (Sam & Berry, 2016).

First, it is important to know if the cultural contact is direct or indirect, how long it takes for the acculturation to take place, and how many groups are involved in the process (Sam & Berry, 2016). Second, are the power dynamics between the different cultural groups equal or not? If not, one group will often have more influence on the acculturation process than the other/others. Thirdly, one must analyze the changes which occur throughout the acculturation process, the long-term effects on group- and/or individual levels and potential acculturative stress (Sam & Berry, 2016). Acculturative stress is defined as *"The changes that arise as a result of challenges to acculturating persons that exceed their ability to cope efficially"* (J. R. Van De Viljver & et.al, 2016, p. 98).

Acculturating groups can be differentiated along three dimensions which affects the acculturation process and level of adaptation: voluntary-involuntary, sedentary-migrant, permanent-temporary (Sam & Berry, 2016). These dimensions will further impact the acculturation strategies of both the dominant and non-dominant cultural groups. Acculturation strategies refer to how the acculturation is done, which is influenced by individual attitudes (what results one prefers and seeks out) and behaviors (what one is able to do) (Sam & Berry, 2016). Three elements can be identified in this process: the level of orientation towards one's own group, the level of orientation towards other groups, and lastly if the groups/individuals involved have the power and choice to acculturate according to their own preferences. For minorities, or non-dominant groups, this results in four possible strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Sam & Berry, 2016). According to Sam and Berry (2016) integration refers to the strategy of maintaining parts of one's own cultural heritage while also adapting and participating in larger society. However, when preferring assimilation, the group or individual seeks to adapt and participate in larger society without maintaining their cultural identity. Separation refers to the opposite of assimilation, where the group or individual seeks to avoid contact with larger society and rather maintain their own cultural identity. Lastly, marginalization refers to a situation where one avoids or is hindered from seeking out and partaking in both one own's culture and larger society (Sam & Berry, 2016).

Dominant groups also have their own acculturation strategies, as well as expectations as to how non-dominant groups should acculturate (Sam & Berry, 2016). In the diagram below these expectations are referred to as the acculturation strategies of the larger society. These can also be divided into four expectations which mirror the strategies of non-dominant groups (Berry, 2003). Multiculturalism refers to a expectation of cultural diversity, while melting pot

is used when dominant groups expect non-dominant groups to assimilate. Segregation refers to expectations which hinders non-dominant groups to partake in larger society. Exclusion refers to expectations which both hinders non-dominant groups from partaking in larger society and from seeking out contact with their own culture, thereby enforcing marginalization on the non-dominant groups or individuals (Sam & Berry, 2016).



(Sam & Berry, 2016, p. 22)

Acculturative preferences and expectations can for all groups be analyzed on three levels: national, individual, and institutional (Sam & Berry, 2016). On each level, one might identify different preferences which might not harmonize well with each other. When different preferences collide, it can create acculturative stress on an individual level and negatively affect the individual acculturation process (Sam & Berry, 2016).

2.4 Relevancy

Throughout this chapter, three theories which are relevant for the study of masculinity have been presented. This study does not aim to fully deconstruct Connell's Hegemonic Masculinity, but it does aim to explore alternative analytical perspectives and their implications for the study of Syrian men and masculinity. By looking beyond categories of types of masculinities, it aims to capture the men's individual experiences and capture their struggles and strengths, as they resettle in a new country and partake in the Norwegian

integration system. Further, the study will shed light on who these men identify as their Masculine Others and how these interpersonal relationships possibly affect the construction of the participants' self-images and identities. I will also explore other interpersonal relationships which might have influenced the men's perceptions on masculinity throughout their lives. The analysis of masculinity will be put into the context of Acculturation Theory as an overall framework. This will lift the analytical gaze from the individual level to the structural level and allow us to see how the interaction with the Norwegian integration system might affect the individual negotiation of gender and masculinity. Through identifying the men's acculturation strategies and expectations, the study will also look at the men's overall experiences with the Introduction Programme for Refugees.

3. Literature review

In this chapter, the literature review will be presented. First, the strategy used when searching for literature relevant to the main research question will be presented. This is important to make the search process transparent for the readers. By mapping out the search strategy, it can also easily be replicated and cross checked by other researchers who are interested in the topic. Second, the relevant literature will be presented. This literature has been divided into two topics; perceptions of migrating men in the Global North, and Syrian refugee men's negotiation of gender in two geographical areas – neighboring countries in the Middle East and in Europe. Lastly, research gaps which have been identified throughout the literature search will be presented and I will reflect on this study's potential to make a meaningful contribution to the existing literature.

3.1 Search strategy

Relevant search engines used during my literature search were Oria, Web of Science, APA PsycInfo via OVID, Idunn, and Google Scholar. The searches were done based on key words identified in the main research question and a list of synonyms for these. This process was done with guidance from a university librarian to ensure that the search was carried out strategically and thoroughly. The combinations of keywords and search strategies used are mapped out in the tables below.

First search:

Notion*	(Syria*) refugee*	Masculin*
Attitude*	Immigrant*	manhood
Idea*	"Asylum seeker*"	
Opinion*		

(notion OR attitude* OR idea* OR opinion*) AND (Syria* NEAR/2 refugee* OR immigrant* OR "asylum seeker*") AND (masculin* OR manhood)*

WOS: 94 results. Ovid: 59 results. Oria: 424 results

Second search:

Notion*	Refugee*	Masculin*	Syria*
Attitude*	Immigrant*	Manhood*	
Idea*	“Asylum-seeker*”	M?n	
Opinion*			

(notion OR attitude* OR idea* OR opinion*) AND (refugee* OR immigrant* OR "asylum seeker*") AND (masculin* OR manhood OR m?n) AND (syria*)*

WOS: 24 results. Ovid: 13 results. Oria: 259 results

As Google Scholars search engine does not have the option to separate search words with AND/OR, the only option was to make a search for a combination of all the relevant search words which gave 275 results. The search strategy in Google Scholar was as followed:

(notion AND attitude AND idea AND opinion AND Syria AND refugee AND immigrant AND asylum-seeker AND masculin AND manhood AND man AND men)

In my first search, the strategy included a search for the word “Syria*” in close proximity to the words refugee, immigrant or asylum-seeker. When reading through the titles and abstracts of the first few of articles, I saw that the list of results was not specific enough, as most of the literature found did not focus on Syrians at all. I therefore carried out a second search where “Syria*” was listed as a separate word. This strategy gave noticeably fewer, but more relevant results. A complimentary search was carried out in Google Scholar. As this search engine does not have the option to limit the search by using the combinations AND/OR between the search words, this search gave a higher number of results compared to the previous ones.

Going through the first five pages of results in Google Scholar showed that most of the literature found overlapped with the findings in Oria.

A search for Norwegian literature was also made in the search engine Idunn. Here, the same combination of key words was used in Norwegian, along with a list of Norwegian synonyms.

Forestill*	Flyktning*	Maskulin*	Syri*
Oppfat*	Asylsøker*	M?nn	
T?nke	Migrant*		
Syn	Innvandrer*		

(holdning OR forestill* OR oppfat* OR syn AND flyktning* OR asylsøker* OR innvandrer* AND maskulin* OR mandig* OR m?nn AND syria OR syrisk*)*

Idunn 147 results.

When going through the titles, abstracts and keywords for the articles who show up in the search, only a few turned out to actually be relevant for the topic and research questions of this study. After eliminating the articles which were irrelevant, I was left with less than ten articles which have been included in my literature review.

3.2 Perceptions of migrating men in the Global North

Masculinity within a migration context has until recently been a neglected research topic within social sciences (Charsley & Wray, 2015; Suerbaum, 2018b), but has within gender studies gained more attention during the last few years. While migration literature has for a long time focused on men's experiences, masculinity as a concept was fairly neglected until the early 00's (Charsley & Wray, 2015). Still, there only exist a small amount of research on this topic, and there is specifically a need to gain more knowledge about minority masculinities (Herz, 2019).

In her study of denied male asylum seekers in the UK and their gendered experiences with the asylum system, Griffiths (2015) found that male asylum seekers and refugees are pictured in one of two ways (Griffiths, 2015). While the genuine refugee is assumed to be vulnerable, passive, and feminized, rather than resourceful or political agents, the ungenuine and denied asylum seekers are seen as *"dangerous liars who try to cheat the system "*(Griffiths, 2015, p. 5). According to Griffiths findings, genuine refugee men are often infantilized by the system

and its representatives; "*They are often treated like children by the system, with their ability to tell the truth doubted by decision makers, their self-determination limited, and their productivity restricted by prohibition from working and/or arduous reporting conditions. Sympathetic support organizations are also prone to infantilizing asylum seekers and some NGO employees I interviewed recognized their tendency to treat the young men as ''boys'' or ''infants''*" (Griffiths, 2015, pp. 7-8).

In the public discourse, young men are more often victims of racist stereotypes, and Middle Eastern men are often portrayed as fundamentalists and possible security threats (Griffiths, 2015). This is to some degree echoing the public and political discourse on migrant men in Europe which is creating them as "othered masculinities" – as problematic and stereotyped foreign men (Scheibelhofer, 2017). Especially Muslim migrant men are victims to this stereotyping and can be said to be the new "Folk devil" in Western discourse (Herz, 2019).

Herz (2019), in his study of masculinity among unaccompanied refugee minors in Sweden, shows how young, Muslim refugee boys and men were collectively vilified after reports of sexual assaults in Sweden and Germany in 2015, supposedly carried out by groups of male unaccompanied minors (Herz, 2019). This sparked a debate in Sweden about the potentially dangerous male migrant, and refugee men were collectively called out as possible threats who needed to "learn Western values" (Herz, 2019). There seems to be a general idea that young men need to be re-programmed when they settle in Europe and that they need to go through special learning programs to learn "our ways" and leave their problematic masculinities behind (Herz, 2019). Hertz problematizes literature and theory which falls short of analyzing masculinity as something fluently and changeable; *"Rather than approaching masculinity as something fixed that is brought from the men's country of origin to their new country, masculinity needs to be analysed globally as well as locally"* (Herz, 2019, p. 9). According to his findings, change in ones masculine identity is a rather messy process, affected both by the men's current life and their relationships with family and background (Herz, 2019).

Charsley and Wray (2015) argues that there is a scarcity of literature which view migrant men as affective beings, and there is little focus on these men's vulnerabilities (Charsley & Wray, 2015). There seems to be a general call in the existing literature to change the perspective from "talking about" to "listening to" migrant men's own experiences to uncover the way local men in different historical and political contexts conceptualize and understand their own masculinities (Inhorn, 2012). Therefore more studies are needed to deconstruct the othering

discourse on migrant masculinities and to bring forth individual men's voices and self-reflections on the topic (Griffiths, 2015).

3.3 Syrian refugee men's negotiation of masculinity and gender

The literature found on the topics of masculinity and Syrian men have been divided into two sections. The first one will focus on Syrian refugee men living in Middle Eastern countries and their negotiation of masculinity. The second section will focus on Syrian refugee men residing in European countries and their experiences with masculinity.

3.3.1 Syrian refugee men residing in neighboring Middle Eastern countries

There have been some studies done on local migration within the Middle Eastern region, focusing on displaced Syrians who have settled in refugee camps in neighboring Jordan (Turner, 2018) or urban cities of Egypt (Suerbaum, 2018a, 2018b). These studies exemplify how Syrian men negotiate masculinity and reestablish their agency when adapting to their new realities as refugees. Although they have been conducted in geographical contexts very different from my own study, they do show some relevance by studying how institutions and actors, power relations, and othered masculinities affect Syrian refugee men's own negotiation of masculinity.

Turner's study (2018) on masculinity among Syrian refugee men in the refugee camp of Za'atari in Jordan, found that Syrian did not act according to the humanitarian actors' expectations of "refugee behavior", as they did not fit the picture of the refugee as passive, feminized and in the need of help (Turner, 2018). Because of this, the men in the camp received less attention from the humanitarian actors. In response to their lack of power when facing representatives of the humanitarian aid agencies, the men attempted to establish a stronger agency, which by the representatives was seen as problematic (Turner, 2018). The study shows how systems and actors whose goal is to aid refugees fail, and sometimes counteract their mission, when refugee men do not act according to the help systems expectations of "a person in need". Further, it highlights how these Syrian refugee men act out their masculinity in response to a system which refuses to acknowledge their agency and strengths (Turner, 2018).

In her study of Syrian refugee men in Egypt, Suerbaum (2018) explored how these Syrian men negotiated masculinity by distancing themselves from what they saw as "real refugees"

residing in Europe (Suerbaum, 2018a, 2018b). By constructing an idea of real refugee men as failed men, Syrian men in Egypt could reconstruct their own masculinity as superior, as they did not identify themselves with this category of refugees. By picturing Egyptian men as lazy, they also raised themselves above the local men whose lives and masculinity had not been affected by war and resettlement (Suerbaum, 2018b).

3.3.2 Syrian refugee men residing in European countries

In a European and Norwegian context, I found only a limited number of studies which combines the topics Syrian refugee men and masculinity. Rather, Syrian men are often included in larger categories of informants/participants which focus on on religious believes, their time of migration, or region of origin as common inclusion markers. One study which did focus on Syrian men and masculinity has been carried out in the Netherlands (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2021). Huizinga & van Hoven (2021) found that paid labor was one of the most important factors when Syrian refugee men negotiated masculinity in the Netherlands (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2021). Their participants could be separated into two categories based on age. Whereas older, educated men often found it difficult to find proper work and therefore experienced a loss of status after resettling, younger men with no previous education found it easier to live up to the traditional male role as breadwinners as they showed more flexibility when looking for jobs. This study fits in with a larger category of literature whose main focus is to study migrant masculinity in connection with paid labor. Suerbaum notes that this literature often blame refugee men's experience of masculinity crisis' on weak links to the labor market and the failure to live up to the cultural expectations of men as breadwinners (Suerbaum, 2018b). She believes that refugee masculinities need to be analyzed from more angles in order to capture other factors which influence their views on gender and masculinity. This underpins that there is not only a need for more specific geographical studies on Syrian refugee men in European countries, but also for studies which look at negotiation of gender and masculinity from new perspectives.

3.4 Research gaps

During the literature search, a clear research gap concerning Syrian refugee men and masculinity in a European and Norwegian context was identified. There was also little literature found which focused on Syrian men's experiences throughout their participation in

the Norwegian Introduction programme for Refugees. Therefore, this study has the potential to make a valuable contribution to gender and masculinity literature by shedding light on how Syrian refugee men negotiate masculinity when facing a relatively strictly organized and bureaucratic integration regime in Norway. In addition, the study will answer the general call for more qualitative studies on masculinity on men's own premises, shedding light on their own stories including their vulnerabilities and strengths. By letting Syrian refugee men's individual voices be heard, the hope is to inspire Norwegian policymakers and bureaucrats to nuance their view on what qualifies as "successful integration". Lastly, as the public discourse in Europe often alienates refugee men, the aim is to counterbalance this othering by showing refugee men as individuals with individual experiences as opposed to the stereotyped picture of men and masculinities that are often seen in media and the public debate.

4. Problem statement and research questions

The goal of this study was to explore Syrian refugee men's construction of masculinity while attending the Introduction Programme for refugees in Norway. This study sought to identify the programme's possible influence on their views on masculinity. Further, it sought to investigate the role of the Introduction Programme as an arena for acculturative processes. In order to look into these topics, I identified one main research question and two sub questions.

Main research question: How do Syrian refugee men negotiate notions of masculinity and gender while attending the Introduction Program for Refugees in Norway?

Sub question nr 1: How does the encounter with the Introduction Programme for Refugees and its representatives possibly influence these men's perceptions of gender and masculinity?

Sub question 2: Which strategies do these men develop to meet the expectations of the Norwegian integration system?

5. Methodology

In this chapter, I will present the methodological choices taken thoughout the planning and implementation of my research and analysis. The chapter starts with presenting the philosophical foundations and research design which has sat the premises for my choice of methods. Next, the methods for data collection and data will be presented. Lastly, the process

of data analysis will be explained before the chapter is concluded with my reflections on reflexivity and the quality of my research.

5.1 Ontology and epistemological foundations

As a researcher it is important to be explicit and reflexive about ones philosophical foundations (Neuman, 2011). This is done by reflecting on one's ontological and epistemological foundations. Ontology refers to what one perceives to be the form and nature of reality (Punch, 2014), while epistemology refers to the relationship between the researcher and reality, and how knowledge is produced (Neuman, 2011; Punch, 2014).

