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Summative Dissertation for PB410

**Self-Continuity and Self-Transformation
of the interviewed European and American women married to their
Egyptian partners within their transcultural marriage in Egypt**

London School of Economics
Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science
MSc Social and Cultural Psychology

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Abstract

This research explores how European and American women married to their Egyptian partners are continuing and transforming their selves within their transcultural marriage in Egypt. Employing dialogical approaches to self, transformation and continuity within migration literature, cultural practices provide meaningful insights into the selves of immigrated participants in Egypt. Based on semi-structured interviews (N=15), a thematic analysis reveals cultural practices from original home cultures are employed to re-establish cultural and self-continuity for continued senses of self (feelings of being the same). Alterity and stereotypes are blocked through semiotic regulation to continue and stabilize selves. The participants' selves and identifications are transformed and hybridized through adapted cultural practices. However, they continued identifying with their original nationalities, mostly rejected "Egyptian" identifications and kept their hybridity unreflected. To resolve tensions between being "Egyptian" and being denied Egyptian identifications by the majority of "Egyptians", or rejecting them themselves because they are considered exclusive to being independent, they resorted to available, original nationalities. This research demonstrates selves were continued and transformed to be adaptive and to continue their senses of self in fractured contexts in Egypt. The study contributes to migration and acculturation literature by accounting for asymmetrical acculturation-processes and coexisting continuities and transformations within dialogical selves through cultural practices.

Introduction

Dialogical understandings of how migrants simultaneously continue and transform their selves are necessary in contemporary psychology. Transformative impacts of migrations on selves for people who move and who receive migrants are growing topics in socio-cultural psychology

(Chrysochoou, 2004). However, mainstream acculturation literature in psychology does not often recognize dynamic interconnectednesses and contested interplays of transformation and continuity, original home cultures and host cultures within selves (Bhatia, 2002; O’Sullivan-Lago, deAbreu, & Burgess, 2008). This research defines cultures as meaningful, dynamic, contextualized and practice-based systems through which people think, act and express “everyday practices, customs, traditions, and artifacts” (Bhatia, 2007, p. 304). The dialogical self is heterogeneous, dynamic and relational as it is constituted by others, sociocultural contexts and extended to the (material) world.

Acculturation has been theorized in terms of universal, linear transformation-models with the aim of positive incorporations into host-societies, where existing conflicting parts are replaced by new competencies within transformed selves (Bhatia, 2002). Dialogical approaches, however, account for complex, conflictual acculturation-processes, where existing parts are continued and transformed within selves (Bhatia, 2002). Dialogical migration-studies emphasize transformative potentials of intercultural encounters for selves (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007), and there are explicit needs to focus on how individuals simultaneously continue and transform their selves (Grossen & Orvig, 2011; Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Moreover, most dialogical-self-studies focussed on social discourses and voices within selves (Linell, 2009). Although cultural practices are theorized as integral parts of extended selves (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007), they have often been neglected (Rasmussen, 2012).

Most migration-research in psychology focused on migrants who immigrated from *developing* countries to *developed* places (Cangià & Zittoun, 2018). Despite increasing, diversifying mobility-

trajectories, little attention has been paid to European and US-American migrants who immigrate to *developing* countries (Fechter & Walsh, 2010). Demographic changes have been reported in Middle-Eastern-regions, where European and American immigrants have been increasing (Walsh, 2009). Studies focusing on this population often contrast *traditional* migrants with *Western* migrants, who are considered privileged, friction-less and unconstrained by sociocultural forces (Cangià & Zittoun, 2018; Fechter, 2007). While reflecting social hierarchies and power inequalities is essential, recent studies challenged harmonious, unconstrained acculturation processes of European and American migrants (Cangià & Zittoun, 2018).

Migrations have increasingly brought together people from various cultural backgrounds into transcultural marriages (Bystydzienski, 2011). Transcultural marriages include notions of interdependent, border-transcending cultures (Welsch, 1999) within partnerships of individuals from different ethnic, racial, religious or national backgrounds (Bystydzienski, 2011). Rising numbers of transcultural marriages are reported in Egypt, indicating more than 24.800 marriages of Egyptian men married to foreign women in 2017 (CAPMAS, 2019). The growing marriages have been publicly recognized and issued by various local newspapers (AlArabiya, 2011; EgyptianStreets, 2019). However, transcultural marriages with regard to acculturation are understudied phenomena in psychological research (Bystydzienski, 2011). Transcultural marriages represent ideal sites for examining how partners of different cultural backgrounds negotiate and respond to each other's perspectives, positions, voices or cultural practices on an intimate everyday-basis (Breger & Hill, 1998; Bystydzienski, 2011). Migration-studies that included transcultural marriages focussed on linear acculturation models, in which they are

associated with endpoints of positive incorporations into host-societies (e.g., Alba, 1986; Gordon, 1964).

To fill the outlined gaps, this research contributes to migration and acculturation literature by employing dialogical approaches that account for simultaneous transformations and continuities of selves, asymmetrical contexts that constitute constrained selves and cultural practices that are meaningful, integral parts of extended selves. It acknowledges particularities and constraints of European and US-American migrants in often-neglected contexts of Egypt. This research is guided by the research-question:

How are the interviewed European and American women married to their Egyptian partners continuing and transforming their selves within their transcultural marriage in Egypt?

Literature Review

To answer the research-question, a theoretical review illustrates the theoretical and empirical work on dialogical approaches to self, transformation and continuity with examples from transcultural marriage literature.

The Dialogical Extended Self

The concept of the dialogical self is considered ideal for analysing transformation and continuity in the course of migration (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). It is long acknowledged that selves are shaped by sociocultural contexts, however, in line with dialogical approaches, this research argues they are constituted by asymmetrical sociocultural environments and others (Bhatia, 2002). Most

research on dialogical selves focussed on social discourses and voices within selves (Linell, 2009), however, this research emphasises cultural practices as important aspects of extended selves (Bhatia, 2007a; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

The concept of dialogical selves was coined by Hermans (1996, 2001a, 2001b) and his colleagues (Hermans, Kempen, & vanLoon, 1992), who defined it as “a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions in an imaginal landscape” (p. 28). James (1890) influenced Hermans’ Dialogical Self Theory. Drawing on James, selves consist of *I* as self as subject, which entails continuity and distinctiveness, and *Me* as self as object, which extends to sociocultural contexts, objects and people (Hermans, 2001a). Selves are considered continuous and heterogeneous with dynamic aspects and positions, resembling a *society of mind* (Hermans, 2002). Positions are embedded and addressed to others and sociocultural worlds in which selves exist, as the “growing complexity of the world goes hand in hand with the growing complexity of the self” (Hermans, 2001b, p. 361).

Addressivity to others – *real* or imaginary persons – is crucial, as others are constituents of selves, instead of being external (Grossen & Orvig, 2011). Individuals co-construct others in their selves and position themselves to others, their utterances, perspectives, actions and sociocultural groups (Linell, 2009). Individuals occupy positions of others, which enables internal dialogues between positions and dialogical negotiations within selves (Hermans, 2001a). Dialogical selves allow for inherent conflicts and tensions between different positions, which may “agree, disagree, misunderstand, oppose, contradict, question, challenge, and even ridicule the I in another position”, however, selves remain continued through dialogical negotiations (Hermans, 2001a, p.

249). Dialogical selves reflect conflictual perspectives and practices from living in various social contexts that coexist within selves (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Asymmetries, power, discrimination, inequalities and social hierarchies are intertwined within selves, which are often neglected in self-concepts in psychology (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Dialogical selves challenge common self-concepts, which consider self, culture, practices and other social phenomena as separated variables influencing each other, instead of mutually constitutive (Bhatia, 2007). Dialogical selves are not unconstrained, unified, socio-culturally independent and fixed but dynamic, extended and consisting of asymmetrical, interdependent and responsive parts (Linell, 2009).

Dialogical research often focussed on discourses and voices in selves, although cultural practices are theorized as integral parts and expressions of extended selves (Grossen & Orvig, 2011; Linell, 2009a). Selves are dialogically extended and include cultural practices, objects and material worlds (Bhatia, 2007a; Thibault, 2005). Cultural practices are not always verbalized – they are implicit, explicit, unconscious or conscious – and provide meaningful insights into selves (Linell, 2009a). They are transformative but relatively continuous as constituents of habituality and continuity of one's everyday-life (Breger & Hill, 1998; Linell, 2009b) and constitute, transform and continue selves (Bruner, 1990; Shweder, 1990). They include traditional and everyday-life issues, such as certain ways of thinking, talking, acting, routines, linguistic resources, etc., which produce dialogues with others (Linell, 2009a). Practices are meaningful *sociocultural resources* for constructing meaning, self-continuity and self-transformation, which must be understood within respective contexts to embrace their emical meanings (Linell, 2009b).

The dialogical self is involved in continuous internal, external dialogues and conceptualizes a “self-in-relations” (O’Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008, p. 354). Dialogical selves provoke challenges which need to be considered, as dialogical interplays of continuous transformations and continuities within selves should be equally acknowledged (Grossen & Orvig, 2011; O’Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008). Dialogical approaches need to avoid reducing selves to others and social processes, and account for stability and continuity of selves (Grossen & Orvig, 2011). For stability, more attention should be paid to cultural practices providing familiarity, stability and continuity for individuals (Grossen & Orvig, 2011).

Dialogical Self-Transformation in Migration

Dialogical Acculturation

Migrations are transformative for selves and challenge individuals to extend their selves (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Transformative impacts of migrations on dialogical selves have been recognized by socio-cultural psychology, focussing on how migrants perceive and define themselves and others, often in response to new others (Kadianaki, O’Sullivan, & Gillespie, 2015). However, psychology often understands migratory transformations as linear, unconstrained acculturation-sequences from ruptures to achieving new stable selves (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Migratory transformations require dialogical approaches to account for ambivalent, tensed acculturation processes constitutive of transforming selves (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

Migrating to new sociocultural environments, selves become more multiple and heterogeneous, as other (counter-)perspectives, practices, people and cultures become part of them (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Dialogical approaches acknowledge increasing densities, fluxes and

multiplicities of cultural aspects in selves and alterities of others with whom selves engage dialogically (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Intercultural encounters are not only existing outside but are constituents of selves. Incorporated aspects engage with each other in conflicts and negotiations, while certain parts become more dominant than others (Bhatia & Ram, 2004). Different cultural groups can be part of selves, for instance, the ones individuals identify with and the ones they reject (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

Multiplicities challenge existing parts, cultural practices and taken-for-granted aspects, which can be psychologically demanding (Kadianaki et al., 2015). Migrations constitute rupturing experiences in the individual's *normal*, "taken-for-granted flow of being" (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012, p. 733). Migrating requires learning new cognitive and social skills and ways of doing things (Kadianaki et al., 2015), while negotiations between multiple self-aspects generate self-transformations (Bhatia, 2002). Dialogical acculturations become contested, dynamic struggles of going back and forth between asymmetrical parts, cultural practices and sociocultural contexts within selves (Bhatia & Ram, 2004). Continuous negotiations need to be acknowledged as inherent in selves, which require dialogical relationships that connect the discontinuities and incompatibilities (Bhatia, 2007).

Dialogical approaches include perspectives of others, analyse how they are negotiated and how they influence selves (Kadianaki et al., 2015). Assumed perspectives of others on the self – meta-perspectives – have fundamental influences on how one perceives, continues and transforms the self (Howarth, 2002). By focussing on how individuals think they are perceived by others and re-position themselves accordingly, self-transformations can be understood dialogically (Kadianaki, 2014). Immigrants are positioned by others through new perspectives on them, such as

“immigrants” or “foreigners”, which are often attached with stigmatizing meanings they need to respond to (Kadianaki, 2014). Re-negotiations are multi-layered, ambivalent and complex through dialogical relationships between original home contexts, host societies, others, meta-perspectives or cultural practices within selves (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Being in transition, in-between, still there but also here is linked to experiences of liminality, ambivalence and ambiguity as the driving force for constant dialogical negotiations between different parts of selves (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012).

Dialogical Approaches to Traditional Acculturation

Dialogical approaches understand selves, cultures and acculturations as moving, mixing, and contested, however, mainstream psychology often conceptualizes them as separate variables that influence each other (Bhatia & Ram, 2009). Stable cultures and contradictory aspects are replaced with new ones throughout acculturation as “a linear trajectory from Culture A to Culture B” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998, p. 1117). Acculturations are fixed, universal, decontextualized, de-historicized and apolitical series of stages that finish with successful incorporations into host cultures (Bhatia & Ram, 2009). Bhatia (2007), together with Ram (2001, 2004, 2009), challenge linear acculturation models which assume immigrants go through universal psychological acculturation-processes, such as the prominent model developed by Berry (1980, 1990, 1997, 1998). Berry and Sam (1997) argue despite “substantial variations in the life circumstances of the cultural groups that experience acculturation, the psychological processes that operate during acculturation are essentially the same for all the groups” (p. 296). Frequencies and forms of contact are measured, rather than focussing on how intercultural contacts become part of selves and individuals are transformed (Kadianaki et al., 2015).

For instance, transcultural marriages are examined within traditional acculturation approaches, where they are associated with developmental endpoints of positive incorporations into majority cultures (Breger & Hill, 1998; Bystydzienski, 2011). Prominent concepts of transcultural marriages (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964) assume immigrants in the USA are gradually incorporated to achieve new American identities, which is facilitated by transcultural marriages. Acculturation consisted of different phases after which marrying into dominant societies was predictive of complete social incorporations. It was assumed immigrants are automatically incorporated into dominant groups once they married partners from the majority (see Alba, 1986; Barron, 1972; Gordon, 1964). Recent researchers, such as Abu-Rayya (2007), utilized Berry's (1997) acculturation model to examine psychological and marital well-being in relation to acculturations of European women immigrated to Israel and married to Israeli Arabs. Similarly to Berry, he (2007) found positive well-being-outcomes for incorporated participants.

However, self-transformations mean dynamic, context-dependent and specific processes that cannot be reduced to linear trajectories (Kadianaki, 2014). Acculturations are contradictory, racialized and politicized, which needs to be accounted for (Bhatia & Ram, 2009). They (2009) show incorporation statuses of Indian-diaspora-members in the USA after 9/11 are challenged by socio-political constraints and experiences of racism that reposition them as foreign and enemies. Acculturations are not endpoints but include constant negotiations between original home-contexts, new places, past, present, future, others and socio-political structures. Dialogical acculturations mean deeply complex, political, historical processes shaped by class, racism and power asymmetries as structural forces constitutive of transforming selves (2009, 2001).

Dialogical Hybrid Selves and Identities in Migration

The mixing with new, asymmetrical cultural aspects and practices in dialogical selves brings about complexes of novel, multiple and shifting hybridized identities (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Hybridization questions concepts of selves, identities, practices and cultures as separated, independent and acculturations as linear, apolitical (Bhatia & Ram, 2001).

Moving, mixing of cultures lead to increasing multiplicities of cultural aspects and constructions of hybridized identities (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). The *In-between* identities should not be considered developmental endpoints of acculturation but continuous negotiations between different self-aspects constantly re-positioning and re-defining each other (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Individuals acquire hybrid cultural practices, perspectives and transform into *others* with conflicting hybrid identities (Bhatia, 2007). Recreating, transforming and continuing cultural practices also transforms migrants' selves and constructs hybrid identities (Bhatia, 2007). Meaningful, practice-based cultural-notions are essential to explicate immigrants' contextual, contested hybrid-self-negotiations.

Hybridized identities are embedded in and constituted by historical, political and power constraints of multiple, asymmetrical, fractured contexts (Bhatia, 2007; Nagel, 1996). They are constrained and constitute dialogical negotiations between internal identifications and external ascriptions (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Various identifications are challenged, as identifications can be rejected by original communities or stigmatized by host societies, while other memberships become available (Kadianaki, 2014). Despite constrained identifications, migrants can nonetheless represent hybrid identities, which are adaptive to asymmetric, fractured contexts (Aveling & Gillespie, 2008).

Bystydzienski (2011) showed in her qualitative study in the USA how selves and identities hybridized, which was attributed to their transcultural marriages by thirty-eight couples. The participants included participants from the USA and others who immigrated from twenty-five different countries. They negotiated each other's perspectives and cultural practices on intimate daily bases that were normalized, while increasing hybridities in cultural practices and selves were described. Power-differences and stigmatizing representations of partners created distinctions between self and other. Migrated participants clearly expressed their cultural identifications and resisted incorporations, contrarily to previous assumptions about transcultural marriages (see Alba, 1986; Barron, 1972; Gordon, 1964).

Traditional acculturation neglected hybrid dynamics of positionings and their inhibitions of identifications (Bhatia, 2002, 2007). Migrants are portrayed as making static, socioculturally independent choices between identity categories of maintaining their old culture and/or having ties with new others (Berry, 1997). However, constrained identifications trigger continuous negotiations between transformed and continued practices and identifications based on hybridized repertoires (Kadianaki, 2014). Bhatia and Ram (2001, 2009) call for fluid, contextual, politicized understandings of hybrid identities open to constant negotiations. Dialogical hybridity questions mainstream concepts, such as "bicultural competence" (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1998), which assume migrants reach successful blends of being competent in cultures of origin and new ones. However, dialogical hybridity entails contesting structural forces and constant negotiations of re-identifications between different parts of the self (Bhatia & Ram, 2001).

Dialogical Self-Continuity in Migration

Migrations are not only about transformations but also about continuities of selves (O'Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008). This section shows how dialogical approaches analyse self and cultural continuity as interlinked and resulting from acculturation. Cultural continuity means the work migrants do to maintain aspects of their original home culture in the self, through cultural practices, for a continued sense of self (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). The sense of self is the “sense of seeing oneself as continuous and more or less the same across various, even contradictory experiences in the world” (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012, p. 732). Dialogical approaches allow us to capture transforming cultural practices, selves and identities and coexisting continuing parts (Bhatia, 2012).

Dialogical selves constitute inherent paradoxes: “we change continually yet we remain the same” (O'Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008, p. 350). The concept of continuity to selves is very old, as James (1890) already emphasized the notion, “I am the same self that I was yesterday”, in understanding selves (p. 322). Dialogical selves are continued throughout migration, as individuals have fundamental needs for senses of continuity (O'Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008). Cultural and self-continuity offer insights into dialogical-self-studies examining acculturation, which need to be acknowledged to understand the constant negotiations of migrants' selves (2008).

Desires for self-continuities are raised through migratory experiences, which can intensify existing uncertainties, instabilities intrinsic in dialogical selves (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Increasing complexities, contradictions and new meta-perspectives within selves are experienced as confusing, threatening and can turn uncertainty into anxiety (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

Migrations are considered ruptures, which (un-)consciously challenge individuals' cultural continuity, self-continuity and sense of self (O'Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008). Cultural continuity is important for senses of self, as "individual and cultural continuity are strongly linked" (Chandler & Lalonde, 2008, p. 72) in dialogical selves. Senses of self depend on local familiarity and cultural continuity, which leads to uncertainty when cultural continuity is discontinued in new contexts (O'Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008). Chandler and colleagues (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallet, 2003) analysed broken cultural continuities among indigenous populations in Canada and found ruptures in cultural continuity cause losses of one's sense of continuity. Broken senses of continuity mean individuals lose their psychological connection to the past, present and future, which has detrimental psychological impacts on individual cultural members. To deal with ruptures, uncertainties and psychological impacts, (re-)establishing cultural continuity for self-continuity is essential for migrants (O'Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008).

Migrations motivate counterforces of reducing, restricting selves and their openness to alterity through cultural continuity (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Uncertainty reductions are not stabilized traits inherent in selves, as conceptualized in traditional acculturation, but require constant dialogical negotiations between multiple contrasting aspects (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Hermans and Dimaggio (2007) argue stabilizing dialogues are closed to alterity, which allow migrants to continue original cultural practices, stabilize selves and identifications. Most dialogical-studies on self-continuity focussed on discourses and identification strategies (O'Sullivan-Lago et al., 2008; O'Sullivan-Lago & deAbreu, 2010), however, attention needs to be paid to how self-continuity can be negotiated through cultural continuity of existing cultural practices (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Cultural continuity sustains extended selves, representing

original home cultures to which migrants relate in new contexts (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Migrants maintain their sense of self through dialogical negotiations with multiple, continued and transformed cultural practices of their hybrid selves (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

Strategies of Cultural Continuity

The need to focus on cultural everyday-practices, which function as “safety nets in the space of in-betweenness” and ties with past contexts are emphasized (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012, p. 737). Individuals respond to migratory-ruptures through resorting to existing cultural resources (Zittoun, 2006, 2007). Practices are (un-)intentionally brought into new contexts where they continue individuals’ subjective histories and familiar contexts in which previous ways of being, senses of self and *homes* are maintained (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Individuals’ senses of self mobilize cultural continuities to reconstruct self-continuity by drawing on different cultural practices (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012).

Re-creating familiar *homes* in new contexts has been emphasized through strategies of *homesteading*, which mitigate uncertainties and establish cultural continuity (Kinvall, 2004). Migrants re-create *homes*, which produce sameness and make up stabilizing fields where everyday-lives take place. Bhatia (2007a) showed Indian immigrants in the USA used *homesteading* for cultural continuities, as cultural practices were utilized to re-establish Indian cultures and identities in their spatial homes. Senses of self were continued through maintaining Indian traditions of private home cultures in their houses, through practices including prayers, rituals, watching Bollywood and Hindi films or participating in family, social and religious events with other Indian immigrants. Private Indian identifications and practices constituted agentic

dialogical selves moving between Indian indoor/private home cultures and contrasting outside/public American cultures.

Commonalities of cultural continuities among migrants mostly refer to private home cultures, such as connections with friends, families and loved ones in original contexts, which often improve when migrants leave (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Daily routines and activities, as taken-for-granted parts of selves, constitute powerful means to (re-)create familiarity and self-continuity (Grossen & Orvig, 2011). Migrants resort to cooking foods, pursuit daily habits, hobbies and continue their way of dressing from their original home cultures (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012; Mahmoud, 2010). Re-establishing social networks with people from similar contexts, social gatherings, traditional holidays or specific occasions in new contexts are strategies of cultural continuity for self-continuity (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Kadianaki (2014) and Zittoun (2006, 2007; Zittoun et al., 2003) describe how cultural resources, such as art pieces, dance, institutions, literature, movies, music, knowledge-bodies or poems are utilized in mediating self-continuity. Re-building specific architectures for individuals' experiences of "being the same" constitutes stability (Bourke, deAbreu, & Rathbone, 2019; Grossen & Orvig, 2011, p. 505). Cultural practices are part of selves and directly continue selves or identities of old home contexts throughout new ones (Kadianaki, 2014).

Within transcultural marriages, Bystydzienski (2011) shows her participants maintained their selves and cultural continuity through practices. They employ strategies, such as keeping an accent, a foreign-sounding last-name, certain expected gender-roles, religious practices and rituals, traditional foods and celebrations or local TV-shows from original home cultures.

In line with the literature review, this research asks the following question:

How are the interviewed European and American women married to their Egyptian partners continuing and transforming their selves within their transcultural marriage in Egypt?

Methodology

Data Collection

Sampling

15 European and US-American women living in Egypt and married to Egyptian partners made up a convenience sample. Living together and being married for at least two years were criteria, as the research focussed on ongoing processes of negotiated acculturations, rather than on participants at the beginning of rupturing immigrations (Bystydzienski, 2011). Euro-American migrants immigrating to *developing* countries constituted the focus of this study due to their neglect in recent qualitative migration-research in psychology (Cangià & Zittoun, 2018). Transcultural marriages in Egypt with Egyptian men made up the basis of this research, as most transcultural marriages have been understudied examined in *developed* countries (Bystydzienski, 2011), while their numbers are increasing in Egypt (CAPMAS, 2019). The *Western* nationality, living in Egypt and being married to an Egyptian partner constituted common bases with the researcher that initiated rapport, shared, *authentic* understandings and insights. The sample number resulted from given accesses and availabilities of participants within constrained time-managements. The participants were recruited through a Facebook group called “Expatriate Women in Cairo” and the snowballing technique. The latter facilitated accesses to the specific, limited and often unknown population through common acquaintances (Browne, 2005). The participants came from countries, including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Macedonia, Norway, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, Poland

or the USA. They were living in Egypt between 2 and 40 years, while most of them moved for their partner.

Research Design

To acknowledge the participants' emical perspectives of how they are continuing and transforming their selves, this research utilized qualitative methods (Flick, 2009). Idiographic studies of people's particular experiences have often been neglected in mainstream psychology due to its quantitative focus (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2008). There are necessities for qualitative, explorative research to understand complex, contextual, particularly meaningful experiences and challenges of individual migrations through their emical perspectives (Kadianaki, 2014). Quantitative models of acculturations isolate pre-defined variables of social phenomena that explain decontextualized generalizations (Bhatia, 2007). Qualitative idiographic approaches aim at understanding sociocultural processes in their entirety and everyday context, such as simultaneous continuity and transformation, rather than comparing fixed states in isolation (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2008). This project contributes to necessities of idiographic approaches to psychological topics.

The method of data collection was interviews, which were preferred to focus groups, as the research focussed on subjective perspectives of participants, rather than their production within social processes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Experiences of acculturations and transcultural marriages can be private topics and interviews constituted more intimate, appropriate situations than public focus groups. Participant observation could not provide insights into the migrants' selves' hidden negotiations of their acculturation experiences within their marriages.

Instruments

Semi-structured interviews based on open-ended questions with responsive interview-styles generated flexible data, centered on self-transformation and self-continuity (Flick, 2009). The tool allowed participants to unfold their perspectives and understandings on their subjective acculturation experiences and negotiations (Flick, 2009; Kvale, 1996). Interviews were guided by semi-structured topic guides (see appendix), probing and prompting to deepen and explicate the participants' subjective viewpoints (Flick, 2009). Due to ongoing social-distancing and restricting travel measures, the data was collected online through the Zoom-software for virtual face-to-face interviews.

Online video-calling technologies provide alternative means to conduct interviews, which have been acknowledged for overcoming limitations in face-to-face interviews (Hanna & Mwale, 2017). Flexibility of scheduling and setting interviews at the participant's convenience without required travels for researchers and participants, were important benefits (Hanna & Mwale, 2017). Initial concerns about building rapport online without face-to-face cues were replaced by participants showing great ease, comfort and deep insights throughout their interviews. Virtual interviews are valuable, as interviewees may experience them as less intimidating, more comfortable and controllable without pressuring social obligations experienced in person (Hanna & