Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities

Cairo, Copenhagen

K V I N F O

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Anne Margrethe Rasmussen, Head of MENA Programmes, KVINFO.
Rasmus Alenius Boserup, Director of DEDI from February 2008 to January 2011.

Gender development programs and studies have, for a variety of reasons, tended to focus almost exclusively on women. While these studies and programs are needed and legitimate, they overlook the equally important role that men have in changing gender dynamics and relations. We believe that a more comprehensive approach is necessary in order for gender programs to impact societal change in Europe as well as in the Arab region. Men's and women's relations must be analyzed and addressed as deeply interrelated.

When we chose to initiate the project Changing Masculinities – Changing Communities back in early 2009 we intended to assist in opening a platform for discussion, dialogue, and exchange between civil society activists and experts who in their daily work in Egypt and in Denmark work with men as a part of developing their societies. As part of the concept, some participants were professionals and experts in the field of masculinity while others were not.

As a relatively new field in both Egypt and in Denmark – and more broadly in the Middle East and in Europe – masculinity studies and development programs targeting men constitute a potent and relevant area for cross-fertilizations between experiences and challenges from different contexts. The field offers an opportunity to ensure two-sided learning about oneself through exposure and dialogue with the others. Promoting exchange and dialogue between professionals is, indeed, a core value of the organizations we represent. For KVINFO the focus on masculinity and the specific societal challenges that men and boys face in today's world has been a priority for some time. For DEDI it has been a top priority to introduce new and creative ways to promote societal development in Egypt. The project reflected these organizational concerns and aims in a very satisfying manner.

The implementation of the project did to some extent confirm our assumptions about the field: Masculinity is a politicized field in both Egypt and Denmark – although in different ways. Draped in taboos and hidden agendas the issue constitutes a potent field for reinvigorating gender development and rethinking the relation between gender and societal development in Europe and in the Arab region.

The insights and perspectives that the project generated for our organizations and for the participants had not been without the engagement and professionalism of our two Project Officers, Thomas Burø and Mozn Hassan. We owe them great thanks for establishing a forum for insightful and open-minded debate, exchange, and reflection on this timely and important topic. We also owe a great thank to the participants in the seminars and the authors who contributed to this volume for sharing their ideas and insights and for helping making the project a success. We hope that the readers will find some of the engagement, creativity, and joy that we sensed when participating in the project.

Mozn Hassan and Thomas Burø.

Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities is a series of workshops in Copenhagen and Cairo bringing together specially invited professionals with the purpose of exploring and discussing the concept of masculinity. The workshops ask to which extent masculinity is a concept that can be used to understand community dynamics and used as a practical tool in social work.

Addressing men as men means insisting that male lives are gendered lives, even if most men do not wish to recognize themselves as gendered. Too often, to most men the only body that is considered gendered is that of a female. This perception is ironically promoted by the majority of gender studies and development discourse, if not intentionally then at least by practice, insofar as 'gender' often signifies 'woman'. **Male subjectivities are disproportionately understudied and underunderstood in comparison to female subjectivities and particularly in relation to understanding community dynamics. Yet, understanding how male subjectivities take part in shaping the contours and contents of communities is crucial, since male agency and its consequences for others is informed and motivated by the nature of their subjectivities.** Such subjectivities are strung out between ideal and real masculinity, underscoring that most men struggle to live up to the expectations contained in the regulatory ideal 'a real man'. When they fail, due to personal, social, political, economic or sexual reasons and inhibitions, what are the consequences to the communities in which they live; what are the effects of failed masculinity agency?

The interplay between masculinity and community is always local and community specific, yet it is a global issue relevant to Denmark as well as Egypt. It can be argued that many social problems troubling communities and men can be understood by focusing on how men compensate for their inability to live up to their communities' masculine ideals. Addressing masculinity, both in Denmark and Egypt is a delicate matter. On the one hand, when examining male subjectivity one analyzes patriarchal structures of privilege and men's complicity in relations of domination. On the other hand, when examining male subjectivity one analyzes questions of powerlessness, impotence, short-comings and other forms of 'failure'. Both aspects are difficult issues to address and are usually ignored. The workshop takes its departure in the conviction that it is necessary to address these questions.

Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities implies a dynamic relation. If you change one part the other part changes too, for better or for worse. If a community can succeed in retelling the story of 'real men,' what possibilities for renegotiating male subjectivities are men given? If men are capable of living up to community ideals, how does this affect their communities? If communities are capable of creating a platform where men can exercise idealized masculinity, how does this affect men? How are such communal narratives told and retold? Deciding which kind of community is to be desired implies deciding what kind of masculinity is to be desired and vice versa.

The Project.
The workshop was conceived as facilitating the meeting of people whose work involves an awareness of masculinity as a crucial factor in the making of social relations and communities. The selected invites range from social workers to academics and artists. The event aims at creating a space for sharing experience, knowledge and insights from the participants' localized field of work and research, as well as creating a space for developing and elaborating approaches to using masculinity as a operational tool for understanding and changing community dynamics.
The workshop took place in two rounds, two days in Copenhagen, two days in Cairo, to underscore that the importance of understanding the interplay between masculinity and community is not reserved to a Middle East and North African environment, but also applies to a European context. The sessions took place within a four-month period from June-October 2010.

On May 30, 2010 a group of scholars and resource persons convened at DEDI to discuss an approximate term in the Arabic language for the term Masculinity. This was to create consistency in the phraseology during the Cairo and Copenhagen workshops. A summary of the key questions, ideas and debates raised during the roundtable discussion will be made available on the project homepage. The discussion was attended by Hala Kamal and Omaima Abou Bakr (The Women and Memory Forum), film critic Essam Zakaria, political scientist and urban ethnographer Paul Amar, and socio-political feminist activist Areen Hawari (via Skype). "Ruguleya" is the term that will be used for the purposes of this project with reference to the social and cultural construction of men, and power relations.

The Structure of the Events.
Each session was divided into two successive days. The walking talks were specifically designed for creating a different bodily experience, both in terms of dialoging and in terms of experiencing different communities, neighborhoods and settings that produce different masculine subjectivities. Practically, the participants are grouped in twos and are giving a route or a destination. These routes may vary and are chosen based on specific qualities, ex. an area post-gentrification; a working class area; an immigrant area, etc.

Moments of Masculinity: Critiquing the Crisis Approach, Revisibilizing History and Power
Copenhagen, September 29th, 2010

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The goal of this essay is to help promote progressive, critical approaches to masculinity studies, by looking to moments in global social history when "masculinity crises" became identified with or served to naturalize large-scale shifts in geopolitics and social-class relations. I am responding to the challenging request of the Danish-Egyptian Dialogue Institute to trace how these "crises" have unfolded in distinct ways in Egypt, Europe and the US.
And we hope to generate alternative methods that activists, NGOs and scholars can apply to masculinity studies, in this light.

This new examination is driven by the fact that today, as seems to happen about every twenty years or so, dominant state and social actors have proclaimed the death of masculinity while also articulating an urgent need to resurrect it in a redeemed form. In the periods that precede and follow these declared moments of morbidity and crisis, "gender" tends to refer to the generalized category of woman. And "woman" is most often configured, in international development discourse, not as a complex set of class, colonial, working and sexual subjects, but as a uniform object of protection and rescue. But occasionally, every generation or so, there is a major political or economic recalibration which troubles the gender framing around women linked to protection and temporarily brings to the fore the figure of masculinity linked to predation. In this context, the cyclically recurring message seems to be: Masculinity is in crisis. Crisis masculinity unleashes self-destructive, predatory sexual, racial and class energies. And to control the crisis we need to mobilize the category 'woman' and redeploy it in the service of controlling 'crisis masculinities'.

I do not think it is any coincidence that our policy, development, activist and academic institutions are talking a lot about masculinity today as we find ourselves, again, in a moment that we understand as a global crisis. Again the subject of women is being displaced or instrumentalized, and masculinity is again under scrutiny. As we speak we are in a high crisis of masculinity: in the autumn of 2010, the Atlantic Monthly ran the article 'The End of Men'. *Newsweek blasted a cover story: "We Need to Re-imagine Masculinity," widely circulating blog postings in Egypt cried, "We Need Real Men in Egypt," in Denmark, pop group Blue Van released the hit "Man Up," and in the spring of 2011, dozens of press articles in Europe focused on the continent's need to "Man Up" to restore its world prestige by being more aggressive in Libya and restoring traditional "European values" at home. Although the articulation of "masculinity crisis" is different at every site, often there are relations between those sites. So even if the response is very different in Egypt, the USA or Denmark the timing of these responses is no coincidence. As "masculinity studies specialists," we know that we are living through a moment portrayed as a global crisis of economy and politics and we recognized that these moments have a historic pattern of unleashing this discourse masculinity crisis.*

To begin a critical exploration of the cyclical articulation of this crisis mode, I'd like to review the concept of hypervisibilization, in order to explain how a particular problem, identity or social phenomenon can become critically important and talked about, all while historical and social awareness about the powers that have shaped that phenomenon become even less recognized or knowable. Hypervisibility is very different from visibility. When something is visible it is accessible to politics, you can see and come to recognize how the concept or social identity emerged, how history shaped it, what forms of interest and power culturally define it; and you can engage it or see its limits and mutability. However, when a social subject or identity or public body is hypervisible, usually the case when that subject is said to be driving a crisis, then in actual fact it becomes incomprehensible and socially unrecognizeable. The phenomenon cannot be seen as a phenomenon in its context, as a social being with complex origins and historical/cultural specificities, and particular locations in patterns of class and state power. Instead, a hypervisible subject or phenomenon becomes a complex or fetish that drives a mix of fear, desire and terror. Examples of hypervisibilization include racist representations of immigrants that portray them as naturally tending toward religious extremism or violent crime. This kind of lens regards someone not as a political human subject engaged in generating dialogue and public spheres and identities, but as a representation of terror and engine of crisis. Likewise when masculinity is identified as "in crisis," then it becomes hypervisible -- you see it everywhere, you hear it spoken about all the time, you see it on covers of magazines -- but you are in fact becoming stupefied about the actual conditions and histories that shape masculinity and make it meaningful. You are recognizing less, even as you are swamped with images and reports.

As we focus on changing masculinities we need to ensure that we are not hyper-visualiblizing it. Thus we need to use critical tools to expose what is rendered invisible due to the "crisis" mode of apprehending masculinity.

"Masculinity Crises" in Historical Perspective
• 1880s-90s: High European Colonialism and Age of Panic

The first period to address in this context is the period around the 1880's. This era is when the terms around masculinity were articulated in a version of their current form, in Arabic, English and French languages – rujula, dhukura, virilité, manliness-- and masculinity, itself. The 1880s were a time of rapid, unstable growth in colonial trade. Empires and emergent nationalist movements were shaken and reconstituted through social conflict, colonial civil wars, and massive shifts in transnational investment patterns. The world experienced a moment of economic and financial panic, very similar to the crisis we are in today. Responses to this crisis took the form of combinations of missionary feminism (focusing on abolition, suffrage and temperance) and movements among elite men to restore the legitimacy of colonial manliness. Manliness (a term, as we will see, which has a different social referent from that of "masculinity") was a quality most often identified with racial whiteness and with certain kinds of Euro-supremacist "civilizing missions" in both the USA and the European metropoles, as well as in the British Protectorate of Egypt and the colonies in general.

Responding to the collapse of forms of colonial globalization, speculative investment and stock-market regimes, moralistic interventions tended to redirect attention away from issues of colonial insurgencies and financial instability and onto the gendered bodies of those rendered most vulnerable by these same instabilities. Women workers were targeted for moral uplift, to rescue them from prostitution and train them for a new kind of respectable femininity. Projects in the metropoles were launched to restore the authority and status of white men, by restoring and enhance manliness, which the decadent consumerism and anti-Victorian liberality of the "Gay 1890s" had eroded. In Egypt, colonial manliness in the 1880-90s became re-appropriated by Westernizing Egyptian middle classes as a project through which to create a new self-governing ruling class that could "respectably" claim sovereignty, step up as an international actor, and sever ties of paternalistic domination with Britain (as described in the work of Omnia El Shakry, Bruce Dunne and Wilson Jacob). In order to train a new kind of respectable manhood for the Egyptian Bourgeoisie, social reformers focused on the rejection of the bureaucrat identity [effendiya] which had come to signify subservience, and had been "feminised" as it bowed to colonial domination and European modernity.

Just as this state in Egypt was being appropriated by a new self-disciplining indigenous middle class (via moral rescue of women and "manning up" of its middle-class male bureaucrats), this period featured the culmination of the first world-scale humanitarian movement, militating for the abolition of slavery. After slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1833, in the USA in 1865, and in Brazil in 1888, the international women's groups that had led campaigns for abolition repurposed themselves. They turned to dedicate themselves, in part, to this "crisis of masculinity," which they conceived as a War on Vice (particular against prostitution, called "white slavery," and alcohol abuse, linked to domestic violence and irreligious debauchery). These movements wrestled with the gender and class troubles that surfaced during this era of financial collapse and rebuilding. In Egypt, humanitarian movements turned their attention toward working-class masculinities, delinquency and vice-crimes in cities.

The specific term "masculinity" in English started to be used during this period, in association with the problems attributed to restless urban male labourers in the burgeoning industrializing cities of the north. "Masculinity" signified the vice-ridden identities of workers, often racialized groups such as Irish, Jewish or southern European, whose problems were attributed to the moral indiscipline of their gender and backwardness of their race, rather than to the harsh conditions of work, or the forms of violent exploitation that drove them. *Also, during this period the term "homosexuality" emerged, first popularized as an "urban vice" discourse to describe upper-class men who cross the boundary between "manliness" and "masculinity," that is, to criminalize those men who violated manliness by mixing with and having relations with vice-ridden working-class men. Increasingly these terms, both "masculinity" and "homosexuality" were psychologized as well as moralized, to further render them hypervisible as pathologies carried by certain classes of individual, rather than as subjects created by forms of domination, industrial exploitation, class prejudice, and colonialism.*

• 1920s-30s: Age of Temperance and Great Depression

In the late 1920s, the intertwined colonized and industrializing worlds entered another cataclysmic economic crisis, the Great Depression, the social response to which included the intensified mobilization of temperance movements that focused on gendered moralization and the expansion of vice policing apparatuses. Temperance movements elaborated religious and moral framings of problems of sexuality, linked to violence, often through alcohol. Diagnoses of broader socio-political crises came not to focus on bankers and stock speculators -- those who caused the economic crisis -- but on the urban sociability of working class men, and the vice attributed to mixing between classes and races, and between colonizing and colonized populations. In this context, certain feminists identified the nature and origins of another "masculinity crisis" and became identified with controlling masculinity and generating evangelization and policing campaigns to apprehend these problems, and to rescue or treat its victims and perpetrators.

Feminist movements in Egypt at this time included social service organisations focusing on problems of domestic violence. In this context, the Muslim Brotherhood, emerging at this time, can be identified in part with the wave of global Temperance Movements. When it appeared in 1928, as the economic and gender "crises" erupted, the Brotherhood articulated many of the same agendas as would many temperance movements, critiquing drinking, urban public sociability, and particular kinds of public femininity. And the Brotherhood imposed rather Victorian vice-control and "evangelical"-type disciplinary solutions to these problems. If one does not insist on seeing the movement as an exceptional eruption of "Islamic traditionalism", but instead as part of a wave of moralizing, modernizing responses, then the Brotherhood can be considered analogous to other evangelical movements, as it rejected political movements that highlighted class conflict and, instead, morally problematized the mixing of classes, genders and nations. Their solutions focused on the moral discipline of masculinity and the paternal or maternal protection of femininity.

Of course, the crisis of the 1920s and 30s also swept through Europe where Spain, Italy and Germany generated new figures of homoerotic fascist embodiment that fused "manliness" (the civilised elite force of modernity) and "masculinity" (the unbridled energy of the working class). Fascism's homoerotic solution to masculinity crisis was to engineer something like a militarized civil union between the colonial-racist knowledge class and the massified labour class. Fascism represented this union heroically in its monumental hypermasculine arts, representing the mechanized bureaucratization of humanity as an eroticized resolution of "masculinity crisis" . Of course, in fascism's machine-like resolution of a masculinity crisis, women drop out almost completely both as agents and even as objects. Fascism proposes a transcendent 'super man' who will finally reconcile this conflict between the world of manliness and the world of masculinity.

• 1980s-90s: Neoliberalism and Restructuring Masculinity

The next period in which we can identify a "masculinity crisis" is in the 1980's, when "masculinity crisis" became linked to both the causes and consequences of the privatization of the public sector, and the radical restructuring of the industrial economy. During this time, the dismantlement of the vertically organized public sector as well as the breakup of dense industrial production sites eroded the forms of monumental social organization that had created the gendered social contracts. In distinct ways, in both social-democracy and fascism, this gendered social contract had reconciled what we call here the "crises" of masculinity and manliness.

Neoliberalism -- the doctrine that drove privatization projects, militarized processes of market making, and promoted the global financialization and destabilization of production patterns -- opened up the problem of masculinity by getting rid of the state controls that favoured breadwinning jobs for male "heads of households" as well as by cutting public-sector jobs that gave women stable, if unequal, wage labor in human service occuptions. The crisis opened up around the critical question: how are men going to be identified and masculinities normalized once they are not productive subjects of dense industrial organization or of public sector entitlement? This crisis, of course, also produced a "femininity crisis" since the public sector was the largest employer of productive female labor in both Egypt and the West. As the public sector was undermined, women often had to be forcibly privatised back into domestic, unpaid reproductive labor at home, or into low-wage private sector labor in small factories or service-sector shops.

In place of public-sector bureaucratization and industrial organization that "secures" masculinity, this period featured the turn toward hyper-incarceration (particularly in the US) and militarization worldwide. Incarceration and militarization became the hegemonic formations through which to revive and reconstitute the social value of masculinity. In effect male figures like 'Rambo' and of racial populist masculinity became the solution of how to deal with all the fired, rendundant men. With women, the trend moved to re-domesticate them, put them back into the home, make them into mothers again. With men, neoliberalism aimed to arm them with uncritical populist racial doctrines, and, of course, with actual guns.

• 2010s: Masculinity crisis in the "Great Recession"

During the most recent period, many of the same corporate and economic structures of neoliberalism continued to operate, of course. But these forms of power now operated free of any legitimizing discourse or logic – since their financial and social irrationality has been exposed by the collapse of speculative bubbles and by the spectacle of the thorough corruption of financial elites. In this context, security governance arose to supplant market governance as the dominant trope of gendered politics.