I adapt what Neuman (2011) describes as a moderate nominalist ontology, in which *"subjective-cultural factors greatly shape all of our experiences with the physical and social world, and we can never totally remove such factors"* (Neuman, 2011, p. 93). I do not believe that there exists one true reality in social sciences. Instead, I believe that every person perceives their reality differently, colored by their subjectivity and lived experiences. Further, I place myself mainly within a constructivist/interpretative social science approach to epistemology (Neuman, 2011). This approach correlates with my ontological believes, as it believes that reality is socially constructed and that there can exist multiple truths (Neuman, 2011). In interpretive social science, knowledge is produced through inquiries into peoples lived realities, and the researcher's interpretations of these realities (Neuman, 2011). When studying men's experience with an abstract phenomenon such as masculinity, I therefore do not seek to find one true meaning of the phenomenon, but rather explore the plurality of multiple realities. Through analyzing and interpreting these men's experiences, I hope to find a deeper understanding, not of what masculinity *is*, but rather what it *might be*.

5.2 Research design

To best answer my research questions, I opted to do a qualitative study. Skovdal and Cornish describes qualitative research as a way to *"explore personal and social experiences, meanings, and practices as well as the role and context in shaping these"* (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015, p. 4). My goal was to get a fuller understanding of how the participants view the world and navigate through life. I was also interested in capturing their individual experiences, as this might contribute to deconstruct images of foreign men and refugees as cultural Others.

Furthermore, I opted for a phenomenological approach, which seeks to find common meanings in peoples lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When following this approach, one seeks to find the essence of a phenomenon - in this case masculinity. I found that the phenomenological approach would be the most suitable approach for this study, as it set out to explore the participants' individual and shared experiences of masculinity within a migration and integration context.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Individual interviews

The in-depth individual interview is a common method for data collection when conducting a phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This method is a good tool to get to know peoples "*perceptions, meanings, definitions and constructions of reality*" (Punch, 2014, p. 144) and was therefore felt to be ideal for the purpose of studying perceptions of masculinity among the participants.

5.3.2 Interview guide

While planning for the interviews, I set up a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix) in collaboration with my supervisor. The guide was divided into three sections – life in Syria, time in the Introduction Programme for Refugees and current life. This structure was chosen to capture the possible catalytic effect which the Introduction Programme might have on the men's negotiation of masculinity and gender. Adaptations and small changes in the phrasing the questions in interview guide were done throughout the data collection when needed. The interviews were semi structured, which gave me a certain degree of control in the interview situation, while at the same time allowing for flexibility, adaptations, and spontaneous follow up questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This also allowed for a dynamic conversation between the participants and I, and my hope was that this would create a more relaxed atmosphere and prompt openness from the participants.

5.4. Data

5.4.1 Site

The data was collected from participants residing in Bergen or surrounding municipalities. This location was chosen due to practical and strategic reasons, as I planned to recruit informants mainly through my personal network in and around Bergen. However, during the project planning period I did consider if it would be better to recruit my participants from another geographical area than Bergen. Since I had worked within multiple local integration institutions in Bergen through the last eight years, I recognized the risk of accidentally recruiting participants who might still see me as a representative of the local integration system. In the end, I decided that I would keep Bergen as my main location for recruitment but take extra means when recruiting by not using my professional connections from previous workplaces as gatekeepers.

5.4.2 Inclusion criteria

I identified six relevant inclusion criteria when recruiting participants for my study:

1. They should all be male Syrian citizens (or former citizens).
2. They should have sought refuge in Norway after 2015, which marked the start of the "refugee crisis" in Europe.
3. They should have participated, but not necessarily completed, the Introduction Programme for Refugees.
4. They should be between the age of 18-55, which reflects the age limits for participation in the Introduction Programme for Refugees.
5. They should reside in Bergen or one of the surrounding municipalities.
6. They should speak Norwegian or English on at least level B1 to ensure good communication during the individual interviews.

I chose not to include any criteria regarding religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation in my study. My sample of participants therefore included both Syrian Arabs and Kurds with different religious beliefs, and one man from the LGBTIQ-community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex +). By recruiting men of various backgrounds, I hoped that the study would reflect the plurality of Syrian society, which is made up of different religions and ethnicities.

5.4.3 Recruitment strategies

When recruiting participants for this project, my main strategy was to recruit via my personal network. Having worked within the field of integration in Bergen, I had built solid network of friends and acquaintances which could help me spread word of my project and contribute to the recruitment process. I first recruited a total of nine participants, although three of these withdrew shortly before the data collection. The final number of participants who decided to partake in this study was six.

As a first step, I made a post on Facebook stating that I was seeking participants for my master's project. This post was shared by some of my friends and re-posted in a Facebook group called Refugees Welcome to Bergen. A total of three people contacted me after seeing this post and volunteered to participate.

The next step was to use the "snowball effect" (Skovdal & Cornish, 2015) by asking friends and acquaintances directly if they could put me in contact with people they knew who might be interested in partaking. This gained me six more participants. The final sample of participants consisted of men recruited through Facebook, my personal network, and some of my own acquaintances who wanted to participate after hearing about the project. Participants were informed that all participation was voluntary and that there would be no financial compensation for partaking, but all were offered a cup of coffee and some snacks as a friendly gesture.

5.4.4 Data collection process

Most of the interviews were conducted at UIB's facilities, while two were for practical reasons conducted in the homes of the participant or my own home. I was at first hesitant to conduct interviews in private homes, as I felt this might be overstepping a professional boundary as a researcher. This issue was therefore discussed with my supervisor at the time, who encouraged me to conduct the interviews in private homes if this was within the comfort zone of both the participants and me. Since I already knew the two participants in question, I therefore felt comfortable at the time to meet them outside of UIB's facilities. As one of the participants lived outside of Bergen, the choice of meeting him at his house made it possible for him to partake in the study without the inconvenience of him having to schedule extra time for the travel. The second participant was offered to eighter schedule the meeting at UIB's facilities or have the interview at my home, and he wanted to meet at home. Even

though I felt there were many benefits to having some of the interviews in private homes, I have reflected on if this was the right choice to make. My impression was that the two participants were very relaxed and the interviews were less awkward than some of the ones conducted at the university, where the setting felt more staged and formal. Further, it was my impression that this relaxed atmosphere prompted openness and a feeling of trust from the participants. Both of them gave me positive feedback after the interviews. In hindsight I have discussed this choice with my current supervisors which made me reflect further on aspects like personal safety and ethical boundaries, and I have come to the conclusion that even though the outcomes of these two interviews were positive, I would probably not have made the same choice again.

5.5 Data Management and Analysis

In this section, the process of storing, transcribing, and analyzing the data will be explained. The interviews were taped on a digital recorder and the files were stored in UiB's SAFE system, an online server designed for safe storing and processing of sensitive research data. The interviews were then transcribed manually and anonymized shortly after the data collection was finished. Through the process of listening to the recordings and transcribing them I started familiarized myself with the data, which is an important first step in data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process was strengthened by reading and rereading all the transcriptions several times. I then continued analyzing the data through conducting a thematic analysis inspired by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Attride-Stirling (2001). The second step in the analysis was to code the material by breaking it down to small parts which were of relevance to the research questions. The codes I identified were written into the software Nvivo, but the rest of the process was done manually on paper and in Word. After the initial coding, I started grouping the codes together into basic themes, organizing themes and global themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This was all organized into a table in Word. A sample from my coding process is included in the appendix to better illustrate this process. As a last step, I double-checked that the codes and themes were logic and comprehensible by cross checking the links from the codes, through the basic and organizing themes, to the global themes. This is an important step to verify that the data supports the themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Changes and adaptions to the codes and themes were done when needed. The resulting three global themes makes up the three main sections of the findings chapter (see chapter six) and thee organizing themes makes up the subheadings.

It is important to understand that the analysis is not a simple linear process, but rather a process which require the researcher to go back and forth between the steps in order to cross check information in order to get a comprehensive analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, it is important to keep in mind that the researcher is the main instrument in the analysis, although tools and softwares can help organize and simplify the process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Further, the analysis does not simply start when the data is transcribed and coded. Rather, it is an ongoing process staring as early as during the data collection, as the researcher starts gathering ideas and notes which might be relevant later in the analysis process. As such, my analysis was not a purely deductive process, in which the researcher moves from more abstract ideas to concrete themes and topics, but rather a mix of deduction and induction (Punch, 2014). All though I started the coding with an open mind and let the data speak for itself, my analysis was guided by the research questions and my analytical gaze, and the reader should keep in mind that the findings of this study also reflect this.

5.6 Reflexivity

Throughout conducting a study, it's important to bear in mind that the researcher is the main research instrument (Crabtree, 2019). The researcher should therefore take care to self-reflect on his/her positionality throughout the research process and be transparent on how the researchers background might affect the study and its results. Through reflexivity, the researcher can disclose potential biases, which is essential in order to evaluate the overall quality of the study (Tracy, 2010).

Throughout the planning and conduction of my master's project, I took great care to reflect on my own strengths and weaknesses and how they might influence my research. As a former student of Middle East studies and Arabic language, I have broad historical and cultural knowledge about the region which the participants come from. Furthermore, I have eight years of work experience from the integration sector in Norway, as I have worked in several reception centers for refugees, at the Introduction Programme for Refugees in Bergen, and in an IPS-project (individual placement and support) for refugees in NAV (the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration). This experience has given me rich knowledge about the Norwegian integration system and the institutions involved. Since Syrians represent one of the biggest groups of refugees arriving in Norway after 2015, I have built a big network of Syrian acquaintances throughout my career.

I found that this experience proved to be a strength throughout this study, especially when planning the interview guide and conducting the interviews, as I have had a solid foundation to know which questions might be relevant or not. My parttime job as a research assistant and previous professional training in interview and counselling techniques has also given me a good level of confidence in one-on-one settings, which came in handy during the data collection. My impression is that my cultural knowledge and language skills worked well as an icebreaker between me and the interviewees, and my confidence in the setting helped create a relaxed and less formal atmosphere.

On the other hand, being too involved can in the worst case lead to unprofessionalism (Shenton, 2004), and I have had to be careful not to let myself be too affected by my past experience. While recruiting I was careful not to use previous colleagues as gatekeepers or recruit participants who might see me as an authoritative figure or representative for the system. Although I did end up with some participants who I initially got to know in a professional setting almost eight years ago, these are people which I have since known as friends. My own impression was that the men I already knew were the ones who showed most openness in the interviews, but it is important for the reader to keep in mind that their story telling might be colored by the fact that they knew me prior to the interviews.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge the possible influence my gender and cultural background is likely to have had on this study. I suspect that not only the topic of my study, but also the fact that I am a woman representing the majority population in Norway, might have affected the sample of participants I recruited. While some men might have not been interested in the topic itself, I imagine that others might find it awkward to be interviewed about masculinity by a young Norwegian woman. Undeniably, language barriers might also have made some men hesitant to participate. My impression is that the men I recruited were mostly resourceful young men who had a special interest in the topic of masculinity. The reader should bear in mind that a similar study conducted by a researcher with a different cultural background and gender might have managed to recruit a very different sample of participants, which would possibly have yielded very different findings and results.

5.6 Quality

In this section, I will explain the steps I have taken to ensure that my study is one of good quality. This will be done by going through Guba's four criteria for trustworthiness in

qualitative research - credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba (1981), in Shenton, 2004, p. 64).

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the researcher has accurately captured and described the phenomenon which is under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). I have chosen individual interviews as a proper and well-established method of data collection, to capture men's subjective experiences with masculinity and integration. Further, I have chosen a group of participants (Syrian men) and context (Introduction Programme for Refugees) which I have familiarized myself with through years of professional experience. I have also made a reflexive comment on the possible positive and negative effects this experience might have had on my research and analysis (see 5.6). This is to uncover possible researcher biases which might have affected my data collection or analysis. To ensure honesty from participants, I have recruited them through open inquiries in social media and through acquaintances. It is my impression that I succeeded in recruiting participants who were genuinely interested in the topic and who wanted to contribute honestly with their experiences. They were all encouraged to answer my questions honestly and they could refer from answering if they did not feel like doing so. Through the interviews, I used iterative questions and tactics recommended by Skovdal (2015) when I detected irregularities or incoherent answers from the participants. All the interviews were long (+/- one and a half hours), and my transcribed data material gives a good and thick description of masculinity as a phenomenon. Lastly, I have had regular discussions with experienced supervisors who have read my work and given constructive comments and advice. This has strengthened the overall quality of the thesis.

Transferability in qualitative research refers to if and how the findings of one study is relevant for and transferable to other studies (Shenton, 2004). According to Shenton (2004) the researcher is only responsible for giving the information necessary for the reader to determine the degree of transferability to his or her new study. It is therefore the researcher's responsibility to ensure transparency about the research context, data collection and analysis. Information about the methods, data collection setting, and the participants are highlighted as important information for the researcher to provide (Shenton, 2004). Though my methods chapter, I have taken care to provide the reader with detailed descriptions of these factors, so the reader can know how to best replicate the research setting if desired. In addition, a section on the limitations of my study is included at the end of the discussion chapter. Through this kind of openness, I have provided the reader with thorough information of the methodological

choices which has influenced my analysis and findings. Based on this information, the reader should decide if, and to what degree, the results of my study are transferable to other studies.

Dependability refers to the possibility to replicate the findings of a study, if one utilize the same methods, context, and participants (Shenton, 2004). As I have explored the participants' subjective experiences with a phenomenon through semi-structured interviews, it does not seem either purposeful or possible to attempt replicating these findings. Rather, I would encourage other researchers to use my study as a prototype (Shenton, 2004) to explore the phenomenon further, and contribute to a richer understanding of masculinity within similar contexts.

The last criterium for ensuring good quality in qualitative research is confirmability. This criterium relates to if the findings of a study reflects the participants ideas or if they might be colored by the researchers bias (Shenton, 2004). Since the researcher is the creator behind a given study and the main instrument for analyzing data, I believe true objectivity is unachievable in research. To achieve confirmability, it is therefore essential for the researcher to shed light on possible bias through a reflexive commentary. This has been done in section 5.6. Further, I have used established methods and computer programs for coding my data material, as described in section 5.5 on data management and analysis. Thoroughness throughout the coding process is important to ensure that the findings of a study is grounded in the data material. A coding sample will be provided in the appendix for illustration.

5.8 Ethics

Ethics has to do with morality and can be said to be the study of which actions are right and virtuous (Punch, 2014, p. 36). Punch identifies three challenges in social science ethics: autonomy, trust, and benefice (Punch, 2014). I will go through each of these to shed light on which steps I have taken to make this project as ethically sound as possible.

Autonomy comprises moral guidelines for informal consent and use of gatekeepers. During my recruitment, I made sure to not use gatekeepers who could be in a direct power relation with possible informants. For example, when I was contacted by an official working in Bergen Municipality, I kindly refused his offer to help with recruitment and explained him my reasons for doing so. My acquaintances who wished to participate were explicitly told that all participation needed to be voluntary, and I gave them some extra time to consider if they really wanted to participate. My worries were that they might feel obliged to help or otherwise

feel like they owed me to participate, but my impression was that these men had a genuine interest in the research topic and therefore wanted to contribute.

Since the participants were all non-native Norwegian speakers, I chose to translate the information and consent forms into Arabic. The translation was done by a friend who has professional experience as a translator. This was felt as an important step to make sure that all information was understandable and to ensure informed consent. Although one of the inclusion criteria for this study was that the participants should have Norwegian or English language skills on at least level B1, I believe that the formalities surrounding informed consent should be available in their first language in order to avoid misunderstandings. The information and consent forms are included in the appendixes. This information was sent out to all potential participants, and they were asked to read through it before we went on to schedule the interviews. At the beginning and end of every interview, I made sure to encourage the participants to contact me if they at any point should feel the need to add or withdraw information to their interviews. I also made it clear that they had the right to fully withdraw from the project if they should feel like it and I made sure that they knew how to contact me. Additional oral information was given about the steps that would be taken to ensure anonymity, and how the data would be stored and transcribed. All participants were offered the opportunity to read through their own transcribed interview.

