Being a "real" man
Honor killings and the performance of masculinity

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To:

Marua Ajouz who left too soon

Abstract

This case study looks at the topic of honor killings in relation to "doing" masculinity, in Jordan. A short overview is given on the dynamics of masculinities detected in the Jordanian public sphere. Furthermore, the study presents two cases of honor killings attempting to explore, through life-history interviews, what meaning the felonies might have had on the masculine identity of the offenders. The theory used here is the structured action theory based on Connell's theory on hegemonic masculinity and West and Zimmerman's notion on "doing" gender; the everyday social practices that we engage in to live up to our sex category. Messerschmidt suggests that gender is an endless project which we engage in from an early age within socially given sets of appropriate gender behaviour that we then choose to produce or reproduce. And although these practices are individual, they are done within a structure of situated social action that enable or constrain our practices of gender. Crime within the structured action theory is suggested to have a functional role as a resource for doing masculinity. When conventional social resources for accomplishing a successful masculinity is lacking, crime can fill that gap. My findings convey that the Jordanian hegemonic masculinity is one of militaristic and chivalry masculinity where honor is deeply incorporated. The study suggests that the offenders embodied "multiple masculinities" moulded by their backgrounds and discourses on age, class, ethnicity. The first case study shows a perception of a successful masculinity performance leading to an enhanced self-esteem while the second one shows tendencies of a failed masculinity performance leading to isolation.

Keywords: honor killings, gender, masculinities, hegemonic masculinity, structured action theory

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1. Introduction

"The woman was not happy with her husband. She had complained to her family that he beats her and mistreats her. They didn't support her in her will to get a divorce. They were not Muslims, Druze. Do you know what Druze mean?" he asked me. I nodded. He continued "Not getting any support from her family, the woman fled to another town to hide at a priest's home. She was hoping that the priest would find a solution for her. She stayed there for a month. Her family contacted her and assured her that she had been forgiven and that they supported whatever decision she made. She could return home. Once at her parents' place, her mother told her that she could go upstairs to take a shower and get some rest. Then she called her brothers. 'Come and clean your honor' she told them. They came, went upstairs and stabbed her thirty-two times with a butcher knife.

When the brothers came to the police station, I offered them some tea and to sit down and rest. Even though the law doesn't encourage this kind of act, I was in my heart happy that they'd done it."

Q: Why?

A: Why?! Because they proved that they were real men, that's why.

This story is one of many I heard and read about during my visits to Amman between 2013 and 2016 conducting field work. What is often in focus when talking about honor crimes are the victims. In Jordan for example, I couldn't find a civil society organization working with men as a target group on this issue. In these cases, most murders are committed by men, especially young men. Yet little has been written on the perpetrators of honor killings. But to understand the effect it is also important to look at the cause. In my study, I attempt to shed light on the understanding of masculinity in relation to honor killings. My main target is to interview men who have committed honor killings.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to shed light on an aspect of the problem of honor killings that is little discussed, namely the perception of masculinity (-ies) in relation to honor

killings. It is hard to find literature on masculinity in the Middle East. It is a relatively new concept there and I think that much more research is needed. Feminism has provided research on gender relations and structures that contribute to the subordination of women through shedding light on the two systems of patriarchy and capitalism. However, as important as it is to consider the power relations between men and women, it is equally important to consider the power dynamics between men. When it comes to this, some scholars argue that feminist explanations of gender relations tend to be limited. To develop the understanding of the gendered power relations and of gendered crime in specific, we need to bring men into this framework through viewing the problem from another "theoretical lens" as Messerschmidt puts it. We need to understand why men are overrepresented in gendered crime through a focus on the sociology of masculinity (Messerschmidt 1993; 61).

I also want to include an aspect that has gained more attention in sociology when it comes to the formation of the self and of identity, namely the significance of the body. Due to the Cartesian dualist perception that separates mind from body, sociology considered the mind to represent the source of the higher, rational being while the body represented a lower, animal instinct (Howson 2013: 9). However, sociological research has shown that experiences and the interaction with the outside world and its expectations do affect our self-formation. Instead of a separation between mind and body, sociology nowadays talks of the concept of embodiment suggesting that the human body cannot "be regarded as a natural and thus immutable entity that exists outside the language in which it is described or the historical context in which it resides" (Benoist and Catheras 1993 in Howson 2013: 9).

The purpose of the study is to understand the masculine trajectories through the act of killing from the point of view of the perpetrator through life-story interviews. How does he relate to his deed? Has it changed his perception about himself? Has it changed society's perception about him? Because of numerous reasons, finding the men who have committed honor killings is a very hard task in Jordan. The purpose of the study will then not be to give a generalizable idea of masculinity in honor killings or of the personality of men who have conducted such deeds. Rather the study will focus on a few cases and offer a possible analysis of their view deriving from the theory of hegemonic masculinity and the structured action theory.

1.2 Research questions

What ideas on masculinity can one detect in the Jordanian society? What attitudes can be detected towards gender violence, especially in relation to honor killings?

How does the participant/interviewee view himself in relation to the crime committed? What meaning might the mortal violence have carried in relation to his gender performance?

What can the participant/interviewee tell us about the role of the body when it comes to his self-perception?

2. Literature review

Jordan is one country in the region with the highest numbers of honor killings compared to the number of inhabitants. The motives for honor killings are usually some kind of disobedience of the imposed sexual norms (Faqir 2001; 66) or other gender norms, often directed towards females but there are cases involving male victims too. It can be premarital sex, marrying without the consent of the family, behaving in a way perceived as morally questionable, being seen with a man on the streets, dressing inappropriately or even talking on the phone with a man etc. (Eisner and Ghunaim 2013; 407). This is not specific for Jordan but exists in the whole Middle East. Most violence against women happen in the home and by a perpetrator known to the victim. So is the case with honor killings. For different reasons such as a high percentage of unemployment among females, collectivism leading to social and familial surveillance, and gender norms, women are rendered vulnerable for domestic violence (Faqir 2001; 66).

Reports show that the honor cases are increasing in Jordan. Reliable statistics on honor killings are lacking since some murders may be disguised as accidents or suicides, but the estimated number is between 15 and 20 victims per year (Husseini 2010, Coogle in hrw.org 2016.12.09). In 2016, this number augmented to 38 cases (Coogle hrw.org 2016.10.27). Honor killings can be found in countries in the Middle East and central and east Asia today. There is a correlation to strong patriarchal systems, where women and children are perceived as the property of a man and his responsibility to discipline (Araji and Carlson 2001; 588, Faqir 2001; 69, Dogan

2014). Honor killings occurred historically also in Europe. They were perceived as acceptable and honorable acts in the societies where they occurred. A man who didn't kill his adulterous sister or wife was penalized by law in the Roman empire and until 1981 the Italian penal code gave reduced penalties to men who killed their adulterous sisters, wives, or daughters (Eisner and Ghunaim 2013; 407). Under English Common Law, a man had the legal right to punish his woman for misbehaving (Araji and Carlson 2001; 588). Article 98 in the Jordanian penal code, giving reduced penalty for the perpetrator (man or woman) when killing in "a state of great fury resulting from an unlawful and dangerous act from the victim", often referred to in matters of honor killings, is inspired by the Napoleon code (HRW 2014 Vol.16. NO1(E); 15). Today, it is argued that honor killings tend to happen when a combination of factors correlates, namely in strong patriarchal societies where individual rights are subjugated for the sake of collectivism, tribal restrictive beliefs, and a state that hasn't managed to gain monopoly in being the sole legitimate user of force (Eisner and Ghunaim 2013; 406). Patterns of family violence and who is considered to be the rightful discipliner and who is to be the recipient of the abuse is usually regulated by a society's culture. There is usually a cultural acceptance of a form of violence that is supported by the majority of people and by a state's regulations (Araji and Carlson 2001: 588). In a study on the attitudes of Jordanian teenagers towards honor killing, the acceptance of this phenomenon from teenagers showed to be quite high. The researchers surveyed 856 ninth graders from 14 schools in Amman. The study showed that 33.4% of the respondents found honor killings acceptable. Boys were twice as likely to support honor killings with a percentage of 46.1% and 22.1% among the girls. Also, the study showed that respondents with at least one family member with university degree were less prone to support honor killings (21.1%) while respondents with lowest level of educational background showed a significantly higher rate (61%). Furthermore, 36.5% of respondents who have a breadwinner family background supported honor killings while only 21.7% or the respondents coming from families where the mother was employed showed the same support. Also, adolescents coming from bigger families with many siblings showed higher support for honor killings, 41.5%, than those coming from smaller families, 26.7% (Eisner and Ghunaim 2013; 411).

2.1 Cultural understandings of honor

The term honor killing is a generic one that is used when referring to the killing of a woman, sometimes also the killing of a man, by one or several male (sometimes female) members of the immediate or the extended family for the goal of "cleaning" the honor through killing the person who deviated from the sexual norms that resulted in the dishonor over the family (Sev'er and Yurkadul 2001;965, Faqir 2001: 69). The concept of honor carries in many societies a more gender-specific meaning, namely that of being closely linked to masculinity. Dogan explains that the word *honos* or *honoris* in classical Latin have a gender-neutral meaning that is associated with respect, esteem and prestige and has to do with reputation (Doğan 2014: 367). The gender-specific aspect is however linked to how a man is expected to behave and includes a collective aspect that encourages to violence when threatened. The gender-specific understanding of the word honor is believed to be of almost sacred nature and to lose this honor would mean a social death. The preservation of this honor can be so strong that a person can go on violating other sacred values, like murdering someone, for the defence of his honor. The woman is seen as merely a "repository of family honor" (Coomaraswamy in HRW 2004, Vol.16, No.1 (E); 5). She is merely a reflection of her family's behaviour, reflecting what they have taught her and allowed her. And because there exists a perception that a woman is by nature weak emotionally and rationally, the task of guarding the family honor can't be trusted to her. Men are forced to monitor their honor, their ultimate prestige and manifestation of dominance, through "their" females. Losing control over a female would mean a threat to their honor. This close relationship between honor and power that usually exist within the family also comes with a third component which is love. This is the paradoxical trinity that usually runs through societies with an honor culture. The aspect of love in this power relation is not often mentioned, though it plays quite an important role in excusing and maintaining dominance within families or the extended family (Joseph Feb. 1994). Kandiyoti argues that the reproduction of what she calls classic patriarchy lies in the practice of patrilocal extended family where the married woman moves in with her husband's family and is expected to be subordinate to the men and older women, usually the mother-in-law, of the household. The senior man, usually the father, is given authority over the rest of the household, younger men included (1988; 278). Different endogamic practices and conceptions of honor decide

to which extent a marriage for a female implies a breakage from the kin group. In Turkish traditions, the husband becomes responsible for his wife's honor, which means that her dishonourable act will reflect first and foremost on him. In the Arab traditions, the kin group of the woman are held responsible for their married daughter's honor (Kandiyoti 1988; 279). When talking about the brother/sister relationship in the Arab world and in relation to love and power, Joseph mentions Michael Meeker's interesting parable when it comes to the difference in the two conceptions of honor claiming that the disgrace of a woman is in the Arabic context responded to by "those who 'love,' " while among the Turks it must be responded to by "those who 'control' " referring to the love relation between brother and sister in the Arab context and to the relation of control between husband and wife within the Turkish context (Joseph Feb. 1994; 53). In either case, one of the main intentions of the honor culture is to secure the pureness of the biological lineage of a man by the chastity of the female (Faqir 2001; 69).

Doğan argues that feminist reference to patriarchy which aims at keeping women subordinate through control of the female body can't really explain the social phenomenon of honor killings (2014: 365). Specially not when the perpetrator is a woman, or the victim is a male. He also rejects theories on masculinity, the theory of hegemonic masculinity in particular, that implies a so called false unity between men, transcending cultures and neglecting the impact of the collective societies on an individual's action, and how honor and shame operate in such communities (ibid). Instead, and in accordance with Wolfgang, Doğan suggests that it is a person's set of values that is the starting point for understanding the social phenomenon of honor killings. It is the power of ideas rather than class belonging such as poverty that tend to drive a person to honor killings. Thus "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them" (Vold & Bernard, 1986, p. 211 in Doğan 2016; 56). The individual, although knowing that killing is considered a criminal act, comes to accept these set of values and see honor killing as a rightful way of correcting the problem (ibid). Even though that this view is indeed relevant when it comes to studies concerning honor killings, it doesn't quite fully grasp from where these ideas of honor derive, why they are so powerful, and why they are gender-specific. Indeed, Doğan himself does recognise that they come from interaction between individual and society. Instead, the notion of narratives can serve as a better concept when it comes to the formation of identity, functioning as the

connective link between temporality, identity and history, in the production of collective and individual identities (Strömbom 2010; 30). Through stories (narratives), human beings try to make sense of their reality. Thus, narratives influence our perception of reality and how we relate to it, constituting an important aspect in the formation of identity (ibid). However, "Identities are always in transition as they come into being through combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong" (ibid). Hence, the gender-specific perception of honor cannot rise only from culture-specific narratives but also from gender-specific narratives. The gender-specific narratives on masculinity transcend the cultural and can be found in many societies, thus making it clear that they are transcultural. Together with theories on masculinities, feminist explanations do indeed provide an important theory of the power dynamics taking place between men and women and between men when it comes to the subject of honor killings.

Feminist explanations suggest that honor killings consist of an extreme form of gender violence with the patriarchal goal of indeed keeping the woman subordinate through controlling her body as a sexual attribute (Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001, Kandiyoti 1998, Ilkkaracan 2002). Sev'er and Yurdakul argue, in accordance with Doğan, that honor killings extend class differences, religious belongings, and that it has a culture-specific meaning for the perpetrators. However, they conclude that although honor killings is not a class related phenomenon, the socioeconomic level does play a role. Belonging to the lower socioeconomic level, with undereducation and illiteracy as common features, makes people more vulnerable to religious and cultural misconceptions or fanaticism (Sev'er and Yurdakul 2001; 970).

Some scholars like Ilkkaracan and Mernissi, argue that the perception of Islam being an encourager of honor killings lies in the patriarchal misinterpretation of the Quran and show that the misconceptions on women's bodies and sexuality, the foundation of the honor culture, actually derive from pre-Islamic understandings around such matters (Ilkkaracan 2002, Mernissi 1991, Barlas 2002). Mernissi explains that the Islamic perception on women's sexuality stands in contrast to the Freudian view on the female sexuality, namely as active instead of passive. A female sexuality as active is then perceived as constituting a danger against the social order of society that needs to be subjugated through the control of men on women's bodies and sexuality (Mernissi in Ilkkaracan 2002; 757). As it is outside the scope of this study to analyse the impact of religion on the Middle Eastern societies, suffice to say that whether it is

misconceptions or selectivity in religious texts, some religious discourses do play a role in the rationalisation and legitimation of honor killings and in the subjugation of the female sexuality in general. Furthermore, Ilkkaracan argues that modernization in some Middle Eastern countries, like Turkey for example, didn't change the perception on matters such as the female sexuality and the female body but in some matters actually incorporated that into the nationalist agenda, making the control of the female body and sexuality a state matter (Ilkkaracan 2002; 763).

Finally, it's worth mentioning something about tribalism, the main system in the Arab world in which the honor code is a central feature. Tribalism has a history in the Jordanian state formation that is quite unique in the matter of the strong relationship it has to the monarchy and its role in the formation of a national identity originating from the will of the kings of Jordan, beginning with king Abdullah I who, when given Transjordan by the British, was faced with the task of uniting the country politically and create a nation-state with him as the legitimate leader. The country had until then consisted of separate autonomous tribal groups, who lived by a tribal system that covered both social as well as juridical manners, reluctant to central authority. It became soon clear to the Emir that to gain legitimacy he had to meet the tribes halfway, by recognising the importance of tribal laws and traditions and intertwining it with the new nation. The result was a sort of supra-tribal structure in which he had a central part (Al Oudat and Alshboul 2010; 69). The institutionalisation of tribalism within the army and the state formation, the tribal laws, especially the honor based family laws, gained an even stronger position. When it comes to the discourse on honor culture, tribalism, together with religious discourses, is blamed for legitimizing honor killings. Others argue that tribalism has a functionalist role as a form of civil society that together with, and because of, globalisation is undergoing its own changes and development toward a civil society particular for the region (Antoun 2000; 444).

2.2 Demystifying honor crimes – critique of the concept

Abu-lughod argues that the concept of honor crime tends to stigmatize people in the Middle East, stripping the women of their moral agency by making them a property of the men and victimizing them, while the men are demonized. The lack of agency portrayed in this concept doesn't do justice to how the women of that region see

themselves. In her experience when living in an Arabic Bedouin community, Abu-Lughod recalls that honor permeated the whole society and was something that the community prided itself to be committed to. The project of honor involved both men and women in the community. Modesty shown from women by, for example, veiling themselves (willingly) for certain categories of men was not an act of femininity, argues Abu-Lughod, but simply an act of honor. Men on their hand, showed the women respect by avoiding sexuality, keeping their distance and not talking about their wives or female relatives in front of other men (Abu-Lughod 2013; 118). Sex outside of marriage was viewed as equally dishonourable for both men and women. Therefore, Abu-Lughod asks if the debate on honor crime should be understood as "simply a form of patriarchal oppression of women", if restrictions on women's behaviour is really "constraints on their autonomy imposed by men" or if it is something else (ibid).

Ghannam argues that women certainly play an important and active role in upholding and reproducing hegemonic masculinities and gender norms. In her study of Al-Zawiya, a neighbourhood in Cairo, Egypt, she depicts the active role women play in men's life through their roles as sisters, mothers, wives (Ghannam 2013, ch.3). She argues that the societal legitimation of violence is situational and functions as a practice for establishing social norms where, used in the proper context it is viewed as a productive and performative way of exercising power (Ghannam 2013; 110). This legitimation of violence goes beyond the gender norms, although it is especially viewed in a positive manner when it is used to "cultivate proper men and women" (Ghannam 2013; 114).

Abu-Lughod's romanticized depiction of the Bedouin community is certainly problematic, even though the critique of the perception of honor crimes is legitimate. Ghannam's depictiaon of women's active role in gender performances in Al-Zawiya is, however, more nuanced and poses the questions that Abu-Lughod seems to neglect; Does agency per se imply autonomy and freedom from oppression? And if men are also being regulated, does that then mean the absence of men's domination?

The discussions around the concept of honor crimes is long. The choice to keep referring to this phenomenon as honor killings lies in the fact that my focus in the thesis lies on the meaning(s) that the perpetrator gives to these terms. In his perception, the notion of honor is deeply linked to his deed of killing (both for him

and the society that judged him). To disregard that meaning would be to miss the point entirely. The use of the term "honor killings" and not "honor crimes" lies in that, in the Jordanian context, the first term referred to the killing of a family member to clean one's honor while the later term referred to a deed done to the family to shame them, such as rape.

3. Theory

3.1 The body in sociology

Sociology has for a long time been influenced by the Cartesian dualist view of body and mind, separating the rational from the human body (Howson 2013: 2). The body resembled merely a machine run by the mind; the subject from where the formation of the self is produced through reason and the ability to view the world as external. And although the body do enable us to connect with the self, to the physical and material world, it doesn't play a role in the formation of self-conception. In this sense, even if the body would get seriously injured, it wouldn't affect a human being's perception of who she is (ibid). But as sociology evolved, studies have shown the importance of the body in interaction with the social world and the processes it generates in the formation of the self. The human being is moulded by the lived experience of the physical qualities of the body; it's sex, shape, size, manners, actions, ability/disability, the reflexivity on the bodily conduct, they all influence our perception of the world and our interaction with it. This development has led to an important question in sociology, namely what the body is? With the increased life expectancy, it has become crucial to develop the understanding of the ageing body and its effect on the mind. Also, with higher life expectancy, societies have come to develop a greater interest for the physical appearance and the part that the body plays in the upholding of the self-image in society (Howson 2013; 7).

The notion of embodiment has come to replace the Cartesian dualist view of the body in sociology. Norbert Elias argues that other than just being biological, the human body needs to be approached as "an organism that changes across both historical and

biographical time in response to social and cultural processes", suggesting that it is hard to analyse the human body outside its societal context (Howson 2103; 9). Embodiment identifies the relation between being a body and having a body and the centrality the body plays in the formation of self and identity. It is the relation between action and biology. The body is in this perspective inseparable from the mind and vice versa. Embodiment draws our attention to the relation between the objective, physical and institutionalized body and the inner sensual, subjective and animated body (Turner 1992 in Howson 17).

3.2 The body-reflexive practices

Connell developed the theory of hegemonic masculinity as a direct synthesis to the biological and sociobiological explanations of gender that explains masculinity and femininity through the frame of biology and the separation of body and mind. Connell refers to gender as a historical process where social constructions about the male and female body have been produced and reproduced to fit a specific interest (1995; 111). He suggests that gender is produced and reproduced mainly through practices, through active subjects, not merely receivers of gender. Through interaction and the embodiment of experiences, we make assumptions and images about gender that we act by in interaction with other. We embody gender through "doing" gender which results in us reinforcing our perception about gender (Howson 2013: 65). Gender cannot be analysed by itself but is to be seen in relation to and in the light of other structures such as racism and class differences. The white masculinity is for example not only constructed in relation to the femininity of white women but also in relation to brown men (Connell 1995; 113, Messerschmidt 1993; Ch. 3). Discourses on race in the West have also influenced the discourse on masculinity. The same goes for class differences and their effects on the discourse of masculinity. The idea is that it is crucial to look beyond gender to understand gender. And vice versa.

The physical dimension of the body plays an important role in the formation of the masculine self. Boys develop an active approach to the world because they, more than girls, are exposed to certain kind of bodily contact that encourage to bodily awareness and in turn develop a greater sense of being-in-the-world (Howson 2013; 66). In the concept of body-reflexive practices, Connell suggests that the formation of self-identity is not only formed through interaction but through the bodily reactions that

are the result of these interactions. An example given by the author is about a young man who as a little boy couldn't get his father to buy him a cricket racket because his father didn't think he could play cricket. The father thought the son threw "like a girl". He didn't want to throw ball in front of his father because he knew that it didn't look right in his father's eyes. When he finally did, the father burst into laughter. Adam's observation of the situation is two-dimensional where he is both inside of his body seeing himself throwing and outside observing the gender related performance where he could see that it didn't look right in his father's eyes. The emotional bond in form of a father-and-son relation makes the memory even more loaded. Adam understood that there existed a perception of difference between men and women, in this situation revolving around ball-throwing, and was aware of his deviation in this performance. This in turn led to the formation of a self-perception revolving around being different as a man (Connell 1993; 104). On the social level, the body-reflexive practices serve to uphold idealised images in society. Within a larger context, for example sports, the body-reflexive practices of champions take on a more complex meaning where their practices become symbols of an ideal man. Practices produce and reproduce structures while structures enable some practices and limit others. Thus, body and structures produce and reproduce each other (Connell 1993: 105).

3.3 Hegemonic masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity derives from the Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci's attempt in explaining class relations. The Gramscian hegemony doesn't only refer to power but emphasizes the importance of social consensus in maintaining the position of power. The main feature of hegemony is not dominance through violence but through the claim to authority. It comes about only if there is a correlation between cultural ideals and institutional collective power (Connell 1993; 115).

Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity suggests that there exists a social perception of what constitutes an ideal masculinity that is maintained through consensus to this ideal. Hegemonic masculinity comes about through a historical process where a specific type of masculinity has gained the status as the ideal one. This is not a given position and is a dynamic process where what constitute the ideal masculinity can change over time. Hegemonic masculinity exists in relation to other

masculinities and prevails only through a "generally accepted" strategy that conform to the terms that defend the legitimacy of patriarchy (Connell 1993; 115). Hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender praxis that obtain the most accepted form to legitimize patriarchy. It is expected to guarantee the dominance of men and the subordination of women (ibid). What constitute the ideal masculinity rises in direct opposition to femininity, and in relation to race and class. The many masculinities arise through gender relations built on dominance and subordination between different groups of men. The cultural dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men is obvious, not only through stigmatisation of homosexual men but also through distinct practices of cultural exclusion and mocking, legal violence, street violence, economical discrimination etc. (Connell 1993; 116). Homosexuality is closely connected to femininity and symbols everything excluded from the hegemonic masculinity, hence the mocking (ibid). However, this group is not the only subordinate group. Even heterosexual masculinities ranked too feminine represent a subordinate masculinity. The hegemonic project is upheld by complicit masculinities, in everyday life. No man can live up to all aspects of the hegemonic masculinity, but the majority of men gain from the structures that subordinate women but are not interested in raw dominance of women. They construct positive masculinities in women's favour, such as considering it unmanly to hit a woman. However, the tendency to relate and defend the legitimacy of the hegemonic masculinity is there (Connell 1993; 118).

Witherell and Edley suggest that hegemonic masculinity can be used selectively by men; they adopt it when it is desirable but can at other times renounce it (in Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; 841). Therefore, it is crucial to understand that hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed characteristic structure of any group of men (ibid).

Some of the critique that this theory has faced is from, amongst others, the psychoanalysis that criticizes the theory for taking a simplistic view on the subject, neglecting to look at how men psychologically relate to hegemonic masculinity. Jefferson argues that the subjectivity of the male has been missed because of the "over-socialized" view of the theory. To this, Connell and Messerschmidt argue that while discursive psychology does have a point in its critique, the theory's purpose is to shed light at the equally important non-discursive practices such as wage, sexuality, violence, domestic labour etc, that form gender relations (ibid). Another critique is that it has almost stigmatized men because of the associations to the negative features

that present men with qualities that are regarded as the causes of criminal behaviour, namely "unemotional, independent, nonnurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; 840). Collier also argues that the model fails to detect men's "positive" practices that are in women's favour. The response to this is that since the theory do focus on power as one aspect, shedding light on some toxic behavioural patterns that maintain gender dominance, physical violence being one such type of practice, is a must. This while still lifting positive behavioural patterns in women's favour. The model of hegemonic masculinity would not have been hegemonic, a model that demand some level of consent and participation from the subordinate groups, if it only included negative traits such as emotional repression, aggression, and egoism. In such case, we're hardly talking of hegemony but merely hierarchy and dominance (Connell and Messershmidt 2005; 841).

One last critique of importance to the theory is the notion that there exists some ambiguity around the concept of hegemonic masculinity in practice. If no man can exactly embody the hegemonic masculinity, who then is hegemonically masculine in society? Ambiguity is indeed an element in the construction of gender practices. The construction of hegemonic masculinities in society cannot possibly refer to the lives of actual men because the construction of ideals and fantasies are embedded with contradictions and some amount of desire to the unobtainable (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; 838). Furthermore, overlaps in masculinities are bound to exist if the project of hegemonic masculinity is to be successful:

"Hegemonic patterns of masculinity are both engaged with and contested as children grow up. Gender is made in schools and neighbourhoods through peer group structure, control of school space, dating patterns, homophobic speech, and harassment (Mac and Ghaill 1994; Thorne 1993). In none of these cases would we expect hegemonic masculinity to stand out as a sharply defined pattern separate from all others." (Connell and Messershmidt 2005; 839)

3.4 Structured action theory

Structured action theory was introduced by Messerschmidt in criminology. He based the theory on West and Zimmerman's notion of "doing" gender and on Connells above-mentioned theory on hegemonic masculinity. West and Zimmerman suggested that gender is the everyday social practices that we do to live up to our sex category. Both the actor and the audience are presumed to have a shared understanding of the appropriate social behaviour for that gender (West and Zimmerman 1987; 127, Messerschmidt 1993; 80). And although these practices are individual, they are done within a structure of situated social actions that contribute to the reproduction of social structures. We do gender according to normative beliefs of gender, thus reproducing gender structure. Or we denounce some of them producing other structures. Hence, the perception of structured action (West and Fenstermaker 1995 in Miller 2002; 434). Therefore, masculinity is something accomplished, constructed in specific social situations and in interaction with others, not something attached on men or decided beforehand (Messerschmidt 1993; 80). In a social setting, men use the social tools at hand, such as physical appearance and behaviour, to demonstrate, communicate and accomplish their masculinity. When these social resources are not available, crime can provide a social resource in doing and accomplishing a "positive" masculinity in a certain social context (Miller 2002; 435). It is not used to communicate just any masculinity but to convey a masculinity as distinct from femininity by enhancing its feature of dominance. Crime then is taken as a resource for accomplishing gendered dominance and hegemonic masculinity. Because, as mentioned above, although doing masculinity is individual, it is done within the social frames of what is assumed as masculine where some forms are accepted, encouraged and permitted by the society in which they exist. (Messerschmidt 1993; 81). One strength of the structured action theory is that it goes beyond the victimization of men and women as mere passive receivers of structural circumstances while still recognising the existing structured inequalities. In this way, it has bridged the gap between agency and structure (Miller 2002; 434).

Using life-history interviews, Messerschmidt has provided useful insights in what meanings men and boys give to their social actions and "how these actions are related to conscious choice and specific social structures in particular settings" (Messerschmidt 2000 in Miller 2002; 435). An example that Messerschmidt presents

is of an adolescent who sexually abused his younger cousin to accomplish a masculinity that he didn't think he could obtain otherwise. He was bullied at school because of his weight and girls didn't want to go near him. He also came from a dysfunctional family and had to live with his grandmother, his uncle and the uncle's family. His uncle's wife abused him at home. The sexual abuse gave him a feeling of dominance which also resulted in a feeling of adequacy, thus accomplishing a form of successful masculinity. When traditional indications of "positive" or successful masculinities are not available or when one's masculinity is questioned in a crucial situation, violence may be used to accomplish that masculinity (Messerschmidt 1999; 201-206).

One critique of the theory directed from feminist thinkers was that, especially when studying the female involvement in crime, it tended to be tautological. Because it explains crime as a resource to achieve masculinity, explaining females' engagement in crime as a resource to accomplish femininity and their participation in "masculine" crime as an anomaly (Miller 2002; 436). An example is Messerschmidt's study of the participation of adolescent females in street gangs where he describes it as an attempt to live up to the "bad-girl" image, a normative femininity perceived as the ideal within the context of the gang. This, Miller argues, becomes circular because it tends to define crime as a resource to accomplish a normative masculinity or femininity, not taking into account the transformational potentials of the actor. While Miller does recognise the efficiency of the theory, she suggests that less focus should lie on normative gender with more focus on a complex concept of agency instead (Miller 2002; 438)

Another critique came from the psychoanalysis suggesting that Messerschmidt's assumes an optimistic view on his interviewees as a rational, unitary subjects guided by self-interest in a society with structural inequalities. This view is contested by Hearn who instead suggests that men neutralize violence against women through "instrumental strategy of control". Thus "Whereas Messershmidt (especially 1999) believes that interviewees can and will 'tell it like it is' given sufficient trust and rapport, Hearn presumes a male subject inscribed by self-interested discourses of violence and masculinity" (Gadd 2000; 430). Gadd directs critique to both Messerschmidt and Hearn for the presumption of only a rational subject, neglecting the emotional aspect that might be of equal importance. He explains that men's violence can be a way to "fend off psychic threats to their sense of vulnerability"

(Gadd 2000; 445). In this light, Gadd argues, the masculinity achieved through violence may not be what they have desired (2000; 444)

4. Method

4.1 The snowball method

When I suggested to my supervisor at the Jordan University that I would try to get in contact with male perpetrators of honor killings, she discouraged me strongly to do so saying that it was nearly impossible to do in Jordan. To kill a relative for the sake of honor is in societies of honor culture seen as deeply psychologically stressful for the perpetrator. Once someone "cleans" his honor in the eyes of the collective, he's yet again accepted into the group and with that comes the collective's obligation to protect him and spare him from any emotional stress, especially if he's an older man. Since my attempts to interview convicts failed, I had to try my luck in finding ex-convicts. I knew that there was no other choice for me than to use the snowball sampling method to get to them, since no register on ex-convicts was available for the public.

The Snowball sampling method or the chain referral method is usually used when conducting studies on sensitive phenomena where the target populations are hard to reach. These kinds of groups can be prostitutes, drug addicts, HIV people, homeless people, criminals etc. A common trait these people have is usually that they don't want to be found. Snowball sampling method then means trying to reach that target group by creating contacts with a respondent's circle of acquaintances (T. Trotter and J. Schensul in Bernard 1998; 705, Faugier 1997; 790). The regular scientific control methods are not possible nor is the census-based sample frames or other methods using randomly sample techniques (Faugier 1997; 790). This has resulted in the increased importance to the use of non-random methods of data collection and innovative research sampling techniques such as the snowball sampling method. Respondents are more eager to hide their involvement in a phenomenon the more sensitive and threatening it is, making sampling difficult to obtain. Related to this is

how visible the activity studied is in the society. The less visible it is the harder it gets to sample. That, together with the "unscientific" sampling options and the threatening nature often characterizing these studies, have made many reluctant to conduct studies on hard to reach populations (Faugier 1997; 790).

The main characteristic of snowball sampling is the belief that the target group have a connection to each other, some kind of link or bond with those who share the same situation. These relationships make the basis of finding more respondents, thus making the referral chain (Faugier 1997; 793). Since my target group didn't have any relation to each other, this made them even harder to find. My traits were the professionals that had been in contact with them in one way or another through their cases.

Research subjects are not collected randomly in the snowball sampling method, as is the conventional way in sampling. The collection of research subjects is very much dependent on the referrals of the respondents and on their willingness to cooperate. This is why the snowball method is claimed to be biased and nongeneralizable. (Cohen and Arieli 2011; 428, Faugier 1997; 791). Biernacki and Waldrof bring up some difficulties in the method, namely the difficulty of finding respondents and starting a referral chain, verifying the eligibility of potential respondents, and engaging respondents as informal research assistants (Faugier 1997; 792).

The social "invisibility" of the target group is the first problem that often strikes a researcher using the snowball method. Groups with low visibility are very hard to locate and contact due to moral, legal or social stigma concerning their behaviour (Faugier 1997; 793).

Possible facilitators to find a hard-to-reach target group is to turn to the professional group/groups who encounter them on a day-to-day basis. These kinds of professions can be the police, social workers etc. Due to their positions providing service or control on the target populations, such informants obtain a unique experience that could be very helpful. However, there are also a number of constraints around this group of informants. One of them is the lack of trust usually found from the target group toward the police or social workers (Faugier 1997; 793).

When it comes to acquiring information, two roles have been proven efficient: the anonymous stranger and the "wise" person. The wise person can manage to maintain the interests of the respondents by, for example, providing his/her professional help

(Faugier 1997; 794). The role of the stranger is the one that I found was more accurate in my case.

4.1.1 The stranger

The definition of a stranger from a sociological point of view and according to Georg Simmel (1908) is the combination of two poles: to be in constant motion, fluid, and to be fixed to a certain space or figurative space, such as a group. The stranger doesn't come from the group of which he/she is a stranger to but becomes part of it. He/she is the potential traveller that doesn't abandon the freedom of coming and going and is never really ever gone (af Edholm in sociologisk forskning 2011 No. 2; 65). The stranger is not considered as an outsider. It is a person among us, belonging and not belonging. Someone so familiar so that one can relate to and yet so unfamiliar in the sense of not having any bonds to; Because of the characteristic feature of the stranger as distant from the group, he/she is confided in. The stranger becomes the bearer of the secrets that one can't share with close ones. Almost like a psychiatrist or a priest. And it is because of this absence of bonds that people have tended to assign a certain objectivity to the role of a stranger that they have consulted when in need for a view detached from the bonds of close relations (af Edholm in sociologisk forskning 2011 No. 2; 65-69).

Connected to the above-mentioned idea of the stranger is the method of participant observation. It includes the paradoxical practice of observing the studied people while at the same time participating in their everyday activities, interactions, events, rituals. It is about creating a sense of fellowship so that neither part is constantly reminded of the strangeness of the researcher and so that the researcher gets a deeper understanding of the culture by engaging in it through the explicit and tacit practices of everyday life (Bernard 2006: 260).

I used participant observation as an unstructured way of learning of the people studied. Unstructured because the observations happened in the setting of spontaneous, everyday life.

Participant observation is used to bring the ethnographer closer to understanding the point of view of the lives of people studied. Geertz viewed this process as putting

yourself in the way of a culture as "it bodies forth and enmeshes you" (Bernard 2006: 263).

4.1.2 The snowball sampling method in a conflict area

One difficulty when conducting research on hard-to-reach populations is the issue of distrust. In a non-conflict environment, this usually concerns only specific populations but, in a society characterized by conflict, all parts of that society can be very suspicious of outsiders and can show unwillingness to exposure. This distrust in whole societies can especially be found in countries and times with authoritarian regimes where personal freedom is limited (Cohen and Arieli 2011; 425).

The definition of a conflict environment is not necessarily one of actual war. It could rather be an environment of antagonistic atmosphere in a society or between societies; A state of cold peace (Cohen and Arieli 2011; 425). When it comes to doing fieldwork in a place characterised by cold peace, this means the strong visibility of distrust and the difficulty to find participants. Establishing trust is thus the main task in such an environment (Cohen and Arieli 2011; 428).

In a conflict environment, the snowball sampling method is said to not only be the most suitable method but maybe the only method there is. In a place where there are several limitations (lack of contact information, lack of trust, fear, political, legal and ideological constraints) the whole population becomes hard to reach. Thus, the efficiency of the snowball sampling method (Cohen and Arieli 2011; 427).

The situation in Jordan is not of actual war but rather a state of cold peace; With conflicts going on in Syria and Iraq, and the relations with Israel being of a distrustful nature. The authoritarian regime in Jordan with its strong secret service also deepens the sense of mistrust in people since citizens think that undercover state agents are quite common. In the field, I was met with distrust sometimes because I was researching a topic that is very unusual for a woman to study. Especially because the topic is of such private matter, which made people doubtful about my intentions. They wanted to make sure I wasn't an agent of the Jordanian state or the Israeli, sent out to investigate something else than the topic I presented to them. One friend warned me to be cautious. She strongly suspected that the Jordanian secret service was keeping an eye on me, since I had been in contact with them when trying to meet with

convicts. In my field report, I cover these many obstacles but because of too little space here, I'll leave it at that.

4.2 Self-reflexivity

"In many ways, writing this research without writing myself in it is akin to trying to paint a portrait without a brush"- Azza Karam

In any ethnographic study, the necessity of self-reflexivity is crucial. However, Karam argues, the idea of self-reflexivity is not supposed to be of a confessional nature (Karam 1997; 32) but an attempt to put yourself in the picture or rather putting yourself under the microscope. It is stepping down from your own position to give the reader the privileged possibility of evaluating your work. It is also a form of transparency that reminds both author and reader to have a wider view on the dynamics that are going on. Self-reflexivity evokes the recognition of the position of power that one holds as a researcher. I will come back to the relations of power between researcher and researched but first let me give you a short introduction to my background.

Being of Iraqi origin and growing up in Sweden, I have a strong experience of growing up in the honor culture. I was raised according to the honor codes of the Arabic culture where I was taught early that a girl's and woman's chastity was her greatest virtue. Bringing shame on the family was perceived as equal to treason. As we were part of the Arabic community, living in a suburb where people of Arabic descent were well-represented, this honor culture was sensed in school, on the streets and in everyday life.

Education was of importance in my family and later provided me with a tool when discussing my rights. How to dress was of importance. Me wearing a bathing suit, for example, caused some people to question my mother's ethics for letting me. Having a boyfriend caused some Arabic girls my age to shame me for being "too Swedish".

In the age of twelve came my first rebellion against the honor culture. It continued to my adolescence when I moved to France to study, to my adulthood when I at the age of twenty-two sat my father down to tell him I was moving to my own apartment in the same town as they lived, an act of deep disgrace for my family.

The aim of presenting my background is to give the reader a necessary understanding for my position in the topic and the stories that I'm trying to depict. Karam mentions that evoking one's own story becomes a part of telling the stories of those whom one is trying to give a voice (Karam 1998: 33). The concept "conscious subjectivity" - advocated by feminist research, critical theory studies and others - instead of the "value-free objectivity", is of the project to look at oneself with critical eyes and stating to the reader your standpoint, background and choices. Or as Karam puts is "..so that the awareness acts as a form of self-censorship, literary criticism and examiner of information" (Karam 1998: 44). It is also a way of bridging the asymmetrical power relations that arise between researcher and researched (Arendell 1997: 589, Råheim et al. 2016: 1).

This brings us to the topic of power since self-reflexivity inevitably demands reflections on the power relations that permeate the study. First, it is important to be aware of the layers of power dynamics that one is involved in (Karam 1998: 40). On the way back from meeting with a tribal head arranged by an informant, his father who had accompanied me there, looked at me through the rear-view mirror of the car and said "I hope that you deliver a correct message to the people in Sweden that we, the Arabs, are not the bad people we are depicted to be" (this even though I did mention at several occasions that I was merely a Master student and not a full-fledged researcher). The author/researcher hold a power position in relation to the people interviewed and the great responsibility that this relation brings (ibid). The authorial role, the presence one holds in the text and to what extent it affects the information that is given, is an important aspect of the power discourse (Karam 1998: 42). At the same time, Råheim et al. argue that this power relation can also be reversed as informants have the power of controlling the information revealed to the researcher (2016: 7).

As both an outsider and an insider (Western upgrowing with Iraqi origins), having enough distance is questioned. This problem, Abu-Lughod argues, derives from the anthropological attempt to try to distinguish the Self from the Other; the studied (Abu-Lughod 1991: 467). There is a historically constructed division between the West and the non-West where the later served as the studied "other". When studying one's own society, the objectivity of the researcher is thus questioned because the researcher bares a greater risk of falling into subjectivity (Abu-Lughod 1991: 468). In the field, however, too little engagement from the researcher, too much distance, can

result in doubt or withdrawal by interviewees. It was thus crucial not to create a power relation where the interviewee felt objectified.

4.3 A woman interviewing men

On a seminar on interview techniques that I attended a couple of years ago, Dr Fataneh Farahaneh told us about an experience that she had when applying for funding for a study on diasporic masculinities among Iranian men. The feasibility to do such a study being a woman was questioned to which she answered that there exists no documented evidence that men talk better with their own sex than with women (Farahani, 14.11.24 "Intervjuteknik för kvinnor 100"). It is no secret that one is treated and regarded differently depending on one's sex, age, ethnic background etc. Under no situation will there be a meeting between two people that leave no impression on each other. Every meeting is of interactional kind which will inevitably evoke impressions and expectations about oneself and about "the other". What is of interest to me is not merely the degree of truthfulness in the meeting but what the person is trying to convey to me.

As a woman in a strongly patriarchal milieu that advocates the separation between the sexes, every encounter was gendered. Despite the delicacy of the topic, the men I interviewed showed that they appreciated talking to me about their experience because they had no one else to talk to. It was also obvious that they were more comfortable talking about their emotions with a woman. The two ex-convicts I managed to interview mentioned it several times and one, Ramzy, would even cry when talking with me about his late son. He then immediately regained his harsh well-controlled face whenever the rest of the family joined us. It is not unusual that men express a view that it is easier talking to a woman about their emotions. In her study on divorced fathers, the men that Arendell interviewed "stressed that they especially exercised caution to not disclose their deeper feelings or even to fully describe their divorce or after-divorce experiences to other men who, they believed, were more likely to be critical of any displays of emotional distress" (Arendell 1997; 595)

At other times, some men I met in the field conveyed that they didn't think I could fully understand their logic because I was a woman and because I was brought up in the West.

Another thing that was noticeable was that many men that I met in the field wanted to be in charge of the situation. This could be by ordinary things like ordering in cafés (this could also have to do with the fact that waiters addressed them), sitting next to the taxi driver in taxis, or other clearly hierarchical acts such as lecturing or disciplining me. As a woman, I felt that I needed to prove myself to make an impression. Like Arendell suggests, female researchers must have an approach of being nonthreatening and at the same time proving that they are credible, competent professionals to achieve an impression (Arendell 1997: 598). I noticed that too much laid-back attitude could give an impression that I wasn't tough enough for the mission I had in front of me.

The most noticeable feature of assertiveness was that of taking charge and leading the conversations (Arendell 1997: 600) where I felt that I sometimes was belittled, especially by older men. I knew, however, that that situation could arise even if I had belonged to the opposite sex since the tribal hierarchy also demands the subordination of young males to older ones. I didn't mind very much that most men felt the need of leading the conversations since it was a chance for me to listen to what they wanted to tell me instead of asking about specific topics that might not be of interest for them.

5.Findings and Analysis

Outline

Here, I intend to present my finding by first introducing to the reader a descriptive picture of the varieties of masculinities that I encountered in the field. This is done in 5.1 and 5.2. I have chosen to include 5.1 because of the valuable insights some people brought to my attention in their oppositional manner of gender performance, reflecting an everyday activism that demands recognition. In 5.3, I move on to the actual interviews with the two ex-convicts that I managed to get in contact with after a very long search. Each interview is then followed by an analysis of the case. In chapter 6, I conclude with some final reflections on the similarities and differences found in the two cases and some final thoughts on the topic of the honor culture.

5.1 The Rainbow

A stroll one Friday evening on the long Rainbow street of the first circle in Amman paved with cobblestones, with roof top cafés filled with men and women smoking shisha, bars (one inofficial gay bar), restaurants, street-performances, liquor shops, book stores, a mixture of people - Jordanians, Arabs, Westerners, "Easterners", urbans, rurals, gay, straight, religious, seculars, traffic jams on the one-way street with all sort of music coming from the car stereos – from nationalist music from the big jeeps with young men with their upper-bodies hanging from the windows waving the Jordanian flag, to pop-music à la Nancy Ajram- would give the impression of being a city in complete rhythm with the globalism and cosmopolitanism of modern days. It is on this street, that reflects the multifaceted Jordan that my journey began. I lived on one of the backstreets to the Rainbow street. Nour, a friend and an informant that I had met in Lund, had helped me find the nice little studio that I stayed at. She lived one floor below me. It was through her that I would come to meet some of the most interesting people I met during my time in Jordan. She had been a human rights activist a while back and was very well-connected with the grass-root activists and movements in Jordan. As an informant, she was of tremendous help for me, not the

least when it came to gaining insight about the Jordanian society. When I first met her in Lund, she pretended to be from four different Arabic countries, changing dialect for every country she claimed she was from so gracefully skilful that it left me stunned. Towards the end of her show I had begun to get tired of the confusion she caused me, so I just asked with some irritation "so where the heck are you from?". She answered the question and continued talking. Endlessly! That evening, on our way back to Malmo, she opened up to me in a way that surprised me considering it was our first meeting. Later, I have wondered if it was to test me.

Nour was lots of fun to hang out with. Even when she was down and emotional, talking about the injustices that life has put her through, she would often brake out in a sarcastic symposium that left all around her laughing. She had thousands of acquaintances (literally!) but few close friends.

I met Karim at my surprise birthday party that Nour had arranged for me. Karim and I found each other through our mutual love to dance. Eventually he moved into the same building and we became neighbours. Karim described himself as metrosexual and later confided his bisexuality to me. His tender behaviour, emotional openness, love for dance, fashion, art, and his light-hearted, humorous way, was a contrast in a society that valued emotional repression in a man and where laughter and smile was considered somewhat of an "unmanly" feature. On women, smiling too much was considered being "easy".

Karim and Nour came from the upper middle-class in Jordan. They appeared, from a first glance, to have had a quite liberal upbringing with their secular life-style, Western way of dressing, promoting sexual liberty and being in circles where different sexual orientations were represented. They talked warmly about their families. Nour's family lived in the same city. Karim's parents lived abroad, his sister studied in a city not far from Amman and he had relatives in Amman that he seemed to have regular contact with. They both gave the impression of having very carefree lives; work, studies, parties, hang-overs, romantic liaisons etc.

Getting to know them, I came to understand that things weren't as uncomplicated as they seemed, but it wasn't until that night towards the end of my first trip to Jordan that I fully understood that Nour and Karim actually lived a life like many diasporic Arabs I knew during my upgrowing in Sweden. I had invited Nour to join me to go to Weibdeh, the "hipster area" close to Rainbow street, to buy *za'atar (a* Middle Eastern mixture of herbs). Isa, a taxi driver that I had come to know, came to pick us up.

Nour, who was usually talkative, was very cold, almost rude to Isa, which bothered me. When we got home, I confronted her about this. As the discussion escalated, Nour let down her guard out of anger towards my complete inconsideration to her sensitive life situation.

"Listen", she said," this is not Sweden. You introduced me to that man, that means he knows my first name. And he knows where I live. He can easily dig up information about me. I have told the landlord that I was raised abroad and that my family is not here so that he wouldn't ask about a permission from my family to rent an apartment as a single female. Jordanian females who are not lucky enough to have a foreign passport are asked a lot of questions when they try to rent an apartment because it's simply an unusual thing for single women to live alone. Had I told him that my family is here, he would have considered me a lot of trouble because he would think that some problems are going to happen with them.

Do you know how old I was the first time I took a taxi home by myself?! I was twenty. It was past ten in the evening and I was scared to death that I wouldn't make it home. Didn't you hear Isa himself tell about the taxi driver that kidnapped a girl and raped her? That's one of many stories here in Jordan. Also, one of my relatives own a taxi company. If this guy finds out this about me, my extended family would have more information about my life that I don't want to share. They don't know I'm in town and my life may be threatened if they knew I was living alone."

Nour had told me that she came from a religious family. She had worn the veil until a few years back. Her father died when she was very young and since then her paternal uncles have been quite involved in their lives. What didn't hit me was to what extent of precaution she had to live by to survive. Karim, who had joined us, became serious for the first time ever. "Elvira, Nour is right. In Jordan this is how we must behave to protect ourselves from any risk to exposure of our life-style. You know my ear piercing that I got the other day? Well, today I was at the university and I bumped into one of my cousins there. As soon as I saw him, I hurried to take it off so that he wouldn't see it. It is considered as an effeminate thing to have an ear piercing and an utter shame for one's family if one's son was seen with one. He wouldn't have hesitated to report back to the whole family and my parents would be utterly ashamed. You don't understand. We live in a society that doesn't accept us. And for women it's ten times worse. So, you see, Nour was absolutely right."

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There was something discomforting in the air when talking about honor killings. As if it meant bad luck to just talk about it. A common thing that some would say was "may God protect us from this evil (disgrace)", describing the people in question as abnormal and that these things only happened in dysfunctional/abnormal families, thus creating a distance from the subject. To others, it created a sort of anxiety; some started to talk really fast, others became defensive and yet others became quiet or gave very short answers. Maybe the subject awoke memories in some, maybe it reminded them of circumstances they wanted to forget. Like in Nour's case. She used to tell me about her mother's disappointment with her life choices. Nour was the oldest child in the family. She had carried a lot of responsibility on her shoulders after her father's death. When she began her human rights activism, it caused her trouble with her extended family. "So now you're defending whores and faggots?", one of her paternal uncles had said. Due to her work she began to come home late in the evenings. Her mother was ashamed that Nour did not seem to know her limits in society as a female. Coming home late in the evenings is attributed to women with a "bad reputation" and therefor became a big deal for Nour's mother. With her decision to remove the veil, Nour's mother gradually cut of the contact with her. When Nour got accepted to master studies in Sweden, they had barely any contact. Nour tried to maintain contact with her brothers but the oldest one had turned against her completely and her youngest brother had just tagged along his mother's and older brother's decision. When I met her in Amman she had started to get in touch with him again. He was fourteen at the time. Nour made many attempts to seek contact with her mother. Sometimes her mom seemed to respond to those attempts and other times she wouldn't. "I went to see my mom today", she once said, "We were talking about marriage and I told her that I would like to marry one day. I asked her if she would attend my wedding. She responded, 'why would I attend your wedding when you're already married?'. Nour was a very strong woman whose tears didn't come easily. Even as she told me this, she held her emotions back. Marriage is the rite of entrance into the admissible sexual life of a woman. Expressing herself in that manner may have insinuated a fear that Nour was sexually active and the disgrace and blame she felt because of that.

Nour and her mother both struggled. Her pride, breaking free from the norms she felt held her back, was her mother's shame. They shared a deep love, yet their different

set of beliefs caused a gap that sometimes seemed invincible between them. Nour's mother tried her best to accept Nour's choices but her strong convictions wouldn't let her. So, she turned to her last resort; to keep quiet, renounce her daughter and pray for her soul. A choice which might have been life-saving for Nour.

"Two sandwiches, please", I said to the young man behind the desk in the very small Falafel place at Rainbow street. Falafel al Quds was one of the oldest falafel places in Amman and always had long queues. Maybe the young man behind the desk noticed the hunger in my eyes because the next thing I knew he was handing me a freshly fried falafel while waiting for my sandwiches. I took it and stepped out of the small booth. "See Elvira, it's not all bad to live in a male chauvinist society", said Karim who had witnessed the whole thing. I sensed his sarcasm and laughed. Karim strongly disliked the male chauvinism he felt the society imposed on him. Just a few days earlier he had told us about the phone calls he had gotten from his mom and sister who had shamed him for not handling a guy who had asked for his sister's hand in a "manly" way. The guy had asked in passing if Karim's sister considered marriage. Karim answered the guy that he should ask her in person instead of asking him. The next day, his mother called to yell at him for inviting a man to seek contact with his sister which is considered deeply shameful, unmanly, and unbrotherly. Karim thought that the matter concerned his sister and so it should be hers to decide. He wasn't at all comfortable with the expectation on him to be a dominant, controlling man. It wasn't in his nature, he said. He preferred independent women who didn't permit supervision.

With time, I learned to interpret the body language that signaled when Karim (and others) felt he could be himself and when he felt he needed to "toughen up". Karim, turned formal and laid-back around people he didn't feel comfortable being himself with. He would speak with a slightly deeper voice but still in the same tender manner that he had, restrain from using hand gestures, not laugh or smile too much. He wouldn't dance and if he did, it would be a couple dance that would give the impression of being from a more refined world, a feature of the western gentleman jargon that is in accordance with an accepted sort of masculinity. Belly dance was something he did in more relaxed milieus. This wasn't an act though; it was a strategic body language by Karim where he didn't compromise his integrity while still being in accordance with the accepted norms. Nour would also become quiet with a

serious facial expression and a restrictive treatment that would insinuate intrusion on the personal space.

Karim was very sure of what kind of man he didn't want to be. So was Asfour, an acquaintance to Karim. "I am considered unmanly by the standards of this society", he said to me one evening while we were talking. "I am expected to be dominant, aggressive, jealous. I smile a lot, if you have noticed? That isn't considered manly here. One woman I was in relationship with even asked me why I didn't hit her. She considered me weird for not hitting her. And she eventually left me". "Why would she want you to hit her?", I asked. "Cause that's the way you show you care. Apparently. But I refuse to change my ways. I know that nothing is wrong with me. It's this fucking society that's wicked. That's why I barely have any contact with my family. I left them because they pressured me to be in a way that I couldn't be. We can't give up our freedom just to please others", Asfour said. He was tall, quite thin with broad shoulders. And with an earring in the left ear which he wasn't ashamed to show to me. He wore it rebelliously. But he never wanted to talk about masculinity again.

Nour and Karim knew many who shared the same struggles and were surrounded by strong, intellectual women and men who, like them, were negotiating gender norms in their everyday life, performing the norms as a survivor strategy while reconstructing them at the same time. Each one in her/his way. Shams, for example, told her family that the apartment she wanted to rent was going to be her work office so that they would agree to let her have her own apartment. Her family didn't look lightly on the matter that Shams had also decided to take off the veil not too long ago.

Maher, a struggling musician wasn't considered determined enough. On top of that, he had renounced the strict Islamic upbringing he had when growing up in Saudi Arabia and was more into alternative spiritual paths which caused parts of his family to view him as irrational.

Hisham, was brought up in a well-known Muslim family with his grandfather as a known religious leader. He was quite new to the relationship thing and tried to find his way in the "game", revisiting gender norms, social and religious norms, and negotiating between the expectations of the world of his family and the expectations of his more free-spirited friends. He gave a shy impression, smiled restrictively and wasn't very comfortable with bodily contact in form of hugging, for example, but was too polite to reject anyone. Despite his young age of 21, he was very well-read and up

to date with the intellectual discourses in the country, a respected feature of masculinity in the Arabic society.

The above-mentioned persons are just a few of the crowd of people I met that are reshaping the understandings of gender and power dynamics in the public and private spheres, challenging them with their everyday, anarchic acts of rebellion that breathes defiance.

5.2 Masculinities in the public sphere

Messerschmidt suggests that we tend to do gender differently depending on the social situation, attempting to confirm our bodies as "female" or "male" through our interactants and using the available gendered practices of that particular setting. When the milieu changes, so might our gendered practices (Messerschmidt 2004; 38).

The "streets" is described by Payne as "a site of strength, community, and bonding" and where negotiating gender happens (06; 288). During my time in Jordan, the public sphere was one of the main spaces where I could observe masculinity. Mainly because the public sphere is still in parts of the Arab world as a very male dominated and male-oriented sphere. One thing that is quite visible and noticeable is that the hegemonic masculinity, what is idealized when it comes to masculinity, is derived more from militarism rather than sports, as Connell claims is the case in the Western world (Connell 1995; 54). The public presence of tribalism is also quite visible and intertwined with militarism. The militaristic features can be detected in the illustrations of the king as often depicted in a military uniform, from the regular greenish soldier uniform or the general uniform, carrying a weapon. It is not unusual that he's also depicted wearing the tribal red and white *keffiyeh* (scarf) and an *agal* (black double cord around the head) while other time wearing the entire tribal outfit. Also, the paternal blood lineage illustrated by the present king Abdullah II bin Hussein, his late father king Hussein bin Talal al Hashemi to the left and his heir and son prince Hussein bin Abdullah to the right. Illustrations of Saddam Hussein, often in military cloths were not rare either. I saw that especially in Al Karak.

The parlance is quite militaristic and contains, like a lot of societies, references to extreme or mortal violence that are used in everyday life. Nationalist songs have very close connotations to militarism with connotations to male honor. The Arabic chivalry, *Al Furussiyah* (lit. meaning horsemanship), existing before the Islamic times, and the literature, customs, and parlance make a great part of the hegemonic masculinity, being rather closely embedded in the tribal and militarist masculinity. Till today, horsemanship is an esteemed skill. However, the modern militarism has replaced that ideal with the skills of handling weapons. A synonym that was used interchangeably with Furussiyah to describe the chivalry was *Murruwa*, meaning virtue and honor (Nicholson 1907; 178). Honor intertwined with hegemonic masculinity is thus an old feature of the tribal masculinity. The Bedouins have a saying that goes "There is no religion without Virtue (la dina illa bi 'l-muruwati), giving more importance to virtue than religious doctrines (ibid).

The Arabic knights were not knighted by a king but became so through their actions. Qualities that a knight was expected to have were courage, rationality, dignity, honesty, boldness, seeking honor through noble deeds, poetry, demanding justice and freedom for their people, being ruthless to their enemies and merciful and kind to their friends. The great general Saladin or Salah Al-Din Ibn Yusuf Al-Ayyubi, as was his full name, is still an icon for masculinity in the Arab world and is still mentioned in songs, literature, poetry. Other knights still referred to are, for example, Al Zeer Salem from the times of *Jahiliya* (pre-Islamic times) when wanting to describe a womanizer and Omar ibn Khattab when talking about courage, wisdom, and justice. As I mentioned above, features of the chivalry are also included and modernized in militarism and attributed to the soldier of modern days Arab world. He is the self-sacrificing man that gives up his personal interests to defend his nation (Rohde in Ouzgane 2006: 189). The land is always feminized, always depicted as a helpless woman or mother. In poems, songs, everyday anecdotes, the country is feminized and deeply connected to the gender-specific sentiment of honor. And the nation is the family. Hence, defending one's country becomes a matter of defending one's honor (ibid). This is seen not the least in the Arabic traditions of poetry where poets have even used this socially understood language as a strategy to criticize authoritarian governments. While the land is portrayed as a female, the soldier is always depicted as a man (ibid). Violence and death are the constant companion of the soldier. Just as violence and aggression are socially accepted features in sports, violence and death

constitute a socially accepted feature of the knight and modern days soldier. His body thus becomes an apparatus for the greater good of the nation where emotions are expected to be repressed, to be conquered by reason (ibid).

Besides from militaristic masculinity, sports did form another feature of hegemonic masculinity, equally linked to bodily performance and aggression however not to extreme or mortal violence. It is also important to mention that there was a clear economical, and to some extent ethnical, aspect to the masculinities available. Sportive activities are very much a luxurious feature attributed to the higher economical classes in Jordan. Going to the gym, fitness, martial arts, water sports etc, sometimes cost more than one third of an average monthly salary. Soccer being one of the few exceptions. Embodying an athletic masculinity is thus also a feature of class belonging and also linked to a Western lifestyle since the higher classes of Arabic societies are more "Westernized" (Abu Odeh 2010), tending to embody a mix of "Western" and Arabic masculinities. Further, since high military positions could only be occupied by Jordanians, some forms of hegemonically masculine features were harder to embody for other ethnic groups like the Palestinians, for example. Oppositional masculinities like the one that Asfour and Karim embodied could also be seen in the public sphere, however more visible in Amman than in the rest of Jordan. And depending on what qualities, these masculinities were also often seen as subordinate. Effeminate behavior is such a quality. However, embodying a masculinity that condemned violence against women was not equally condemned. Moreover, like Messerschmidt argues, people may develop several gender strategies at the same time (Messerschmidt 2004; 40) which could mean that while a person may perform an oppositional masculinity in one setting, he may perform a more conventional one in another setting. Today masculinity is addressed as "multiple masculinities" within a person, just like we talk about "multiple identities" (Spector-Mersel 2006; 68).

The subordinate masculinities are first and foremost the ones viewed to be closer to femininity than masculinity. Homosexuality is such a feature but not the only one. Since honor is deeply connected to the hegemonic masculine, the lack of it, or the lack of willing to preserve it through domination of and control of one's female relatives, is perceived as a feminine feature. Emotional openness, being dominated, perceived as physically weak etc. are other qualities of the subordinate masculinities. This despite of sexual orientation.

I think it's worth mentioning that there is an overlapping of masculinities that are interrelated and fluid with no clear cut. Like Connell and Messerschmidt argue, often qualities of the hegemonic masculine are combined with other complicit, subordinate or oppositional masculinities; the above-mentioned "multiple masculinities".

5.3 A "real" man

5.3.1 Hashem

Background

Hashem is about 1.70 metres, thin body and with a calm attitude. When I met him at a café in a town about an hour from Amman and explained my case, he was quite cooperative. "It's not easy talking to friends and family about this. I hold up a strong facade but sometimes I wish I had someone to talk to about this".

He grew up in an economically challenged area, in a family of five brothers, three sisters, and three half-brothers. His father is married to two women. Neither of his parents have an educational background and Hashem himself dropped out of school to pursue a soccer career.

Q: Can you tell me about your family, your upgrowing?

A: I had a beautiful childhood. Innocent, joyful, carefree. I'm from a big tribe. Our tribe is known across the whole country. We are known for our goodness, generosity, our good reputation. I grew up in a Palestinian refugee camp full of problems. You know how they say that if you want to make a man of your son, send him to the military? Well the refugee camp where I grew up was the greatest factory of manhood. We all know each other in one way or another, even though it's a wide area. Violence was a casual feature that we got used to. The other day, the news reported of a guy cutting a Syrian girl in the face with a razor. This may surprise you, but we're used to witness these kinds of things. The camp was full of thugs, mafias,

and criminals that caused trouble. To cut someone else in the face was an act to "mark" him, which costed him the respect of the society.

Some of them were my friends and we went to school together. But my parents raised us differently, to not become as ignorant as them. Therefore, we have a very good reputation in society. But because we are Palestinians, we don't have the same rights as the Jordanians. We suffer because of the job situation. We are not let into the public sections without a *wasta* (connections, based on favouritism instead of merits). So, we are forced to work in the private sector. That's why some of us went the wrong path. It's a harsh life."

Q: What about your parents and your relationship with them?

A: My mom is a very warm and loving woman. We have a very close relationship, me and her. I am one of her favourite sons. I have a beautiful relationship with my father. He's a very democratic man. He doesn't know anger, no matter how hard the circumstances are. He's a rational and calm man. A great personality. Is it possible to describe paradise?! To me, my father is paradise. He served in the military for a while, starting at the age of 16. After that he travelled abroad. He went to Germany, Iraq, Syria, doing casual jobs here and there. This made him the openminded person that he is. He was the only boy in his family, growing up among four sisters. Surely you know that we Arabs prefer boys over girls. He always reminds us what a privilege it is to have a brother, since he grew up without any. Because the brother holds your back, he is your support in life.

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Where do birds go to die?

Hashem's older sister wanted a divorce because her husband treated her badly. From that marriage she had two daughters. She moved back to her paternal home. A year later she is confronted with severe pains and have to go to the hospital accompanied by her mother. Once there, they are told that she's pregnant and that the baby is on its way.

"There had been no bodily signs that she was pregnant. It came like a complete shock to us. I had finished my daily work-out at the soccer club and was heading home. My cousin who is also my brother-in-law, told me what happened. I headed home not knowing how I got there. At the door, I met my father. He asked me if I had been

notified of the events and I nodded. "Well, you know what to do", he said to me and my brothers.

I went inside and headed towards her room. When I walked in, she looked up with frightened eyes. I was not thinking; I had lost my reason. I saw her sitting there. Next to her was a little baby. I asked her "to whom does this child belong?" She didn't answer. I asked her one more time with no answer. So, I grabbed her by the throat with this hand." He raised his right hand demonstratively. "I didn't even use both hands. And I kept squeezing till she…. Then I just withdrew. I sat all alone on the floor. And that's how my brothers found me. When she died… It's really hard to describe that situation because… it's simply indescribable. It's even hard to imagine."

Q: Where are your nieces now?

A: They're living with us. It was our choice. In Jordan, when such a thing happens, it's customary that the girls are brought up by their maternal grandmother. Two sweet girls. They love me a lot.

Q: Do they know what happened to their mother?

A: No. we haven't told them. They're still very young. We don't want to scar them.

Q: Are you taking care of the baby too?

A: No. We didn't even know who the father to the child was. She wouldn't tell us. I took the baby with me and asked my brother to drive me to the police. I handed myself in and handed over the baby. They put these children in an orphanage. We don't know where he/she is now. I am not obliged to take care of the child. None of us is. God will have mercy on him.

Hashem did sometimes show signs of sadness when talking about his sister. However, he was not ashamed of his action. On the contrary, it was clear that he thought that he had obtained redress. "Honor is something very big in life. To lose one's honor would be equivalent to death. You would still be breathing, nothing more. And even if a man managed to continue living, people would never stop reminding him of his dishonour. That would be the ultimate psychological breakdown. Women are, in today's society, considered to be equal to men. Well, if you want to be treated equally, you'd have to share our burden too. This means living an honorable life. If women abandon the men from this task, we would lose our honor. You are the carriers, we the protectors of honor. It's a shared responsibility." To Hashem, then, losing his honor was a matter of social death (Dogan 2014).

Q: Can you tell me how you were met by the police when you handed yourself in?

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A: I had never been in a police station before. I expected them to treat me badly but instead they were really nice to me. The superintendent that I asked to see was very understanding. I was crying. The prosecutor told me not to blame myself and said that few people could do what I had done. They were all very supportive, bringing me coffee and cigarettes and not putting me in the same car as other criminals.

The prison, however, was not for the weak. Till this day, I don't know how I managed to survive that time.

Life in prison was a whole new world. There is an Arabic saying that follows "if thy aren't a wolf, thy will be food for the wolves" (En lam takon theeb aklatka al thee'ab). This is how life in prison is. If one is not a man in the true meaning of the word, one will not live. There's all kind of people there. If you can't take care of yourself, you'll be lost. And there were people who were lost. It was the first time for me but, praise the Lord, I managed to take care of myself. I minded my own business, respected myself and thus came others' respect for me.

Q: And the people who were lost, how did you see that?

A: We were put in cells that took up to ten people each. So, the ones who got subdued were the ones who cleaned the floor, did the laundry, went to get food for the rest of us. They were responsible for all the cleaning and such. In return one would pay them with cigarettes or small change. Like one dinar (1.40 USD) would be enough for a whole week. It was no life to live at all. Then there were the tough guys. These people were not of this world. I can't begin to describe their sick ways. They molested people.

Q: Were these people raped, you mean?

Exactly! I tried to put it delicately for you. I learned a new word for these people; "khoz". It means someone that is (morally) depraved. He has no worth and is a man only by name. You'd have to prove yourself from the first beginning. If you didn't, you'd have lost your manhood. If someone insulted you and you didn't get up and hit him, you'd be a goner. You'd live subdued. They provoked me to fights many times and I never backed off. Some of them were even bigger and stronger than me. But I managed to take them and win them over. I even managed to save some of the guys that couldn't defend themselves from being raped. It was enough to say 'he's under my protection' and they'd leave him alone. They developed a certain respect for me because they knew my case and because I showed self-respect."

Q: How was your relationship with your family during that time? Did you keep in touch?

A: My family used to come visit me. My mother would cry every time she saw me. I used to go crazy and tell my brothers not to bring her. I couldn't face her. I wanted to forget. But a human being cannot forget. Rather he pretends to forget. Everybody pretends to forget. Because we want to convince ourselves that we have. My mother, first she'd lost her daughter and then she thought she'd lost me. We thought I would get ten years or more. She didn't say anything, she just cried. No one is made of stone. When she cried, I couldn't bare myself. It was easier when my father and brothers came to visit. Between men it's not as emotionally exhausting.

Q: And your friends? How was is to meet them after prison?

A: My friends, those that I called friends, were really close to me before all this happened. After I got out from jail, they were even closer to me. I earned their respect. That's the difference from if I had restrained from taking action. In our society, a man that doesn't take action is considered a "fallen" person (a depraved person). If one proves himself, society would treat him as a mature man, not a boy. In my case, I already had people's respect before this happened. I kept my word. I didn't fool around, didn't tell lies. I didn't behave like a boy. This incident just proved to them that the person in front of them is a man in the true sense of the word. The opposite scenario, when you restrain from action, would be that people wouldn't even respond to you saluting them when passing each other on the streets. They wouldn't want anything to do with you at all.

There is this man in my neighbourhood that lost people's respect because of his daughters' bad reputation. Because he restrained from action, no one wants to talk to him. If they do it's only to be polite. They would listen to him, not adding anything, just so he can finish his talk and be on his way. They even avoid eye-contact to avoid greeting him on the streets. Me, on the other hand, older as well as younger men greet and invite me into their homes.

Q: You told me that you use to play soccer. Can you tell me more about that?

A: Football was my whole life. I was a central defender. I gave most of my waking hours to it. And I was good at it. We, just like the Brazilians and even more, like to play football a lot. It's our hobby. We grew up in the suburbs. They actually call soccer for the suburb sport; did you know that? We used to form groups to compete against each other. One day, when we were playing, there was a guy called Juma'a.

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He was our coach and the founder of our team. So, this Juma'a had gotten to know a coach from a well-known football club in our town. He arranged for a match between our team and a team from that club. We won by 1-0. We, a simple team from the suburbs, won over them. So, they had two of their coaches watching the game. After the game, they pointed out witch one of us they wanted for their club. And that's how I got in. They used to give us 500 JDs per month and 1 JD every day for transportations. The transportations used to cost us 20 piastres and we'd save the rest. From there, my soccer career took a spring. My body was in great shape. I used to work out a lot. Then this happened to me and I was put away for a whole nine months. I took up smoking in prison. And drinking coffee…

But I am convinced of one thing. That a person doesn't get more than what God has written for him. It wasn't written that I should have more to do with it. God's will.

Self-perception

Q: Has what happened with your sister changed how you perceive yourself?

A: You know, I used to perceive myself as courageous and bold. But I didn't think that I could be this bold, to the extent that I was capable of killing another human being. At the same time, I say to myself "I wasn't in my right mind; as if someone else was doing it". I try to get rid of the memories from that day so that I won't remember what happened to me. It's so hard, very hard. It would have been easier if it would have been a stranger. When it's someone close, it feels as if you've killed yourself. I'm a nice guy. Not the man you see in front of you now. I used to joke, laugh, smile.

Q: Have you experienced emotional distress after what happened?

A: No, not at all. A man has a responsibility not to put himself in these kinds of situations. I keep telling myself that I have already lost one dear person to me, I shouldn't lose myself also. If anything, to not put my parents in any more harshness. I try to stay strong for them.

Q: So, do you mean to say that you regret going through with killing her?

A: "Look anyone in the world would find this a hard deed to commit. I mean, it's my sister we're talking about." He looked down for a second and then looked back up again." I know it's not halal (Islamic term for what is allowed) to take a life. I have a

soul on my conscience. And I have to live with that. But at the same time, there was no alternative."

Analysis

The upgrowing of Hashem is strongly coloured by his origin as a Palestinian and his class, coming from poor circumstances. These factors seem to have been essential in Hashem's identity formation, including in his perception of manhood. At home, he grew up with a strong patriarchal presence and with a mother who embodied an emphasized femininity – the idealised femininity embedding the interest and desires of men (Messerschmidt 04; 42). An enforced sense of brotherhood formed by a father - embodying qualities of both macho and militaristic masculinities - seem to have made a great impact on Hashem's sense of masculinity at home. He also grew up in a street culture where the gangster and macho masculinities were the most prominent alternatives for doing a successful masculinity. Studies done on low-income subcultures show masculinities moulded by feelings of disempowerment because of their financial situation which then affect their sense of identity, not the least the gender identity (Izugbara 15; 122, Payne 06). Effects that have been observed in low-income subcultural constructions of masculinities are "hyper-masculinity"- the impoverished man feeling underappreciated outside the home seeking redemption through a physical "overcompensation" like womanizing, physical fights and excessive drinking etc. (Zinn in Izugbara 15; 123) – gangster masculinity (Payne 06), the use of bodily capital - physical advantage, instead of the inaccessible economic power and social status - to assert themselves, especially in relation to women (Izugbara 15: 123). Hashem shows a sense of masculinity that is strongly connected to his physical abilities since this is his main resource for doing gender. He embodied the masculinity of street culture but refused to identify himself with what he perceived as its manners of conduct, adopting a set of conduct closer to the tribal, chivalry masculinities. Eventually, soccer was added to the arena of exemplary bodily performance, gaining him the public recognition, while also teaching him sportsmanship.

A main feature of both the gangster masculinity (Heber 15; 63, Payne 06; 289) and the chivalry is being a protector of one's family, friends and community against

possible threats which demand a great sense of brotherhood, trust and loyalty, which Hashem made a main feature of in his sense of masculinity; killing his sister was a performance of the protector role which won his neighbours' trust to the extent that they felt relaxed about inviting him into the feminized private sphere ("..they even invited me into their home"). The norm of the man as the protector of women and children, reproduces norms of masculine heroism and female victimhood (Uhnoo 2012 in Heber 2015; 63). This is to be performed on a daily basis to avoid a "masculinity challenge" (Messerschmidt 2000 in Heber 15; 63), where a man's gender performance is questioned.

The breadwinner masculinity, despite the socioeconomic circumstances, is still an expected quality in poor areas like the one Hashem grew up in (Payne 06; 290). Where Hashem grew up this was also linked to his honor, since it is considered shameful to let a woman work, especially older women like one's mother. Through sports, Hashem could perform his masculinity, doing both the athletic performance while also being a provider for his family. In a subculture where unemployment is very high, being able to make a good salary out of playing soccer was an exemplary position for Hashem who performed an ideal masculinity through his athletic achievement and financial status.

Odeh argues that the discourse on gender in the Arab world is closely linked to the virginity discourse (Odeh 10; 917). Doing a successful femininity means to do virginity first and foremost. The hymen, Odeh suggests, becomes not only a biological part of the female body but her whole body, symbolically. Thus, even when married and not considered a virgin in the physical term, a woman is expected to perform her virginity through practices of chastity (Odeh 10; 918). The failure of Hashem's sister to embody an emphasized femininity became understood as a deliberate action to betray the family honor. Like Hashem put it "she was older than me. I didn't have to teach her. She knew the rules and yet she broke them"

He had a somewhat dehumanized imaginary of his sister which was part of a strategy to repress emotions and forget. Hashem never praised his late sister the way it is custom to do whenever talking about a dead person, namely "*Allah yerhamha*" (May God have mercy on her). To restrain from that is usually and customarily a strategic practice. This was somewhat confirmed when Hashem told me that the family had also chosen not to hold the traditional Islamic ceremony held after the burial of the departed where close ones and friends come to show their condolences and support

with the family. This is very usual when a female has been killed in the name of honor as a way of showing that the family is not mourning the victim. Choosing to give away his sister's baby is also nothing unusual whenever there is a child in the picture, as part of cleaning the blood lineage (by cutting the child off from its roots). As mentioned earlier, Hashem embodied features of both hegemonic and complicit masculinities before prison and wasn't about to lose that. His physical skills came well in handy when asserting his place in prison by performing his gangster masculinity; not showing fear for violence, not backing out of fights, not doing any effeminate tasks like cleaning etc. By taking on the bigger guys, he emphasized his bodily skills, shifting focus from his size. This, in turn, enhanced his masculine self-esteem more than if the guys had been the same size as him (Heber 2015: 66). Hashem's experience seems to have brought him closer to his dad and his brothers, gaining their respect and gratitude for "cleaning" their honor too, hence asserting their masculinity as much as his. His relationship with his mother seems more distanced as she seems to be reminding him the most of his sister, steering up feelings that he tries hard to repress.

When in prison, Hashem's athletic condition worsened; he started smoking and drinking a lot of coffee. Also, he didn't work out for nine months. When he got out, he realised that he could no longer live up to the exemplary athletic masculinity that he embodied before jail, partly because of his age of 28 years which is considered quite high in sports, which might also have contributed to the decision of quitting. With that came unemployment which he hasn't managed to fully recover from. He's had odd jobs that didn't last long but nothing as well-paid and with the same status as when he was playing soccer. Thus, even though he managed to assert his hegemonic masculinity, this costed him his provider position and the masculine self-esteem that that brought him. Also, being labelled as a criminal bothered him. After prison, whenever he was stopped by the police and had to show his id, they would cause him troubles. "They couldn't see what I was convicted for, only that I was an ex-convict. So, they'd start asking me a lot of question and such". Hashem eventually stopped carrying an id and would, whenever asked for one by the police, give his younger brother's id-number.

In all, Hashem's experience gave him a perception that he stood above others because he had succeeded in the ultimate test of mastering his emotions and prioritized the rational best for him and his family. He developed a narcissistic self-perception; being

ultrarational, strong, skilful, honorable, courageous "in a way most people aren't" etc. This also left him feeling quite lonely, for example whenever he needed to talk to someone he would restrain "because they wouldn't understand". He couldn't maintain the role of the provider or his role as a sportsman, but they came second to preserving his and his family's honor. In the end, he stands triumphant having performed a successful masculinity that costed him some of his masculine status but also won him enhanced social contacts and skills and rendered him feeling transcendent albeit lonely. However, even though Hashem acted in what he perceived as an inevitable rational way, it has costed him his peace of mind and a clean conscience. In the end, he may have triumphed socially but failed miserably in loving and protecting his sister.

5.3.2 Ramzy

Ramzy was a man in his 60s, 1.75 metres high and a body that revealed a past of hard body work. It took me a while to establish trust with him. He didn't know how I got his address that afternoon when I knocked on his door, suspecting that I was from the Israeli secret service first. I told him that I wasn't and spent the coming times that I saw him trying to confirm to him and his wife that I was indeed who I said I was. I was lucky to have a letter from SIDA (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), that I got with my scholarship from them, written in Arabic. Together with my passport, pictures of my family in Sweden and answering lots of personal question, I managed to get Ramzy and his family to relax around me. Ramzy grew up in the West Bank in a family of three sons and five daughters. His father suffered from mental illness and he and his brothers were forced to start working at an early age. Ramzy's brothers were a lot older than him. They were living abroad during his upgrowing. "My first job was in farming at the age of thirteen or fourteen. When I moved to Nablus for studies, I worked as a tiler after school to cover my expenditures". Ramzy also got involved in the Palestinian resistance movement at a very early age. To what extent he was involved or how that experience affected him was something he didn't want to talk about at all.

Ramzy's brothers helped him financially during his studies. However, when he went to Jordan to pursue higher studies, they refused to continue helping him. "It was psychologically stressful for me when my brothers refused to help me with my university expenses. After they had showed me the right path and my grades were high, they snatched that happiness from me. It felt like a betrayal and I think it created a psychological complex in me. So, I had to go back to the West Bank where I worked for three months before I finally got my scholarship from Jordan; a two-year scholarship at the industrial institution of Aleppo. It felt like I had been pulled up from the well that my brothers had thrown me in. I eventually settled down in Jordan, but I've travelled a lot too. I used to work in Israel for a while, then I went to Oman and lived there for five years. I had quite the good relationship with the Westerners there. I was a very open-minded and extrovert person.

I've always been a responsible person. I supported my family. My father was very satisfied with me because I helped him and my mother a lot financially. He had nothing himself. Till his last breath he blessed me with his prayers."

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But he that fitches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed. – William Shakespeare

"He was living a dishonourable life. Nothing good came out of him. I put him in a good university in Iraq. During Saddam Hussein's time, the Jordanian youths got almost free education in Iraq. One night, I had a very bad dream. I got this feeling that Shahid was in some kind of trouble. I decided to pay him a surprise visit in Baghdad. When I got there, he wasn't home. I went to his university only to find out that he had been expelled from there. I went to meet with the principal who told me that Shahid had skipped many classes and showed such a nonchalance to his education. After talking to the principal, I managed to convince him to let Shahid go back to university.

I set out to find my son and went back to his apartment. I found him in the neighbourhood walking with some friends. When I saw how he was dressed, I couldn't believe that it was my son. He had a necklace around his neck. When he saw me, he freezed. I pulled him towards me by his necklace. 'What man in your family

has ever worn a necklace, huh?! You're a disgrace to this family' I pulled it off and began hitting him. The owner of a convenience store whom I had asked about my son came out running trying to pull us apart. That same day, I deregistered him from university and brought him back with me to Jordan. I put him in a university here. After a lot of effort and spending a fortune on his education, he finally got his degree and got a job. I thought he would grow up and start taking some responsibility. The Quran says '*When a male is born, God tells him you shall be of support to your father. When a female is born, God tells her I shall be of support to your father*' (A hadith, not quranic verse. My translation). As his father I had the right to demand support from him, my oldest son who is supposed to hold my back. His sisters needed to go the university. I asked him to contribute with a hundred dinars a month to the household. He said yes and didn't commit to his word. Instead he spent all his salary on girls, alcohol and nightclubs. He would borrow money from people that I later had to cover. I was brought up that a man never reaches out his hand to beg for anything from anyone. If me and my wife would starve in this house, none of us would ask for even a piece of bread from our neighbours. He brought my face to the ground in front of people (an indication of deep shame, not being able to face people). Once, he borrowed money from a craftsman. This young man was rewiring the second floor of our house, the one that we built for Shahid so that he could get married and settle down. This poor guy makes three dinars per day. From him, Shahid asked to borrow one hundred dinars. And didn't return the money. The guy had great respect for me and Shahids mother, who used to offer him food and treated him like a son. He came to me three months after they finished the construction work, telling me this story. I called upon Shahid and pointed to the young man saying, 'this man has more honor in his feet than you have in your entire body'.

He began to come home late at night, sometimes not coming home at all, leaving me and his mother to worry. This enraged me a lot and I asked him many times to pick up his phone when I called. His behaviour was outside the culturally accepted behaviour. When you came to me the first time, I suspected one of two things. Either you were from the Mossad or that you, or someone you knew, had been in a relationship with my son when he was in Iraq and was here to tell me I had a grandchild. This would have been a disaster and utter shame for me. That's why I asked you how old you were when you left Iraq.

His shameful behaviour even led me to once sit him down and tell him that if he didn't stop, it would lead to me either killing myself or killing him. I had prepared his passport and 1000 JDs. I asked him to take them and get out of the country. I had decided to go through with my plans a few times but stopped myself. Sometimes, I would call him to my room, kiss him on both cheeks and beg him for the sake of God to not force me into a corner of which I couldn't get out from. He didn't listen, didn't seem to care. One time, I was so enraged that I pulled him up towards the wall and hit him. He just stood there (and took it). He used to say to me 'No one else, but you, is ever allowed to raise his hand on me'.

Ramzy fell into tears. He would do that every time he talked about Shahid.

"On that night, after pleading with him to change his ways, I got up, went into his room and… I shot him. I turned myself in. And the rest you know from reading my case. Before I was released, I asked Shahid's mother to bring down all his photos. I never wanted to see his face again.

My health has gotten worse since then. I have diabetes and now it's affecting my eyes. I have also gone through a heart surgery. There is not much time left for me on this earth. I will live the rest of it trying to take care of the rest of my children. I have tried doing right by my family. I have given my children a safe upgrowing, secured their education and now what is left is my departure (death). But in the big picture, we in the Arab and Islamic world haven't been able to achieve anything. Our struggles and dreams were for nothing. Praise the Lord for everything.

Since the incident, I isolated myself from people. I don't go out much and had barely contact with my brothers when they were alive. The only one who has been supportive is my sister in the US. The rest pulled away since my son's death. You know, they say that a neighbour can feel envious of you, but your sibling is the only one that can hit you with the evil eye."

Do you feel that you were hit by the evil eye by your siblings?

"Yes, indeed I do. I grew up with a mentally weak father that I took care of. I did good in school and made good money after I graduated. I was well-travelled too. When I got back to Jordan, I started working as a teacher in welding. My students had great respect for me. And for the money I had saved, I bought a building with my brothers and rented out its apartments. I was the one in my family who earned the most, despite that I was the youngest of the boys. My children did well in school, and

I had a son who would take over this wealth after me. They had reasons to feel envious."

Do you think that what happened is a result of the evil eye?

"Partly. Of course, I also have myself to blame but the evil eye of your close ones can hit really bad."

After a moment of silence, Ramzy said "I was brought up as a Muslim. Sometimes I wish I had been Christian instead."

How so?

"Our religion is so cruel. We were taught cruelty and violence. Many are the times when I, in the mosque during the Friday preaching, have quarrelled with the imam for preaching to our youths to go to jihad against the West, or Israel, or the US. Religions should be peaceful, not encourage to violence and killing. The Christians have a much more peaceful approach. But Alhamdulilah (praise Allah), I am at the same time content for being Muslim. I pray and live an honorable life. Sometimes, I hear the Quran and it brings me to tears. Once, in the mosque, I heard the Quranic story of Joseph and it made me cry all the way back home. Abraham's story about having to sacrifice his son always reminds me about my own story.

You see, sometimes we are not lords over our own actions. We lose control. I am full of remorse but what good will that do me now? In this society, a man is held responsible for his children no matter how old they get. Shahid brought my head to the ground."

"Have you heard of the police chief of Zarqa?", he asked me.

No, I said.

"The chief of the Zarqa police is well-known here around. He was very good at his job. Zarqa was before a venue for drug dealers and weapon smugglers and all kinds of scoundrels. People use to be afraid of leaving their homes. Then this guy took over. He gathered all these notorious scoundrels and their fathers. He picked out his gun, turned to their fathers and said 'I have gathered you as witnesses to what I'm about to say. Either you see to control your sons, or you'll be responsible for their death'. He cleaned the streets of Zarqa from these people. They knew they couldn't get to him, so they turned to his son. They lured him into drugs and alcohol. After trying to change his son's way with no luck, he picked out the gun one morning when the son had just arrived home from a late night's partying and uttered the words 'I have cleaned the streets of every scoundrel there is in town. I'd be damned if I let you bring

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my face to the ground!' He shot him dead and went to work as if nothing had happened.

Ramzy's wife, as the closest relative to the departed, dropped her "personal right" at the police station the next day of the incident, choosing not to take legal actions against her husband which resulted in the low sentence that Ramzy got. Once, sitting alone with her and the daughters, she started talking about Shahid "I don't understand why he did this. Yes, he wasn't living according to what is culturally accepted but what young man doesn't do mistakes? He's sitting their talking as if he's such a democratic man. But he could be really cruel to him. And the boy never disrespected him."

Analysis

"You know dad, a lot of people confuse not being in charge with not being respected. I hope you're not making that mistake, because you command a great deal of respect"
– Frasier, season 2, episode 2

Ramzy had his special chair in the living-room that was the first space that met you when entering their house. There was a long sofa that covered one of the corners of the room. Opposite to the sofa, almost on the other side of the room was Ramzy's chair. He never sat somewhere else and none of the family members even once attempted to sit in his place. Ramzy showed clear signs of introversion or even of being asocial. When he did get out of the house, it was mainly to go to the mosque prayers. The few times I saw him outside, he walked with his eyes to the ground, raising his hand in a saluting gesture to men he passed by and kept walking. His ill-health was articulated many times by both him and his family members as an effect of his deed. The second time I was there, Ramzy's oldest daughter pulled me into their formal living room to convince me to drop the interviews. "We still don't know why he killed my brother. But we have seen how much his health has worsened since. He gets very emotional when talking about this." But Ramzy, even when talking about his bad health, would insist on continuing the interviews saying, "I promised to do this, and I am a man of my word." While Hashem's bodily postures and behaviour

conveyed a high masculine self-esteem, Ramzy's conveyed the opposite when he was in public, although he maintained his position as the patriarchal head and the embodiment of the hegemonic masculine within the family.

Ramzy grew up without a strong patriarchal presence at home. His father was described in subordinate qualities as mentally weak and couldn't provide for himself or his family. His mother, he described as a descent, honorable woman. It's hard to say if he had any other father figure. His older brothers didn't seem to have been very involved in his life either. However, being a child in a militaristic environment must have made an impact on him but it's hard to say how.

Ramzy showed a strong sense of breadwinner masculinity; he was very proud of his financial achievements. Coming from a low-income family where his father wasn't able to support him, he developed a sense of provider masculinity early in his life and the responsibility and independence that came with that. That position put him in a superior power relation towards his ill father which enhanced his masculine self-esteem. The fact that he made a class journey, from the working class to the middle-class, and managed to obtain a university degree, on his own, enhanced his self-confidence and his class identity which also became his way of doing a successful masculine performance. Besides from that, Ramzy showed a strong belief in the Arabic tribal customs and values. He would always make sure to have coffee ready for his guests, which is the traditional tribal way of making a guest feel welcome. Also, welcoming guests by setting a table full of food was a habit in Ramzy's family, another Arabic custom of performing generosity. And since the man is imagined to be the main provider of the family, this generosity is still seen as a gesture of male performance. He was also trained in handling weapons, had a strong feeling of authoritarianism, patriarchal responsibility for his parents when they were alive, and his family; all in accordance with an embodied militaristic masculinity. His strong disappointment with the modern Arabic society was often attributed to what he perceived as a replacement of the chivalry, Arabic values with the Western values. This implied a strong ethnic identity that was embedded in feelings of nationality and of pan-Arabism.

As I have mentioned before, the discourse on gender is also put in relations to other discourses like ethnicity and class. Spector-Mersel also lifts the aspect of age and claims that, when it comes to masculinity, age is not only a feature but a key definer of masculinity (Spector-Mersel 06;). Ramzy's relation to his son was that of an older

man to a younger one. His age was a clear definer of their relationship. So was the fact of fatherhood, thus the patriarchal head of the family, that entitled him to an ownership over his family (Joseph 1993: 469). The position of the father in the Arabic context is one of almost divine nature. Unlike the depiction that Spector-Mersel gives of how older men are treated in the Western context -as an invisible, unmasculine social category- older men hold a position of power and respect earned through their gender performance in younger years plus their old age, in Arabic societies. If their performance of masculinity has been successful in younger years, it is rewarded with an even greater respect because of their age. Aging in relation to masculinity is very much linked to wisdom. An older man is expected to perform his gender not much through bodily performance but through a strong mind.

As Hashem mentioned, male descendants are often preferred over female descendants. In the Arabic collectivist imaginary, the son is symbolically a continuation of his father. He is not only expected to inherit his father's material wealth but also to carry on the good name of his father, both mind and body. In Arabic there is a saying that goes "The one who puts descendants on earth never dies" (*Yalli yekhalif ma yemoot*). Relationality, within the family, is theorized as a feminized concept within the Western conceptualisation. Mothers form a relation to their daughters as an extension of themselves while the sons are left out of that notion. The boys then construct a masculinity based on "difference and separateness", leading to that the feminine personality is defined as relational while the masculine one is defined by the "denial of relation" (Joseph 1993; 465). This definition has then been contested as, among others, being essentialist. Instead Joseph suggests, based on her work with Arab families in Camp trad, a working-class district in Beirut, that the differences between male and female relationality is rather featured by gender and age – linked to "the pervasiveness of patriarchy and patriarchal idiomatic kinship"- than being a feminized notion (Joseph 1993: 466). Furthermore, this relationality presupposes a connectivity, especially what Joseph labels as a "patriarchal connectivity", where intimate others are expected to be each other's extension; reading each other's mind, know each other's likes and dislikes, answer for each other's actions etc. (ibid). And because of the embedded patriarchal structures, men, especially older men hold a position of entitlement to direct the lives of women and younger males, empowering themselves by disempowering the above-mentioned categories (Joseph 1993; 470).

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So, the father's physical decline doesn't become an obstacle when he has his son's physical body that symbolises an extension of his own. At the same time, the young man, who in old tribal customs was not considered a true man until he reached the age of 40, had his father's good reputation and strong mind to rely on. Until today, tribal conflicts are settled between the older men. Young age and masculinity are often depicted in popular imagination as a strong bodily performance rather than embodying a mature mind. Thus, the father is still held accountable for (and entitled to) his grown-up son's actions. Ramzy put all his social and financial resources on his first-born son, Shahid, who then failed to do a masculinity that his father considered honorable. In Ramzy's perception, Shahid put his desires and lust before his duties, and the rational good for him and his family. The fact that he reached out his hand for money from others was a failure of masculine performance since the man is expected to be the provider not the provided for; a subordinate position linked to femininity. Also, the fact that he asked for money from a financially subordinate person, showed a failure in class performance. Not committing to his promises was also considered to be a feature of an effeminate masculinity by Ramzy, more guided by a frivolous, spontaneous mind than a strong one with a sense of duty. For Ramzy then, it became obvious that his son wasn't going to be the continuation of him, neither mind nor body nor financial status. Because of this power struggle with his son, rendering Ramzy a feeling that he was being ignored, belittled, and betrayed, his masculine self-esteem began to shift from a somewhat hegemonic one to an emasculated, subordinate one. The fact that he knew that his son was physically capable of overpowering him but didn't out of respect, made him aware of the fragility of his power position which he tried to redeem with threats of mortal violence to force respect and obedience (Heber 2015; 61). By killing his son, he restored his hegemonic masculinity in his family, asserting his patriarchal status, and his strong mind, and setting an example for the rest of the household to not dare to challenge him. This however, he knew would cost him a lot socially. To kill one's son is to cut off the patriarchal blood lineage, almost like a self-chosen castration, which is perceived as opposite to the self-interest and survival instinct of a patriarch. Especially if the man has more girls and few boys, like in Ramzy's case who had only two boys. However, since the father is considered the owner of the household, he wasn't held accountable for an action that is counterproductive for himself, since that is considered a punishment enough. Actually, Ramzy's performance of masculinity was unsuccessful because it was

perceived as counterproductive, but not failed in the sense of having performed a subordinate masculinity. It is rather the opposite, since strength and authoritarianism are idealized, even when perceived as touching upon craziness and psychological illness, like some people put it when talking about honor killings of a male. So, while Ramzy didn't perform a fully successful masculinity fitting for his age, his masculine performance was quite successful within his own family. Hence, the restoration of him as the authority figure was successful. However, the deep emotions that he held for his son, the high status that the first-born son holds, together with the social failure, left its effects on his self-esteem as a competent social agent, which is often the case when a gender performance "fails" (Messerschmidt 04; 46). And on his health and wellbeing. While he still feels that there was no alternative for him to restore his dignity and honor, the emotional bond that he had to his son left him with great remorse and anxiety which caused an inner battle that he has tried to recover from by turning to religion.

Ramzy told me that he didn't use to be a practicing Muslim before the incident. It was not until afterwards that he became religious. Religion became a sanctuary for self-validation and comfort. He often recited religious texts or used religious parlance to strengthen his perceptions on things but also to find forgiveness. For example, the story of Abraham that was asked to sacrifice his son, insinuating his victimhood and powerlessness towards the situation that he faced. This is not uncommon since offenders often victimize themselves suggesting that the victims drove them towards their actions. For Ramzy, religion also became a setting where he showed a somewhat oppositional masculinity, opposing the imams preaching violence, but also asserting his masculine self-confidence since the mosque had become his main public social setting where he could perform his masculinity.

One interesting thing in Ramzy was his ability to show tears when talking about his late son. He would sometimes cry intensively, without any attempts to hide his tears. Also, he talked often about death with an implicit fear. This and other forms of emotional distress is not unusual in ex-convicts (Heber 2015; 71). And to show vulnerability in this way may suggest a cross-gender strategy in which feminine features are incorporated as a form of resistance to culturally accepted performances of masculinity (ibid).

Finally, some may wonder if Ramzy's case is really a case of honor killing or of mere domestic violence. Well, first of all, honor killings are a form of extreme domestic

violence but not only that. Furthermore, there are clear features of an honor related case in Ramzy's killing of his son. The references to honor and shame are pervasive. Also, the imagination that his son was an extension of his masculine performance gives a slight difference from the normative notion of honor in cases of honor killing but does not disregard its presence. Rather it shows that oppression in the name of honor can manifest itself in different forms. For example, honor oppression in Arab Christian context would maybe not consider it a dishonourable feature for a female to drink alcohol since that is socially accepted and demanded in some situations like the holy communion. That doesn't disregard the possible presence of honor oppression in Arab Christian families. Another difference in the notion is linked to the gender-specific honor connected to the sexual behaviour of a female because of the control of the blood lineage. Not being able to control the female sexual body is a direct prove of a man's inability to perform his physical masculine strength in order to dominate the female body which has an implicit connotation to weakness. Between father and son, however, the dishonour occurs because of the failure of the father to maintain a successful hegemonic masculinity in relation to his son who is seen as a subordinate to his father because of age and relationship. Here, a failed performance of masculinity by the son causes a deep dishonour in the father who then feels he has to overcome that through mortal violence to accomplish a performance of a hegemonic masculinity. In both cases, crime is taken as a resource to assert masculinity. And in both cases, the feeling of emasculation is triggered by a feeling of deep dishonour blamed on the victim. The socially accepted part of Ramzy's deed is that he, as a father, has the right to use violence on his son to discipline him and perform his honor just as the man is perceived to have the right to use mortal violence on his female relatives to regain his honor. The crucial unaccepted feature is the mortal violence towards one's son because of the above-mentioned killing of the symbolically patriarchal heir. But even that is not socially rejected, like Ramzy points out in his reference to the police chief. Hence, there lies a danger in not recognising these murders as related to honor because the ignorance around them as "something else" risks to reproduce norms of gender violence instead of addressing them. Shahid's case could be understood as a mere case of domestic violence but because of the above-mentioned feature, I don't think so. I do, however, want to underline that this is just a suggested analysis of this case and that much more research is needed.

6. Conclusions

This study has tried to shed light on the offender in honor killings, as very little has been written about it. I have looked at two offenders' perceptions on the killings that they committed from the gender perspective using the structured action theory to try to explore what meanings they gave their deed and what effects they perceive that their actions have had on their gendered performance. I have suggested that gender is performed within other discourses of ethnicity, class, age etc. Hashem's background, having an authoritarian father and growing up in a low-income area with street culture and gangster masculinity- where violence is an essential part of proving one's manhood- constituted the available ways of doing masculinity for him. Ramzy growing up with a weak patriarchal presence at home, forcing him to work from an early age moulded a strong sense of breadwinner masculinity in him. That together with his class journey (from working class to middle class), embodying an authoritarian hegemonic masculinity, age and fatherhood constituted the available masculinities for him. By that I don't mean that there weren't other ways of performing masculinity. Only that Hashem's and Ramzy's perception was that they acted within the appropriate masculinities made available for them within the scope of class, age, subculture etc. The constrains, like the financial disempowerment in Hashem's case, did also play a part in the formation of the masculine identities.

I have also tried to shed light on the varieties of masculinities detected in the Jordanian public sphere, depicting the lives of some of the people that I met and their struggles embodying oppositional or subordinate gender practices. The experiences of Karim and Asfour for example show that the gender project is a fluid one where the individual is indeed and active agent in choosing what masculinity to embody within the available masculine resources. One thing that I experienced when meeting with two tribal leaders was that there is indeed, even in the most rigid social settings, room for positive masculinity. The first tribal leader that I talked to expressed his position towards the honor killings as a form of failure in masculinity performance because, as he put it, often these things can be resolved in a better way. He didn't disregard murder as a way of cleaning the family honor but saw it as the absolute last resort, pleading for a positive masculinity favouring a more peaceful manner. The second tribal leader was however not of the same opinion having a much more rigid view in line with the authoritarian masculinity that can only be cleaned through bloodshed.

Granted that this example is not an ideal one, but my point is that there is always space for gender negotiations, even in the most conservative settings.

The masculinity that Hashem and Ramzy conveyed to me as a researcher was one coloured by ethnicity and the resistant attitude toward the West as a cultural hegemony. They felt the need to remind me that their deed is grounded in their ethnic identity as Arabs. They used to say to me "You have Arabic roots. You should know what I mean" as a way of conveying an expectation of countenance from my part. In both Hashem's and Ramzy's perceptions, their actions carried a meaning of an accomplished masculinity. The social validation to Hashem's actions enhanced the feeling of successful masculinity while the lack of validation for Ramzy, resulting in a feeling of "failed" gender performance, led him to isolation. However, because Ramzy's performance wasn't of a subordinate masculinity, it wasn't a total failure. Both offenders developed a form of narcissism leading to emotional isolation. They no longer perceived their surrounding as adequate enough to understand them. And, in Ramzy's case, his surrounding no longer perceived him as obtainable to understand.

There is a general imagination of the offender of honor killings as being a victim of his society's expectations. I have tried here to suggest that a human being is not simply a product of her society but an active agent of producing and reproducing structures through our embodiment of gender within given social structures that enable and constrain our gender performance on a daily basis. We engage from an early age in the gender project which becomes an endless negotiation of our gendered identity. The active performance of Hashem and Ramzy wasn't denied by any of them. According to studies of victimology, the ideal victim in the popular imagination is the subordinate, passive and powerless person (Heber 2015; 61), which fits the description on both Hashem's sister and Ramzy's son. Shahid, being young and capable of taking on his father physically, was shot dead in his sleep totally unaware and unable to defend himself. That together with the above-mentioned disempowered, subordinate masculinity that Ramzy conveyed about his son, makes him fitting to the depiction of the ideal victim. The same thing goes for Hashem's sister. Besides from the physical disadvantage she already was in as a woman facing several men who could easily overpower her and the social lack of protection, she had just given birth and was in an even weaker position with no chance of self-defence. Both Hashem and Ramzy were not merely trying to live up to the expectations of others and society.

Hashem even pointed out to me once that "I didn't do this to please society". However, actions are structural because we act within a set of patterns perceived as appropriate or we oppose given patterns of practices and engage in producing different sets of behaviours. Hence, if society was acting through Hashem, Hashem was acting through society. It wasn't as if Hashem and Ramzy were rationally calculative moments before they killed their victims. Rather they acted within the set of behaviour that they had embodied through conscious and unconscious formations of the gendered Self.

Furthermore, honor killings must be viewed within the wider structures of gender violence and problematic masculinities that disfavour both women and men. The varieties of honor killings need to be addressed to avoid the perception that honor killing is only directed towards the female while the male victims are perceived somewhat of an anomaly. The felonies committed were enabled by the embodiment of socially accepted violence, especially the social recognition of extreme violence for the restoration of honor, which targets mainly females but also males.

Finally, I think it's crucial to say that my point with the study of the perpetrator is not to awake sympathy towards them, nor to dehumanize them. The cultural condemnation of such extreme gender violence is indeed needed, and demanded, for the construction of a more positive masculinity. I do think that the social condemnation, like in Ramzy's case, can indeed lead to re-evaluation and produce change in mentality and practices. However, the need to address the gender discourse in the Arab world is important as it is today available for people of a certain educational level which is often connected to class. And even then, the gender discourse continues to be of an academic elitist notion that is not really grounded in civil society. An awareness raising is very important together with judicial and other institutional reformations. My experience with the NGOs in Jordan was that they were operating mostly on the theoretical level, documenting the victims and trying make judicial changes, but not so much on the practical level with working on awareness raising, especially not in the poor districts. I am not suggesting that the theoretical way is not important. Proof of that is the recent abolishment of article 308 (enabling rapists to marry their victims to avoid punishment). But it equally important to engage people of all backgrounds in opposing this phenomenon. Like one PhD doctor made clear to me when discussing honor killings "This phenomenon has existed before Muhammed. Islam tried to change us and couldn't. Nor will the civil law be able to

change us" implying that the notion of honor killings is a biological reaction within Arab men that is impossible to change. I looked at him remembering the many people I met in Jordan that argued the opposite. And I smiled….

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