Human security or humanised security state models, in a sense, came to resemble large-scale military and police versions of the early 20th century temperance campaigns. Large international humanitarian campaigns were launched to intervene morally in order to protect women and to control Arab masculinities, deploying a gendered frame that focuses on human security. But 'human security' intensified enforcement logics, without redistributing power. These human-security states did not redistribute wealth, nor remake the State in the interests of the people. They rescued, intervened morally and deployed a humanitarian approach that drew upon and fed the rise of new evangelical Feminist and liberal sexual rights movements. These models tended to look at cultural problems and masculinity rather than broader problems of global power, or the redistribution of resources and access.

In this context, masculinity crises materialized in the recent period through two frameworks: (1) the gendered criminalization of development which took the form of the feminization of the informal sector and the militarized policing of the hypermasculinized "slum" sector; and (2) the gendered securitization of development intervention mechanisms which shifted from focusing on "protecting women" to apprehending and forcibly "changing men. The changes called for revolved around the eradication of masculinities that breed security threats. In this deployment, women again became objects of protection (protected from the predations of masculinity), rather than as subjects of power that intersect with class, gender, history, etc.

• Conclusion

My aim in this talk was to help shift the debate around what is perceived to be the "crisis of masculinity" or the redundancy or death of masculinity. This figure of crisis dominates the public imagination today. Instead of taking the terms of the "crisis" as it is presented, I suggest we see this current "masculinity crisis" in global and historical context. Today, as during past moments of geopolitical and economic fragility, the imaginary of "gender crisis" has often become hypervisible. This hypervisibilization happens just when the economic rationalities and political legitimacy of global class and colonial hierarchies are threatened or exposed.

"Masculinity studies" has often served the function of substituting moralization, behaviour modification, and phobic vice campaigns – targeting perversions of manliness and masculinity – for more urgently needed actions that would challenge the economic, financial and state forms of domination actually responsible for producing the global crisis at its structural roots.

Instead of repeating this mistake, I propose we analyze which colonial, economic, and class structures "hypervisibilize" masculinity, and then explore together the kinds of moralization and cultural reimagination that shape and take advantage of these notions of gender crisis. This way, we can redeem "masculinity studies" as a critical project, endowed with a mission to challenge unjust and colonial power relations in the modern world.

SUMMARY OF CAIRO WORKSHOP, THURSDAY 24TH - 25TH OF JUNE 2010

DAY 1:

Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities is a pilot project supported and funded by the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute (DEDI) and KVINFO. The workshop is the core project component, amongst other activities that took place in Cairo, including a youth filmmaking workshop entitled Man and Masculinities in the *Egyptian Society*; a blog; and a round table discussion on Masculinities in Arabic. The project seeks to examine masculinity in different communities by posing the questions, *What are the multiplicity of ways in which men construct their masculinities? Are new ways of 'being men' emerging? And to what extent is masculinity a concept that can be used to understand community dynamics, and used as a practical tool in social work?*

INTRODUCTIONS

The organizers kick started the workshop by welcoming the participants to the workshop and introducing their respective institutions and the project. Following that, participants introduced themselves by stating their field of work, their background in gender and their motivation to participate in the workshop.

Muna Bur on behalf of Rasmus Alenius Boserup, Director of DEDI, spoke about the organization's involvement in programs on governance and democracy, gender and equality, and knowledge-based societies and media. Anne Rasmussen, gave a brief presentation about KVINFO, the Danish Centre for Information on Gender, Equality and Ethnicity, which is co-funding the project. She spoke about the organization's partnerships across the Middle East with women organizations and civil society and its interest in promoting women's participation in the public sphere including politics and media.

Project coordinators Mozn Hassan and Thomas Burø set the grounds of the workshop by elaborating on the workshop's rationale. They approached the subject by combining the concepts of masculinity and community, given the importance of context when addressing gender. Through this project they aim to touch on social form, context and local expressions. For them, masculinity differs from one community to the other thence the planned arrangement of walks and visits to the city in order to recognize the relation between masculinity and the social perceptions of communities.

RELEVANCE OF ENGAGEMENT WITH THE QUESTION OF MASCULINITY AND COMMUNITY: NOHA ROUSHDY, EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE FOR PERSONAL RIGHTS [EIPR]

Noha Roushdy, a researcher on sexuality at the EIPR was the workshop's keynote speaker. She introduced her organization, which is the only human rights organization in Egypt that has a standing program on privacy rights, through which they conduct research, advocacy and strategic litigation on sexual and reproductive rights. In her presentation she addressed the work that EIPR does with respect to masculinity and gave concrete examples of how human rights work and advocacy engages with masculinity on both a conceptual and a practical level. EIPR offers legal assistance to men accused of debauchery –men accused of having indiscriminate sex with several men for an extended period of time. She explicated that the issue of the right to sexual orientation –LGBT rights- does not comprise EIPR's work. It is in fact the regulation and perpetuation of masculinity in both the private and public spheres through the different state agencies, mass media and civil society that constitute their scope of work. She illustrated this through giving examples of cases such as arrests of men under the pretext of 'practicing debauchery' just for the mere fact that they were dressed in women's clothes, had long hair, walked in an 'unmanly fashion', and exhibited 'unmanly comportment'. This implied that the state may detain men not because they were caught having sex but because they exhibited a non-conformative performance of their 'masculinity.' Here lies the organization's concern with the different forms of social control deployed by the state and authorized organized bodies on human sexuality. Throughout their work they realized that it is rarely sexual behavior that provides evidence or grounds for the violation of the person's rights, it is in fact the mere expression of an aspect of their subjectivity that does not conform to the prescribed performances that the state tolerates.

EIPR in addition works on sexual violence, sexual education and the different forms of state control over sexuality and consensual sexual practices between adults. In that sense, it is not the conception of 'women' or 'gays' that defines their engagement with sexuality but rather the conception of sex and gender as a 'regulatory ideal' and sexuality as the space through which the state imposes or penalizes failure to comply by that 'regulatory ideal.' Thereby the state infringes on the personal dignity and integrity of individuals. It is thus not only homosexuals that fall victim to state incursions but also anyone who does not abide or comply with the 'regulatory' norm of the heterosexual imperative. Noha invited the participants to reconsider how structural interpretations of gender roles –femininity and masculinity- affect the experiences of both masculinity and femininity. In addition, the organization deals with sexual violence by breaking away from the focus on violence against women, which has perpetuated a victimization discourse on women. EIPR tries to address sexual violence on both women and men by reviewing and assessing the laws pertaining to sexual assault. Throughout

their work, there was hardly any documentation of male victims of sexual violence since man are never considered victims of sexual violence or rape in laws addressing sexual assault in criminal law. Women are hardly positioned as perpetrators of sexual violence. Roushdy stressed the link between any conceptualization of femininity with that of masculinity. Accordingly, she believes that whatever formulations we have formulated about femininity could only be valid once we study the masculine experience because the cultural and political inventory that produces these normative categories that we are expected to conform to applies to both men and women.

DISCUSSION

Noha's lucid presentation paved the way for a general discussion on masculinity. Participants reflected on issues that she touched on and debated other issues including sexual education, how it should be addressed on an institutional level, how parents will react to sexual education, the alarming gap in the knowledge of youth especially boys, tailoring sex education; lack of research in the field of masculinity as opposed to the abundant research on femininity; men's social roles and its relationship with the prevailing culture in both Denmark and Egypt; conditioned masculinity; changing socially constructed perceptions and norms; the demonization of men; the price that comes with masculinity; the tension between imagery and reality; constructions of the other; the distinction between state and culture, and the role of the state in producing and reproducing cultural narratives or working against the cultural. The discussion provided the participants with a platform to express and share their ideas and explore various issues of masculinity.

DIALOGUING IN PAIRS

Participants were divided into five pairs. Each pair was composed of a Danish and an Egyptian partner. The pairs had an opportunity to become better acquainted with each other and brainstormed ideas for the expected co-authored text that will be the end result of this workshop.

MAKING A MAN OUT OF HIM, PRESENTATION BY CULTURAL HISTORIAN AND ARTIST HUDA LUTFI

'Making a Man Out of Him', is an exhibition that showcased at the Townhouse Gallery in Cairo. After having worked with the feminine body to raise awareness about gender issues, the artist and researcher was inspired by several conversations with her colleagues on gender dynamics from a masculine perspective. In her exhibition Huda addressed the gender dynamics through the prism of the male body through diverse cultural representations and performative roles of men in different cultures.

Some of her work included an archetype representing the ultimate masculine symbol, namely an oblique in the shape of a male organ which is a collage of inscribed English and Arabic text collated from movies, fiction and philosophy. Through this piece she demonstrated how the discourse of hegemonic masculinity expresses itself in different medias. Other examples include several mannequins one with a drawn moustache and wearing a bow tie; another had repeated inscriptions on it to represent the conditioning of masculinity; a 4 meter long piece of military men standing facing backward to the presidential procession depicting the 'double restriction' that poor soldiers face; 'Entangled' is a representation of the male body through the use of toy dolls and entangled nets to represent the physical violence suffered by men in wars; 'Lightness of Being' is a paradox of the muscular bodies; a collection of footballs presenting how football brings men together; 'Making a man out of him' presents the constructed image of men as protectors of female sexuality. In addition, it is a piece that represents the exaggerated image of the feminine and the masculine, the employed toys illustrate how they contribute to the conditioning of specific roles; 'Not titled Yet' is a set of glass bottles in which models of Obama in the shape of the statue of liberty are trapped, this piece demonstrates that even though Obama is considered one of the super male models yet he is trapped in a bottle and cannot implement his good intentions; in another piece of her work Huda attempts to convey a different image to the powerful male imagery by photographing different working class men; and finally in her last piece 'Stripping off the garments' symbolic of garments of identity- naked upper male bodies are lined up in a square and installed in a black cube.

Lutfi's artwork helped in materializing the socially constructed male roles that were addressed earlier. Her diverse work represented how men perform certain roles to prove their masculinity, in another piece she illustrates that power is illusive, life is ephemeral and is constantly changing, and expressed the anxiety of men towards the feminine; and attempted to present a non-confirmative male model.

SHORT FILM SCREENINGS ON MASCULINITY AND YOUTH IN EGYPT AND DENMARK

As part of the project Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities activities, a one minute film workshop on 'Man and Masculinities in the Egyptian Society' was held and resulted in the production of five short films touching upon issues of masculinity. The workshop included ten young Egyptian writers, directors and filmmakers.

Following a long day of touching on classical and nuanced themes of masculinity, participants gathered at Makan to watch the short films as a different take and approach to dealing with masculinity. A Danish short film and five Egyptian

short films were screened paving the way for a discussion on the film themes with the filmmakers.

The Danish film entitled 'What is a Man? Raw Sketches from Denmark' was produced by one of the participant's twin sons whereby they were asked to interview their schoolmates about masculinity. The other five Egyptian films included; 'All but this' that deals with how sexual impotency affects masculinity; 'Cold Grapes' which seeks to deconstruct the socially constructed concept of masculinity; 'Survival of the fittest' exposes the inner struggle men go through in order to adhere to socially accepted male roles; 'In Every Neighborhood. There is a Etra' highlights the changes and transformations of values of masculinity; 'From the Chronicles of Hanafi the Elephant' addresses the difficulties of being a homosexual.

DISCUSSION WITH THE FILMMAKERS

The films triggered a rich discussion that included questions on censorship in Egypt and the freedom to address taboo issues such as homosexuality, how it is presented in films and how people receive it. The filmmakers explicated that these short films would not be screened in public schools but would be allowed in cinema theaters. They further noted that taboo issues are always presented negatively for instance homosexuals are always depicted as sick, villains, corrupt, disturbed to list a few. On her part one of the participants noted that should these films be screened at public school a clear message needs to be clarified bearing in mind that working on changing cultural norms is a long process. Specific questions about the films were asked to some of the present actors such as how did the women feel when they were enacting and performing male roles? One of the actors said that she felt empowered that she was able to perform many culturally accepted roles for men such as using the restroom in the ahwa -public coffee shop, and pray in public without covering her hair.

The filmmakers talked about how they sought to question ideas through their films thus they were not concerned with how people would react to their films. They wanted to break the stereotypes and conditioning of masculinity by addressing the traits associated with masculinity such as 'men do not cry,' are men really the protectors? Among other examples and questions.

The project coordinators ended the discussion by thanking the filmmakers for their great job especially that they worked under a very tight time and funding.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS ON FUTURE PROJECTS

Following the dinner, participants gave a briefing on the dialogue that took place between the pairs in order to discuss their future collaboration. The first pair explored each other's backgrounds by talking about their daily lives. The turning point was when they found out what they worked as. Influenced by cultural sustainability as his field of expertise, one partner discussed the changing property of ideas in different contexts. They agreed initially on a slogan "No idea is my idea" which they will seek to develop over the next few months. It was also agreed that since the Egyptian partner will be in Denmark for a couple of months, her Danish partner will use her as a spearhead for a sustainable development project in immigrant communities. The second pair walked for an hour in Zamalek where they explored a wide range of gender related questions including sexual harassment and physical space. They agreed that on tomorrow's walking talk they would explore the Egyptian transportation system.

The third pair given their artistic background shared some of their artistic work and talked about themselves. They contemplated how artists should approach the subject of masculinity. They explored different methods in addressing issues from different angles. The pair told stories about masculinity, narrative, lives between fact and fiction. They talked about the possibility of working on the idea of identity and masculinity. The fourth pair, sought to find where they stood on issues. They compared Danish and Egyptian families on issues pertaining domestic violence, social issues, construction of masculinity and how it is passed on to other generations. They talked about the difficulty on changing socially constructed norms especially with grownups as opposed to children. They addressed how the recent economic crisis affected family roles such as the role of the father as the provider. In preparation for their future collaboration, they discussed common themes between Denmark and Egypt including; the invisible male and female roles; visible stereotypical roles, insecurity about male and female roles, invisible stereotypical roles; the source of social problems –economy, alcohol, violence, etc.-. They also touched upon different subjects of child rearing. The fifth pair, walked around Zamalek and exchanged ideas about many issues especially state police and the crackdown on peaceful assemblies and protests. Their initial idea for the project revolves around the use of gender and sexuality by police officers to exercise power especially in peaceful assemblies. They also compared the organizational policies of police officers in Denmark and Egypt.

The coordinators thanked the participants for a very productive day. Pairs will go on walking talks on the second day of the workshop in order to discuss their future collaboration.

WALKING TALKS

On the second day of the workshop, the participants took to the streets of Cairo on walking talks on individual routes and destinations in order to discuss their future collaboration that will materialize in a co-authored text.

SETTING THE GROUNDS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

After the walking talks, the project coordinators reflected on their expectations of the project and led a discussion on the best approach to address the project's subject, Masculinity. It was emphasized that the project does not aim to reach a collective consensus, on the contrary it seeks to explore different perspectives; hence the presence of five individual groups. They concluded that the most appropriate methodology was to employ Michel Foucault's concept of dispositif 1, which includes a set of limitations and induces a set of facts and regulations that always contain freedom as a condition. Foucault's notion aims at highlighting different forms of action and its effect on others. It sheds light on the negotiation process that takes place between the individual and the collective when conditioning is questioned. For example, how does one behave in public? How do you guide people? How to produce action in a specific way? How does one become a proper man or woman? It was agreed that the participants would adopt a microcosm/microscopic approach in order to avoid an image of the whole that produces a stereotyped narrative.

GROUP PRESENTATIONS ON POTENTIAL PROJECTS

The discussion paved the way for a very fruitful debate and commentary on issues raised during the group presentations on potential collaboration. As mentioned earlier, the participants were divided into five pairs. Each pair is expected to produce a co-authored text/work that taps into the main theme of the workshop, 'Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities'. The five pairs reported on their initial project ideas as follows:

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS: FRIENDSHIP AS A TOOL

The first pair agreed to use friendship as a tool that can change perceptions of specific relations especially that the general idea of this workshop is to change masculinity and perceptions of masculinity. This is where friendship is going to be explored as a tool in changing the sense of community. One of the pair is going to work on her relationship in two contexts; the uneasy relationship with the janitor after she moved to Downtown, through which she will examine how class intersect with gender/masculinity and her relationship with the local residents of Fayoum (rural Egypt) where she built a house through which she will investigate the stereotypes between urban and rural areas. Her partner on the other hand, being an expert on issues of sustainability will try to work through the idea of friendship since there is an aspect of self injection that builds on a lot of critical thinking and deconstruction of conditions and possibilities. He believes that friendship is a dispositif that starts from freedom and has limitations. Friendship also deals with long term change, nuances to list a few. A discussion followed the presentation on stereotypes and to what extent is it important to identify, define and expose stereotypes and how they relate to and infer the concept of masculinity. It was agreed amongst all the participants that should they identify stereotypes it would not be for the purpose of reaching a consensus.

EXERCISING POWER THROUGH INCORPORATING GENDER AND SEXUALITY

The second pair in their walking talk did not discuss the article that they will later produce. They spent a good deal of time trying to get to know each other and explore Cairo. They visited train stations; bus stations; narrow streets and alleys. Through their walk they tried to connect with women in Cairo by witnessing how women interact with men, public transportation and the limitations they encounter. They also visited streets where peaceful assemblies took place in Downtown.

The initial theme of their project is on how individual police officers exercise their power through incorporating gender and sexuality when cracking down on peaceful protesters. Accordingly, different verbal and physical techniques are adopted to abuse women and homosexuals. The pair will also look into whether this is an organized approach by the state and the legislations under which women and homosexuals are tried. A debate followed the presentation on whether it is better to approach the topic from a cultural perspective as opposed to a state level. A participant questioned whether through such a project we justify police oppression by dissecting their motives. However, another participant noted that it is important to study how attitudes are constructed and maintained within police officers and raised the question of how a woman police officer survives given the extreme masculinity associated with being a police officer. Towards the end of the debate it was clarified that there is a need to understand the relation between the structure and the tool. It is important to analyze the micro-perspectives: how vs. why.

GENDER SPATIAL SEGREGATION

The third pair explored public transportation in Cairo and the issue of gender spatial segregation. For the Danish partner, the issue of metros having special wagons for women was intriguing. He tried to understand the rationale behind such an act and to questioned whether it is better to defend segregation of women or change the habits of men. He likened this to the issue of improving the conditions of prostitutes or ending prostitution in Denmark. He enquired about the basis on which the decision was adopted on an institutional level and talked about how these wagons protect women from sexual harassment, but at the same time creates a dilemma of putting a focus on the controversial attitudes of men –the attitude and behavior of men vs. trying to improve the situation for women. He also shed light on how deeply rooted culturally accepted behaviors, and the difficulties men face should they express dissatisfaction with or challenge these norms.

His partner highlighted that the sexual harassment was not necessarily inflicted by men only but also by women. She also expressed her fear of the phenomenon of segregation that creates comfort zones for women that separates between them and men. She also noted that masculinity crosscuts with such a phenomenon since these comfort zones/special wagons are created in order to protect women. Other participants from the workshop expressed how women use these institutional policies of segregation for their benefit so women use the special women queue to avoid long queues. When women see it is not in their benefit to be masculine they relinquish their masculinity.

Another participant reflected on the films screened on the first day of the workshop and the dissimilarity between the Danish film and the rest of the Egyptian films. According to him, a dichotomy of notions emerged regarding potentiality; the power of being able to; and the power of being able to not be able to. He felt that in the Danish film it was clear that the Danish youth were being able to not being able to whereas the Egyptian films showed impossibility, they had a recurring theme simply being trapped in a structure such as men not being able to cry, amongst other examples.

THE EFFECT OF SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED ROLES ON CHILD REARING

The fourth pair based their walking talk on their main interest- namely child rearing. They visited some of the oldest areas in Cairo such as Al Azhar Park, the Maccabres –the graveyards-, and other places. They tried to observe children at the different places and gauged how they interacted with their surroundings. In their project, they will address the role of prevailing culture in constructing, defining and shaping masculinity and social roles. This will be illustrated through the study of violence in families. They will also study the effect of stereotypes of social roles of men and women.

An issue was sparked and thoroughly discussed following the presentation with regards to the process of child rearing and how constructed narratives are taught during childhood. It was noted that the negative aspects of masculinity could be identified for the purpose of the deconstruction of such negative traits. For example, in Arab culture we are bound to a stereotype of the role of a father or a mother. In other words, one can consider one value and turn it from one thing to another without changing it.

Another participant pointed that values are rooted in the cultural evaluation of power and powerlessness- powerlessness always has a negative connotation, for example when we evaluate the relationship between men and women we talk about a cultural evaluation of power as negative and the need to reevaluate powerlessness as something that can be positive. We always tend to think of power as oppressive whereas we need to understand power in possible terms. However, another participant disagreed and stated that categorizing subjects as powerful and powerless is a misconception since discourse does not reflect reality especially that there are situations where subjects keep changing and negotiating. Reality is constantly in flux and it keeps transforming. The former participant clarified that there is a distinction between those who affect and those who are affected in addition to the possibility of being affected yourself –the notion of being able to be affected or how submission can also have a sense of desire to it.

MASCULINFINITY AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE

The artistic nature of the fifth pair resulted in a different take on the issue of masculinity. Their project will be entitled Masculinfinity. The infinity refers to oneness; integrating all the aspects of what we know and cannot verbalize. The pairs wanted to avoid falling in the trap of limiting the discussion on masculinity; the infinity is to address the various aspects of masculinity. They agreed that this encounter would be an open personal process whereby they will externalize it without adding preconceived ideas and results. As artists, they believe that changing a specific perception or highlighting a different perspective is important. They felt that interviewing people would be too superficial thus they decided to visit different places in Cairo where they shared family histories and experiences. They will produce a visual end product instead of the expected co-authored text.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

The participants thanked the organizers for organizing the workshop in such a diverse approach through bringing together academics, artists and activists to discuss issues of masculinity.

[1] The concept of an episteme is insufficient and dispositif fills in the gap. An episteme is researched through the analysis of discourse (text), but there are practices (institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosphic propositions, morality, philanthropy) in addition to discourse, which we may use to do a genealogical analysis of some particular situation (Dreyfus and Rabinow, p.121). These practices form an intensified surveillance and control mechanism (Darier, 589), creating policy, which polices and disciplines and which leads to resistance among certain groups. (http://users.sfo.com/~rathbone/foucau10.htm)

SUMMARY OF COPENHAGEN WORKSHOP, SEPTEMBER 29TH TO OCTOBER 1ST

SEPTEMBER 29TH, EVENING:

The participants - minus Ashgan, Fatma and Ramy who couldn't make the workshop, and Nina who had trouble finding the venue, met at 5E, a community space of quite secretive location and accessibility. Thomas Burø introduced the second workshop. He outlined the programme and introduces some of the methodological and conceptual reflections born out of the first Workshop. Burø forwards an approach to talking about masculinity that goes by things; there is an interesting challenge in using concrete, specific things to explain masculinity as opposed to using masculinity to explain things. Starting the workshop by an initial focus on things was in order to try to shift our collective attention from generalisations and speculations to the concrete and specific. Thus every group was asked to spend the morning hours walking and visiting the city and they were given the task of collecting a thing – the presentation of which could serve as a way to commence the talk about masculinity and community.

Following was Paul Amar's presentation: Moments Of Masculinity. Amar's contextualisation and reflection on the timeliness of the workshop regarding global notions of a crisis in masculinity sparkled a lively discussion on power, economy and politics as a way to talk about masculinity, or phrased diferently: when you talk about masculinity and seek to place the phenomena within a economic, political and power structure masculinity changes its resonance as something that exists in itself. Rather, it appears to be deeply imbedded in, and a product of politico and socio-economic power relations. And further; Amar's presentation served as a way to reflect critically on why Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities is taking place.

SEPTEMBER 30TH, MORNING:

 The group separated to spend time together outside, on/in/around the streets of the local district Vesterbro. With the one task; to return with an object, or objects, related to the workshop and to present its significance to the group when they returned for the afternoon session.

Once returned Thomas Burø started with a presentation of a sound recording of a noisy construction work environment and an image from the Metro building site at Enghave Plads. The presentation offers a personal anecdote of a man in construction work; we hear the noise he would listen to constantly throughout his working day, and we understand the dangers and perils of his daily working conditions. Thomas discussed the battle of conflicts within this particular construction workers mind; the work is hard on the body and time often spent in tough places (tunnels, rain, snow, physically straining situations) and with the constant threat of fatal work related accidents. So this particular construction worker is caught in a negotiation. Where he himself is explaining the dangers of daily life, of hating the job, having a body that aches at night whilst at the same time he is actively using his work and its conditions to narrate his sense of masculinity. He is caught in a thrill of the danger, even though there is a negative impact on his health, life expectancy, and family life.

Huda & Oleg: Visited Istedgade and collected a piece of foam insulation, a Toothpick, and a Fixing Set (a syringe, rubber band, cotton wool, disinfecting swab):
The insulation foam signifies the masculine. The construction worker uses the foam in his daily work, although such foam is a dangerous substance, and represents the danger he places himself in through his work. The toothpike represents the effeminate; the 'cafe culture' that has rooted itself strongly throughout the area of Vesterbro and which is associated with the creative class of high cultural capital and a quite different set of working conditions and income.

Together they represent gentrification and reconstruction. 'The notion of You Can Go Anywhere' was forwarded. It is a notion that contrasts the principle of freedom of movement with the real oblique barriers within the public spaces that allow only the smallest possibilities of movement for addicts and other marginalised peoples. In other words, gentrification implies that the principle of free movement applies with quite different impact on different social groups.

Which led us to the fixing set, this was collected from 'The Mens House' (Mændenes hjem) on Istegade. This is a space that houses men in need of shelter and help. Semiotically, this is a place for men who 'cannot man themselves'. 50% of the men are immigrants and various kinds of addiction is common. How would a man's sense of identity as a man, or a human being be affected by being here? It was mentioned during the discussion that ''Heroin is the most spiritually liberating of all the drugs out there, it erases the worry and the emotional pain''. Heroin also offers a liberation from gender conditions and the responsibilities attached to genders. It was expressed that it provides a ''sad kind of freedom''.

It was suggested that a distinction could be made between being capable and incapability as two modes of being, which connects us to the notion of 'You can go anywhere' – which is a question of potentiality: You can go anywhere, but only if

you are capable of doing so. It was suggested that public space is rigidly coded and the capability to 'go anywhere' is a function of class belonging.

This presentation prompted a series of questions;
• What is addiction and how can we read public space vis-a-vis accepted and non-accepted addictions?
• What is the relationship between addiction phobia and policies of gentrification and city?
• Why is addiction countered with an overweight of public moralising?

The question 'are men more vulnerable to addiction' raised the issue of general male vulnerability in terms of physical health, life expectancy, work conditions, psychological and emotional health. There seems to be evidence that with regards to these issues Men are highly vulnerable.

Kenneth & Doaa brought 'The Colour Purple'. They had attended a hearing at Christiansborg focusing on sex customers, specifically in relation to trafficking. The people attending the hearing were, according to Kenneth and Doaa, middle aged, middle class women representing men. The male customers, the focus of the hearing, were not represented at all. In fact the one male customer who was supposed to attend, in order to forward a presentation, did not arrive. This begs the political question; who has the power to articulate male sexuality? An audience of women (of whom it was stated: ''always the same people'') viewing male sexuality as a problem and with access to law makers vis a vis lobbying agency? If policies are to be changed or formulated is it a problem that this group of women speak as a 'temperence movement'. This movement, which on the this particular hearing did not include the lawmakers, actively limits the understanding of prostitution by conflating trafficking with prostition and by fundamentally perceiving of male sexuality as homogenous phenomenon. Seemingly, this does not expand our understanding of prostitution, trafficking and its male customers.

Paul & Kasper brought a map of a network Christians helpers. They had paid a visit to a Danish Church whose priest had been involved in assisting rejected asylum seekers. Paul explained that he had was surprised /bristly as initially he did not want to go visiting the 'Christianity' relation to (illegal) immigration. Paul was impressed with being presented to a network of priests and christians willing to break the law, and risk arrest, in order to protect/take care of immigrants and asylum seekers. The role of the church and organised religion vis a vis patriarchy and as upholder of conservative values was discussed.

Nina & Ibrahim brought a Scrabble piece. Nina's project was to create a dictionary based upon a reflection on the limits of the words used to describe masculinity. There is a distinction between masculinity as a term that carries a set of connotations and the experiences of singular males. The term masculinity can be quite poor in terms of actually providing language to explan individual experiences of male lives, but it appears that when we talk about men the terms is readily applied. This paradoxical situation served as a foundation for devising a game that would discover words that could be used to describe male life experiences.

The evening concluded with a screening at Kvinfo of Huda Lutfi's film on Nørrebro - a series of interviews with locals on various issues. A discussion of the viewpoints expressed in the film followed and Huda reflected upon her making of the film.

OCTOBER 1ST:

The day was divided into a section of group work where the partners could delve deeper into their respective ideas and projects and a section of presentation of what they had decided to pursue as a response to the workshop. Each group answered questions as to how they wanted to carry out their work and how this work would resonate with the theme of the workshop.

Thomas finally offered a reflection on the work that had been done both in Cairo and in Copenhagen, trying to high light what kind of thinking had been achieved and what kind of questions had been raised during these days.

[1] Relying on technology can be disasterous. All three days were carefully recorded with an audio recorder for transcription. Those files were stored on a computer that decided to crash entirely, with only the recording of Paul's presentation surviving due to being stored by coincidense on another computer. This meant that in order to provide a summary of the workshop we had to rely on sparse written notes and memory in order to reconstructs the sessions. This means that we in terms of reconstruction tried to summarize the contents of the discussions and the overall line of reasoning; it also meant that we had to be careful not reconstruct something that did not happen – a reason why some portions of the summary seems to be somewhat lacking in substance (we guarantee it was substantial).

In Egypt sexual harassment in streets and in public transportation is turning into a phenomenon. Many concerns from Egyptian civil society organizations, and others, are raised in order to make Cairo a safer city for women. The two articles; one from Denmark and the other from Egypt, are attempting to analyze the masculinity trends in 'sexual harassment' acts.

Kenneth Reinicke from Denmark asks in his article if sexual harassment is a key strategy in men's exercising of power. The article deals with the question as to whether a spatial division of gender is a solution to sexual harassment in public transport, or whether the problem demands a change in the mentality and practices of men. It looks into spatial gender division and asks if this gives more roots to the problem or if it actually does protect and improve the situation for women.

Doaa Abdelaal from Egypt asks questions about the acts of what she calls the 'Masculine State'. Doaa observes that the Egyptian state has chosen to deal with the consequences of violence practiced by men against women, rather than dealing directly with the phenomena itself. The state has made possible the segregation of sexes in the underground in Cairo, and sees this as a solution for the harassment of women.

The two articles conclude with suggestions for combined efforts of both men and women, in Egypt to redefine masculinities.

Sexual Harassment in Public Transport

Kenneth Reinicke, Associate Professor, Ph.d.,
Roskilde University

Physical mobility is vital to women's empowerment. It allows greater admittance to employment, metropolitan areas, and financial independence. But many women all over the world have received unwanted sexual attention in public when they make their way through the public world. Sexual harassment is therefore a phenomenon that is limiting women's right to move and is threatening women's participation in public life.

This article therefore asks if sexual harassment is a key strategy in men's exercise of power? The article is a product of my participation in the project "Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities" organized by DEDI and KVINFO.

The article more precisely deals with the question about whether a spatial division of gender is a solution of sexual harassment in public transport or whether the problem most of all demands a change in the mentality and practices of men? The question is raised if spatial gender division roots the problem or if it actually does protect and improve the situation of women?

The project 'Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities' aspires to create an analytical and critical space for developing and elaborating approaches to using masculinity as an operational tool for understanding community dynamics. Therefore a specific focus is directed towards the role of men in sexual harassment. The article asks the questions; who are the men committing sexual harassment, why do men commit sexual harassment and why is it difficult to raise controversial issues about men's behaviour in public? The article argues that we must open up the 'black box' about men and gender equality if we want to create sustainable solutions, and further if we want to understand the unconscious resistance and the socio-cultural inertia surrounding the issue of sexual harassment.

During my stay in Cairo in June 2010 I conducted a small amount of participant observation in the metro system in Cairo. But most of the data used in the article is from literature dealing with sexual harassment.

THE ASPECT OF POWER AND DEFINITION

Sexual harassment is often defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances and comes in many forms. But when is a man's aggressive behaviour just a part of cultural accepted practices and when does it become harassment? Questions of power and questions of definitions are inextricably connected. There is often a problem regarding recognition and passivity. Many women and men fail to recognize sexual harassment when it occurs, and especially many women refuse to define their experience as sexual harassment. Why is it difficult for women to complain about sexual harassment and to bring sexual harassment to public attention? Alison/Kitzinger (1997) states that many women are insecure about which behaviours properly qualify as sexual harassment and do not want to label male behaviour in that way. Also women who have recognized male behaviour as sexual harassment are unwilling and hesitate to use the policies created to combat sexual harassment. Women are socialized to a perception of femininity created by men and women's value in society is often connected to male approval, therefore some women may feel flattered at the same as they feel frightened by men's comments about women's body and dress (Larkin, 1997).

How do we think about, speak about and deal with the issue of sexual harassment? Most societies tolerate a considerable amount of bad behaviour from men without defining it as deviant behaviour (Larkin, 1997). Street Harassment is often so omnipresent that it becomes a part of "normal" life for many women. Kelly (1987) has stated that sexual harassment is simply what women's experience of life consists of for much of the time. Often sexual harassment is connected to the dilemma about when does culture stop and when does harassment begin. It touches the schism between the public, political domain and the personal arena. As with other gender equality issues, it can be also be difficult to create respect for the issue and sexual harassment is not always given the status of an 'issue'. Many women have undoubtedly experienced reactions like this when talking about sexual harassment – 'Why are you making a big deal out of this? Why don't you talk about domestic violence instead? What about child sexual abuse?'

When women refuse to identify their experience as sexual harassment it is not only ignorance. Many women are aware of the term sexual harassment, but at the same time women are often reluctant to identify themselves with an issue connected to feminism. There is often a striking emphasis on sexual harassment as a feminist concept (Brant/Too, 1994).

MEN MUST BE DRIVEN OUT OF THEIR PRIVILEGED 'HIDDEN' POSITION

Though sexual harassment is likely to be considered a female issue I will put a focus on the role of men in sexual harassment. Kimmell (1996) has characterised men as the invisible and protected gender. The sexuality of men is often perceived as unchangeable. Men's feeling of entitlement is crucial because some men perceive a sexually aggressive behaviour as an assumed right and when they are met with accusations they often try to retaliate and backlash against the victim and defend themselves by for example saying; "you are spoiling a funny situation, you have no sense of humour".

Men's use of sexuality to exercise power has been a crucial question for feminist analysis. The use and dominance of public space is an important indicator for male dominance. Many men want to maintain the illusion that the public space belongs to men. If society shall raise men's interest in gender equality issues, it is necessary to emphasize, that men are paying a high price reproducing traditional male values, and that men have more to win by adopting more modern forms of masculinity. But it is difficult to create new forms of solidarity between men, and it is difficult to motivate men to take a collective male responsibility for individual men's sexist, destructive and violent acts.
Although domestic violence and sexual harassment is largely perpetrated by men, that almost exclusively men buy sex and commit rape, it is difficult to point out some gender facts and lead a discussion on men's gender socialization, without making men feel unfairly treated. There is no doubt many men think when they encounter descriptions of other men's destructive acts "it has nothing to do with me, and I cannot make something up." In this context it is not surprising that the international organization "White Ribbon" that tries to commit ordinary men in the fight against men's violence in the home has had little impact on a world wide scale.

Why do more men not draw attention to the price that they pay to maintain their masculinity? Is it the case that men really do not know what it means to be a victim of sexual harassment, and that men cannot really get their heart and soul into gender discussions, or about men's rights to their children after a divorce? Maybe men are afraid to end up in a sort of no man's land if they break too radical with the culturally dominant ways of being man. Many men know unconsciously that they risk being accused and ridiculed if they start talking about sensitive gender issues or critisizes dominating masculine virtues. This requires often that there is a certainty that there is another reality which they dare add value. Of huge importance to men's resistance to change is that some men think that redefining masculinity is the same as rejecting masculinity. Though some men can feel ashamed about their gender they also enjoy the privileges of masculinity hereby the cultural acceptance of sexual harassment.

I think it is important to increasingly involve men's perspectives and assumptions of gender equality. **But how do we find male 'carriers' for the equality project?** The American male researcher Michael Kimmel has pointed out that any attempt to improve women's circumstances must include an attempt to involve men. If not, it is often doomed to failure in advance (Kimmel 1996). If boys and men shall be able to change their behaviour they must see a chance to be evaluated positively to their changed behaviour. The big question is how to bring men into a situation where they find it worthwhile to act. In regards to sexual harassment, it is an obstacle that many men are declaring that they are accustomed to harassing women from a young age.

> *"Many men want to maintain the illusion that the public space belongs to men."*

Does sexual harassment serve to perpetuate patriarchal power relations? Alison (1997) are emphasizing that the roots of sexual harassment are culturally embedded in the dominant definitions of masculinity with which the young grow up. Everyday sexual harassment is not individual pathology; it is more "normal" behaviour because most men at some point in their lives are likely to practice it in some form or other. I also believe that sexual harassment is more a question of "bad" behaviour instead of "mad" behaviour.

But why do men commit sexual harassment? In a way the answer is connected to the question of how women are seen in public space. Maybe some men are threatened by the increasingly female labour force on the labour market. But some men also feel entitled to harass women, and sexual harassment can also satisfy repressed sexual desire (ECWR, 2008).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EGYPT

Women's experience of sexual harassment varies from context to context. In some Arab countries there is a widespread prevalence of sexual harassment and a lack of collective will to combat it. This is an issue that is rendered highly invisible through lack of laws and Arab women's silence on the abuse and harassment that they frequently face in public. In countries like Yemen and Egypt the rates of prevalence are more than 80 percent of women surveyed on sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment comes in many forms. But harassment in public places is the most frequent form of harassment in Egypt. According to a 2008 survey of 1,010 women conducted by the Egyptian Center for Women's rights, 98 percent of foreign women and 83 percent of Egyptian women have been sexually harassed, half of these at least once daily. There is no law criminalizing sexual harassment in Egypt. The government is drafting legislation that would give a clear definition for sexual harassment. But there is no law that clearly defines sexual harassment and there are no procedures for evidence and proof.

The issue of sexual harassment has become less taboo recently in the Egyptian media (ECWR, 2008). Open discussion of the harassment issue first emerged in Egypt in 2006, after blogs gave broad publicity to amateur videos showing men assaulting women in downtown Cairo during a major Muslim holiday. In 2009, the first-ever regional conference about sexual harassment took place in Cairo. Statistics on harassment in the region have until recently been nonexistent, but a series of studies presented at the conference showed the widespread nature of the problem. At the conference it was stated that sexual harassment, including groping and verbal abuse, appears to be designed to drive women out of public spaces and seems to happen regardless of what they are wearing. It was further stated at the conference that men sometimes go shopping instead of women to save them from being victims of sexual harassment.

To a certain extent it is possible to claim that Egyptian women support the idea of male dominance and women's fault and the inappropriateness of stimulating women to opponent against sexual harassment. Many women don't want to breach customs and traditions. But the sociological survey also showed that some women were afraid of their reputation if they did complain. Others did not have trust in the police if they reported sexual harassment (ECWR, 2008).

> *"Why do more men not draw attention to the price that they pay to maintain their masculinity?"*

DOES SPATIAL GENDER DIVISION LEGITIMISE HARASS-MENT?

Sexual harassment is mostly a pervasive and threatening phenomenon in urban settings. Due to regular complaints all over the world Ladies Special train service has been introduced in many big cities like New Delhi, Tokyo, Tehran, Cairo and Jakarta. But are sex-specific train cars the answer and do we need to create a comfort zone for women? Are we reproducing gender hierarchies and ways of thinking about them when making spatial gender divisions? Spatial division of gender in public transport create the immediate safety concerns and makes women more confident. But putting the responsibility on women not to get harassed rather than on the men to stop harassing is not a sustainable solution. That's essentially letting these men free of accusations, and simply accepting women being assaulted as a part of life.

When the authorities separate the women to stop men harassing women instead of educating those who harass, they also send a message that the presence of women causes harassment, rather than the idea that those who prefer to objectify women and project their sexual desires onto strangers cause harassment.

Protecting and promoting women's health and safety is important. But I will express my doubts that the gender-segregated cars would actually make women safer unless the governments get serious about addressing the root of the problem: a widespread and accepted disrespect for women.
The measures might make women safer in the short term, but they fail to address the greater issue of widespread sexual harassment that threatens women's safety to begin with. Maybe a solution could be to implement a program in schools that includes information about women's human rights and gender equality, so the next generation of women- and men- don't have to deal with public spaces that are unsafe and unequal.

EXAMPLES OF RESISTANCE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

With greater personal safety, women will be more comfortable and more willing to travel, as well as enter the workplace. But how to develop strategies of resistance which rely on everyday consciousness among "ordinary" people and not only among activists? I will show some examples from different contexts where women have tried to combat sexual harassment in public.

The 'Blank Noise' Project is a community-public art project that seeks to confront street harassment, commonly known as eve teasing, in India. Since its inception in 2005, the Blank Noise Web site has become a virtual space for the documentation of street harassment. The project started out as a student project and has since spread out to other cities in India. The project works with the victims and the perpetrators of street sexual harassment and hopes to bring a change in the public perception of eve teasing, which is still largely considered a minor problem.

Blank Noise is a participatory project that aims to change attitudes and perceptions about women, especially on the streets. It tries to convince perpetrators that women do not ask to be sexually harassed when on the streets. A widespread belief that it seeks to dispel is that women get harassed because of the clothing they wear. Through street actions and dialogue Blank Noise hopes to achieve its aims of achieving a safe and free environment for women on the streets, and enable society to become more egalitarian towards women in general.

> *"Through street actions and dialogue Blank Noise hopes to achieve its aims of achieving a safe and free environment for women on the streets, and enable society to become more egalitarian towards women in general."*

The project has undertaken actions such as spray painting messages recording the testimonies of victims of sexual harassment in public places, and printing T-shirts with anti-harassment messages on them. It has also staged demonstrations, sticking posters on the walls and writing slogans on the pavements.

A more radical and aggressive way of combating sexual harassment in public is the New York City-based blog "Hollaback" which posts pictures of street harassers. Hollaback is a movement dedicated to ending street harassment using mobile technology. Hollaback are inspiring women to take a picture of their assaulter and expose them on the blog Hollaback.

HarassMap is a new social initiative in Egypt that is intended to provide transparent documentation of sexual harassment and restore public safety for women using an SMS reporting system for sexual harassment to change its social acceptability, spread awareness and revitalize the public. Concretely it is a system for reporting incidences of sexual harassment via SMS messaging. This tool will give women a way to anonymously report incidences of sexual harassment as soon as they happen, using a simple text message from their mobile phone. By mapping these reports online, the entire system will act as an advocacy, prevention, and response tool, highlighting the severity and pervasiveness of the problem.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

As mentioned in the beginning women are facing sexual harassment all over the world but in very different contexts. Sexual harassment is one of the most pervasive forms of gender-based violence and one of the least legislated against. Sexual harassment is rarely reported, and it's often culturally accepted and it is difficult to decide when it does become an appropriate target for policy and legislation. This is due to the fact that sexual harassment is frequently considered a cultural and ordinary every day practice which is an acceptable part of the game between the two genders.

I don't think that fighting everyday sexual street harassment is a matter of keeping a small subset of the population off of public transportation, or segregating women in their own train cars. I think it is about changing society's idea that it's okay for men to touch and comment on women's bodies. To understand the nature of male domination and to perceive what sexual harassment is a symptom of we must understand the social power that men enjoy which allow them to feel superior in relation to women. Of crucial importance is that the majority of people grow up with the idea that is somehow normal for men to harass and for girls to accept being harassed.

Is the phenomenon of creating women-only cars a means of combating sexual harassment in public space? On one hand a spatial division of gender is a naïve solution to a complicated problem. But on the other hand female comfort zone is the best and immediate solution creating a harassment free mode of transport. But again it also perpetuates women as a kind of second –class citizen. What is needed to change the acceptance of sexual harassment and how to enable women to break the silence? Women must start to speak out about their experience, sexual harassment must be criminalised by law and a huge awareness work must be done towards men. To start speaking openly about sexual harassment is the first step towards changing the norms. As Alison/Kitzinger (1997) has pointed out, it is crucial that sexual harassment becomes part of women's attempt to rename the world based upon women's experiences and reflections upon everyday problems.

"We must challenge men more. But we shall not 'demonise' men."

Can we or shall we confront male aggression in public transport? I believe it is possible to change the mentality of men. The transformation of intimacy also affects men and we see more democratic and responsible men becoming aware of the negative consequences when adapting greatly to traditional patriarchal values. We must challenge men more. But we shall not "demonise" men, instead we must raise the awareness of the feelings and perceptions of women and girls among men. It is difficult to put sexual harassment on the political agenda. But we need more "space" for listening to what men have to say about their gender and we need campaigns focusing on the role of men. We must balance between the cultural and institutionalised male privileges and the personal costs of masculinity.

Though men and women are not necessarily in a contradictory relation, it is a huge challenge to convince men that equal opportunity is also a liberation project for men. Men often can't or won't see problem as gendered and men are not socialised to perceive (their) problems in a gendered way. But it must be possible to convince men that if they stop harassing women they also create a more secure environment for their own wives, sisters, mothers and daughters.

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The Masculine State
Women and Public Transportation in Egypt

Doaa Abdelaal, country coordinator for Media Diversity Institute.

INTRODUCTION

Why would one study Masculinity in Egypt? This is a question that has haunted me for some time. In a country that is still defined as conservative, understanding masculine behavior is important in order to analyze many social acts.

In this brief paper I am attempting to understand the acts of what I call the 'Masculine State'. The Egyptian state for some time now has chosen to deal with the consequences of violence practiced by men against women, rather than dealing with the phenomena itself. The state has preferred the segregation of sexes in the underground in Cairo as a solution for the harassment of women. An act from a protector stating: If you don't want to be harassed, stay in your specified zone and do not 'subvert'.

I will explore the different 'Masculine' practices by the state towards women and more precisely in public spaces. What is the extent of state's Masculine interference in the lives of women? How are women responding to this new segregation? Do they accept it or resist it? How the is state playing the protector or the Masculine role?

The paper will be based on the observation of the researcher in Cairo and brief individual interviews. I will adopt the definition of Masculinity as reference to the socially produced but embodied ways of being male. Its manifestations include manners of speech, behavior, gestures, social interaction, a division of tasks 'proper' to men and women and an overall narrative that positions it as superior to its perceived antithesis; femininity.

I should note first that the term 'Masculinity' as many other terms created in the West has its own problems when it comes to translation; and the terms that are usually developed in Arabic have different cultural connotations.[1]

Scholarly attention to gender issues in the Middle East has been focused almost exclusively on a quest to understand femininity. There are (as yet) no significant studies that make Muslim men visible as gendered subjects, and masculinity in Arab Islamic cultures has so far remained an unrecognized and unacknowledged category viewed in essentialist terms and perceived as natural and self-evident (Aghacy: 2004).

In Egypt, feminists, women scholars and organizations are still too involved with the problems of women's rights to divert their attention to the notion of masculinity. So it is not surprising that while the literature on men and masculinity is growing in the West, there is very little debate found of this topic in Arabic or written by researchers either from Egypt or the region. There are still some hesitations and the same question is posed several times: Should we talk about Masculinity?

The question raises two methodological considerations. The first is that we (in the Arab speaking world) have taken masculinity so much for granted that we assume we know it. The second is that while feminists have detailed the nuances of Muslim women's lives under patriarchy, we have left men out assuming they are the direct beneficiaries of the system (Gerami: 2003, 259). We seemingly forget that they might not be.

To date, the contributions into the subject in Arabic have focused on two dimensions. The first centered on the notion that 'Masculinity' is in crisis and the second, is focused on what I call 'Masculinity kidnapped by patriarchy' and where I base this paper. This second group of work calls for broadening the angle of vision, which will help to see masculinity, not as an isolated object, but as an aspect of a larger structure (Connell 1995:67).

Is Masculinity in Crisis in the Arabic Speaking World?

In *Criticizing Masculinity in Morocco*, Abdel Samad El-Dialemy, calls for redefining Masculinity. Interviews that he conducted with a number of men in Morocco suggests that they see Masculinity as equal to 'wisdom' and 'responsibility'. His sample showed that 60% of the men interviewed do not see that a man should not dominate a woman. Nor do they see infertile, homosexual or sexually incapable men as still 'Masculine' men as there are other traits related to the concept. The same sample revealed that 42% of the interviewees thought that the real man is the one that takes only one wife and refuses polygamy.

He called, by the end of his study, for political parties to adopt a new meaning of the term by breaking traditional frames. His research was conducted in 1999 and the sample of his study was drawn from governmental employees in six Moroccan cities. As he states in an interview; his research was in a time when the feminist movement in Morocco focused on integrating women in development. He points out that the current period rather represents the creation of a new paradigm of masculinity.

Mai Ghoussoub is a Lebanese writer who writes in English. Her book serves in these same trends. In 'Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Middle East' she notes that the recent increase in women's status in Arab societies has posed dilemmas for men whose identity are still based in traditional conceptions'.

Masculinity under Patriarchy

An example of this trend is the study conducted by 'Women Against Violence Organization' in Israel, which was prepared by Ibrahim Said and published in Arabic during 2008. The main conclusion of the study is that men also fall under the pressures of the patriarchal society which force us into division of roles, stereotypes and boxes created for a certain sex. These roles and ideas limit our dynamics from childhood, through adolescence and later in relations (either marital or professional) as well as our status in the society and the state. The proposed solution to break this circle is that women's movements should try to integrate men in their work and not target women solely.

Several contributions have been introduced by Areen Hawary (Palestine/Israel) under the same notion. She notes, in the article titled 'Victims of Patriarchy', that the patriarchal system locks women in closed spaces to protect their 'honor' while at the same time forces the men (fathers, brothers, husbands and even sons) to be violent in defending that honor. This system gives a 'man' his credibility of being 'masculine' by giving him permission to be violent; while his masculinity in the public is under siege of poverty and state violence. (Hawary: 2010a) She defends this same argument with interviews conducted with Arab men under the military system in Israel between 1948-1966; concluding that the Israeli Military system has succeeded in reducing the term 'Masculine' to be able to support your family and not to fight oppression or occupation (Hawary: 2010b).

"I should note that the term 'Masculinity' as many other terms created in the West has its own problems when it comes to translation; and the terms that are usually developed in Arabic have different cultural connotations."

MASCULINITY CHALLENGED

A very common saying amongst Egyptian men is that 'I am the man of the house'; being the sole bread winner for the house, the assumed protector and the only heard voice justifies this notion. For long time the 'Masculine' image is based on these roles in addition to the harsh image of the man, something similar to what Naguib Mahfouz has portrayed in his famous trilogy of Cairo in the first quarter of the 20th century and the Children of Our Alley (Awlad Haretna). His masculine characters from both works; El-Sayed Abdel Gawad from the Triology and Ashour El-Nagy (Ashour the Survivor) reflect the masculine traits of that time. The man is good, brave, loyal and benevolent, this has been standardized for long time and it continues. Even his 'unacceptable' social behavior as violence against female relatives or having multiple and parallel sex relations are all acts related to his super 'Masculinity' and are accepted socially.

But these traits have been changing since the early 20th century and women were gaining more power which affected the gender relations. Mahfouz captured this in a very skillful way in his various novels. He has focused on the shifts within Egyptian society during this period, and his incisive critique of masculinity within that shift, especially in the way he illuminates gender relations to be 'grounded in asymmetric power' (Cooke 1993: 107).

At that time Masculinity was defined in oppositional status relative to women: Men are strong, women are weak. Men can work, and women cannot. Men can earn money while women are not capable of doing so. Men have their own spaces (any place inside and outside the house), while women have the 'Haramlek'- a preserved and closed place for women which they can't be seen outside. The 'Haramlek' confirmed the idea of segregation in the Egyptian society and made it an acceptable social situation. A segregation that would hide and then reappear again throughout time.

In short, at that time 'Masculinity' was conditioned by the man's ability to control, rather than his capacity to achieve. Accordingly, these opposites must be preserved and women and families should be protected. Again this is a condition that will hide temporarily and reappear again, with calls of conservatism and religious fundamentalism to the effect that behaving as a man is to 'take care of women'2.

The Increase in Female Power: A Threat to Masculinity?

During the late 19th century and across the 20th century roles played by women have changed. These changes affected the nature of their relationships. During this time the society shifted into industrialization and modernization which has contributed to structural changes has transformed gender relations, leading to a discourse of gender role definitions. Others have noted that industrialization, which needed more labor forces, led to using women as workers. And urbanization, which in turn created more spaces, led women to go outside homes. All of this generated a feeling of feminization; this is similar to what has happened in America for example in the late 1800's (Kimmel: 1984; 142).

All of these changes affected the traditional 'Masculine' roles played by men. As Mai Ghoussoub notes, the 20th century has seen a fundamental change in male notions of masculinity in the Middle East. She describes this change as bringing 'a tortured conception of their 'own masculinity' (2000: 230).

It is worth saying that the presence of women in public spaces has increased remarkably during the second half of the 20th century; this presence could be felt at least in the numbers of women joining the education system and the work force. And the continuity of women taking more spaces in the public sphere has

not passed by resistance and by calls from the conservatism camp to control these moves. Many justifications were given to these calls by claiming that lack of job opportunities was simply due to women taking all of the jobs so they would be better placed at home. These claims paved the ground for the sexual abuse of women in public, a notion that came to be known in Egypt as 'Sexual Harassment'.

In a study conducted by the Egyptian Center of Women Rights on the phenomena different reasons were given by male interviewees on answering the question: 'Why do you harass women?'. The reasons varied, but were centered on the following; they are taking our jobs, women should not go outside uncovered, women like it.

Some analysis of the situation could refer us to the fact that a man tends to prove himself against other men. What Ouzgane sees as largely a homo-social enactment performed before and evaluated by other men. Thus the core of masculinity is homo-social competition and hierarchy; men's need to prove themselves to other men (Ouzgane 1997: 11-12). To a certain extent this could be true, but at the same time it raises a question: Why the need to prove? Does this mean that men's lack of something in their masculinity maybe taken by others? 'The others' in men's mind are women but I would say 'the others' here also includes 'the state'. The state, which justifies violence by practicing it, and sees the solution of this violence in the segregation of the two sexes.

The answer, given by the Egyptian state, in order to address the violence of 'Masculine' men against women in public transportation is to resort to segregation. The state designed two carriages in the underground in Cairo only for women's use. The state brought back the 'Haramlek' but this time in the public space. The state acted as the Hegemonic Masculine.

THE MASCULINE STATE

The term 'hegemonic masculinity' describes 'the configuration of gender practice' in a society functioning to 'legitimize patriarchy' and ensure 'the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell 2005: 77).

The continuous appearance of women in the public spaces put women - in the mind of men - under attack. Men should protect their women. At the same time, these new roles acquired by women threatened the man's historical role and image. Accordingly men had to defend their space by keeping it, and creating 'comfort zones' for women in public spaces to keep the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. Men have taken their roles of the 'protector' as granted by their 'Masculinity'. They became both the oppressor and the attacker. The state has taken the same role for granted. The state has long seen itself as the defender of social norms, so the Masculine State has to keep the norms and defend the subordinates and keep them to their comfort zones in public spaces; so let's separate as a solution.

Being an inhabitant of Cairo for most of my life, I have always questioned these 'comfort zones'. Why a separate line in public agencies or banks for men and women, why I am seen as abnormal person when I use a different carriage in the underground than the one specified for women use only. Actually, I don't quite recall when these carriages in the underground appeared but I assume somewhere in early 90's after many complaints that women were being harassed in public transportation. I remember that in 2008, the Administrative Court in Egypt refused a case by a male citizen to abolish this carriage and said in the ruling decision that 'women deserve some privacy in the underground'.

The Egyptian state has taken the responsibility of the 'Man' in order to defend women from being harassed. The easier solution was to specify these carriages. So instead of dealing with reasons it was more acceptable to deal with the consequences. It dealt with the underground as an extension of the privacy of the house, where the man is the defender. In the case of public transportation the house is the 'underground' and the man is 'the State'.

Has anyone ever questioned the role played by the state, and if it is favorable to women or not (Hatem: 1994).This act by the state emphasizes a long accepted segregation in society and revives it again. Egypt, for example, has known segregated marches by women during the revolution of 1919 (Baron 2004, 292). This changed two decades later when women who joined universities started to go demonstrating alongside their colleagues calling for Britain to leave Egypt. Segregation started to hide but the Egyptian state dragged it back again.

This reappearance for segregation as an easy solution, passed with acceptance from many women and girls who riled the underground: **'I am neither veiled nor conservative, but I prefer using it and I ignore other women's looks to me'**, a waged women's answer who takes the underground for a long journey between work and home. An action confirmed by a housewife and mother of two who used to work, she emphasized although she doesn't like it: "I use the system for my favor; because I am not working now I do most of the work that my husband cannot do because of his work. So I renew the car license for example. But I have to hurry because of the children at home so I chose to use the separate line for women, which is usually shorter."

An act that is not accepted by some other women but at the same time they cannot do anything against it. For example, I go to hand-in my papers in a governmental agency, and I chose to stand in the line with other people. Then I find myself pushed to form an imaginary line just for women. There might be no other women around but the men around me push me gently from the line as a kind of favor as if I need favors or I need protection. It is a perfect result of segregation; men are favoring women with a protected place, a protected line and a protected carriage in the underground.

The ironic conclusion I have drawn from my interviews with different females in Cairo who ride the underground, is that men are not the only ones who defend this protection attitude by the state but also by some women who use the 'imaginary' comfort zones to press for more protection. In a brief interview with a university student, she stated that the carriage doesn't represent a safe place for her. She is veiled but according to her words 'a modern veil'; where she wears makeup and colorful scarves to cover her hair. But this agitates other women in the same carriage who ask her to behave. Sometimes she prefers riding the mixed carriages where she would stand in a corner with her back to the walls better than being under other women's fire. An act confirmed by her colleague who was wearing a very moderate veil but said that other women criticize her for not wearing *nikab*. These are the same women who call for violent reactions against men who would seize the opportunity to ride the less crowded carriage of women.

Women who do not usually conform to the 'only women' use carriages are usually to be blamed by the representatives of the state, the police. In a brief conversation, a civil engineer friend who takes the underground from time to time and who does not know 'the underground rules' laughed at my questions. She told me that at the beginning when she started to take the underground she did not focus on taking the women carriages and she took the mixed one. In two incidents she was sexually harassed by another male rider who she stopped and with the help of other riders tried to report him to the police of the next station; an act that was laughed at by the policeman who only took the report and asked her simply to forget it. She has done so and learnt the rules, as she said "Rule 1) Take the Women Carriage, Rule 2) The police will not do anything for the harasser because it is your fault." The absence of any anti-harassment laws further complicates the notion of reporting such incidents, whilst sending a message to men that public violence against women is acceptable. Additionally, women fail to report sexual crimes to avoid being blamed for the way they were dressed or seemingly behaving at the time of the incident (Ilahi, 60).

We don't find calls from women's movements to change the situation of segregation. I see it a lost opportunity because these are the pieces that form the whole puzzle, a puzzle of Masculinity. A puzzle in Egypt that assumes in the definition of the word a legitimization for 'protection' and 'violence', protection of 'women' subjects and violence against them if they break outside their protected zones in the form of sexual harassment. I recall a public talk from a women's right defender two years ago about violence against women. She said that when women are treated as 'full citizens' as men with rights and duties, then all acts of violence against her will stop. I would remove the word 'citizen' and put 'human being'.

"We don't find calls from women's movements to change the situation of segregation. I see it a lost opportunity because these are the pieces that form the whole puzzle, a puzzle of Masculinity. A puzzle in Egypt that assumes in the definition of the word a legitimization for 'protection' and 'violence', protection of 'women' subjects and violence against them if they break outside their protected zones in the form of sexual harassment."

CONCLUSION

As stated at the beginning, this brief paper tried to answer "Is studying Masculinity in Egypt Important?" My answer remains yes. Exploring Masculinity constructs and practices of the Egyptian state sheds light on some accepted behavior by men in Egypt. If the state could play the defender of women and if the state could be violent against both men and women what prevents men from being both the defender and the harasser? The state is presented by powerful men and you rarely find women there; it is the 'Masculine' men arena.

Maintaining segregation serves as a means to sustain traditional gender norms that mask male violence against women, which is grossly ignored and portrayed as insignificant by the Egyptian state (Ilahi, 66). It is worse when the state takes the masculine role and emphasizes this segregation.

If we intend to work on new definitions of the term 'Masculinity' we would need to adopt a methodology that depends on empowering women but also giving men the opportunity to work with women. As Emma Sinclair-Webb rightly points out, working on women also means working on men, and '[f]ocusing on masculinity should not be seen as a shift away from feminist projects, but rather as a complementary endeavor, indeed one that is organically linked". And both men and women should work to redefine their roles against the state and the role of the state in shaping the system.

Notes:
1• As many non-Western feminists have pointed out, there is no cultural and language equivalent of gender in many non-Western cultures. See for example:
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2• In an article by Khaled El-Kahaldi published on El-Balagh website, he discuss the term in Qura'an an in between his conclusion we could read the 'taking care of women' of male behave. www.balagh.com/malafat/gr0p3nmg.htm- Accessed on 3 December 2010

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A Dialogue/Metalogue on Gender

The authors of this dialogue invite the reader to regard the dialogue that follows as both a dialogue and what Gregory Bateson called the metalogue: a discussion, in which two parties talk about a difficult subject, while letting the conversation move in a way that opens up to the nature of the subject itself, and the directions of the conversation. Thus, reading a metalogue gives the reader a feeling of entering a field, an encounter that listens to itself, rather than a discussion or an argument.

Gender Perspectives: From Cairo to Nørrebro /Huda Lutfi

In our sessions during the Masculinities workshop in Cairo (Summer 2010) I had some discussions with several Danish participants about gender dynamics in Denmark. I learned that men in Denmark are expected to share family and domestic responsibilities with women, both having to work in order to split the expenses of their daily living. I was also told that the official discourse on gender in Denmark supports such gender dynamics, thus during the absence of parents at work, the state ensures that young children are well taken care of in childcare centers before they reach school age. Furthermore, a simplified formula of gender equality is being taught early on through various pedagogical methods at kindergartens and schools in order to prepare children to think about and critique such terms.

Traces of a Sustensive Questioning of Gender Politics /Oleg Koefoed

What is really interesting for me when I read even your opening passage, is how I immediately see you raising the issues of gender relation as being about child rearing and domesticity first and foremost. To me, this is of course relevant and important, but I find it very limiting to see work as something both parties have to do to meet the costs of living. In my universe (already here, something resists, is it really 'my' universe?), I try to look at the relation between these elements from a different angle, trying to find a new dynamic between genders through shifting the relations also between home, work, and money. **Sure, in the end, it may very well be the condition that it's all about power and love, love and money, power and money.** *But the way to get through this condition and find its other sides goes through twisting our approaches so that the relation could become a condition for creativity, rather than a condition for conflict. One might say that I read you as talking very much about power in the constraining and conflictual sense of the word, and less about force, as the kind of power that is creative and constitutive and can be shared and enhanced. In other ways, I am looking in vain for a way out of the zero-sum game approach to the relations between genders. I find this approach (to some extent) underpins your writing, although you may very well be looking to go somewhere else with it. So let me phrase this somehow critical questioning not as a direct critique of your writing, but as an open dialogue, using a reading of your experiences as a platform on which to express other perspectives. In other words: I thank you for taking this stance, which evokes a voice in 'my' column, and allows for a third column to rise in the in-between of our voices. Neither from the man, nor the woman but from the interweaving of our voices and experiences and from the wisdom that only the reader can maybe really reach through his/her reading.*

Huda Lutfi:

For someone coming from an Egyptian cultural context, where domestic chores, child rearing and provision of nourishment, are still believed to be the woman's primary responsibility, and where gender roles appear to be more clearly defined between men and women, this seemed to be an ideal situation. Needless to say, I was curious to see how men and women in Denmark lived up to this ideal, but this had to wait till I came to Copenhagen during the month of July, 2010.

As a single woman and mother living in Cairo, I have had to constantly negotiate gender relations in different daily contexts, always taking into consideration that we are living in a male dominated society. I remember when my son was still an adolescent I often tried to convince him that he should assume responsibility of cleaning up the mess in his room and the kitchen, but I was never really successful in doing so. He, on the other hand, had learned from his schooling and daily cultural environment that such chores were the concerns of women, despite the fact that I have always worked and assumed all financial responsibilities of our household.

When I moved to my downtown Cairo building 13 years ago, I had to deal with the janitor who came from Upper Egypt and who took his traditional male role as guardian very seriously, or so it seemed. In time, however, he had to gradually accept that he is not to interfere in my private matters, and as I began to take on many of the building's works of maintenance, his male attitude began to change. Our gender dynamics underwent a reversal as I continuously assumed what is considered to be a man's responsibility; the financial side of keeping the building facilities running. Admittedly, in this specific case, class and age intersected in such a way to transform the traditional gender dynamics between us.

Once again in Tunis, a small village in the Fayyum oasis, where I built my house I needed to work with male workers and helpers, not only in the construction of the house, but in the continuous maintenance and services that are necessary for its up keeping. I also sought the help of women in procuring food and other household necessities. I was not the only woman who did so, for there were many other Cairene women who also built their houses in this village. It was a way out for Cairene women as well as men to get away from the city and to enjoy the clean and relaxed environment of the countryside.

We always wondered how the village male workers and their families perceived us, coming to the village on our own, intermingling with male and female friends, and assuming what they consider to be male responsibilities. I must admit that we had our difficult moments, when some of the male workers contested my authority, resisting some of the demands I made on them. It was sort of a dilemma for all of us, but then I was their financial resource and they had to accommodate themselves to the power dynamics of the situation. I also had to find other ways to negotiate the power relations between us. Having been there since the early 90's, I watched some of the adolescent boys I worked with grow up as young men, seeking me out as a source of advice on various matters, and discussing all sorts of construction possibilities appropriate to the local village environment. As our long-term interactions and mutual learning processes became more established with time, a sort of friendship developed between us, a friendship that transcended many of our class and gender biases.

Oleg Koefoed:

This last passage is interesting – here, it seems that a real displacement, a glissement of relations is taking place, also in the focus of the text (a glissement is the kind of movement that occurs in seamless friction between bodies that touch each other as they cross, and create a new body continuous as well as discontinuous with the old one – like when glances meet and form a zone between them for a while). The previous examples all remained within the logic of overcoming, not the differences in gender, but the specific inequalities between the genders. Surely, this last example about the boys remains within a power frame, but one

of mutual trust rather than conflict.

An interesting aspect of this small experiment in expressing masculinity is the fact that one of us is a man, and the other one isn't. The direct implication of this obvious difference is that one of us is liable to come from a female perspective and look at masculinities in the third person tense. The third person comes in as a relative figure to the first person; Huda's story is the heart of the matter and the men are drawn through this perspective. My story is one of thinking masculinities in first person and third person respectively. Or is it that simple? Obviously not, one might say. First, your (or 'Huda's', what might the difference be?) story is very much about crossing over the line between the masculine and the feminine, with every crossing being a questioning of the power relations constituting the border itself. Even the role of the single mother is a role that holds a lot of masculine pathos in it, in all its lonely endurance – although strictly speaking, this is maybe a cross-gendered role par excellence and more a story of power than of gender? One might even also detect masculinity in the form of Huda's discourse, if we accept to stretch the lines a bit. And this column may be one of the philosopher-child, refusing to remain within the lines that are drawn, refusing to remain male or female. Not more than these, but less than male, less than female.

HL:

Although in their own domestic contexts, local gender dynamics continue to regulate the lives of men and women living in the village of Tunis. And when women, at specific moments, critiqued their men's authority, it was more when the latter failed to play up to their expected male roles. In the long years I have been there, I rarely heard women complaining that they were victimized by their men, for ultimately the gender dynamics regulating their daily life seemed to work out best for the good of the family as a whole, and the family's interest ruled supreme here. I would like to note here that in contrast to Egypt's large urban centers, the rate of divorce is very low in the villages.

When I first arrived to Nørrebro in July 2010, I was wondering how Denmark's gender discourse of equality was practiced in daily life. One of my first impressions is the large number of pregnant women I saw on the street, and how they were dressed. Instead of loose garments hiding their large bellies, and as if to boast of their pregnant looks, these women were elegantly dressed in tight dresses that enhanced their large, round bellies. I thought to myself, here is a kind of pride taken in playing out the reproductive role of woman, as if to celebrate feminine fertility. I came to know from one of the pregnant women I met that the Danish state law gives both women and men the right to long maternity and paternity leaves. In contrast, Egyptian state law gives the working mother a 3 months maternity leave, but none to the father. Due to the relative lack of good childcare centers in Egypt many middle class women who can afford to stay at home choose to leave work in order to take care of their newly born babies. This is so because child rearing in Egypt is seen as the primary role of women. In fact, working class women consider work outside their home as a sign of the husband's inability to fulfill his male role as provider of the household.

"When I first arrived to Norrebro in July 2010, I was wondering how Denmark's gender discourse of equality was practiced in daily life. One of my first impressions is the large number of pregnant women I saw on the street, and how they were dressed. Instead of loose garments hiding their large bellies, and as if to boast of their pregnant looks, these women were elegantly dressed in tight dresses that enhanced their large, round bellies. I thought to myself, here is a kind of pride taken in playing out the reproductive role of woman, as if to celebrate feminine fertility." — Huda Lutfi.
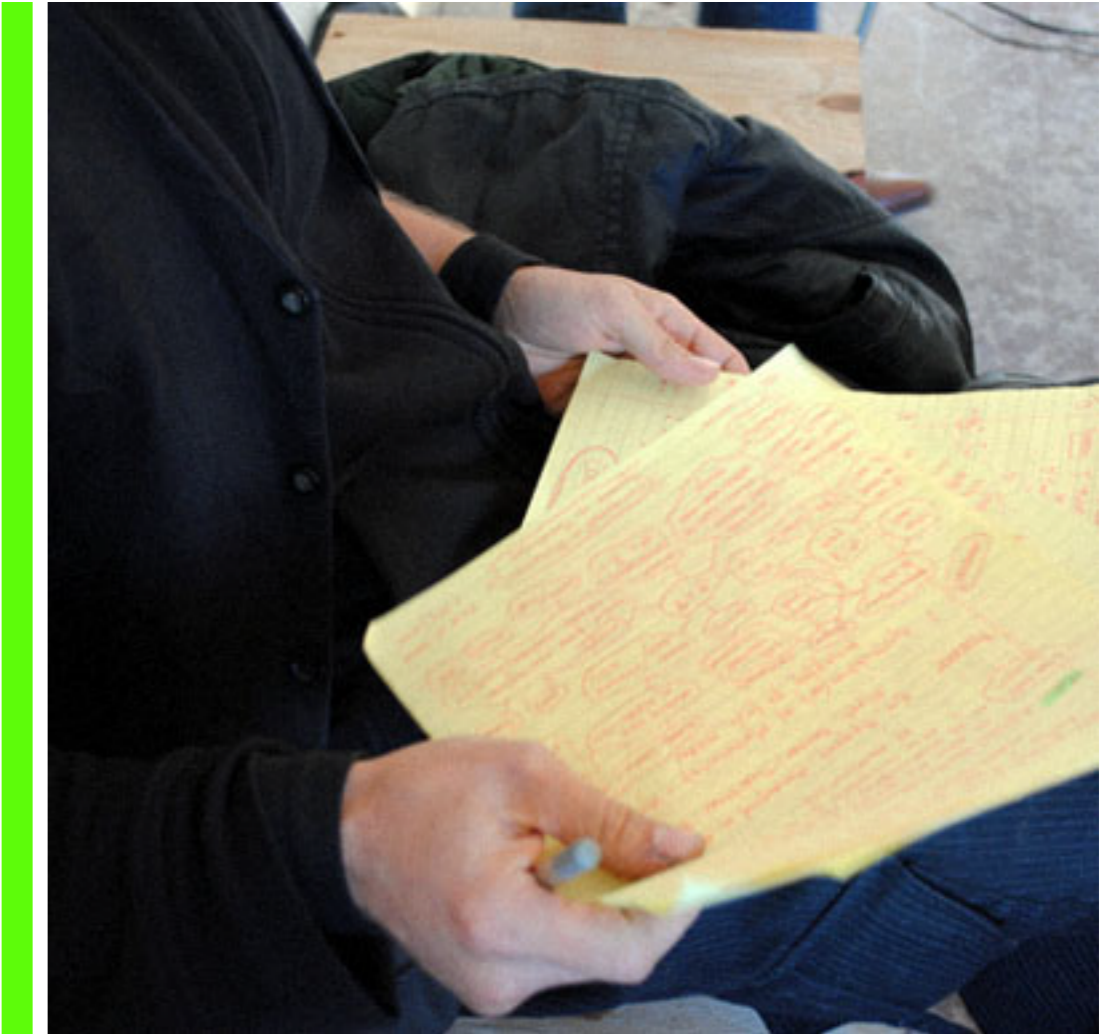
As my only knowledge of Egypt comes from more or less touristic, superficial visits, I can only relate your examples to the experience I have from a Danish context.

Here, I see the changes in the forms of masculinities that are taking place these years from both "from the inside" of a gender, and "from the eventual", as the child's eye upon that which is happening without letting it move to its end. We might very well assume that the "inside" is always already influenced by the (social, cultural, sexual etc) event of encounters with especially the other gender. One of the problems here is that it seems like a lot of the change is not taking place in what I have elsewhere called sustensive encounters, but in a kind of low-conflict tension flow, like a war that does not really build, but remains a matter of not dealing openly with a common problem or one that could be made common if it were dealt with in commonality. The sustensive encounter is one in which the identities in the encounter accept to de-totalize the way they see the world, on the actual (now), the potential (future), and the virtual (past and always) levels. This does not lead to harmony or symmetry – in fact it seems often to lead into instability, but with time also to some kind of meta-stability in vibration. Not painless or unproblematic, but a relation that always tries to question every stance of power that manifests itself in or between one or all in the encounter.

"How much change is not taking place due to an almost instinctive counter re-action based on the threat towards what we feel is the life we ought to be living? In other words, how much resist-ance is based on the gender imaginary, cause of many affective layers of thought and actions?" — Oleg Koefoed.

What I seem to see around me in Copenhagen are movements that are more parallel than sustensive: men and women are not working sufficiently together to work on gender issues – and they (we) are at the same time not sufficiently caring and respectful about the aspects and issues of the other gender. Basically, to make things very caricatural, men are caring about how to remain the men their fathers were, and women are caring about remaining the women their mothers were – AND becoming the men their husbands' fathers were (as the archetypical portrait has become of the female business leader – both super-woman and superman, both intuitive/soft/caring/encompassing/khôra and active/sharp/ cold/exclusive/ratio), which is a bit of a problem for both sexes. Instead of trying to build a frame which could contain an expanded version of the male-female coupling of forces, both genders, but especially the men, seem to settle for success on other aspects and failure on the gender relation.

In this context, surely, many things remain the same. Although some media print articles that call to a deep change going on, I would question whether that change is really an issue of gender as such. Sure, genders are influenced by the cultural, economic, political, ecological and resource-related crises our world is going through. And sure, when this happens, the effects as well as the affects are different from one gender to another. They are maybe not more different between genders than between, say, social groups, or ethnic groups. But surely,

the effect on identity formations, or 'individuations', is of course huge, and gender is an important part of this. How much change is not taking place due to an almost instinctive counter reaction based on the threat towards what we feel is the life we ought to be living? In other words, how much resistance is based on the gender imaginary, cause of many affective layers of thought and actions?

I certainly see around me how these problems are not dealt with sustensively, but defensively, in isolation, in retreat, in conflict even, or in semi-conflictual lack of engagement in willingly changing the rules of the game. I will not jump to the conclusion that this is wrong and should be changed. I do conceive the processes as harmful. But if we move from there straight to the idea of changing them, we might fall directly into several pitfalls. One is the usual 'critical warriors' pitfall of being the heroes or agents of a particular revolution, defeating the oppressors or oppressive principles, thus solving the problem and saving the world. Another is the danger of thinking that we might in fact create new solutions that would be better, without reflecting deeply in a next loop about genders and their future potentials. I think we do have an obligation, as intellectuals and creative people, as men and women also, and as parents very much so, to try to rethink some of the categories we use to understand the world and how we may act in it. Allow me consider two relations: that to my friend and co-writer, co-teacher, co-thinker, Thomas, and that to my friend and co-director, co-worker and co-writer, Kajsa, some reflections appear: 1) it is easier to question identity (including gender) and transgress it and flip it and play with it between two parties of the same gender; 2) it is easier to play in collaboration when power can be held at a distance; 3) power often manifests itself as that which separates, forcing the gender back onto the stage; 4) age is an obvious instance of power – not only as in "I am experienced", but also as in "I am young"; 5) separation installs fear, inclusion installs co-working and common navigation. This is just one case, but it ends by the movement which is the essence of sustension: inclu-sion. Maybe cross-gender inclusion is so much harder in times of crisis? And maybe it is precisely the kind of time that calls for it.

When Jacob invited me to visit the day care center in which he worked in a poor neighborhood of Nørrebro, I was quite impressed by the place. As he took me around, he showed me how teaching methods are devised to teach children gender and racial equality. Such pedagogical efforts might have been particularly difficult to put in use, given the cultural background of the children, I thought. For they mostly come from immigrant communities of the Middle East, Africa and Asia. How do immigrant parents reconcile themselves to such teachings may be an issue here. Talking with different persons from Arab Muslim backgrounds during my residency in Nørrebro, I sensed some resistance to the existing discourse of gender equality, for I have often heard comments like: we don't want our boys and girls behaving the same way the young Danes do. Not to mention the sexual freedom issue, which seems to underlie such a stance of resistance.

Despite all the talk on gender equality, I thought, is it so radically different in Denmark? What I have seen on the streets of Nørrebro looked as though women are still the primary caretakers of children. Although I have spotted a number of fathers pushing baby carts or escorting their young children, the number of women doing so far exceeded the number of men. I have to admit though that when Oleg (my workshop partner) came to meet me in Nørrebro, I was happy to see that he brought along with him his two children, taking on the responsibility expected of him as a Danish father. Given his busy workload, however, I wondered how much time he was able to devote to taking care of his children and his household.

OK:

There is of course a risk in engaging in these reports on people pushing baby trolleys, as there can be many reasons for your observations in Denmark. There is no doubt in my mind that the conditions in Denmark do not express full equality between genders when it comes to e.g. salaries; just like the laws as well as the culture still make it much more difficult for a man to take maternity leave, for instance. However, one might also be quite critical, I think, towards the thought that these laws, once changed, would make men and women alike take equal amounts of maternity leave. One might also, and this may be a more (?) interesting discussion, ask whether the aim of equal laws and rules should lead to equal activities. Would we consider it a failure if men were to take less leave? I expect the answer would be that we are looking for equal opportunities, not activities. However, if all countries in the world try to model their societies on the same recipes will this be better for everyone in the end? Should we abolish cultural differences – especially when we think of the demand of sustainability: to respect the difference of the culture that will follow ours? Might it be more interesting to try to generate the re-thinking and re-structuring of the way that we consider issues such as households, work, income, child rearing, etc? This is a process that I find is in fact taking place in Denmark, but often challenged i.e. by economic crisis. But talking about child rearing alone is far from substantial enough. For one thing, the concept of care is deeply intrinsic to Danish society, with its roots in pietism and welfare society. But I believe the regulative idea of care needs to be re-thought and reworked in a Danish context. This is not a matter of struggle against each other, but of trying to reach a new place together, across genders.

We should also be ready, if we wish to improve the conditions and relations of genders, to question the economic models and the political structures and processes through which we construct our families, communities, and societies. To paraphrase an old slogan, gender trouble must be system trouble. Not only read as 'class struggle', as this has shown to return us once again to the issue of certain actors being disfavored and the subsequent dream of equality. But as a troubling of the concepts of work, home, gender, families, organizations, communities, and societies.

"However, if all countries in the world try to model their societies on the same recipes will this be better for everyone in the end? Should we abolish cultural differences – especially when we think of the demand of sustainability: to respect the difference of the culture that will follow ours?" — Oleg Koefoed.

HL:

It so happened that during my stay in Copenhagen, I came in close contact with a Danish family, where both parents worked in high profile professions. However, it was the mother rather than the father who assumed more of the responsibility of taking care of their 3 children. Is it possible here that there might still be a lingering mentality that gives more importance to the father's profession as opposed to the mother's? The result was, not only a situation of tension between the couple but the exhaustion of the mother as well. Learning that one of every two marriages fail in Denmark, it might be useful to ask here, could such discrepancies between discourse and praxis be considered as one of the causes for the high rate of divorce in Denmark? Are the women working far more than the men, just as in urban contexts in Egypt?

OK:

The claim that women overall work more than men in Denmark is one I will leave it to sociologists to answer. Rather than engaging in this, to me a bit fruitless comparison between societies, I propose that we ask instead: what are the systemic causes for fx marriages to fail? Is the institution of marriage an inadequate solution to the 'problem' of on the one hand, the need for deep and lasting relations between people, and on the other, the need for safe, stimulating, and learning environments for children? Asking this question and taking the time to analyze it openly seems to me to be more in thread with the approach that we should advocate. It implies that we ask openly what kind of societies/cultures we are looking to create. Focusing only on local relations and on securing equality within perhaps withered institutions, to me means accepting that the systemic conditions overall do not need to be improved, apart from the 'piecemeal engineering' of changing rules and local practices. Having said this, one might still keep a focus on the relational, but as I see this, the aim of such a focus should never be to restore equality or to abolish 'discrepancy' (between what and what?). I mentioned 'sustension' above, as a way to consider the particular ethics of encounters that allow for creativity, freedom, and transformational processes, while being based on principles of ecology, love and qualitative growth.

Sustension is a tension in which the real remains as full as possible, encompassing the highest complexity of diverse forms without destroying them. In sustension, the outcome is not the future, but the synchronicity of the past, the present, and the future.
(Koefoed, 2008: ZXZ)

The sustensive encounter is one in which both/all entering elements undergo a change from their actual state of stability and offer themselves to a process of mutual influence. This process is different from e.g. a conflict, because the conflict is not the result of a mutual opening process: at least one of the parties does not open up to the other, as the aim of the conflict is to overcome or to defeat the other. Ironically, destroying the other gender implies, for creatures based on sexual reproduction, destruction of both genders. Of course, I am not claiming that this is your explicit goal. What I am saying is that the ontological and political model upon which are based the thoughts you express, to me look like models of conflict.

HL:

I like the notion of sustension, but it still seems unclear to me how this theoretical approach may be applied in practice. Also I agree with you that the gender issues involved are ultimately systemic issues, so it would be useful to find and to critique some problematic areas of the system, and then try to recommend a sustensive approach to it; I will not use the term solution here because it implies closure, and since life is in constant flux new situations are always emerging.

OK: I completely agree, this is something we should be working on, and on which I work. I will not pretend to be able to answer this need as of now, however. In fact, I find working with sustension to be just as painful on me as it is liberating, making it perhaps a truly sustainable (or Christian?) ethics.

HL: Furthermore, in cases of divorced parents, who bears the load of taking care of the children? How does the Danish system ensure its ideals of equality here? I have seen one of my Danish friends, a divorced mother of 4 children assuming full responsibility of her family. In her case, the situation was more complicated, for the two fathers of her children were immigrants, one of them disappeared in Morocco; the other cannot find employment in Denmark.

Such questioning might not be entirely off the mark, for I had a discussion with a Danish woman, working with an agency that promotes creativity among the youth, and who informed me that Danish young men are also assuming some sort of resistance stance, one which celebrates masculinity and ridicules femininity. How much of all this has to do with the media, particularly the American film media, and the popular image of the American macho hero or anti-hero performing acts of aggression and violence?

I would like to end these notes with some question: how does the welfare system in Denmark and its ministry of gender equality deal with such contradictions and discrepancies? How is gender equality disseminated and applied in the Danish countryside, where more traditional gender relations are expected to rule?

Given the strong emphasis on the gender equality discourse in Denmark, how much tolerance is there for cultural difference, particularly among Denmark's immigrant communities?

OK: Again, I will strike a somewhat different note in my closing remarks than the one that your writing displays. I firmly believe that we should be looking at the movements of masculinities. Masculinities that search and move, venturing into the unknown, bowing or inclining itself in the encounter with the other, with the world. On the one side, it would not be wrong, historically, to define this movement as traditionally masculine. On the other hand this would also express a certain naivety or even politically irresponsible to define it as exclusively masculine, as this creative movement of masculinity is of course connected, relied, to the feminine.

HL: I love this point.

So one might just as well say that this movement is feminine, because the destiny that it engenders falls upon and influences both genders. Not only as a shadow, but also as a shared condition, which all must follow or at least relate to and contribute to create. But also because calling it masculine would be an insult to things, to event(u)alities, included in these movements. They connect not only to the masculine, contributing to form it, as a presencing, and as a connectedness with the things and the feminine. They also form and include male as well as female movements in a dance that is not only about power and (in)equality, even though it might very well be very much about difference, divergence, and in that sense also with power. But there is a call here for a decisive shift in orientation, from only dealing with issues of power, to dealing more and maybe first and foremost with force. This entails a long philosophical discussion, which will not take place here. But to me this is mainly about refocusing the gaze on power to include force, to include a more open relation to the creative movements that include all genders. We need to think in broader terms that equality, to strengthen a common ability to work transversally across genders to bridge the distance between past and future.

I am not sure I understand correctly the points that you are making Oleg, but as a final remark, perhaps one way to look at the issue of gender transformation and creativity is to consider the possibility of revisiting the whole femininity/masculinity dichotomy. We should ask here how this hierarchical dichotomy is related to a systemic structure. Pedagogically we may perhaps consider teaching children that they have both sides, whatever these may be, and that to nurture both is to enhance our creative impulses with less suppression.

I like where you have taken the dialogue, from one which focuses on inequality between genders, to one where we should consider this as a systemic issue, and one in which we should stress the whole issue of creativity, how to enhance our creativity through changing gender perspectives.

OK: ..and at this point it might just be worth giving the last word to the reader, male or female or both and none of the above. As no matter where we decided to start and to take this metalogue/dialogue, the reader will have taken it to a new place at this point; the invitation to system trouble and gender sustension now lies with her/him. Or to see even other invitations and evocations in our mutual wor(l)ds.

"Pedagogically we may perhaps consider teaching children that they have both sides, whatever these may be, and that to nurture both is to enhance our creative impulses with less suppression." — Huda Lutfi.

Cairo & Copenhagen & other places, June-December, 2010

– **See Bateson, Gregory and Mary Catherine (199x):** Angels Fear, for a series of examples of these metalogues, introduced in Gregory's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, and recently experimented with in the anthology *Learning from the Other* (2011, Ydesen, Paulsen, Kromann & Koefoed, eds.).

Vinyl...
talking about men

*Nina Larissa Bassett, Copenhagen,
April 2011*

*I was invited to participate in an exchange
workshop on masculinity as part of an Egyptian
– Danish dialogue programme. The idea was to
bring together 10 people from mixed professions
in both countries, pair them off and get them to
explore masculinity and finally write papers on
their discoveries. Immediately I started spam-
ming the poor organizers with impossible ques-
tions. Why do you want me to talk about men?
What have I got to contribute? I'm an artist and
have no idea about how to deal with masculin-
ity issues.*

Get your head round masculinity

Nevertheless it proved to be an interesting and challenging meeting. I've never
dealt with Masculinity in my work, though most of my projects naturally end up
dealing with fixed power structures and tend to question given stereotypes. The
workshops were very ambitious and tried to encompass many things in a very
short time frame – the widely different professional perspectives and two
extremely different national situations. We had to get our heads round the larger
subject of masculinity and try to gain a little insight into predominate and
current masculinity issues in Egypt and Denmark – and accordingly discover the
huge void between to two countries. Could the two positions at all meet and
inspire each other? Was it possible to produce a 'result'? Though the exchange
was very interesting and informative it seemed impossible to find a common
platform to speak from that could surpass stereotypical generalisations of men in
both countries. My fear was that I'd end up expressing the same opinion I had
before the project began.

Ask the men

After a good deal of soul searching and failed attempts at long distance exchange
with my Egyptian project partner I came to the conclusion that my opinion on
the issue of masculinity was not relevant in this context – or maybe that my
opinion in actual fact was very important. Because my opinion was: Ask the men.

The next question was: How do I ask the men? Doing straightforward interviews
would not produce the results I wanted. Interviews are framed in such a way that
you tend to get the answers you want, and many men would run away or go
completely rigid at the question: "So what does masculinity mean to you?"
Furthermore doing straight interviews would not satisfy me at all as an artist.

I like games. My work is often inspired by games. They reveal a lot about people
and social structures.

Do you follow rules?
Do you make up your own?
Do you break them?
Are you a team player?
Must you win at any price?

Even when people don't care about games it reveals something about them. So I
thought it would be great to play some game that would get men to talk about
their views on masculinity in a subtle and playful manner.

Come and play at my house

Two Danish male friends of mine were to act as guinea pigs. I invited them to my home and told them they would play a game of Scrabble. At my table I explained the rules – ordinary Scrabble rules – you make words and get points for the letters you use. But there was one extra rule: You can only write words that have to do with your idea of being a man. You need to explain the word to your opponent, who can veto your choice of word if he thinks its too general or that you don't mean it. They were allowed to use any language they liked but I needed to understand the explanations.

The men would then play and tell stories to explain the words. It was an amazing journey. The diversity of words and stories was quite overwhelming and I was privilege to have knowledge about these two wonderful men and sense of their identity never known to me before. The experiment was a success and the following day I repeated the game with two men with Arabic backgrounds. Again a very tender, vulnerable and honest session.

The following is a selection of New Male Words.

war / screamer / nail / messenger / lazy / money / i / anal / judgement / shag / 'good guy' / die / nasa / clan / fifa cup frenzy / sex / chair / ask / bask / bread / bars / pose / dick / vinyl / list / bellow / jew / duke...

I ended each session by asking the men to choose one, favourite word on the board.

Scrabble mania

Later I asked my friends to invite two of their friends to come and play Scrabble with me. The new friends were not told about the extra rule and did not know me. They came simply because the ex-players were so excited about the game and conveyed this. At the present date I've played 6 Scrabble games, predominantly with men I don't know. The men's ages range from 23 – 65, they are heterosexual, gay, bisexual, single, married, in relationships, some have kids, others don't, they are students, unemployed, freelancers, employed and pensioned. Predominantly the men are from Denmark but some have mixed background.

The results of all these Scrabble games - the words and connected stories - have the potential to form a very beautiful dictionary that in a diverse and playful way portrays reflections on the joys, stereotyping, secrets, power, frustrations and complexity of being a man.

– Nina Larissa Bassett
Copenhagen, April 2011

Boys in Egypt in general are raised on the principle "Deal with it"

Contract

That's not how it's spelled

The new thing is that the wall is the shadow of the man

Cairo scrabble session

Game Players:
Writer, comedian Motaz Attalla
Writer, feminist Nawara Belal

Setting:
One fine Friday afternoon in Zamalek, late 2010. Duration: 75 minutes.

Directed by: Ibrahim Batout
Edited by: Maiken Vibe Bauer

Rules stipulate that players may only formulate words/terms/expressions that represent masculinity/male/maleness/manhood/zukuriya to their personal-social paradigms. Players must also defend, elaborate and justify their choice of words.

To view, please re-visit the project's online page.

Humanizing Masculinity

Dr.Ashgan Farag, PHD In Psychology,
Country Director Karama to End Violence against Women
Ms. Fatma Emam, Research Associate,
Nazra for Feminist Studies

Introduction

This paper will discuss the concept of masculinity, and the role of society in the formulation of masculinity. It questions one of the features of the societal concept of masculinity; violence and discrimination against women.

This paper will question how gender roles are constructed and reinforced within society. It will specify the role of society in imposing certain codes of conduct on men, and how gender roles can be considered as a burden for both men and women.

The social construction of the gender role

When we deal with gender roles, whether in the ideal of the male (masculinity) or the ideal of the female (femininity), we do not deal with the personal choices of individuals or with concepts personally in isolation of society. Rather, we are dealing with the socially constructed gender roles that are imposed upon individuals.

This paper will start from a position that every perception is a social perception, that the creation of the ideal image of the male is socially constructed and these socially constructed codes of conduct effect the males' individual choices. In other words, our perception is based upon knowledge we accumulate from our societal experiences and our socialisation process. The social, cognitive and cultural paradigm is formed through socialisation and social interaction. This process is affected by the differing cultural, political, religious environments and social systems the person lives within in addition to the economic conditions. As the person develops in accordance with his/her factors and conditions, he/she develops an organised imagination of the world, and this imagination is not separated from the value and cognitive system prevailing in society.

Society formulates the gender roles for both men and women, man is viewed to have certain features such as; powerfulness, non-expression of feelings, supporting his family, and virility. These are viewed as crucial factors in order to determine the masculinity of a man. This is the idealised image of a man. **Society does not only construct masculinity but reinforces it through differing social relations.** If a male chooses not to follow the ideal image of masculinity, or if the adopted behaviour is associated with the female, he will be rejected socially, he will become isolated, and negative qualities will be associated with him. These social recognitions of proper masculinity and improper masculinity is a process executed by the members of the society in which he lives, which start within the family, or the peer groups and end with the external community. In this regard, we are not going to discuss the knowledge of the individual and how it is developed, how his/her mentality consists with all of its concepts and mental images. We wish to state that the stereotypes and mental images we formulate about others are formulated through the socialisation process.

Mostafa Soiuf defined the 'stereotype' as a pattern of the personality as the community defines it and that it can be opposite to reality. We tend to classify a person as soon as we have a small amount of information about them, we do not formulate our classifications according to personal encounters with the subject. These generalisations are formed through the socialisation process.

To conclude, I would note that cultural heritage in any society form the concepts and the stereotypes prevailing in it. If we focused on the concept of masculinity, or the stereotype of the man, we will find the following: masculinity is the group of physical and sexual features of the man. There are some features that have defined masculinity throughout the ages; the man must be strong, rationale, unemotional, does not cry, he is smart, responsible, decisive, has many relations before marriage.

That is how masculinity developed as a concept and held meaning. It changed from just a word to embodying many differing connotations. This word with its social connotations was endorsed by various social activities and roles; man fights in war, he supports the family, he partakes in certain tasks, specific fields of study suit him more other. Men were modelled to be the smart, strong, productive and brave. Women, on the contrary, were modelled as; the cunning, weak, seductive and nagging person. These models lead to the division of labour between women and men.

Violence against women as a manifestation of masculinity

It is important to say that the features of masculinity contain both positive and negative qualities, and that there is a continuous process to the shaping of the concept of masculinity. This undergoes change with time, what has been accepted throughout history and constituted the accepted norm is currently question or not even accepted anymore. Certain aspects are called into question and criticised, a good example would be violent characteristics, especially if it associates itself with violence against women. The violent, aggressive and dominant male is very common in society. We know by consulting the figures of domestic violence worldwide that it constructs a norm. The dominant and violent male is the opposite to the submissive and helpless woman, and he exerts power on her which may be extended to children.

Violence could be defined as any harm against a person, and people should agree on what constitutes harm. But when it comes to violence against women, it is not easy to define what harm is. For example, when some women face rape, the community disregards the misery women are facing as victims of rape when it argues as to whether the victim is wearing revealing clothes.

In addition to this, women are demonised in some religious verses: "women have half religion and half mind". Many religious verses help the misogynists justify violence against women.

Violence is a feature of masculinity; it is a global occurrence. It was always accepted as the natural character of power inside the household, and it constitutes a pattern of behaviour. It is noteworthy to say that the violence against women comes along with discrimination against women in all its different manifestations and is associated with the image of the macho powerful man. The macho men who head the household and hold control over the female not only discriminate against women, but are also involved in conducting violence against women.

Masculinity as burden on men and women

The word 'man' insists that we recall all the connotations society gives to this word, and the attempts of the man to be what society is anticipating him to be. Men try to repeat the socially constructed model, so men are free persons, who can make decisions. It is questionable that this model of masculinity might be harmful for men, like it hinders them from expressing their feelings, how can a human being enjoy mental health if he is stopped from showing how he feels? We have to say that there is a unitary vision of masculinity and men are trying to follow this model. And we can say that this socially constructed model is effecting men's decision making process and life.

When the society formed the model of the man, the model for women was created in correlation with it, women were portrayed to be submissive to men, and she does not enjoy the same rights. These stereotypes of women and men were transmitted throughout the years and were endorsed by the formal institutional laws which legalise the discrimination against women. Violence against women is channelled through socially constructed and institutional laws which favour men and are against female interests.

Men are suffering through the socialisation process, as they are expected to meet certain expectations. Men try to perform the expected role, the male gender role and its stereotypes places limits on the freedom of men.

As mentioned before, the social exclusion of men who do not abide by the outlines is harsh, and it leads to isolation or the shaming of many men who do not meet the expectations placed on them. Men are not alone in their sufferings from masculinity, women suffer too from the macho violent men. It is note worthy to say that women's silence against the discrimination they are facing does not mean that they agree with the violence, although they might transmit and institutionalise it. Women may be performing a kind of patriarchal bargain where they accept certain harms in return of certain gains, such as keeping the family stable. However, when they are transmitting the knowledge about the gender roles to their children, they do not criminalise the deeds of the abuser man. On the contrary, they often justify it.

There is literature arguing that women agree with their destiny to be mothers and wives and agree to be submissive for the greater good of society. However, feminist literature shows that women are struggling to fight the prescribed gender role and duties which dictate that women will conform with so called destined gender relations. It is important to say that women do reinforce the traditional stereotypes, since women are part of society and they are affected by the prevailing culture, they too accommodate certain violations although this is an effect of gender roles. We can see that the stereotypes of the men and women are part of the reasons of violence against women and there is a unitary vision of masculinity and men are trying to follow this model.

New strategies for 'bringing in' and 'bringing up- masculinities?
by Jakob Graack

Eradicating masculinity, constructing new masculinities· or just emphasizing and challenging the already existing diverse ways of understanding and doing masculinities?

THE WHY

This article is the outcome of my participation in the project 'Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities'. Through an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural exchange of experiences my view on masculinity was to be broadened and challenged. As a way to pay my respect to the people who shared with me their interesting thoughts on and professional insights in the complex concept of masculinity I will try to pass on the challenge to people of my own profession – within the sphere of pedagogy and social work – and to anyone interested in the upbringing and education of children and the development of the different communities they – and we – inhabit.

THE WHAT

The main object of the following text will be to identify how understandings of masculinities are passed on to new generations. At the same time I will try to highlight certain areas where we – as professional social workers from different practical and theoretical positions – might hope to eradicate, reconstruct, change or challenge common understandings of masculinity in (our) local communities and thereby influence the actual performance or doing of masculinity.

I do not expect to cause rapid changes neither within the private nor the institutionalized sphere, since this would mean the impossible instant closing of not only the generation gap but also social, cultural and economic gaps linked closely to societal structures. Still my hope is that others will – as I did – start to question the way we use our influence and pass on our constructions of masculinities in the process of bringing up new generations – and especially the consequences our constructions might have.

So in a desperate attempt to narrow down the immense subject of masculinity – and since it is my experience that the first constructions of masculinities are taking place in early childhood - I will try to stay focused on the way understandings, constructions and doings of masculinities are passed on to the next generation. First and foremost presented to them by their parents and siblings, but also by other relatives, peers, neighbours and (especially within a Danish context) to a considerable extent by societal norms represented by institutions as day-care facilities, kindergardens and later on by the schooling system.

THE CONCEPT – IN BRIEF

In the following masculinity will not be seen as a static biological fact concerning only the male gender. It will rather be interpreted as a social construction and as such it cannot exist as a singular concept. We will be talking about it in plural form - as 'masculinities' - since its content will always be subjected to negotiation within every relation and within different physical, cultural and social settings. In other words it will always find itself in a dynamic process of reconstruction and its symbolic value will be determined by the people doing the negotiation through their performance of masculinities and their verbal or non-verbal expectations to the performance of others.

I do not believe that there can, or should, be one single correct path to follow when it comes to the construction of masculinities in the complex process of bringing up a child. But in everyday terms the concept seems to be connected primarily with negative features and to be seen mostly as in opposition to everything feminine.
An internet author at Muslim Reverie that goes by the name of 'jehanzeb' describes it as follows;

"For a male to behave in any manner that is generally perceived as 'feminine' is to be stigmatized by others, especially male peers, because the worst insults for boys and men are designed to deprive him of his 'manhood'. If a boy or man is not aggressive, dominant, tough, athletic, unemotional, sexually aggressive in the heterosexual context, he cannot be a 'real man.' [...] Any man who has resisted to 'acting feminine' or 'acting gay' has been both a participant and victim of the ruling masculine culture." (jehanzeb, 2010) 'jehanzeb' goes on to advocate for the eradication of masculinity for being "interrelated with homophobic, sexist, racist, classist and oppressive social structures in white heteropatriarchal capitalist states." (jehanzeb, 2010).

Since it is not within my power to eradicate the concept of masculinity - and by the way I believe that both kids and adults would still categorize each other as more or less boyish/ manly - what I will attempt here is to encircle certain areas within the social structures that deserve special attention from parents, educators, social workers and other caretakers that are involved at an early stage of childrens life. Areas that are interrelated to oppressive understandings and performances of masculinities, although areas that we can actually challenge and debate in dialogue.

THE CONTEXT

The child's surroundings - its context - is made up of separate spheres. The first, and generally most important, being the family. The second (especially in a Danish context extremely important as well) being an external child-care facility; day-care, nursery or kindergarden etc. The third being the local communities playground or backyard characterized by homogenous relations and spontaneous activities across age. The fourth perhaps being within a larger family or in a religious community and so on. Which one is considered the most important can of course vary depending on each family and their social, cultural and geographic conditions.

In each context the child will meet different expectations to its doings of gender - its performance as either boy or girl. It might grow up in an atheist progressive family structure that praises and tries to support an ideal of neutral gender-roles. At the same time it could be spending a lot of time in an institution influenced by a variety of family-backgrounds, where each kid will be trying to combine their own sprouting construction of masculinity with the images presented by other kids and by the professionals, who themselves are trying to adopt and act in accordance with institutional values. At the playgrounds, in the backyards, on the building sites or whereever kids go to play, they will meet a hierarchy and have to negotiate their way into it. This negotiation will not only be about physical and mental positioning, but also about values and re-construction of concepts. Then again grandparents, other relatives, friends of the family, neighbours or fellows in faith can have traditional, cultural or religious expectations that influence the childs

process of construction.

Every child will find itself in new contexts throughout life. The child will have to find ways to perform different aspects of its own masculinities in each context - or to expect others to perform their masculinities in particular ways according to the context and the other's position in the actual social structure. And since every context and new relation will carry with it an influence, this is exactly why there is always hope – somewhere on the way understandings will be challenged and performances could be changed if people dare to question the construction of 'the other', of each other, and of the other's constructions...

THE RELATIONS

Within every context there is an endless web of relations and every one of them will have at least a little part to play in the process. Some relations will be remembered throughout life and be fundamental to the individual, while others will be circumferential and of less importance.

– The Family

The strategies families use when they enter the process of bringing up children will usually reflect their values and show how they attempt to give the child competence to build a future for itself and obtain a 'good life', at the same time it also reflects how they present their ideals and try to influence the childs own construction of the image of a 'good life' in the future.

If we believe that human beings are born into a world consisting of socially constructed relations, contexts and structures, then we have no reason to believe that anyone finds actual pleasure in acts of masculinity-based violence, rather we must be open to the possibility that men act in despair and powerlessness most often as a reaction to their own feelings of insufficiency. If they have not (yet) had their image of 'a real man' challenged in an atmosphere of dialogue and respect, they might not have the tools to change their own mental constructions. At the same time oppressing social structures are bound to be an obstacle to new interpretations of acceptable masculine doings – at least as long as classic masculine dominant behaviour is still generally synonymous with concepts as honour, respect and power.

Since the official Danish middle-class consensus, among other things, tells us that everything concerning modern childhood is negotiable – often with the children as participants for good or worse - physical punishment is not accepted within wide societal norms, which makes it very easy to condemn anyone who exercises this way of punishment. Often it will be easier to categorize this kind of behaviour as either right or wrong, rather than asking the question why? Why is power exercised in this way? Why do fathers come to a point where they would hit their child or wife, both acts influencing the childs image of masculinity. I am not saying that as professionals we should not have our own values and see physical punishment as wrong, but we have to create spaces where we can ask questions and accept the answers as a way to re-construct 'our' image of masculinity together with

'them' – signifying the ones we do not understand, expect not to agree with and probably do not know very well.

As professionals we must find interest in opening spaces where we can discuss with families in our communities the whole spectre of reward vs. punishment and encouragement vs. prohibition, which strategies do we make use of and how do they play a part in the constructions of and performance of masculinity that we pass on to the next generation?

– The Child-Care Facility

When it concerns institutionalized settings dealing with child-care and education in Denmark the fundamental values are based upon the constructed idea about the unique (free) individual, the unique and self determinating child. In one way or another it is described in all developmental plans and political guidelines how every person is unique and it is emphasized how important it is for child-care professionals to respect and support that.

Even though this is the governing societal norm every institution will have its own interpretations and every family will meet the institutional demands with different strategies. Families with resources – families with a fair amount of what Bourdieu refers to as social, cultural and economic capital - will actively choose an institution that reflects their own ideas while families lacking the acknowledged forms of capital will have to work out their own strategies on how to meet the institutional demands and may struggle to recognize themselves and their values in the everyday institutional life and norms. This is why the only way social workers can take part in and challenge less socially accepted constructions of masculinity is to go into a dialogue with parents in the institutional settings and with the inhabitants of the local communities whenever it is possible.

Unfortunately the question of how boys can be supported in doing their gender in different ways and experiment with masculinities instead of living up to generalized images of 'the real boy' are not highlighted in many developmental plans or institutional contexts – even though the doing of your gender is one of the things that determine who you are going to be – your uniqueness.

As jehanzeb states: "In patriarchal culture men are not allowed to simply be who they are and to glory in their unique identity. Their value is always determined by what they do."(jehanzeb, 2010)

The less options you have when you are doing gender, the less ways you can be unique as a person when it comes to meeting challenges that involves your construction of masculinity.

Or in other words, with reference to a new Danish anthology on gender and pedagogy, the more we keep certain doors closed, neglect to open others or remain unaware of the actual existence of particular doors, the less possibility we give kids to choose their own ways and construct their own images of masculinity. (Kirk m.fl., 2010)

– Societal Norms and Values

What we need to be aware of is the obvious paradox that the habitus of the average social worker often collides with the habitus of the people that inhabit the communities where we do the social work, the same people we are employed to respect and support.

In my opinion it is an interesting paradox (at least within a Danish context) that most people conducting professional social work will be considered to have a 'middleclass' background. While at the same time most of the focus on 'negative' doings and effects of masculinities in social settings are articulated professionally and considered to be problematic when it comes to male family members from socially and/ or culturally vulnerable, exposed or marginalized families with a low average income and educational level. What we must keep asking ourselves is how do we manage to cross this barrier and find a common ground from where we can identify, reconstruct and negotiate new understandings of manliness and masculinities and its consequences for the families and communities in question?

And at the same time we could ask ourselves why typical middleclass white heterosexual normbased masculine behaviour is rarely spoken of as being problematic. Lodahl gives us an example from a Danish schoolyard in an article on 'non-heterosexual' kids;

Lodahl describes how a number of 5th grade male and female kids are playing in separate groups. The girls are skipping rope. A boy tries to join the girls skipping rope, but is rejected – being told he can not enter the activity because 'boys are not welcome'. A group of

boys observes what happens and finds his attempt to play with the girls rather funny and not very cool. They shout 'faggot' at him from the other end of the school-yard, which makes him cry.
A teacher interferes and tells off the boys admonishing them not to 'shout ugly things at each other' (my translation). As described here the boys are told off, but it is seen rather as general teasing than as a question of heterosexual dominance. (Lodahl, s.5, 2010)

The consequences would probably have been different if the kid had had an ethnic minority background and the other boys had shouted something racist at him. Then most teachers would react since this would generally be seen as problematic. What I am trying to point out is that the oppression of unfamiliar, disrespected and alternative doings of masculinities will happen on many occasions, but it will often remain invisible, because these acts of (unconscious) oppression are merely seen as general teasing. Still it sends a clear signal to the boy who likes to play with skipping ropes. The majority of his male peer group explicitly condemns him and launches an attack at his 'man-hood' by calling him a 'faggot'. At the same time the teachers remark only underscores that being called 'faggot' is something ugly. He tells the boys off because they are teasing, which is fine, but he fails to question the fact that being called a 'faggot' should be degrading – in other words playing with girls and 'acting gay' stays non-acknowledgeable whether this was the teachers intention or not.

At the institution where I have my daily praxis surrounded by kids at the age of 1-6 years I (too) often hear them calling each other different things that are clearly meant to express disapproval. This would be expressions as 'faggot' or 'whore'. Clearly a child of 2½ years is not aware of the meaning of the concept 'faggot' or 'whore', and can not be expected to grasp the full meaning of these concepts at that age. Anyway we have to keep the kids from bullying each other and we must discuss with them what it means to respect each other even if you can not be friends with everybody all the time. But what we do not have to do is to support the negative construction of the expression 'faggot', by automatically calling it an ugly thing to say.

As for male and female social workers, they are often 'being gendered' when they perform their gender according to expectations in specific normative ways. Men are often supposed to be the ones who can reach 'the wild boys', while women are expected to under-stand and relate to the 'quiet girls'. Men and women become seen as static role-models for respectively boys and girls without considering the unique needs of these boys and girls (& the social workers in question) as individuals. In a recently published article Kirk & Wind gives examples on how social worker union magazines cover the role of male social workers in day-care institutions and schools. In their article they describe how male pedagogues are expected in many ways to be 'real men' who address certain abilities and preferences within areas as sport, technique, out-door activities and direct communication; 'not so much talk'. (Kirk & Wind, s.168, 2010)

In other words male pedagogues and teachers are often ascribed and expected to live up to characters seen as opposites to femininity. At the same time we know that these men are working within a profession officially characterized by so-called female values and they are supposed to share the general routines of changing diapers and participating in the basic child-care. This is why performance of masculinities in institutionalized settings becomes essential. This is where we have a rare possibility of showing kids and their families a variety of possible doings in everyday life – performed by both men and women. If we only manage to reflect the norms and the traditional constructions of masculinities prevailing in the surrounding society, then we miss the opportunity to support the young ones about to enter the different adolescent hierarchies in the local community. We fail to give them strong alternatives to the continuation of the dominant ways of performing masculinities. Again we let certain doors be closed to them – doors that might have let them to broader understandings of themselves and their gender.

—The Local Community: Hierarchy in Playgrounds & Backyards

Of course everything does not happen while at home with your family or within institutional settings, not even in an institutionalized country as Denmark. Every local community will have their arenas where kids and young people meet and form their own hierarchies. These are places where the rules are often made up along the way and based on traditions, strength and negotiation skills. A wide spectre of social, cultural and economic factors play a part in these processes of positioning that all kids finds themselves in from time to time.

Most kids tend to look up to and idealize the ones who are older than themselves. They might love and respect (or at least obey) their parents, and they might enjoy time in kindergarden, but the time they spent with elder peers are extremely influential on the way they imitate and learn to perform masculinities and the way they carry on their construction-work in other settings. When it comes to the process of positioning within non-adult supervised settings at least three factors will usually have to be considered; the exertion of power, the earning of respect and the defence of honour.

Usually boys will be in charge, seen and encouraged by society norms to have natural leader potential and strength. To be strong is often synonymous to being powerful, which is seen to be masculine. Thereby the exertion of power becomes constructed as an act of masculinity. If this understanding fails to be challenged it can, as we have previously discussed, lead to the potential individual or group-based harassment of kids performing masculinity in different ways – in extreme cases it can be the first step towards later acceptance and exertion of domestic violence or hatecrimes.

Most people are afraid of what they do not know, even more if they suffer personal, social and structural pressure of different kinds. In the example above we see how a group of boys deal with the fact that another wants to play with the girls. It does not earn him respect and in order to maintain their own respect and thereby protect their honour the boys have to take a stand and prove to each other that 'we' do not acknowledge a boy who plays with girls. At the same time the girls, in their own way, had already defended their honour and maybe earned some respect from the majority of the boys by rejecting the one trying to enter their circle.

What we a demands they meet everyday trying to position themselves among parents, friends, teachers etc.

...& FINALLY THE HOW?

In which ways can we broaden the understandings of what it means to be a boy/ man, the constructions of masculinities? This must be the most important question to ask ourselves as social workers. How is it possible to come closer to an understanding of the different creditable ways of doing and effects of doing masculinity within institutionalized settings and local communities?

In my opinion it cannot be emphasized enough that what we need is to have the courage to ask the difficult questions and not turn away from conflict, but understand it as a constructive way to open up a dialogue, remembering that common understandings and mutual respect, not complete agreement must be our primary goal. We need to stay aware of our own values and the constructions we have built up to support them. We also need to be honest about our values and be prepared to discuss them. If we want to challenge constructions of masculinities that we find problematic we must first accept that our own constructions will be challenged too. We have to accept the fact that we will always have different views and assume different positions and recognise that it is so much more interesting and important for the 'professional' to be curious.

So curiosity might have killed the cat, but lack of curiosity will certainly kill the dialogue between 'me' and 'the other'. There can be no real challenges without curiosity and acceptance of the potential conflict it might involve. Without curiosity we miss the chance of opening up new spaces in between old understandings, where we might carry out a joint reconstruction of new creditable masculinities – and who knows, eventually in the long run the concept might eradicate itself if there no longer remains a need for a static and ideal masculinity.

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in: UP #6, Unge Pædagoger 2010

"This is why the only way social workers can take part in and challenge less socially accepted constructions of masculinity is to go into a dialogue with parents in the institutional settings and with the inhabitants of the local communities whenever it is possible."

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MASCULINITIES AND YOUTH IN EGYPT AND DENMARK

DENMARK

What is a Man? Raw Sketches from Denmark.
Written and Directed by Sebastian and Jonathan Starling, edited by Maiken Vibe Bauer.

Given a camera 15 year old Sebastian and Jonathan interview friends and classmates on the topic of masculinity. In a straight-forward manner they inquire into questions of ideals, idol worship, meaning and sexuality. The resulting film is an honest, curious sketch of a group of equally curious Danish youngsters, including the filmmakers, trying to make sense of a gendered world.

About the filmmakers
Sebastian and Jonathan Starling are students at Islands Bryggeskolen, Copenhagen. While not engaged in filmmaking they are into music and sports.
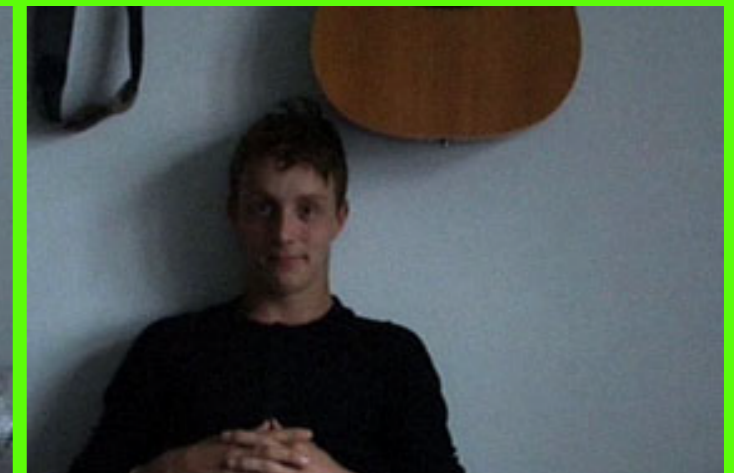
EGYPT

Man and Masculinities in Egyptian Society

Under the title Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities, a one-minute film workshop on 'Man and Masculinities in Egyptian Society' was held in Cairo in May 2010, coordinated by Maissan Hassan (Woman and Memory Forum) and Bassam Mortada (Al Masry Al Youm). The workshop included young Egyptian writers, directors and filmmakers. The workshop resulted in the production of five short films on the subject of masculinities.

"All But This"

Directed by Ines Marzouk, Written by Nesma Youssef.

Smoking is very harmful to health ... smoking causes death ... smoking causes impotency. No, all but this! A young man, a smoker, one of the thousands or millions like him, buys a packet of cigarettes every morning. That pack may be his only source of pleasure, breathing in frustration, despair and a sense of helplessness. He finds no objection to the warning image (a man in recovery) or in the slogan that Smoking is very harmful to health and causes death. One day, the young man notices a new image on the box, posing a threat to the only remaining symbol of strength he possesses: the image of a bent cigarette bearing the statement Smoking Causes Sexual Impotence. Nevertheless, he will not quit. All But This.

"In Every Neighborhood, There is a 'Etra"

Directed by Ines Marzouk, Written by Nesma Youssef.

In a society under dire straits, where the individual is subjected to injustice and humiliation, all values undergo changes and transformations. The values of masculinity transform from strength, honor, protection and Gad3ana - to trouble. A father descends from his home in the early morning holding the hand of his daughter. He carries her school bag. With tenderness and care he accompanies her to school. He walks towards the microbus stand. Along the way, he comes across two individuals harassing a teenage girl who is on her way to school. She could be his daughter in a few years time. The microbus arrives. Will he try to catch the bus for work, or stop to protect the girl? Has society given him the leisure of choice?

About the Filmmakers

– **Nesma Youssef** *holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering from the University of Ain Shams. She has previously worked in theatre projects and is currently enrolled in Aly Badr Khan's Cinema Workshop.*

– **Enas Marzouk** *is a director and producer at Al Masry Al Youm.*

"Cold Grapes"
Directed by Mohamed Ashur, Written by Hany Moustafa.

Mahmoud is in financial difficulty and discusses her/his problems with his/her friend Omar at a Downtown Cairo café.

"From the Chronicles of Hanafi the Elephant"
Directed by Ahmed Rahal, Written by Mahmoud Farag.

An experimental film centering on an unknown, non-obvious character, seen smoking cigarettes and conducting physical exercises amidst the details of his home.

"Survival of the Fittest"
Directed by Bashir Waguih, Written by Nael El Toukhy.

A funeral is dominated by the tense and awkward feeling of unrest in the air. A man exerts his full facade of toughness and his 'how things should be' attitude to all the funeral goers.
 On several occasions he enters his bedroom where he finds little details that remind him of the departed, which in turn crack his shell for all to see.

About the Filmmakers
Bashir Waguih *has written, directed and edited two short films, one feature-length documentary and was the Director of Photography of nine short films. He is currently the editor for a documentary film on the issue of women's representation in the judiciary system of Egypt.*

Nael El Toukhy *is author of several novels and short stories, as well as translator. He has the blog 'Thus spoke Cohen', dedicated to translating Hebrew literature.*

Participant Bios

— Ashgan Farag.

Country Director for Karama Movement to End Violence against women, based in Cairo, Egypt. Prior to Karama, she worked on violence against women in the USAID and the National Council for Women project Combating Violence against Women. She also worked for 8 years in a women's program, El Nadim Center for Rehabilitation as psychologist for battered women and children in Egypt. Dr. Ashgan Farag earned her PHD in Psychology with focus on children and has published various studies in psychology.

— Doaa Abdelaal.

Ms. Abdelaal has more than five years of experience in socio-economic research, evaluation fund raising, training and project management. Ms. Abdelaal is the country coordinator for Media Diversity Institute, an international NGO working to enhance media work in relation to diversity and is also researcher and fund raiser with Nazra for Feminist Studies. Ms. Abdelaal also serves as two years council member of Women Living under Muslim Laws - an International Solidarity Network.

The different research interests of Ms. Abdelaal include gender, migration policies and vocational training and education. She has served as the lead researcher and as contributor researcher in different gender research, including a research on the "Effects of Remittances on Women Empowerment in Rural Areas in Egypt" with the International Organization for Migration and "Opportunities and Obstacles for women working in Tourism and ICT in Egypt" with the European Training Foundation. Abdelaal has MSc in Political Science from Cairo University and a Software Development Diploma from the Information Technology Institute - Egypt.

— Huda Lutfi.

Huda Lutfi is trained as a cultural historian, and with her second career as an artist, she has emerged as one of Egypt's most notable contemporary image-makers in the 90's. Born in Cairo, where she lives and works, she studied Islamic culture and history in Montreal, gaining a Ph.D. She then took up the position of Professor of Islamic cultural history at the American University in Cairo in 1983, and has been teaching there up to 2009.

In addition to teaching cultural history and mixed media art courses at the university, Lutfi has been involved in several long term art workshops with street children, as well as Sudanese refugee children in Cairo. She curated several exhibitions in Cairo of children's works, which were showcased at the British Council, the French Cultural Center and the Townhouse Gallery.

She now works as a full time artist, with her studio based in the Townhouse building in downtown Cairo. Lutfi has had a large number of successful solo and group exhibitions in Egypt, Dubai, France, England, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Greece, Mali, Senegal and the USA. She continues to draw on her research background and interests in the city of Cairo, in culture, gender and in the politics of identity.

— Ibrahim El Batout.

El Batout graduated from the American University in Cairo in 1985, majoring in Physics. El Batout's infatuation for the camera started in the Video Cairo Production House, an agency that provides facilities for foreign TV-stations. There, he worked as a sound engineer. Shortly hereafter he began to experiment with film making and learned about the skills required of cameramen, editors and directors. Later, he worked for a year in a British television station called TV-Am, located in Cyprus. And since then he has worked as a director, producer and cameraman, capturing stories mainly about human loss, suffering, and displacement since 1987. He has also directed numerous documentaries for international TV channels, such as ZDF (Germany), TBS (Japan) and ARTE (France). His documentary work has received many international awards, such as : the Axel Springer Award in Germany (1994 and 2000) and the Direct Marketing Association's coveted ECHO award (1996). In the beginning of 2004. El Batout stepped into the world of fiction to make the long feature film 'Ithaki' (2005). His second film entitled 'Ein Shams' (Eye of the Sun) (2008) has won the Golden Bull, the top prize at the 54th Taormina Film Festival, 2008.

— Jacob Graack.

Jacob had his first experiences within the field of pedagogy and social educator related work in 1994-1996, when he was employed in a kindergarden. During this period he was elected first as the union representative of the unskilled assistants in the institution and shortly after as member of the local union executive committee which gave him his first look into the professional work of the union. After travelling Central America in 1996, working

with homeless children and as peace guard in Chiapas, Mexico, he returned to Copenhagen to engage in local community activism. During the 90's Jacob was involved in a lot of different left-wing political work within the Copenhagen D.I.Y. (do it yourself) punk-scene mostly organized around a Cultural Center called 'Ungdomshuset'. Here Jacob conducted guided tours for both national and foreign ground school pupils, high school and university students, local politicians addressed subjects as alternative subcultures, decentralization & anarchist organization, direct action & democracy, veganism, ecology and so on. Jacob became one of the people responsible for press issues representing 'Ungdomshuset' at public hearings, doing radio- & tv-interviews, a couple of documentaries and more.

Jacob finished his education in 2002 and in the beginning of 2003 he was employed as a social educator/ kindergarden teacher in an institution in a Copenhagen 'ghetto' by the name of Mjølnerparken working mostly with immigrant/ ethnic minority kids from the age of 7-8 months up to 6 years. In 2007 Jacob was employed as a 'subcomandante' or vice director in the institution in Mjølnerparken, responsible for the development of the pedagogy – a job he still has. These days his political activism lies in being part of the coordination group in the critical educational network 'Kritisk Pædagogisk Netværk'

Both at the university and in his everyday work Jacob focuses on the concepts of diversity, autonomy, direct democracy, alternative organization, perspectives on in- & exclusion and all kinds of minority vs. majority related issues.

— *Kasper Morville.*

37 years, born and raised in Copenhagen and Master in Theology since 2009. After more than 15 years in the hospitality business (hotels and wine bars) Kasper suddenly finished a master in theology and the additional training to become a protestant priest. Unfortunately the church was not as ready for him this season as he was for it. Luckily he has been able to engage in projects within other fields of previous work. For six years he has been connected to the Department of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the Danish Institute of International Affairs giving lectures on Nazism at youth education centres around Denmark. The last six month he has worked at an anti-radicalisation project for youth in Copenhagen which is a small piece in a wider EU-project against political and religious extremism.

Kasper suggests that the connection between his many different doings is the promotion of basic

human respect, tolerance and dialogue. Kasper also insists on a tight link between highbrow scholarly theory and a more direct and concrete local impact. He is especially concerned about how the dusty old churches in Copenhagen could play an important part in this work on a very local level - not least in a global and multicultural (as well as multi-religious) society.

— *Kenneth Reinicke.*

Kenneth Reinicke is an Associate professor, Ph.D. in Masculinity studies at Department of Society and Globalisation, Roskilde University. He has earlier been project manager at The Danish National Research and Documentation Centre on Gender Equality. Kenneth Reinicke has an extensive international experience in conducting fieldwork and training of gender mainstreaming at a European Level. Kenneth Reinicke has written several books on masculinity and gender equality with a specific focus on how to get men interested in the issues of gender equality. From October 1998 to July 1999 he was stationed in Albania as a "Human Rights Officer" for The Danish Centre For Human Rights, to assist the human rights training at the police academy in Tirana.

In 2007 Kenneth Reinicke received the "Mathilde Prize" from Women's Council in Denmark due to his work against prostitution. Kenneth Reinicke has conducted projects for the Danish Ministry of Gender Equality and is widely used as a gender expert in the Danish media.

— *Nina Larissa Basset.*

As defined by gender, education, experience, social construction and other boxes.

NLB was born in the UK, by a Finnish mother, with an English father, she has lived in Denmark most of her life and moved around a lot. This resulted in her having no sense of national loyalty or identification, making her most at home in international contexts. She is European. On the 28th of April 1971 it was determined that she was female. She has spent 40 years trying to understand what this means. She has been a theatre-maker for 14 years, a writer, translator, director, dramaturge and conceptualist. She got bored with classic artistic conventions and is driven by questions that challenge the status quo, structures and explores human connections. She is the artistic director of the independent theatre company based in Copenhagen, TeaterKUNST working with alternative spaces, storytelling and audience relations. MA in theatre and gender studies but never felt comfortable as an academic. Instead she is

researching through art.
NLB is a single mother to a 13 year old boy, she's not a good cook, can't sow and cannot use a hammer and drill.

— Oleg Koefoed.

43 years old, Danish/Russian/French origins. Action-philosopher, Ph.d., core member of Cultura21International since 2007; co-founder of Cultura21Nordic in 2009: an organization working to strengthen the visibility and thinkability of cultures prone to sustainability. Project and concept developer, external relations, partnership develoment, etc. Teacher at Copenhagen Business School and Roskilde University, covering a range of subjects within philosophy, culture, social change, communication, branding, and areas of sustainability. Author of a series of articles on eventual philosophy, cultures of sustainability, chronotopes of change, collective learning, masculinities of sustainability a.o. - and still believing that there's a continuity to his work. Co-editor of the Nordic Journal of Intercultural Dialogue, author of a collection of poems. Father of 4, two boys aged 15, a girl age 4, and a boy aged 6 months, married to Susanne, living in Copenhagen, not far from the centre in a big house with another family and between 5 and 10 children.

— Ramy Raoof.

Ramy is the Online Media Officer at Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), a Cairo-based independent human rights organization which seeks to protect and promote the personal rights and freedoms of individuals. He works on utilizing online media platforms on a daily-basis and developing strategic media plans. In 2009, Ramy joined Global Voices Advocacy team of authors, where he shares posts related to digital activism in Egypt and violations happening to Egyptian netizens and bloggers as well as monitoring the Egyptian government conduct in dealing with digital activism.

Ramy joined several trainings to hold sessions on utilizing online media platforms in human rights issues. With a background in programming and data security, Ramy also do training in digital security and privacy needs for advocates and human rights defenders.

Ramy was selected among 100 human rights defenders to join the 2010 Dublin Platform organized by Frontline Defenders.

SUMMARY OF CMCC ONLINE BLOG DISCUSSIONS

One component of the project *Changing Masculinities, Changing Communities* was the set up of a blog, with the objective to expand the debate on the issue of masculinities in Egypt within youth circles. An open forum has been launched for youth to post their opinions on masculinities in both Arabic and English hosted by the online platform for Nazra for Feminist Studies. A summary of the present overall online discussion in Arabic, is as follows:

One of the main opinions focuses on child-rearing, stating a belief that in many Egyptian families there are major gender discrepancies in the differences between how a boy and girl are raised. Accordingly, this is reflected later in how a man sees himself; he should be different in his actions and attitudes.

Most of the other entries focus on character traits such as keeping one's words, respect of oneself, and others, that the commentator believed should be uniquely masculine. These traits are vanishing by time, according to the commentator. Another entry stated that if some married men take their family's advice too closely, it could lead to the destruction of married life. Another entry stated maybe real men have vanished like dinosaurs.

Another entry reflects on the opinion that 'current images' of masculinity are a historical construct- the man as invader and conqueror that society members should seek to comfort.

There was also an admission that the man could be the victim of a standard image of himself, which leads him to forget or ignore his feminine side. Society is the source of "forbidden" things that men should not do, and society is the only means to leave these obstacles to allow men enjoy their masculinity.

Another entry refused to associate certain traits to a man or woman, exclusively. The ability to hold a family together, or to control anger are all traits that could be associated either to men or women.

A further entry focused on deconstructing the concept of masculinity on different levels - traditional practices, traditional roles of women, and redefining the terms in different discourses (especially the popular).

THE ENGLISH BLOG FOCUSED ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

– The association between masculinity and violence especially violence against weaker groups such as women and children

– The image of a 'masculine' man in society, as the man who does not cry in public

– Engaging men to defend women's causes such as stopping sexual harassment

– The association between masculinity and certain traits which women themselves prefer and accordingly nourish in their children

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