Trust has to do with ensuring the participants privacy, anonymity, and upholding confidentiality (Punch, 2014). Ensuring privacy means that the participants have the right to withhold information which they deem too private to share. All participants were encouraged to be open and honest, but only within the limits of their own comfort zones. Anonymity refers to the process of anonymization, meaning taking necessary steps to ensure that the participants remain unidentifiable. This was be done by giving the participants pseudonyms. As a fun twist and to give the participants a feeling of "owning" their interview, they were encouraged to choose their own pseudonyms. In addition, I have left out information in the about the participants line of occupation and the name of the municipalities where they attended the Introduction Programme. This also helped ensuring confidentiality, meaning that the researcher does not share sensitive information about the participants and what they've said to any third parties. I've carefully stored the recorded interviews in UIB's SAFE system, where only I have had access. These have been deleted once the interviews were transcribed.

Lastly, the third challenge is benefice. I believe that this study will be a meaningful contribution to the existing literature on masculinity and hopefully also decrease stigma

surrounding refugee men. I have strictly avoided giving gifts or other material goods for rewarding participation in the project.

6. Findings

In this chapter, the findings of my study will be presented. The chapter is structured into three main section which follow the participants stories chronologically.

First, the participants and some relevant information about their background will be presented.

The second part will focus on how life in Syria has influenced the participants views on gender from an early age. This section is divided in two parts. The first one focus on the men's families and upbringing. The second part focus on the dominant gender norms in Syrian society at the time.

Thirdly, we will move on to life in Norway and the participants' time in the Introduction Programme for Refugees. This section's three main focuses are how the informants negotiated gender and masculinity during their time in the program, their positive experiences with the program and its representatives, and lastly their negative experiences with the programme.

Lastly, the final section will focus on the participants' life after finishing the Introduction Programme for Refugees. This part will be divided into three sections, focusing on autonomy and freedom, current struggles, and current negotiations of masculinity and perceptions of the ideal man.

6.1 Introducing the participants

Before the findings are presented, I will give a short presentation of each of the participants who were interviewed for this study.

Rami is a single Arab man from and large city in Western Syria. He identifies as part of the LGBTQI+ society (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersexual, + more) and refers to himself as gay man. Rami is the only participant in this study who has uttered that he does not identify as a straight man. His mother came from a rich family and his father came from a poor/middle class background. As a child, he was sent off to live with his grandparents

on his mother's side of the family. He has one bachelor's degree from Syria and one from Norway. He is currently working full-time in a job related to one of his fields of study.

Thomas is a single Arab man from a large city in Northern Syria. He grew up in a middle-class family. Before settling in Norway, he lived in Russia for a year until the civil war in Syria started in 2011. He has finished high school in Syria and has studied one year in a Norwegian university. Currently, Thomas is working in a job which is non-related to his studies or precious work experience.

Erik is a Kurdish man from Northern Syria. He grew up in a middle-class family. As a teenager, he was sent off to study in one of the larger cities in Western Syria, where he obtained a bachelor's degree. He is single but has children from a previous marriage. Erik is currently a full-time bachelor's student and works part-time in a field non-related to his field of study.

Lukas is a single, Kurdish man from Northern Syria who grew up in a very wealthy family. He moved to one of the large cities in Western Syria to attend university and has a bachelor's degree. Currently, he is working full time in a job non-related to his field of study while he is taking courses on high school-level. He plans to study in a Norwegian university in the future.

Jonas is a single, Arab man from a large city in Western Syria. During his childhood years, his family was poor, and they moved a lot between different cities in Syria. Later, during his teenage years, his family became very rich. He has a bachelor's degree from Syria and is currently working full time in a field related to his field of expertise. He has a child from a previous relationship.

Pedro is a single man from a large city in Western Syria. He grew up in what he describes as a poor family. In Syria, he attended vocational educational training and worked in various fields of work from a very young age. He currently works full time in a job non-related to his previous vocational training.

Pseudonym	Age	Home region in Syria	Municipality for participation in Intro. Programme	Marital status	Family's socio-economic background	Ethnicity
Rami	30-34	West	One	Single	Middle class	Arab
Thomas	30-34	North	Five	Single	Middle class	Arab
Erik	30-34	North	Four	Single father	Middle class	Kurdish
Lucas	35-39	North	Two	Single	Rich	Kurdish
Jonas	35-39	West	One	Single father	From poor to rich	Arab
Pedro	35-39	West	Three	Single	Poor	Arab

6.2 Life in Syria and views on gender

In this section, the findings related to the participants' upbringings and life in Syria will be presented. First, the social relations and gender roles within their families will be presented, focusing on three themes which were identified in the data material: the level of open mindedness in their families, the breadwinning role of fathers, and relationships with sisters. Second, the participants descriptions of dominant gender norms of the general Syrian society throughout their childhood years and early adulthood will be presented.

6.2.1 The role of family and upbringing

6.2.1.1 Coming from open minded families

One thing which was highlighted by all participants was that even though they could point out general tendencies of high social control in Syrian society, the level of open mindedness varies a lot between and within families. As a country built up by many different ethnic and religious group, most of the participants wanted to avoid too much stereotyping about their own society. But, by pointing out the diversity and different levels of traditionality, they also

gave themselves an opportunity to differentiate their own families from the rest. While some directly stated that they came from open-minded families, others stated this more indirectly by simply adding the phrase *"but my family was not like that"* to their descriptions of general society. A hint of laughter or describing some actions as "weird" also revealed that the men were distancing themselves from some of the things they described.

"I know some families. If they let the girls continue their education, their brothers need to follow them to and from school. Every day. There are many weird things (…). But my family was not so strictly religious. They let my sisters go to school without me having to follow them."-Thomas

Thomas, who made this statement, ended this with a small laugh. When asked about why he was laughing, he explained that he saw this kind of control as unnecessary and pointless. In his opinion, it was better to give the children more freedom, so they could see the world and develop their own way of thinking.

"I would say that my father and mother were more open than other families. (…) they gave the girls the choice to make their own decisions. They gave us opportunities. They didn't pressure us to do this or that. There was more openness." –Thomas

Many of the men connect the level of open mindedness to the level of social freedom they were given as children, how girls and mothers were treated, level of religiosity, and frequency of physical punishment from parents. Rami, however, found this perceived openness to be somewhat superficial.

"My family was, in Syrian standards, open minded I would say. But when it comes to homosexuality, gender and not finding your-self in the right gender, they are still very, very traditional. And also, my sister could wear bikini, but it didn't mean she had rights. They gave rights just by looks so they could say that we were different from the rest." -Rami

6.2.1.2 Fathers were breadwinners, mothers were housewives

Although the informants defined their families as open minded compared to others, they still described some traditional gender patterns within their families. Most of the men talked about gendered labor divisions where mothers, often despite a good or decent level of education, ended up as housewives, whose main domain were their homes and caregiving roles.

"She was a housewife. As you know, in our communities, almost all wives, especially those who have children…Those who get married are housewives. But she studied. She was educated compared to the society." – Erik

The mothers took care of children, cooking and cleaning. Some, like Thomas' mother, also did some unpaid labor or favors for friends and family.

"She worked with sewing clothes. At home. It was like a hobby to her, so she liked it. Many people she knew came to her."-Thomas

It varied if the men chose to refer to the housewife-duties as work or not, but they most often referred to their mothers as "staying at home" and fathers as "working outside". Further, they told that the children often were raised to continue this pattern of responsibilities.

"The girls always help the mothers, and the boys work outside. (…) But it's not a big job, right. They just stay at home and clean a little and plan for dinner and such." -Lukas

While Lukas seemed to downplay the importance of his mother's and sisters' work around the house, Pedro seemed to appreciate his mother's homely duties more, always describing her as skilled and lovingly. In addition, he said that he enjoyed helping his mother whenever she was sick or felt bad. Further, he also explained that the men in the house generally helped his mother whenever there was any need for more muscle power.

"Housework… if it was hard for my mother… for example, we lived on the first floor and we needed to go to the third floor to hang the clothes to dry. My father used to carry the clothes. My father did all the physically hard work" -Pedro

Further, the informants told stories about hardworking fathers who spent most of their time outside the home, providing for their families.

"My father had to work 12 hours, sometimes 14 hours, to get money to buy food, pay the electricity bills and buy us clothes. He was always exhausted when he came home." -Pedro

Pedro came from what he described as a poor family and spoke with affection about how they finally had the chance to spend time with their father on Fridays, which was his only weekly day off work.

When becoming teenagers, most of the boys started professional training within their father's line of work, and for those who owned family businesses, they were most often given a job in the company. An interesting exception to this pattern was Rami. He had a very estranged

relationship with his father, describing him as a man whom he did not like very much. Although his mother had chosen to stop working after having children, the power relations within the family were somewhat out of the ordinary.

"My mother was controlling the family because she came from a rich family. So, he (father) was the one with less power." -Rami

Because, according to Rami, his mother had married late and were "out of other options", she had settled for a man from a poor family. Herself being from a rich family and having a university degree, she had married far beneath her own socio-economic status. This was described by Rami as a highly unusual situation. Since she come from a wealthy, powerful and privileged family, Rami was sent off to live with his rich grandparents at a young age. He further described having an estranged relationship with his now diseased father and he was the only informant who did not choose to follow in his father's career-footsteps.

6.2.1.3 Relationships with sisters

All the men in this study had sisters, and this section will focus on their sibling relationships. When asked about their relationships with their sisters, the informants from Western Syria told stories of more affectionate relationships than the ones from the North.

"You know how in the Arabic World, the first son is like…overrated? My family was not like that. (…) They never made us feel like one of us is better than the other." -Jonas

Jonas described a very close relationship with his sister, and of parents who treated them as equals.

"I was 13 years old when my father bought me my first car. And then he also bought my sister a car. So, the whole extended family was like "why are you doing this?". (…) I think that is the reason why my sister feels like she is supported by a mountain. Because my mom and dad and me, we actually fought with the whole family because they weren't respectful to my sister." -Jonas

After telling this story, Jonas went on to talk about an occasion when his uncle had tried to hit his sister. Jonas had responded with hitting his uncle back, and in the aftermath he and his parents had refused to speak to this uncle for five years, in support of his sister. He described a family built on strong and loving relationships. This was mirrored by Pedro and Rami who

grew up in the same geographical region. Rami, who identified as part of the LGBTIQ+ community generally felt much closer to his mother and sister than to the men in his family.

"I have good relationships with both of them. But my sister, I feel she is not my sister. She is my friend. My brother, he is my brother" -Rami

These stories were in contrast to the ones told by Lukas, who portrayed more alienated relationships with his sisters.

"In my family there wasn't much contact with my sisters, about their thoughts and stuff. We rarely talked about that. They just talked with their mother. (…) I would never ask my sisters about their day and what they've been doing" -Lukas

Lukas reflected on whether this, combined with living in a society where there wasn't much contact between girls and boys in general, might be a reason why he as a grown man found it difficult to understand what girls where thinking.

6.2.2 Gender norms in society

In this section, the participants' descriptions of the gender norms in Syrian society throughout their childhood will be presented. When asked if they believed there were differences between growing up as a boy versus growing up as a girl in Syria, all informants reported that there were some clear differences. As Thomas, an Arab middle-class man from Northern-Syria, reported:

"If you're a boy in Syria, you have more freedom. In all ways. You can go outside and play in the street, and you can do many things which girls are not allowed to. You can have many friends and go out with them. Girls didn't have as much freedom. They had freedom, but they were controlled more." - Thomas

This reflects the experiences of most of the informants. They stated that whereas boys could stay out late, play in the streets, and misbehave, the girls were in general more socially constricted. Girls had to ask parents for permission to go outside or visit friends. Many of the men also described girls as calmer and more in control of themselves than boys. By some, this was understood as the result of strict socializing. As Rami stated:

"If she sits with her legs out like this (spreading legs), she is not allowed to. You have to sit like this (legs folded). Even if you are a child. You are not allowed to sit comfortably. You have to sit like a girl." -Rami

Others stated that the girls themselves preferred more "girl-like" activities, like talking together, brushing each other's hair and putting on make-up. One informant, Lukas, a Kurdish man from Northern-Syria, described this kind of behavioral difference almost as natural gendered features. While he described boys as always angry and wild, girls were more in control of themselves and their feelings. He simultaneously explained these differences to be a result of social control. If girls misbehave, they risk dishonoring their families. Therefore, they must always be in control of themselves or be controlled by others to avoid gossip and rumors. Paradoxically, Lukas also stated that that there was never any pressure on the girls, but that the boys always were under pressure, presumably because they had to appear as tough from a young age. In many families in Northern-Syria, the boys were expected to follow their younger sisters to and from school and correct their sisters' behaviors if rumors said they had behaved in ill ways. Similarly, younger boys were expected to align their behavior with the expectations of older brothers or other older male relatives. Although the participants stated that girls experienced social control in more open and direct ways, Lucas stated that boys were not free from social obligations and pressure.

Many of the participants told stories of how they and other boys in their neighborhoods used to engage in more rough playing and fights. Lukas explained how it was seen as positive for boys to appear tough.

"(..) and after we played, we hit each other (…) it makes you stronger (…) it's positive. If you're a strong kid, it will lay foundations for you becoming strong later. When you grow up, you won't become a weak man." -Lukas

In hindsight, he described this behavior as weird and reflected on the lack of knowledge about how these kinds of attitudes towards boys' behaviors might affect the boys' psyche and mindset later in life. For some, it resulted in a lingering feeling of not fitting in in society and a longing for more freedom in life.

Thomas, who did not feel comfortable with social restraints and the constant risk of being scrutinized by neighbors, mentioned this as a contributing factor as to why he chose to leave Syria before the war started in 2011. The feeling of being different was something he had lived with since his early teenage years. Recollecting a phone call he had when he was eleven

years old with his aunt who lived abroad, he told me that he had begged his aunt to take him with her out of Syria. This feeling of being different from the rest of the community was experienced by many of the men. Jonas described how he as a young boy was "brainwashed" by the society's ideas on religion and homosexuality, but during his teenage years and early twenties felt a need to educate himself on these topics. This made him realize that he did not identify with the society's values.

"If you told me about homosexuality when I was like 16 years old, I would probably fight with you. But not because I believed that. It's because the community where I was, they planted those ideas in my head, and I didn't know any better. (…) When I was around 21 years old ,I started to hit the wall a lot with the thoughts which I picked up from the community, and I started to realize that these thoughts are just sort of hypnotizing your thoughts and stuff, like religion. (…) I realized that this (religion) is bullshit in so many ways" -Jonas

Jonas said that he had to pretend to be like the rest of society and accept what he saw as the dominating values in Syria.

"If I didn't, I would be bullied, probably attacked, probably killed. (…) I had to pretend for like 10 years that I was like the people I was going out with or seeing, because if I did the opposite, yeah... I wouldn't have survived until now." -Jonas

Luckily for Jonas, he had been able to find a group of friends made up of other likeminded people which he described as "normal" like himself.

6.3 Time in the Introduction Programme

In this section, I will present some of the main findings related to the participants time in the Introduction Programme for Refugees in Norway. First, the men's positive and negative experiences with the system will be presented, before continuing to how the men perceived gender and masculinity while attending the programme.

6.3.1 Positive experiences with the integration system and its representatives

6.3.1.1 The Introduction Programme provided security and structure

Lukas, who was very positive in his descriptions of the Introduction Programme, gave a nice metaphor for how he perceived it:

"We can call intro by one word - "Mother". It's just like a mother. As a guide, just like a mother.

Int: so that's how you perceive a mother? As a guide through life?

Lukas: yes

Int: is there a father also?

Lukas: yes... the father is the state (laughter)

Int: and the Introduction Programme is sort of a representative for the state… (more laughter)" – Lukas

According to Lukas, the Introduction Programme provided structure and security when starting a new life. It forced him to get to bed at a reasonable time in order to get up early in the morning to attend school, it taught him valuable skills and language, and made him ready for work and a "normal life" in Norway. He would have preferred the programme to be more strict to ensure that all the students did their best and fulfilled their duties at school.

"If it's not strict, you will not learn. The participants need to be a bit worried and stressed that if they haven't done their tasks (homework) they will be punished or get problems. Then they will learn fast. In the end, it will be valuable for them." -Lukas

6.3.1.2 Good relationships with representatives

Several of the participants reported that they in general were pleased with the Introduction Programme. What these participants had in common were that they all lived in and attended the programme in some of the smaller municipalities surrounding Bergen. This often equaled a closer relationship with their contact persons in the municipalities, smaller classes at small local language schools and teachers who had more time for each individual student. In addition, they all reported good and respectful relationships with their contact persons in the municipalities.

"The employees were very, very kind. I still remember them. (…) We were a bit afraid of her, but with time we understood that she was afraid for us, not that she didn't like us or that she was racist. We had been on holiday for a few days, and I didn't come to school for three days after the summer. She called me all the time and left a bunch of messages. I was afraid to answer her, but she told me "Pedro, I just want to know that you are well. I don't want

anything else, just for you to answer me.". (…) With time I understood that she was trying to help me and show me how life is here." -Pedro

Pedro, who felt unsure about his contact person at first, told many stories throughout the interview about his contact person in the municipality and about several of his teachers. His smiles and laughter as he described these people showed that he had come to admire them throughout his time in the programme. Also Jonas, who was very critical towards the programme in general, stressed that he had good impressions of most of the teachers and representative of the Introduction Programme.

"Through the Introduction Programme, I met a lot of people who are a part of the organization. They have to do what they are doing, but they don't believe in it. I have to be fair about that. (…) I did find mostly good people on my way." – Jonas

6.3.2 Negative experiences with the integration system and its representatives

6.3.2.1. Intro was like a prison

While all informants could point to one or more good aspects of the Introduction Programme, a many also expressed more negative attitudes and experiences. Jonas was the one who was most explicit about his opinions, and he did not seem to hold back in his criticism.

"I was there because I had to. I literally didn't give it much attention. (…) the Introduction was forced on us as refugees. It is like a step you have to go through. That made me hate it more" - Jonas

During this time, he was financially dependent on his monthly income from the municipality, and this forced him to continue the Introduction Programme even though he would have preferred not to. His wish to become self-sufficient and regain control of his life made him search for paid labor as an alternative and an early escape from the programme.

"So, if you didn't do whatever they told you, you didn't have money. And then you're basically going to starve. So, for me, finding a job was salvation. Finally, I had no one to control me. I don't need your money, I'm getting my own. I'm doing my own thing. So I was more free. I was normal. I was just another human. In the Introduction I never felt close to human. I always felt like a prisoner." – Jonas

Some of the other participants also uttered similar struggles, although with less anger and focus. Pedro described that going back to school as a grown-up had been very difficult.

"Why…In my country I got the opportunity to get an education (..) but I didn't go because I didn't like the routine of fixed days, waking up early to go to university and packing food and clothes. And then I came to Norway, and one day when we were going to school when it was raining and snowing… I said to my brother "I've never done this when I was in my country, so why should I do it here!?" That day was very difficult for me." -Pedro

Although less vocal about his dismay, Pedro described the same feeling of being forced into a system and a daily life which he didn't want. He mentioned feeling tired and not having the energy to go to school. Other participants were not as vocal about being forced into the Norwegian integration system, but rather seemed to acknowledge it as a step to learn important skills and become self-sufficient. They did however describe this feeling of coercion as common and they had oftenobserved it among fellow classmates and friends.

6.3.2.2 Putting all refugees in the same box

One factor which seemed to amplify the feeling of loss of agency for some participants was being categorized as a refugee and being placed in a system designed for this group only. Rami, who as a gay man had expected a life filled with more social freedom than what he had experienced in Syria, expressed some frustration when talking about his expectations compared to reality.

"When I came to Norway, it was in my head like…I'm going to Europe, so freedom! But when I came here, I came directly to the Introduction Programme with other Syrians and we all studied Norwegian together. Luckily, I don't know, I don't look very gay, but I have other friends who look very, very gay. So one time we called the police because there was bullying." – Rami

Also Jonas was critical to this aspect of the Introduction Programme.

"I was running from the same people that I was…I had to be in the same class with them every day, the same mentalities, the same stupid stuff that we never found a solution for (at home). I was forced to be in that environment again." – Jonas

Jonas listed this as the most important reason for him to dislike the Introduction Programme and it seemed to reinforce the feeling of coercion and lack of freedom to live out his life according to his own expectations and desires. He further explained that the students were grouped together in classes independent of their skills and level of education.

"So, they don't care if you've been studying for like ten years in university or you've never been to school, they put you in the same category." – Jonas

He described this as demotivating, because the smartest students in class quickly became bored as the progression for the class was slowed down in order for the weakest students to catch up with the rest.

6.3.2.3 Being treated like children

When asked directly how it was to go back to school and learn a new language from scratch as grown-up men, all participants described that either they themselves or the people around them felt to some degree infantilized or treated as less competent than they were by the system.

"(They) treated me like a kid. Like I had no personality, like I had no opinions. (…) I told her "some people in this place, they had factories with like 500 people working for them. And you're just treating them like kids and like we don't have any opinions. So why is this?" And then she just didn't answer me." – Jonas

Jonas seemed to be the one who had been hardest emotionally affected by this treatment and he vocally resisted being treated this way. He was not only telling me about being infantilized by the system itself, but also by its representatives. While some of this infantilization was a result of prejudice among the teachers and caseworkers - mandatory courses in basic life skills, the school curriculum, and the in class-situation also contributed to this feeling. Baffled, Jonas referred to a movie which one municipality uses to teach new participants about fire hazards and security when they first get settled in their new homes. Signaling that the contents and message of this video was common knowledge and therefore useless, he commented that elements like this contributed to his harsh negative feelings toward the Introduction Programme and made him want to quit. Pedro also had experienced the feeling of being taught what he saw as basic knowledge.

"We learnt about economy and stuff, and then I got a bit angry. I don't need anyone to teach me about my own economy, because I am very good at understanding it. But with time I understood (why)." - Pedro

What differentiates these two cases, however, is that while Jonas still seemed annoyed by this several years later, Pedro had in retrospect understood that he had learnt some useful skills

through these lessons, even though he felt somewhat degraded at the time. Rami, who only spent a few months at the local language school also described their way of teaching as basic and designed for less educated people than himself. He quickly got accepted into the University and continued his Norwegian classes there while finishing the rest of his time in the programme. He described a big difference in teaching styles between the two institutions.

"The way they teach you (in university), they teach you like an adult, as one that's been in school before. But when I was in the other school it was a bit like they thought I had never been to school. (…)

Int: As a grown-up man, how is it then to…

Rami: …to study like a child? Yeah, it's a bit boring." – Rami

As Rami stated, it became boring to "study like a child", indicating that it was demotivating and not challenging enough. Rami ended up finishing the programme ahead of schedule, as he had good progress and learnt the language quickly. The rest of the informants, Thomas, Erik, and Lukas did not seem to have felt treated as children or as less educated. What signified all of them was that they had good progress in their Norwegian language acquisition and that they saw the value of learning the language from scratch. In fact, Lukas clearly stated that he never had felt infantilized during his time in the programme.

"Int: did you feel as if you were treated like a child?

Lukas: never.

Int: do you believe that others might have felt like they were?

Lukas: Yes. Many did. Most of them. They were like "What is this? We are not children!" but then they start their life, and they cause problems" – Lukas

He seemed to make a point of differentiating himself from other men in class who he mimicked in a mockingly voice. Further, he seemed to assume that the ones who had felt treated like children, which according to him were most of the participants, would not succeed later in life. Although not as critical towards his fellow classmates, Thomas was also under the impression that most of the participants felt treated this way.

"They feel like they are children when they have to go to school. It's like kindergarten. (…) I would say that 90% feel it's hard. Especially men. But 10% understand that they have to learn." -Thomas

Thomas placed himself in the 10% category, thereby differentiating himself from the rest in the same way as Lukas did. He further confirmed that in his opinion, grown up men might feel especially susceptible to feeling infantilized when they are unvoluntary downgraded from breadwinners to refugees who have to go through the integration system, learn a new language from scratch and rely financially on salary from the municipality.

6.3.2.4 Bad remarks from teachers

Many of the men had experienced degrading remarks or what they interpreted as racist or sexist language from their teachers. Rami told about a female Arabic-speaking teacher which he encountered during the mandatory classes in social sciences.

"I remember the first time they put me in the Arabic class, and we had a very sexist and homophobic teacher. (…) We had fights with the teacher because she talked like… she talked very badly about women who wants to get divorced because when they come to Europe, they know their rights. She talked very, very badly about women. And she talked very badly about LGBT. And they gave more credit to masculinity as a toxic masculinity in class." -Rami

He continued saying that he believed this way of thinking was the standard among the Arabic speaking teachers, but that the smartest teachers were able to convey the same attitudes in a more concealed manner. When asked to specify what he meant by the phrasing "toxic masculinity" he further explained:

"When they want to talk about bad things in a good way or they encourage that toxic masculinity. (…) When you have more privilege just because you're a man and you can take the place of women." -Rami

Jonas also described an encounter with a teacher which seemed to have left a permanent mark on his self-image.

"In the beginning, there was this one teacher telling us that he was glad we were there, because Norwegians don't like do work the shitty jobs. (…) he was a teacher in the school, and he was around his fifties, so I felt very bad answering him" -Jonas

This teacher's comment was by Jonas interpreted as an honest remark, and he still believed that the teacher revealed his true opinions about refugees in this comment.

6.3.2.5 Problem solving strategies

When describing the abovementioned issues with teachers and bullying from other students, the men elaborated on how the cases were handled, both by themselves, their fellow students and by the school management. Jonas and Rami where the only ones who mentioned confronting the teachers directly. While Rami mentioned that he and other queer students had vocal fights with the before mentioned teacher from social science class, Jonas seemed to have stood more alone in his confrontations. They did not mention if anything good came out of these direct confrontations. Rami did however state that making official complaints to the school administration did have some effect, although the outcomes often were not the ones desired by the students.

"I didn't want to go and talk about her. I said "it's just social sciences for 50 hours" or something like that. But my other friends, they went. And we did complain about her. What the school did, they did not warn her. They didn't do anything to her. They just took us out and put us in the English class." -Rami

This seemed to be the general response when the language schools received complaints from students about the teachers. Instead of confronting the teachers or changing routines, the school often opted for what was seen as the easiest solution, namely moving the students who made complaints to other classes. At least, this is how the cases were perceived by the informants. When Pedro complained to the dean at his school about a teacher which he perceived as racist, the response was a simple explanation as to why the school couldn't do anything to solve this issue.

"I talked to the dean at the school, but they couldn't do anything because she had been working there for such a long time. I felt this was stupid." - Pedro

Rami gave a possible explanation as to why the school didn't take more action towards the teachers in cases like this. This was also given as an explanation as to why the school seemed to hush down conflicts between students, especially the ones involving bullying against queer students.

"I remember the municipality got an award for "best city of integration". They didn't want to bring the police. They didn't want to make the problem bigger. They were very afraid of their reputation as a school, so they just made it less… and they took us out of the class. – Rami

This passive response by the school was also seen in the classroom, like when Jonas tried to confront his teacher and she chose to ignore his comments. He also said that the teachers avoided taking sides during conflicts and discussions between students during classes. Rami explained that something eventually had been done by the school to try to fix the problems between queer students and teachers who were interpreted as sexist or homophobic.

"I think they didn't want to have fights with their teachers. Like, there were three teachers. And they all had an Arabic background. They didn't understand what it meant to have LGBT-students in school and the management tried to have meetings every month or every two months with us to talk about that. So they gave us a space. (…) but this was also an outing in a way, when the students go out of their class. But they tried. This is a problem in my community, and it came here, so they didn't know exactly how to fix it." -Rami

While Rami had felt angry and ready to put up a fight to fix the situation at the time, he seemed to see the problem in a more nuanced way now. He now felt that the way the school handled things was for the best and hesitantly acknowledged that it might have been a good strategy to not accelerate the conflicts. He did however see the paradox that in their attempt to possibly shield the LGBT-students from a conflict filled environment, the school also outed them as queer in front of both teachers and other students, as it was made visible for everyone who was taken out of class for meetings or moved to other classes.

6.3.3 Negotiating gender and masculinity

6.3.3.1 The Introduction Programme's lack of focus on gender

Most participants reported that there was little direct focus on gender in the different components of the Introduction Programme for Refugees, like Norwegian language training or the 50 hours obligatory course in social sciences.

"During those 50 hours? There was no focus (on gender). The teacher was an Arabic woman who had lived in Norway for many years, and the focus was to learn the curriculum and pass the exam. So, there was no special focus. -Thomas

While gender was mentioned through topics like human rights and gender equality, this was just briefly touched upon. The students were also said to have a limited interest in the topics due to the pressure of learning a lot of things during a very short time, and the high focus on

passing the course exam. There was also little focus on gender throughout the Norwegian language course.

"The focus is mostly on language and grammar. But we did have some (gendered) topics and teachers who were interested in them. It depended on which teacher you had and what their interests were. The teachers could get you extra curriculum. If I were a teacher, I would talk about economy, because that's what I'm interested in. The teachers were also like that."- Lukas

6.3.3.2 Masculine Others

While the participants reported that there was a lack of focus on gender throughout the Introduction Programme, they did tell stories of how they perceived other classmates, especially men, and how they positioned themselves in opposition to them. When describing incidents involving classmates or the values and attitudes which they saw as dominant in class, some the informants tended to frame them as strictly religious and traditional, toxic in their views on masculinity, gender and queer culture, or lazy and unintelligent. Jonas mentioned how some of the conflicts between him and other classmates were linked to differences in religious believes.

"(The class) was very influenced by Islam. Sometimes you would hear a ring to some Koran (ringtone) or something and you just had to live with it." -Jonas

He further explained that religious students in class disliked it if the teaching focused on gender or sexual education in Norway.

"Actually, in the Muslim community there is some kind of hate towards the way that they teach in Norway, because they consider that you guys are poisoning their children's heads with ideas that sex is okay. So… this kind of stuff, it's just weird and funny for me to hear about" -Jonas

Jonas clearly distanced himself from this way of thinking and seemed to ridicule the ones that he deemed religious and traditional. He portrayed himself as a more modern man, someone who had sought out information and educated himself on topics like religion and gender and thereby was quicker to adapt to the cultural ideas and values of Norwegian society.

"I was new in school and we had a lot of LGBT people with us in the class. So, in general, most of the Arab community, of course they are against that. Especially the religious people. For them (LGBT students) I was the only one who defended them." -Jonas

Rami explained that he didn't necessarily blame the bullies at school, because conservative people often had a lack of understanding on the topic of homosexuality and didn't understand that what they were doing was wrong.

"I don't blame people much, because they don't understand what is happening. (…) They grew up thinking it's very, very bad to be gay, that it destroys the society. They thought it's like a disease, like contagious. They thought if all people become gay, how will we have more children or something. And also, when I came here, there were people from all over Syria. We have very, very conservative places in Syria. They never heard what it means, this word "gay". They never heard of it." -Rami

Rami also explained that his male classmates had been very happy with the teacher who he described as homophobic and sexist.

Lukas, however, did not talk badly about religious or conservative students, and he did not mention any conflicts regarding the sexual orientation of students. He did however have a clear tendency to highlight himself as smarter and more emotionally and culturally intelligent than many of his classmates.

"Int: how was the relationship with your teachers and caseworkers? Did you have good relationships?

Lukas: Yes. Especially me. I had a very good relationship with them, and we understood each other. They say that this is how they must do their jobs and I respect that. I listen. If they say "you haven't attended Intro this day, so we have to withdraw money from your salary", so I understand. Others might respond with "no, why?!" (mimics in a mocking voice) but I respond with saying that "yes, it's true". Because if you're a sensible man, then you understand the difference between wrong and right" -Lukas

He continued explaining that even though he felt there was little focus on gender in class, he had learned a lot from the Introduction Programme about this and other topics. Most of his fellow students however, had not been able to do this.

"The things which I see, 90% of other refugees and immigrants don't see those things. They can't develop that quickly, you get me?" -Lukas

The ones who were not as intelligent as himself where at multiple times throughout the interview pictured as problematic, as they caused problems for them-selves and others, were unable to stick to routines and learn the language, and caused conflicts with caseworkers and teachers because they preferred attempting to bargain themselves out of trouble instead of accepting the rules. The most unfortunate ones went through the Introduction Programme without learning anything and eventually had to rely on financial support from the state, a situation which was seen upon with dread by many.

6.4 Life after intro

This last section of the findings chapter will focus on the men's lives after finishing the Introduction Programme. The section has two main focuses. First findings related to the men's current struggles will be presented before the men's current views and negotiations of gender are presented.

6.4.1 Current struggles

6.4.1.1 Social exclusion and prejudice

While all the informants had succeeded in finding jobs or continue with higher education after ending the Introduction Programm,e many were still telling stories of social exclusion and prejudice from Norwegians. Pedro's stories of negative social accounts with Norwegians were especially many and had left deep emotional scars. He had found it very hard to find friends in Norway, even though he had made big efforts to come into contact with new people throughout the years.

"I tried going to bars every Saturday. I had never drunk alcohol before, but I was drinking here. I went to bars to dance and always though I would get the chance to get to know people. But nothing, throughout these six years. (…) Nothing helps. I've had vocational training, (…) I went to the gym, I went walking, hiking, swimming. Nothing helps." -Pedro

According to Pedro, Norwegians were so shy and scared of foreigners that it might take him a whole lifetime to get to know them. He was also struggling to find friends at work, although he did his best to help out and be nice.

"I know some Norwegian girls at work. If they need help, they are like "Pedro, can you help me?". But if they don't need anything they don't even say hi to me. " -Pedro

Pedro felt that many Norwegians tended to draw social boundaries between themselves and others which they seemed hesitant to cross. He told me a story of how he had saved a bottle of nice champagne for years, until he had finally found a nice occasion to share it with friends. On a beautiful summer day, he had invited some people over to his home for barbeque and drinks, but no one had showed up. Instead, people had responded with questioning his intentions for inviting them.

"Why? I invited you just to have some coffee or to drink and eat and have fun. I would never hurt you or force you to have sex against your will. I would never, never like that! We can't do that in my religion, culture, tradition... we don't like doing that. "Why did you invite me?" I just invited you because it was a nice place to hang out." -Pedro

One explanation for this excluding behavior, according to Pedro, was that rumors spread quickly if one refugee man has done something wrong. One Syrian man's bad actions quickly become a symbol for all Syrian men. Pedro described this as unfair, as all nations and cultures are made up of both good and bad men. He further estimated that 90% of refugees coming to Norway have experienced this kind of prejudice, and that it makes people tired and sick. He did however still have hope that he someday would be accepted.

"I get upset and tired. But I can't do anything. I need to keep being a good and strong man. There will come a time when everyone understands that I am a good man and decent human being." – Pedro

Other participants had also experienced similar prejudice in Norwegian society, although these incidents were fewer and less frequent than Pedro's encounters.

"One of my ex-partner's friends said something at the beginning of our relationship. She said that I was only with her because I wanted papers or something. So, I told my ex "If we decide to get married, it will have to be after I have my citizenship". (...) It was for me. Proving it for me. Because I knew I wasn't like that. (...) I felt disrespected when I heard that. I don't see how getting married is going to change that. It's just a piece of paper." – Jonas

Jonas, who had initiated a relationship with a non-Syrian woman, had felt very offended by this comment. This idea that refugee men would date local women only to gain some kind of benefit, undermined his true intentions and love for his partner. Like Pedro had experienced, there seemed to be a tendency for Norwegians to not trust Syrian men's true intentions, especially towards women. Rami's experiences confirmed this as he added that Norwegian

women seemed more relaxed around him once they knew he was gay, implying that they no longer feared unwanted sexual attention from him.

"I think people will not like me until they know I'm gay, then they will like me more. (...) because they have this stereotype about Syrian men. So they will be sceptic." -Rami

Following this statement, I asked Rami how he thinks Norwegians perceive straight Syrian men.

"I don't know exactly, but I guess they will be more aware that they cannot hug them. That they (Norwegian women) cannot wear whatever they want, because it will be perceived in a different way. But when you're friends with a gay man, then you can do whatever you want because you know he's gay so he would not understand something in a way you wouldn't want him to understand it." -Rami

6.4.1.2 Low self-image

Some of the participants talked very openly about their struggles with self-image during and after their time in the Introduction Programme. The before mentioned experiences of prejudice and exclusion had taken its toll on Pedro's self-esteem and mental health. On many occasions throughout the interview, he described himself as tired and sick due to a lack of friendships and romantic relationships. Pedro had also described himself somewhat negatively when asked how his upbringing had shaped his personality.

"My upbringing made a man who is not so intelligent. Who is shy and afraid. Maybe a weak person who is not so strong" -Pedro

Pedro's low self-image seemed to not only be a product from the social exclusion he experienced in Norway, but was something he had carried with him since childhood. Jonas also carried some childhood trauma and talked openly about the mental health struggles he had gone through both before and after settling in Norway. When his teacher had made the bad remark about refugees doing Norwegian people's dirty jobs, it had struck especially hard, and it had left a permanent mark on his self-image.

"I'm still struggling with this sentence which this teacher said, like "we don't like these ugly jobs, but we're lucky to have you guys". It still intimidates me. I still don't know if I'm good enough. I'm still like so over my head stressed up about this new (job) position, because I

don't know if I'm good enough. Which is… I never thought about it before. I'm very confident. I know I'm good with a lot of stuff. So, it surprised me that I have those fears." -Jonas

After finishing the Programme, Jonas had continued doubting himself, and had struggled with anxiety and depression.

"I was afraid. I was depressed. I was collapsing, literally. For many reasons. From the leftover war stuff and all the bad stuff that happened in my life. The fact that I'm away from everything I know and the fact that I wasn't contributing as much as my partner." -Jonas

Jonas explained how his depression had affected the relationship with his ex-girlfriend and how it had all accelerated after he became a father.

"The fact that I was not able to contribute as much made me feel that I didn't have the same respect for her…and that made me dive deep into depression. (…) I stopped caring. I was just so depressed. It didn't work out with her, and it didn't work out with her family." -Jonas

The feeling of inadequacy when his child was born had been though for Jonas, but fatherhood also seemed to have helped him through his worst times, since according to himself he would probably have ended his own life if it wasn't for his son. Through his struggle with depression, he had found that his son was his salvation.

6.4.2 Current negotiations of masculinity and perceptions of the ideal man

6.4.2.1 The role of fathers in Syria and Norway

Two of the participants of this study, Erik and Jonas, were fathers. This section will shed light on their experiences with fatherhood in Norway compared to the role of fathers in Syrian society.

When asked about differences in the role of being a father in Syria compared to being a father in Norway, Eric was quick to state that the love a father feels for his child is strong, no matter the cultural background.

"Regarding the emotional aspect, there's little difference. In any part of the world, one will have emotions towards one's child." -Erik

What differentiated Norwegian and Syrian society was the level of the fathers' involvement and their everyday duties regarding raising their children. Jonas explained that this often is due to the father's role as breadwinner and financial provider.

"The guys don't interfere with the children, like raising the children and stuff. They are always at work, and then the mothers have to take care of the family. So for the guy, he doesn't feel any change" – Jonas

While the fathers were at work, mothers took care of the daily practical tasks in the private sphere, including taking care of the children. Concerning the children, fathers are expected to function as role models and guide their children.

"In our society, the father is like a superpower in the family. Not negatively. He is funding you. Guiding you. He's motivating you to study, work, to be a good person in society."-Erik

In contrast, they saw that in Norway, fathers have to be more practically involved in child rising. Both Eric and Jonas explained this as a result of high standards of gender equality in Norwegian society and the opportunity for the parents to share the paternity leave, which is not an opportunity in Syria.

"Raising the children, it's just the women there. But here, its divided. It's very normal for the man to have "pappapermisjon". We don't have that in our system or culture, we only have "mammapermisjon". So of course, there are a lot of differences" -Erik

Both participants expressed exclusively positive attitudes towards shared paternity leave, as it gives fathers the opportunity to be more involved and mothers the opportunity to uphold the duties of motherhood and still seek out a career.

"It's a good idea for both genders. Because the mother doesn't have to stay at home for nine months. She has a job, she has to work. (…) It's a solution to divide this time period between the man and woman." -Erik

When I asked Jonas if the system in Norway forced fathers to be more involved in raising their children, I was quickly corrected.

"Not forced. (…) They (Norwegian fathers) have the privilege to be more present. Because in Norway, you have somewhat equality between the time mothers take paternity leave and the fathers. That's something I like. It's the way that the parents, both parents, have to be included in the teaching process for the children in the kindergarten and stuff. That's very good. In Syria they pretty much only talk to the mothers." – Jonas

Jonas explicitly put pressure on the word "privilege" when talking about the duties of fatherhood in Norwegian society. Erik also expressed positive attitudes towards getting the

opportunity to be more practically involved in his children's lives, comparing "opportunities" in Norway to "limitations" in Syria.

"Here, the opportunities, the system, is different from my country. We don't have much opportunity there. The father's mission is limited compared to here. His task is limited to giving advice and funding his child. Here, he's part of more. He's part of the process of raising his child. (...) Here, practically, the father is more involved in his child's life. For example, by helping with school assignments. (In Syria) you would rarely see a father helping his child in primary school. but here in Norway, of course, the father is helping. The father is taking the child for walks together. Here, the father is practically more involved." -Erik

Jonas did however comment on one factor regarding Syrian society which he highlighted as positive when starting a family and raising children.

"In Syria, it would be much easier. Arabs have big families. and whenever someone's pregnant, the whole family will always stay there and help out with daily life and work. (...) So, in a way, it's much easier for guys in Syria or the Arabic world. That's why they have a lot of children." – Jonas

The support of friends and family was in general described as a positive feature of Syrian society compared to the more individualistic characteristics of Norwegian society. And it was enhanced by Jonas as an important support system for newborn mothers.

6.4.2.2 Love and romantic relationships

A topic which was brought up by some of the participants was love and dating. Several times during the interview, Pedro expressed a deep longing for finding a romantic partner, settling down and starting a family. There seemed to be expectations from friends in the Syrian community for him to find himself a wife of Arabic background, and he had gotten comments on how his behavior was not decent if his goal was to find himself a wife.

"A few years ago, someone said to me, "Pedro, you have gotten a reputation for drinking. How will you ever manage to find yourself a woman". -Pedro

Pedro, however, did not care about the cultural background of a potential partner.

"It doesn't matter. It's not important. The important thing is that she is a nice girl and that we like each other. That we help each other. And the most important thing for me is that she

thinks about life in Norway. That we can work together to build a good life here. That she understands me. That we can go out together, dance together, sit together. But it doesn't matter (where she comes from), it doesn't matter at all." – Pedro

Lukas also showed openness to finding a partner of a different cultural background, and openly talked about his dating experiences in Norway compared to his relationships when living in Syria.

"If I had a girlfriend from the Middle East…If I don't talk to her 10 hours a day, then it means I don't like her. If I don't argue with her, it means that I'm not jealous of her and that I don't like her. And then she'll start making problems for me. In Norway, if you start talking with a girl, she'll tell you that she needs more freedom, that you're trying to control her and such." – Lukas

At several times during the interview, Lukas drew the conversation back to this topic, contemplating on the difficulties of navigating the dating marked in Norway and understanding cultural cues.

"I wish for a sensible woman. Because if you talk to her too much, it can easily become too much here in Norway, right. But if you don't talk to her enough, she might think you're not interested. What's the problem? I don't understand this aspect of Norwegian culture." – Lukas

Jonas, who shared a child with his long-time ex-girlfriend, also expressed some longing for getting back on the dating marked. He was however holding back as he felt unsure if he and his ex-girlfriend were fully ready to move on. Out of respect for her, he wanted to wait before seeking out a new relationship.

"(It's) actually stopping me from dating. I'm waiting for her to start dating. I'm not joking. I want her to start dating so I'll feel free. Because being a single mother with a child, it's much harder for her to start a relationship than for me. So that's why I'm waiting for her." -Jonas

All though all three participants seemed open for love and talked openly about dating, Pedro was the only one who seemed to have lost hope.

"Do you know what my problem is now? I'm stressed. I have health problems, both physical and psychological, because of this. I wait and I wait. I have tried so many ways, but now I've given up. I still wait for a chance, and I understand that I won't get one unless I do something myself. But I stopped doing anything to find love. I feel like I will live alone as a man."

-Pedro

Towards the end of the interview however, his mood seemed to lighten a bit, as we discussed the dating app tinder and he laughingly sought out advice on how he could get more matches in the future.

6.4.2.3 Current masculine others

6.4.2.3.1 Men who mistreat their women

Although violence against women was never a topic which was initiated in the interview guide, many of the men made remarks in which they distanced themselves from the acts of intimate partner violence.

"Sometimes I hear about men hitting their women and I just can't think about it. They are like animals. I don't like hearing about it." -Pedro

They positioned themselves in opposition to men who mistreat their partners, and they described this kind of violence as backwards and inhuman behavior. Lukas stated that he had now become more aware of women's rights, but he did not specify when or for which reason this change in attitudes had happened.

"It's mostly when it comes to equality between men and women. Sometimes I think about all the women who don't have rights. All humans are not (treated as) equals. I feel very openminded when I see men who are behaving very strictly with their wives. I have changed a bit regarding this." -Lukas

Jonas was the only one who talked openly about sexual abuse and described a situation when he had intervened when he discovered a man who molested a sleeping girl at a party after settling in Norway. He further described a certain kind of situation which he repeatedly witnessed when going to bars.

"Also, and that's not on Norwegians, but on guys in general. I find it very disrespectful and very bad that you go to a bar and wait for a hammered, drunk girl, to have sex with her. That's rape. That's totally rape, because you are waiting (for them). If you're as drunk as the girl, no problem. (…) but if you pick up the drunk girl, that's rape. I see a lot of people doing this." -Jonas

He explained that he regarded this kind of behavior as being rooted in a lack of knowledge among men regarding what's right or wrong when it comes to sexual behavior.

"I was thinking lately to find some influencer to educate guys on this stuff that we do. (…) They do a lot of (bad) stuff. Because they don't know it's wrong. -Jonas

Wanting to educate men on behavior and moral standards, Jonas had lately been playing with the idea of starting a podcast by and for men, where he could help other men to act better in the future.

6.4.2.3.2 Thoughts about Norwegian men

During the interviews, all participants were asked if they perceived Norwegian men as softer than Syrian men.

"It's not about soft or hard. It's about the way of life. If you're living in a war zone, you have to be though because you're going to have to survive. If you're living in a place where you don't really have to fight to explain others what you mean…" – Jonas

In Jonas opinion, a man's toughness was a result of the society he lives in. This idea was also shared by other participants. Some of the participants also deemed Norwegian men as softer due to a high level of gender equality in Norwegian society and a more even power balance between men and women.

"In Syria, men have more power to make decisions than they do here. Because here, both men and women are working." – Pedro

Thomas argued along the same lines as Pedro, stating that the power imbalance between men and women is higher in Syria. He argued that men in Syria are seen as more manly when they exert this kind of power. This did however not mean that Norwegian men who inhabited a softer form of masculinity were less manly than Syrian men.

"Int: Do you perceive Norwegian men as softer than Arab men?

Thomas: Not in that way, no. Not softer as in they are "less men". I mean the way society works. There (in Syria) men have more power and can decide, no matter if the woman agrees or not. But here, he can't decide 100%.

Int.: but both are men in equal regards?

Thomas: Of course. I refer to the power-situation. Because men are men no matter where they live. When I say that Syrian men are "more men" I refer to the power balance." -Thomas

Erik, who also saw men's level of softness as a result of social and political structures believed that Syrian society needs more time to allow men to act soft on the same level as Norwegian men.

"Yes, regarding masculinity, to be honest, in general, they are softer. (…) I think we (Syrians) need more generations to reach this point. And the political regime and system is playing an important role. For example, in Norway it is very common for a father to change his child's diaper. But in Syria or other Middle Eastern communities, you rarely find men doing that. Only if he's divorced or alone." -Erik

When asked if he thought he had become a softer man after resettling in Norway, he confirmed that he had.

"Yes of course. And I think I was soft before too. (It is) of course positive." -Erik

6.4.2.3.3 Descriptions of the ideal man

At the end of the interviews, alle participants were asked the same finishing question – "how would you describe the ideal/perfect man?". In this last section of the findings chapter their answers to this specific question will be presented.

"The term "perfect man" is wrong for me. I just want to be a perfect human. (…) There is no perfect man, but there is a perfect human. Don't hurt anyone. Be open do differences. You might know a lot about life, but people can see stuff differently. So don't force your ideas (on others). (…) I think that's the perfect human. And love people. Love yourself and love people. And do good" – Jonas

"I don't believe the perfect man exist. But, to be a good man is to be caring, adaptable, calm and balanced, and being able to see one's place in the world. To see how you affect others and how others affect you. And to be good to everyone around you." -Lukas

"The perfect man… he supports his family and friends… respects everyone and is kind to all. Sometimes you need the man to be a bit strong, open. This man should respect his love and help his wife with housework and the children. You should be able to trust this man and he

should support you if you're hurt. It's not so important to me that a man should have a good body with a lot of muscles." -Pedro

"There is no perfect man. But if you were to try and be perfect, you need to adapt to the standards of the society you live in. For example, I can't be the same person here as I was in Syria. I wouldn't be considered a perfect man if I did. So a perfect man must adapt to his surroundings and his family. If I had a Norwegian girlfriend for example, I could not have been the same person as I would have been if I had an Arabic girlfriend. You need to adapt." -Thomas

"A sensitive man who understand others and who can understand his own privileges. I think all people should be sensitive, to understand their place (in the world) and others'." -Rami

"To be a man doesn't mean you have more rights or privileges. You have been created as a man, it's like a physical feature. That doesn't mean it gives you a special position or privilege. (…) So the man must show humbleness. Women have special interests, desires, and ways of thinking. Men have the same. But it must all be under the same umbrella of rights, respect, and helping each other. I think that the real man is not to show that you have power or that you're stronger. It is to show that you have power in your thinking (…) and to show that you are powerful in your emotions as well." -Erik

7. Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings presented above in light of relevant theoretical frameworks and existing literature. The first part of the chapter will focus on how the participant's views on masculinity have been affected by their upbringing in Syria and how the Introduction Programme for Refugees has influenced these views. Second, differences in the acculturative preferences of the participants, Norwegian state, and the Norwegian public will be discussed. I will then connect these conflicting preferences to the men's constructions of masculine identities, as they navigate different expectations and are often met by gendered and racialized prejudice by the Norwegian state and civil society.

After the discussion, I will present some of the challenges I met throughout my research project and the possible implications these might have had on my results. Lastly, I will offer some reflections and advice for future research based on my own experiences throughout writing this thesis.

7.1 Masculinity and gender

7.1.1 Views on masculinity and gender in Syria

The main goal of this study was to look at how the participants negotiated masculinity and gender while attending the Introduction Programme for Refugees in Norway. Part of the goal was also to investigate if this programme had any effect on, or possibly challenged, their views on masculinity. Herz (2019) states that in order to see how one's masculine identity changes, it is necessary to analyze both the individuals present life and past (Herz, 2019). To investigate the men's ideas on masculinity after settling in Norway, it was therefore necessary to know which values and views on gender roles the participants had developed during their lives in Syria and how they viewed masculinity and gender at present moment.

While the participants came from different socio-economic backgrounds, they all reported that they came from families which they described as open minded compared to many other families in their areas. The men from Northern Syria did however speak of local communities with stricter social norms than the men from the West. Coming from liberal families seemed to have formed the men's views on gender from an early age, and especially Jonas and Rami described themselves having a mindset which they viewed as radically different from the dominating ideas of Syrian society. Most of the participants seemed to take pride in this open mindedness. They described the social norms in Syria as traditional, religious, or backwards. In contrast, they themselves stood out as modern men who were open minded, and either non-religious or less strict in their religious practice. In his study of masculinity among Egyptian middle class men, Kårtveit found that some men distanced themselves socially and morally from other men which were seen to inhabit more traditional and orthodox masculinity traits (Kårtveit, 2022). The men I talked with also seemed to have established their self-image and identity in opposition to other traditional men in their society and masculine traits which they did not want to associate themselves with.

As in Kårtveit's study, the men in my study also seemed to construct an image of themselves and their masculinity ideals as morally superior to the dominating traditional form of masculinity in Syria. In this image, other men were facilitators of a social system marked by social control, where women and queer men were not given the same freedom as heterosexual men. Men who were not able to break these patterns of social control were to some degree also seen as victims within this system, as they either lacked the courage to oppose it or the intellectual capacity to seek out "true" information about equality, women's rights, and

homosexuality. Kårtveit found that new forms of masculinities among Egyptian middle class men were *"centered around men's conduct towards the women and children in their lives, as well as their ability and willingness to embrace new expectations in handling these relationships"* (Kårtveit, 2022, p. 40). During the interviews, I found that this was also the case among many of the men I talked with. Relationships with mothers and sisters stood out in their storytellings, and fathers who supported sisters and brothers equally were praised. The men's own masculine identities centered around what they saw as modern gender roles, where the women in their lives were recognized and treated as strong individuals who should break out of their traditional roles in the household.

7.1.2 Prejudice and indigenous stereotyping

While all the participants reported that the Introduction Programme for refugees had little or no direct focus on gender, partaking in the programme still seemed to have some influence on the men's negotiation of masculinity and gender. As they had all to various degrees distanced themselves from the traditional gender roles and masculinity ideals in Syria, some of the men seemed to have had high hopes that they would resettle in a new society with more open-minded values and gender views. The reality was however much more complicated. As newly settled refugees, they had to enter the Introduction Programme and go through Norwegian training alongside other Syrians. As Jonas said, he was now put back into the same environment and with people who inhabited the same mindsets which he had been running from. This was a strong contrast to the social freedom which many of the participants had expected when resettling in Norway.

As participants in this system, they were not only categorized as refugees, but as *refugee men*. Many of the men I talked with had experienced stigma and suspicion from Norwegians because of this. According to Griffiths, young refugee men are especially prone to experience xenophobic stereotypes (Griffiths, 2015). She states that while black refugee men often are linked with criminality, violence, and hypersexuality, Middle Eastern men are often seen as fundamentalist and security threats (Griffiths, 2015, p. 4). The stories told by the men in my study showed that as Syrian men the participants were often were met a mix of both superstition and hypersexualized stereotypes. While Jonas had been accused of attempting to finding a shortcut to Norwegian citizenship by dating a Nordic woman, Pedro had been accused of having a hidden sexual agenda when inviting women to social gatherings. Rami's experience was that women seemed uneasy around him until they discovered that he was

homosexual and therefore seen as "harmless". These stereotypes mimics Inhorn's caricature of *"hegemonic Masculinity-Middle Eastern style"* in which Middle Eastern men are seen as hypersexual, dangerous and fundamentalists (Inhorn, 2012, p. 48). When settling in this new society, the men experienced being stereotyped by Norwegians as men who inhabited the same views on gender and women as the men which they had tried to distance themselves from back home in Syria.

Stories told by my participants also indicated that some representatives of the Introduction Programme seemed to inhibit negative gendered stereotypes of refugee men. While some Arab teachers preached what the participants saw as toxic and traditional gender roles during Norwegian social science classes, Norwegian teachers sometimes made remarks and jokes which the men found racist or sexist. Teachers who made such remarks based on assumptions that "their audience" would find their jokes funny or agree with the traditional views on gender which was conveyed, thereby contributed to this social stigma of refugee men as caricatures of a hegemonic masculinity (Inhorn, 2012). Inhorn asserts that many Middle Eastern men do not identify with such caricatures of hegemonic masculinity- Middle Eastern style (Inhorn, 2012, p. 56). My findings support this statement, as the men I talked with clearly distanced themselves from jokes and comments which indicated that they as Middle Eastern men inhabited or supported such caricatured traditional gender roles.

In his study, Kårtveit found that Western stereotypes on Middle Eastern men often are internalized by the men themselves (Kårtveit, 2022). Inhorn refers to this kind of stereotyping as "indigenous stereotypes" (Inhorn, 2012). The men I talked with were aware that they were seen by many Norwegians as representatives of a patriarchal culture which contrasted with Norwegian values like gender equality. This negative stigma from Norwegians seemed to reinforce the participants pre-existing views on other Syrian men, as they themselves struggled prove that they were not "like the rest". Negative attitudes among Norwegian teachers and the Norwegian public towards Middle Eastern men thereby functioned to reinforce the Syrians men's indigenous stereotypes of their own countrymen.

7.1.3 Being categorized as one's Masculine Other

Throughout my analysis, it became clear that being a part of a system which put them in the same box as their Masculine Others (Kårtveit, 2022) seemed to magnify the participants

existing views on masculinity. These Masculine Others resembled the above-mentioned indigenous stereotypes and caricatures of Middle Eastern hegemonic men, while the participants took pride in their own modernity and adaptability. I interpreted this cementation of masculine identity and indigenous stereotypes as a resistance to the loss of autonomy which some of the men seemed to experience while participating in the Introduction Programme, combined with resistance to negative local stereotypes of refugee men. While earlier studies on masculinity among migrating men have focused on men's masculinity crisis resulting from a loss of traditional roles as breadwinners, my findings indicate that refugee men's masculinity crisis can be more complicated than such (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2021; Suerbaum, 2018b). If the men I talked with experienced a masculine identity crisis after resettling in Norway, this rather seemed to be caused by a failure to be socially accepted by the majority and live up to their own expectations of what it means to be "a modern man".

The stereotypes the men were met with undermined the men's self-image as modern men with liberal gender views. Instead, they were treated as part of a masculine culture which Rami in his interview deemed "toxic". Inhorn states that *"the difficulty of fitting so many men into a single hegemonic mold suggests that hegemonic masculinity requires rethinking"* (Inhorn, 2012, pp. 56-57). I too argue that there is a need to theorize masculinity differently, in order to capture the multiple individual experiences and self-imagery of the men who do not identify with a hegemonic masculinity.

7.1.4 Masculinity as something dynamic and emerging

When describing their thoughts on "the perfect man", the participants described masculinity ideals marked by emotional intelligence and adaptability. While they argued that the dominating form of masculinity in Syria was related to power both within the family and also in society at large, this was something which they clearly distanced themselves from. This dominating masculinity ideal in Syria seemed more in line with Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, where masculinity ideals are connected with the strive for power within a patriarchal system (Connell, 2005). According to Connell's Hegemonic Masculinity, most of the men I talked with shared common signifiers of inhabiting a "protest masculinity" (Connell, 2016). These men wished for gender equality and opposed patriarchal structures and traditional masculinity ideals. Inhorn however, refuses to acknowledge such attitudes among Middle Easten men as signifiers of protest masculinity (Inhorn, 2012). She argues that *"it is these ordinary, nonterrorist men who are by far the statistical majority in the region, but*

whose individual stores of hope and fear, suffering and triumph are rarely told" (Inhorn, 2012, p. 57). I suspect that how the men portrayed other Syrians and their *"Eastern mentality"* (Inhorn, 2012, p. 55) were to some degree exaggerated as a result of indigenous stereotypes and the men's claim to a more "modern" form of masculinity, closer to the ideals of the country they were now living in. Paradoxically, though their indigenous stereotyping, the participants who identified as modern men ended up reproducing the exact stereotypes of hegemonic Middle Eastern masculinity which they themselves had strived to oppose.

During his interview, Erik said - *a man's power lays not in his physical strength, but in his way of thinking and in his emotions*. Erik and the rest of the participants seemed to connect men's level of power in Syrian society to the local structure of the society and its political environment. In a harsh environment, men need to act tougher. This toughness was however far from what they themselves valued. After settling in Norway, they now enjoyed the social freedom to act out a softer form of masculinity, closer to their own ideals. They spoke of ideals marked by caring for their loved ones, respect and openness to their surroundings, and general kindness. This masculine identity marked by love and nurturing abilities stood out as a clear polar opposite to the Middle Eastern-hegemonic masculinity they described as dominant in their home country and the stereotypes they were often met with in Norway (Inhorn, 2012).

Building on Inhorn's critique of Connell's theoretical framework, I question if an analysis of minority masculinities based on hegemony would have allowed for these men's vulnerabilities and emotional strengths to be seen. By studying men from a theoretical perspective where the basic premise is that men are in an everlasting power struggle to be on the top of the patriarchal hierarchy, one run the risk of overlooking positive aspects of masculinity. How can one capture men as loving, caring, and tolerant, if the theoretical lense used is constructed to mainly seek out men's negative behavior? Such an analysis could run the risk of reproducing gendered and racial stereotypes and thereby vilifying these men by categorizing them as complicit men who reaps the benefits of the patriarchal structure (Inhorn, 2012). Further, such an analysis would possibly undermine the men's struggles to oppose these social structures and act out other "softer" forms of masculinity. Worst case, this would only reproduce orientalist stereotypes of Middle Eastern men as hypersexual, overly religious, or emotionally unintelligent (Inhorn, 2012).

The men strongly emphasized emotional intelligence and adaptability and downplayed the importance of physical and social power when describing their "ideal man". This undermines

Connell's emphasis on power and hegemony in her more static categories of different types of masculinities (Connell, 2005). While I interpret Connell as seeing the patriarchal structure of society as a product of men's continual struggle for hegemony and power, the men in my study turned this scenario up-side down. As Jonas argued, men who live in though environments have to act tough, but in a peaceful environment, they will soften. Following this logic, masculinity ideals are ever changing, depending on the structure and gender expectations of their surroundings (Inhorn, 2012). This element of change is, according to Inhorn, essential in order to move away from fixed stereotypes of Middle Eastern men (Inhorn, 2012). Rather, it is important to focus on how men adapt to their environments and find new ways to act out their masculine identities (Inhorn, 2012).

Thomas made a remark during his interview which seemed to capture the experience of all the participants well. He made it clear that as a man, he could not act the same way here as he would be expected to act in Syria. The participants' focus on adaptability and change capture the important aspect of "emergence" which makes up one of the basic premises in both Inhorn's and Kårtveit's theories (Inhorn, 2012; Kårtveit, 2022). By distancing themselves from what they saw as orthodox and outdated forms of masculinity, they could act out a new kind of ideal which the saw as modern and morally superior. This capture the dynamic feature of masculinity which many scholars have found lacking in Connell's theory and shows how new forms of masculinities can be constructed in opposition to old ones (Inhorn, 2012; Messerschmidt et al., 2018).

7.2 Acculturative preferences and their effects on masculinity

This second part of the analysis will focus on the acculturative processes the men have navigated after settling in Norway. First, the participants' own acculturation strategies will be analyzed. Second, the acculturation expectations of the Norwegian state will be discussed. Thirdly, the men's perceptions of the acculturation expectations of general society will be discussed. Lastly, I will discuss the differences in the expectations and strategies of these actors and the effect they seemed to have had on the acculturation experiences of my participants.

7.2.1 The participants acculturation strategies

All the participants in this study showed signs of high orientation towards Norwegian culture and society. They seemed eager to learn the language, find work and partake in Norwegian society. Some also seemed open to initiate relationships with Norwegian women, and all participants had sought out Norwegian friends. According to Berry (2016), having a high orientation towards the dominant group is one of the trademarks for non-dominant groups whose preferred acculturation strategy is integration (Sam & Berry, 2016). The second trademark for the integration strategy is that one to some degree hold on to and maintain one's cultural integrity (Sam & Berry, 2016). While the men I talked with distanced themselves from what they portrayed as traditional Syrian culture and certain groups of Syrian men who they saw as less adaptable and modern, they nevertheless identified themselves as Syrians. They had maintained contact with family and friends at home, still cooked Syrian food, and maintained other cultural traditions which they found important.

Earlier studies have found that integration most often is the preferred acculturation strategy among immigrants (Sam & W.Berry, 2010). In reality though, minority groups do not necessarily have the abilities to acculturate in accordance with their own preferences due to imbalance in the power relations between dominant and non-dominant groups in a given society (Sam & Berry, 2016). Integration can therefore only be pursued freely by no-dominant groups if the dominant society is open to cultural diversity and inclusivity (Sam & Berry, 2016).

7.2.2 The state's acculturation expectations

The Norwegian government has for many years promoted integration as their preferred political strategy for acculturation (Beredskapsdepartementet, 2015-2016). Following Sam and Berry's model for acculturative strategies and expectations among acculturating groups, the government's integration rhetoric signals that it's expectations are close to multiculturalism (Sam & Berry, 2016; Sam & W.Berry, 2010). According to Berry (2003) integration/multiculturalism *"requires nondominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, and at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt its national institutions (e.g., education, health, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society"* (Berry, 2003, p. 8). Through national integration policies and the Integration Act, the Norwegian government is clear in their expectations in which refugees should adapt in order to contribute to Norwegian society and economy (IMDI, 2023).

In order to facilitate for this process, settled refugees should attend the Introduction Programme for refugees.

As involuntary, permanent migrants, the men I have interviewed represents a minority in a new host culture (Sam & Berry, 2016). According to Sam and Berry, the relationships between acculturating groups are often affected by unequal power relations (Sam & Berry, 2016). When entering the Introduction Programme for Refugees, these men had not yet fulfilled the criteria for receiving permanent residency in Norway. Without necessary language skills and poor network, newly settled refugees are in a vulnerable position, and most will rely on help from their municipality to find housing and earn a living until they are able to sustain themselves (Beredskapsdepartementet, 2015-2016). Although one can, in theory, choose to not partake in the Introduction Programme, few will have the capabilities to do so, as they have no other real alternatives to secure an income. Due to this, attending the Introduction Programme for Refugees will for most become the only real arena for acculturation after settling in Norway. In this arena, the participants are daily exposed to the acculturative expectations set by Norwegian authorities, which are communicated through representatives of the Norwegian integration system.

Although the Introduction Programme is said to be adapted and shaped for the individual participant's needs, many of the Syrian men in my study seemed to experience their realities to be different (inkluderingsdepartementet, 2020). They talked about classes made up of students from various cultural and educational backgrounds. While the strong students felt this as a hinder for quick progression, others seemed to struggle to keep up with the rest. They described a "one model fits all" kind of system, where their individual needs and wishes often were downplayed by representatives. Although all the men wished to find work and contribute to society, they were not given the power and freedom to pursue this goal in the way they themselves preferred.

While the long-term acculturation expectations of the state might be close to integration/multiculturalism, the men's descriptions of their lived experiences throughout their time in the Introduction Programme showed that this system rather resembled a form of assimilation/melting pot strategy. The system is built on severely uneven power balances between the state and representatives who run the programme on one side, and the refugees who attend it on the other. Without the capabilities or power to acculturate in other ways, the participants are forced through this system in order to learn the language and adapt to Norwegian culture. The men I talked with expressed frustration over a system which only

seemed set on collectively prepping them to be included into the Norwegian society at a later stage, without acknowledging or adapting to their individual needs, strengths, and cultural background. Therefore, this became a one-way acculturation process in which only the refugees are to adapt, and the authorities facilitates for this adaptation to occur. According to Sam and Berry (2016) integration is a collectivistic strategy in which both nondominant and dominant groups need to adapt in order to achieve a multicultural society, and I therefore question if this one-way adaptation process described by the participants can truly be called an integration process (Sam & Berry, 2016).

7.2.3 The participant's perceptions of the acculturative expectations of general society

Throughout the interviews, it appeared that the men had some clear perceptions on how they were perceived by Norwegians. These perceptions were formed through interpersonal relations and encounters with friends, colleagues, representatives of the Norwegian integration system, and discussions in the media. Many of the participants told stories of social exclusion, and a feeling of standing on the outside of society. They related this problem to them being scrutinized as young Arab men, who were seen as different, problematic, or overly sexualized compared to Norwegian men. As refugee men they were not acknowledged by the majority as proprietors of modern masculinity ideals, and were rather being imposed with imagined negative features of refugee men (Griffiths, 2015). This imposed social exclusion bear some resemble to segregation, as is forced by the majority or dominant group of a given society (Sam & Berry, 2016). Even though most of the men in this study were resourceful, well-educated men who saw themselves as modern and more "Western" than other Syrian men, they carried the stigma of being refugee men and therefore struggled to be socially included by Norwegians.

In her study of Syrian refugee men in Egypt, Suerbaum (2018b) found that resourceful refugee men distanced themselves from what they saw as failed refugee men. This way, they constructed an image of themselves as more successful men who lived up to the male role of breadwinners (Suerbaum, 2018b). Most of the men I talked with also distanced themselves from other refugee men who were seen as less resourceful and more "in need of help". However, when attempting to integrate socially and economically in Norway, the men experienced that they too were seen by the majority as "refugees in need". Being categorized by the majority population as unresourceful men, combined with being scrutinized for presumably inhabiting a problematic form of masculinity, seemed to be the main causes for

why these men felt excluded. As socially excluded men representing a nondominant group, they did not inhabit the social power to challenge how they were portrayed by the majority.

7.2.4 Conflicts in strategies and expectations and its resulting masculinity crisis

Throughout my data analysis, I identified some clear gaps between the acculturation preferences of the participants of the study, the acculturation expectations of the Norwegian state and the perceived expectations of the Norwegian civil society. While the men wished to integrate, they were forced through a system which ignored their own acculturation preferences in order for them to adapt to the "Norwegian way of life". Herz writes that *"The idea that refugee men need to be educated to change their views on sexuality and gender is strongly represented in 'Western' politics and policies. It tends to be a discourse based on cultural or racial assumptions, for instance through the envisioned traditional cultural immigrant"* (Herz, 2019, p. 4). Gendered and racialized preaching, comments and jokes by teachers and other representatives gave the men in my study the impression that they were seen as stereotyped Middle Eastern men who inhabited orthodox and traditional gender ideals. This seemed to reinforce the men's impressions of being seen by the dominant group as "othered masculinities" – as problematic and stereotyped foreign men in need of cultural "re-programming" (Herz, 2019; Scheibelhofer, 2017). Herz refers to a tendency in European politic strategies in which refugee men need to go through special learning programs to learn "our ways" and leave their problematic masculinities behind (Herz, 2019). Gendered and racial assumptions made by integration representatives was one factor which indicated that the men were caught in a system which categorized most of its participants as traditional and culturally different from the majority population. For the men who did not identify with these gender roles and traditional masculinity ideals, negative experiences throughout their time in the Introduction Programme therefore became a root for self-doubt and low self-esteem.

As newly settled refugees, these resourceful young men were also met by a state and an integration system which failed to acknowledge their strengths and autonomy. Many felt that the programme was forced on them and that they were treated like children by the system and its representatives. Griffiths (2015) argues that "*Many aspects of the asylum system are infantilizing, offering little space for men to behave as adults—to support themselves, make decisions about their lives, and to establish stable families."* (Griffiths, 2015, p. 5). Based on my data analysis, I argue that the same goes for the Norwegian state's integration strategies and the Introduction Programme for Refugees.

Refugees who enter the programme are expected to surrender to the system and adhere to the rules given by Norwegian authorities. While some of the men accepted this, others showed resistance by complaining, confronting teachers, and talking back whenever they felt disregarded. By showing resistance and opposing the system, these men challenged the popular imagery of refugee men as passive and feminized (Griffiths, 2015; Turner, 2018). Like the men in Turner's study of refugee men's attempts to reestablish autonomy in Jordanian refugee camps, the men who resisted being part of the Introduction Programme risked being seen as "problematic" (Turner, 2018). Teachers and other representatives seemed to be unsure of how to react to negative behavior and complaints from participants, and the men I talked with often ended up being ignored or denied the support they needed. Like in Turners study, resourceful men who wished to reestablish their autonomy by opposing the system risked negative response from the systems "helpers" (Turner, 2018).

The differences in acculturative preferences seemed for some of the men to have contributed to long term negative effects and acculturative stress, resulting in what I interpreted as a possible masculine identity crisis (Sam & Berry, 2016). As the men strived to distance themselves from their Syrian Masculine Others and construct a modern masculinity which they saw as closer to the gender ideals of their new host society, they were met by an integration system and a dominant group which did not acknowledge their modern masculine identity. Rather than being acknowledged as individual men who inhibited the agency to break with traditional gender roles, they were collectively categorized as refugee men in need of cultural re-programming (Herz, 2019). For these men, attempting to establish a stronger agency while partaking in the Norwegian integration system only strengthened this image of them as problematic or difficult men who couldn't adapt to the system. For the men in question, this led to feelings of self-esteem and a feeling of not being deemed good enough by the dominant group by which they sought to be acknowledged.

7.3 Challenges

The main challenge during this study was related to the recruitment and choice of methods. My initial plan was to conduct one or two focus group sessions alongside the individual interviews to include triangulation in my data collection. I hoped that this would bring forth new or additional ideas and perspectives and thereby contribute to a richer data material. Early on, I recruited an Arabic speaking assistant who would help me lead the focus groups in Arabic and transcribe them into written Norwegian. All informants were invited to attend both

individual interviews and focus groups. While a few uttered that they did not feel comfortable attending the focus groups, I got a total of five participants who agreed to attend. However, three of the men decided to drop out last minute. One of my participants later commented that he was not surprised by this, as he imagined that it might be awkward for a group of Syrian men to sit together and discuss the topic of masculinity. My Arabic speaking assistant had also warned me that many would find the topic of masculinity to be a bit sensitive, and he correctly predicted that I might face some problems during the recruitment for the focus groups. My impression is that this study attracted men who already were interested in the topics of gender and masculinity. This might also be an explanation as to why all of my informants were young men in their 30's who presented themselves as open-minded and liberal compared to how they saw the rest of the Syrian community.

As I had already spent two months organizing and planning for the focus group, I was already behind schedule on my data collection. Due to time limits, I therefore opted to make a change of plans and continue the rest of the data collection without going through with the focus group. In addition, three participants withdrew from the individual interviews. Accordingly, the number of participants in this study is fewer than I had expected. The lengths of the individual interviews are, however, longer than 1,5 hours on average and contain rich material. With close to 10 hours of data material, I still had a considerable amount of material to analyze and work with for a project of this size.

7.4 Recommendations for future studies

Based on the findings, analysis and challenges met throughout this study, I will now present some of my recommendations for future studies.

As this study is of a relatively small size with only six participants, it would be interesting to conduct new studies on the same topic with a larger sample of participants. Additionally, it would be beneficial to recruit men with a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds, ages and from different geographical locations in Syria. These are important factors which are likely to bring forth new aspects which are important for a full and comprehensive understanding of the plurality of men within Syrian society and their experiences regarding gender and masculinity.

As the researcher's background might affect the recruitment of participants, it might be valuable for future studies to be conducted by researchers of different ethnic backgrounds and of different genders and age. I find it likely that many men might be reluctant to discuss the topic of masculinity with a younger Norwegian woman. A researcher of different gender, age or ethnicity might lower the threshold for some men to participate in a study like this. Likewise, the background of the researcher is essential for the analysis of qualitative research data. Therefore, I encourage researchers from different backgrounds to make further inquiries into this research topic in order to bring forth new perspectives, and thereby challenge and further develop existing theories on masculinity. In addition, I advise other researchers to conduct their interviews in the participant's native languages if possible. This will allow for men with poor language skills to contribute, and it will lower the risk of misunderstandings both in the interview setting and the analysis.

In 2021, the new Introducion Act took effect in Norway, and some of the structure of the Introduction Programme for Refugees has changed accordingly. All the participants in this study partook in the programme under the old Introduction Act of 2003. For the topic of acculturation, it would be highly interesting to conduct further studies focusing on both men who have participated in the programme under the old and the new Act, and to investigate if the new structure of the programme influences refugee men's acculturation differently. This might yield valuable information for policymakers who are responsible for evaluating and further developing the programme.

Lastly, it would be interesting to see future studies which further investigate sources of acculturative stress for participants in the Introduction Programme. I recommend conducting studies focusing on participants of different genders and sexualities, and from different ethnical and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to get a nuanced overview of the challenges participants experience and which coping mechanisms they develop. Further, it is important to know more about what builds resilience to acculturative stress among participants in the Introduction Programme and the long-term effect of this kind of stress. This kind of knowledge would be beneficial for teachers, case workers, psychologists, and other first line workers in the Introduction Programme.

8. Conclusion

In this last chapter, I will sum up the most important findings from my study and show how they answer my research questions.

Main research question: How do Syrian refugee men negotiate notions of masculinity and gender while attending the Introduction Program for Refugees in Norway?

Two elements played important roles for how the men in my study negotiated masculinity while attending the programme: the other men which they constructed their masculine identities in opposition to, and the gendered and racialized stereotypes they were met with by the Norwegian integration system. The men distanced themselves socially, morally, and culturally from other Syrian men in the Introduction Programme who they constructed as Masculine Others. Through indigenous stereotypes, the participants portrayed these other men as overly religious, traditional, and morally inferior. In opposition to their Masculine Others, the men could reconstruct their own masculine identity as modern, adaptive, and morally superior.

By the Norwegian integration system and its representatives, the men were often met with negative gendered and racialized stereotypes of refugee men. These stereotypes mimicked the indigenous stereotypes which the men had imposed on their Masculine Others. By the system, the men experienced that they too as refugee men were stereotyped and categorized as traditional and problematic foreign men in need of re-programming.

The men had to navigate between the racial and gendered stereotypes which they were met with by the system and its representatives, and their own indigenous stereotypes. This, I found, became a messy process in which the men struggled to distance themselves from what they were not, and at the same time struggled to be accepted as what they were.

Sub question nr 1: How does the encounter with the Introduction Programme for Refugees and its representatives possibly influence these men's perceptions of gender and masculinity?

During the interviews, the men I talked with took pride in their modern masculine identities, which they had constructed in opposition to the dominant traditional gender roles which they had grown up with in Syria. Most had struggled to oppose these traditional gender views

while growing up and expected more social freedom after settling in Norway. When entering the Introduction Programme, the men were put back into this same cultural environment which they had grew up with in Syria. In their attempts to prove that they themselves inhabited more modern gender views and masculinity ideals than other Syrian men in their class, the men preexisting views on gender and masculinity were strengthened. As such, I found that the Introduction Programme did not radically alter the men's perceptions on gender and masculinity, but rather cemented the modern and liberal views these men had identified with already before fleeing their home country.

Sub question 2: Which strategies do these men develop to meet the expectations of the Norwegian integration system?

My study confirms the findings of previous studies which states that refugee men often are victims to racialized and gendered stereotypes by the majority population, political policies, and institutions (Griffiths, 2015; Herz, 2019; Turner, 2018). The Integration Programme as an institution and its representatives seemed to have certain gendered and racialized expectations of what constitutes typical "male refugee behavior". While some of the men I talked with constructed their masculine identity by adapting and adhering to the rules of the programme, others attempted to regain their agency by opposing the system and the gendered stereotypes they were met with. The ones who accepted the programme constructed a self-image of themselves as adaptive and modern compared to the other "difficult men" who opposed the system and who were seen as less adaptive. The ones who attempted to regain their agency by not adhering to the rules of the programme constructed a self-image in which they as modern men refused to adhere to a system which did not acknowledge their autonomy and modern masculine identity. As such, the men in this study developed different strategies in order to eighter meet or resist the systems expectations of male refugee behavior.

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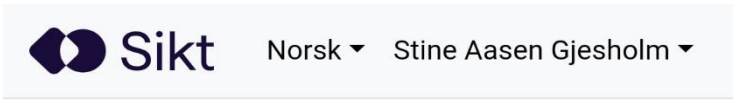
Appendix i: Coding example

quote	Basic theme	Organizing theme	Global theme
-I never felt close to human -they treat you lie a kid. I had no personality, no opinions -I was forced to be in class with the people and mentalities I was running from -I don't want to be forced to learn something as a grown adult	Loss of autonomy	Negative experiences with the integration system	Time in the Introduction Programme for Refugees
-teacher in samfunnskunnskap was very homophobic and sexist -Teacher's comment: glad that we (refugees) are here, because Norwegians don't like to take on alle the shitty jobs	Negative encounters with representatives		

Appendix ii: SIKT clearence



Meldeskjema / mastero... / Vurdering

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Skriv ut | 08.08.2022

Referansenummer	Vurderingstype	Dato
156187	Standard	08.08.2022

Tittel
masteroppgave, maskulinitet og migrasjon

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Universitetet i Bergen / Det psykologiske fakultet / Hemil-senteret

Prosjektansvarlig
Siri Lange

Student
Stine Aasen Gjesholm

Prosjektperiode
01.08.2022 - 30.06.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige
Særlige

Lovlig grunnlag
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)
Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 30.06.2023.

Appendix iii: Information sheet and consent form in English

Would you like to participate in the research project

Masculinity and Migration?

This is an invitation for you to take part in a research project aimed at understanding how Syrian men think about masculinity and gender while participating in the Introduction Program for Refugees. This document provides information about the objectives of the project and what your participation will entail.

Purpose

The project lasts 11 months and is a master's thesis at the University of Bergen. The goal of the project is to understand Syrian men's ideas about masculinity and the integration-/inclusion-system in Norway. The three main questions the project aims to explore are:

1. How do Syrian refugee men negotiate ideals around gender and masculinity while participating in the Introduction Program for refugees in Norway?
2. How can the encounter with the Norwegian integration system affect or potentially change these
men's views on gender and masculinity?
3. What strategies do these men develop to meet the expectations of the Norwegian integration system, and how do they handle any negative experiences?

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Bergen is responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are being asked to participate because you meet the project's inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria areas follows:

- Male with Syrian nationality
- Aged between 18-55 years
- Arrived in Norway after 2015
- Have participated or is participating in the Introduction Programme for refugees in Norway

- Speaks English or Norwegian at a minimum B1 level (documentation of language level is not necessary)

What does your participation involve?

As a participant in the project, you will be asked to take part in an individual interview along with a master's student from the University of Bergen and a focus group. In the focus group, you will engage in a discussion on various topics and questions with a maximum of 4-5 other participants in the project. The individual interviews will be conducted in Norwegian or English, while the focus group will be in Arabic. The duration of the interviews and focus group will be approximately 1 – 1.5 hours.

The topics for the interviews and discussions may revolve around your upbringing and life in Syria, religious background, family life, your time in the Introduction Programme for refugees, thoughts on masculinity, and life in Norway.

Audio recordings and notes will be made during both interviews and focus groups.

Participation is voluntary

It is voluntary to participate in the project. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. All your personal information will then be deleted. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or if you later decide to withdraw from the project.

Your privacy – how we store and use your information

We will only use information about you for the purposes we have described in this document. We treat information confidentially and in accordance with data protection regulations.

- Only the student, supervisor, and any co-supervisor associated with the master's project will have access to information about you.
- Your name and contact information will be replaced with a code that is stored on a separate name list apart from other data.
- All necessary data will be stored on the University of Bergen's secure server. No data materials will be stored on private computers or the like.

What happens to your personal information when the research project ends?

The project is scheduled to end once the master's thesis is approved. The planned end of the project is in June 2023. After the project ends, the data material containing your personal

information will be anonymized. Audio recordings will be deleted, but transcribed material with codenames may be retained for further research. The data material may be stored at the University of Bergen or a research archive indefinitely and may be made available to other researchers.

What gives us the right to process personal information about you?
We process information about you based on your consent.
On behalf of the University of Bergen, Data Protection Services have assessed that the processing of personal data in this project complies with data protection regulations.

Your rights
As long as you can be identified in the data material, you have the right to:

- access which information we process about you, and to receive a copy of the information
- to have information about you that is incorrect or misleading corrected
- to have personal information about you deleted
- to submit a complaint to the Data Protection Authority about the processing of your personal data

If you have questions about the study, or want to learn more about or exercise your rights, please contact:
University of Bergen by:
- Stine A. Gjesholm (master's student), tel. 900 51 805, email: stine.gjesholm@hotmail.com

- Siri Lange (project manager), tel. 555 84 832, email: siri.lange@uib.no

- Janecke Helene Veim (Data Protection Officer), tel. 555 82 029, email: Janecke.Veim@uib.no

If you have any questions related to the Data Protection Services' assessment of the project, you can contact:

- Data Protection Services by email (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by phone: 53 21 15 00.

With kind regards,

Siri Lange *Stine A. Gjesholm*

(Researcher/supervisor) (Student)

Consent Form

I have received and understood information about the project *migration and masculinity*, and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I consent to:

☐ participate in an individual interview

☐ participate in a focus group

I consent to my information being processed until the project is completed

……

(Signed by project participant, date)

Appendix iv: Information sheet and consent form in Arabic

تريد المشاركة في مشورع بحث عن الرجولة و الهجرة

هذا سؤال لك حول المشاركة في مشروع بحثي حيث يكون الغرض منه معرفة شيء ما عن كيفية تفكير الرجال السوريين عن الرجولة و الجنس خلال مشاركتهم في البرنامج التمهيدي للاجئين. في هذا المستند نوفر لك معلومات حول اهداف الشروع وما تعنيه المشاركه بالنسبة لك

الغاية:

يستمر المشروع 11 شهرا و هوه عباره عن واجب للماجستير في جامعة بيرغن.

الهدف من المشروع هو معرفة تفكير الرجل السوري حول الرجولة و الندماج\ نظام الندماج في النرويج.

هذه اهم ثلاث اسئلة في المشروع من المهم معرفتها.

1. كيفية تعامل الرجال السوريين في مبداء الجنس و الرجوله اثناء مشاركتهم في برنامج التمهيدي للاجئين

2. كيف يكون اللقاء في البرنامج التمهيدي للاجئين و هل يغير نظرة الرجل للجنس او الرجوله؟

3. ما هي الاستراتيجيات التي يطورها هولاء الرجال لتلبية التوقعات من البرنامج التمهيدي للاجئين و كيف يتعاملون مع التجارب السلبية؟

من المسؤل عن المشروع البحثي؟

جامعة بيرغن المسؤلة عن المشروع

لماذا يطلب منك المشاركة؟

يطلب منك المشاركة نظرا لانك تستوفي معايير القبول للمشروع.

المعاير للمشروع هي كما يلي.

. رجل سوري

. بين العمر 18 و 55

. الوصول الى النرويج بعد 2015

. كان مشارك او يشارك في برنامج التمهيدي للاجئين

. يتكلم الانجليزي و النرويجي بمستوه B1

ماذا تعني المشاركة بالنسبة لك؟

بصفتك مشاركا في المشروع, سيطلب من المشاركة في مقابلة فردية مع طالب ماجستير من جامعة بيرغن و مجموعة مركزة. في المجموعة المركزة ستشارك في محادثة عن بعض المواضيع و الاسئلة و سيكون ما لا يزيد 4-5 مشاركين اخرين في المشروع.

ستتم المقابلات الفردية باللغة النرويجية او الانجليزية, بينما ستكون المجموعة المركزة في باللغة العربية.

سيكون مدة المقابلات حوالي من ساعة الى ساعة و نص.

الموضوع في المقابلات سيكون حول التربية و الحياة في سوريا و الخلفية الدينية و الحياة الاسرية,

و وقتك كمشارك في برنامج التمهيدي للاجئين و الافكار حول الرجولة و الحياة في النرويج.

سوف يكون تسجيل الصوت و كتابة الملاحظات خلال المقابلات

المشاركة ستكون طوعية

المشاركة في المشروع تطوعية و يمكنك سحب موافقتك في اي وقت دون ابداء اي سبب. سيتم بعد ذلك حذف جميع بياناتك الشخصية. لن تكون هناك عواقب سلبية بالنسبة لك اذا كنت لا ترغب في المشاركة او اذا اخترت الانسحاب لاحقا.

خصوصيتك – كيف نخزن معلوماتك و نستخدمها

نستخدم المعلومات الخاضة بك فقط للاغراض التي وصفناها في هذه المقالة. نتعامل مع المعلومات بسرية و وفقًا لسياسة الخصوصية.

. سيتمكن الطالب و المشرف و اي مشرف مشارك في مشروع الماجستير فقط الوصول الى المعلومات عنك

. سيتم استبدال اسمك و تفاصيل الاتصال بك برمز يتم تخزينه في قائمة اسماء منفصلة عن البيانات الاخرى.

. سيتم تخزين جميع البيانات الضرورية على جهاز الكبيوتر الخاص لجامعة بيرغن, لن يتم تخزين اي بيانات على جهاز كبيوتر خاص او ما شابه.

ماذا يحدث لبياناتك الشخصية عندما ينتهي مشروع البحث؟

وفقًا للخطة سينتهي المشروع عند الموافقة على رسالة الماجستير.

نهاية المشروع المخطط لها في يونيو 2023, بعد انتهاء المشروع سيتم اخفاء البيانات التي تحتوي على معلواتك الشخصية.

سيتم حذف التسجيلات الصوتية و مادة البيانات سيتم تخزينها في جامعة بيرغن او في ارشيف بحثي الى وقت غير محدود و ستتاح للباحثين الاخرين.

ما الذي يمنحنا الحق في معالجة بياناتك الشخصية؟

نقوم بمعالجة المعلومات المتعلقة بك بناء على موافقتك.

بالنيابة عن جامعة بيرغن قيمت خدمات الحماية الشخصية ان معالجة البيانات الشخصية في هذه المشروع تتوافق مع قانون سياسة الخصوصية.

حقوقك

طالما من الممكن تحديد هويتك في البيانات, فالديك الحق في:

. الوصول الى المعلومات التي نعالجها عنك, و الحصول على نسخة

. و من الممكن تصحيح المعلومات الغير صحيحة عنك او مضللة

. حذف البيانات الشخصية الخاصة بك

. ارسال شكوى الى هيئة حماية البيانات النرويجية بشأن معالجة

اذا كانت لديك اسئلة حول الدراسة او تريد معرفة المزيد عن حقوقك, فيرجى الاتصال بـــــ:

جامعة بيرغن

ستينه يسهولم (طالب ماجستير) رقم الهاتف 90051805, البريد الاكتروني stine.gjesholm@uib.no.

سيري لانكه (مدير المشروع) رقم الهاتف 55584832, البريد الاكترواني siri.lange@uib.no .

يانيكا هلينه (مسؤل حماية البيانات) رقم الهاتف 55582029, البريد الاكتروني Janecke.veim@uib.no .

اذا كانت لديك اسئلة تتعلق بخدمات الحماية الشخصية للمشروع فيمكنك الاتصال بـــــ:
الخدمات الشخصية على الرقم 53211500 او على البريد الاكتروني personverntjenester@sikt.no

مع اطيب التحيات

Stine A. Gjesholm	Siri Lange
(طالب)	(باحث | مشرف)

الموافقة

لقد تلقيت و فهمت المعلومات حول مشروع الهجرة و الذكور, و اتيحت لي الفرصة لطرح الاسئلة.

المشاركة في مقابلة فردية ¤

المشاركة في مجموعة التركيز ¤

اوافق على استخدام معلوماتي حتى انتهاء المشروع

Appendix v: Interview guide English and Norwegian

Interview guide

Preliminary Questions

In order for you not to be recognizable in the study, it is desirable that you choose a nickname/pseudonym. Choose a name that you are comfortable with:

How old are you?
What is your marital status?
Where in Syria do you come from?
What is your educational and work background from Syria?
What is your educational and work background from Norway?
What is your current employment status?
How long have you lived in Norway?
Have you completed the Introduction Programme for refugees? In which municipality?
When did you finish the Introduction Programme?

Background:

-Can you tell a little about your life before you came to Norway?
(relevant points: what was your childhood/upbringing like? Family background? The relationship between the various family members? From a city or countryside? Educational background? Professional life?)

-What educational/professional background do you have from Syria?
Why did you choose this education/career?

-What was it like growing up as a boy in your city/village?
Example?

-How do you think it was to grow up as a girl?
Example?

-How do you think your upbringing has shaped you into the person you are today?

Introduction Programme:

-Can you tell me about your life while you participated in the Introduction Prgramme for refugees?

(relevant points: living situation, marital status, job/school, social life)

+ relevant follow-up questions

-What do you think of the Introduction Programme for refugees?

-Was there anything positive?

Example

-Was there anything that was challenging?

Example

-What was it like to start Norwegian language training as an adult?

-How has it been to have to build a new career/study in Norway?

-Which people/institutions/channels have been most important to you when learning about life in Norway? In what way have they been important?

-To what extent do you feel that the Introduction Programme has influenced your view of gender and masculinity?

-Through the Introduction Programme, did you attend courses that focused on equality, parenting guidance, gender, sexuality, or the like? If so, can you talk about these courses?

-How was the relationship with your contact person in the programme and other municipal employees? Isthere anything about the guidance that you wish had been different?

Life in Norway:

-Can you tell me a little about your life as it is now? (family, job, school, living situation, etc.)

+ relevant follow-up questions

-What education/career path have you chosen in Norway?

Why did you choose this education/career?

-What is most different between being a man in Syria and being a man in Norway?
Example

-What do you think about Norwegians' ways of life? (equality, social life, manners, culture, etc.)
Example

-Do you feel that you have changed as a man (attitudes, habits, hobbies, etc.) after coming to Norway?
How? Example

-Do you receive comments from family/friends in Syria that you have changed after settling in Norway?
If so, what comments? Example

-Do you experience encountering positive attitudes towards your culture, nationality, gender, or the like from Norwegians?
Example

-Do you experience encountering negative attitudes towards your culture, nationality, gender, or the like from Norwegians?
Example
How do you react in such situations?

-Do you experience encountering positive attitudes towards your culture, nationality, gender, or the like from other Syrians in Norway?
Example

-Do you experience encountering negative attitudes towards your culture, nationality, gender, or the like from other Syrians in Norway?
Example
How do you handle such situations?

-How do you think the perfect/ideal man should be?

Other:

-Is there anything else you would like to add/talk about?

Note: repeat info about informed consent at the end of every interview.

……

Innledende spørsmål

For at du ikke skal kunne bli gjenkjent i studien er det ønskelig at du velger deg et kallenavn/pseudonym. Velg et navn som du selv er komfortabel med:

Hvor gammel er du?

Hva er din sivilstatus?

Hvor i Syria kommer du fra?

Hvilken skole- og arbeidsbakgrunn har du fra Syria?

Hvilken skole- og arbeidsbakgrunn har du fra Norge?

Hva er din nåværende yrkesstatus?

Hvor lenge har du bodd i Norge?

Har du fullført introduksjonsprogrammet for flyktninger?

Når var du ferdig i introduksjonsprogrammet?

Bakgrunn:

-Kan du fortelle litt om livet ditt før du kom til Norge?

(relevante momenter: hvordan var oppveksten? Familiebakgrunn? Forholdet mellom de ulike familiemedlemmene? Fra by eller landsbygd? Skolebakgrunn? Yrkesliv?)

-Hvilken skole-/yrkesbakgrunn har du fra Syria?

Hvorfor valgte du denne utdanningen/dette yrket?

-Hvordan var det å vokse opp som gutt i din by/landsby?

Eksempel?

-Hvordan tror du det var å vokse opp som jente?

Eksempel?

-Hvordan tenker du at din oppvekst har formet deg til den personen du er i dag?

Introduksjonsprogrammet:

-Kan du fortelle om livet ditt mens du deltok i introduksjonsprogrammet for flyktninger?

(relevant: bosituasjon, sivilstatus, jobb/skole, sosialt liv)

+ relevante oppfølgingsspørsmål

-Hva synes du om Introduksjonsprogrammet for flyktninger?

-Var det noe som var positivt?

Eksempel

-Var det noe som var utfordrende?

Eksempel

-Hvordan var det å begynne på norskkurs som voksen?

-Hvordan har det vært å måtte bygge opp en ny arbeidskarriere/studere i Norge?

-Hvilke personer/institusjoner/kanaler har vært viktigst for deg for å lære om livet i Norge? På hvilken måte har de vært viktige?

-I hvilken grad føler du at Introduksjonsprogrammet har påvirket dit syn på kjønn og maskulinitet?

-Fikk du gjennom introduksjonsprogrammet kurs som fokuserte på likestilling, foreldreveiledning, kjønn, seksualitet eller lignende? Hvis ja, kan du fortelle om disse kursene?

-Hvordan var relasjonen med din kontaktperson i programmet og evt andre ansatte i kommunen? Er det noe med veiledningen som du skulle ønske var annerledes?

Om livet i Norge:

-Kan du fortelle litt om livet ditt slik det er nå? (familie, jobb, skole, bosituasjon etc)

+relevante oppfølgingsspørsmål

-Hvilken utdanning/hvilket yrkesspor har du valg i Norge?

Hvorfor har du valgt denne utdanningen/dette yrket?

-Hva er mest ulikt mellom det å være mann i Syria og det å være mann i Norge?

Eksempel

-Hva synes du om nordmenn sine levemåter? (likestilling, sosialt liv, væremåter, kultur etc)

Eksempel

-Føler du at du har endret deg som mann (holdninger, vaner, hobbyer etc) etter at kom til Norge?

Hvordan? Eksempel

-Får du kommentarer fra familie/venner i Syria om at du har endret deg?

Evt hvilke kommentarer? Eksempel

-Opplever du å møte positive holdninger til din kultur, nasjonalitet, kjønn eller lignende fra nordmenn?

Eksempel

-Opplever du å møte negative holdninger til din kultur, nasjonalitet, kjønn eller lignende fra nordmenn?

Eksempel

Hvordan reagerer du i slike situasjoner?

-Opplever du å møte positive holdninger til din kultur, nasjonalitet, kjønn eller lignende fra andre Syrere i Norge?

Eksempel

-Opplever du å møte negative holdninger til din kultur, nasjonalitet, kjønn eller lignende fra andre Syrere i Norge?

Eksempel

Hvordan håndterer du slike situasjoner?

-Hvordan tenker du at den perfekte/ideelle mannen bør være?

Annet

-Har du noe annet du ønsker å tillegge/ snakke om?

Avslutningsvis: Husk å repetere info om samtykke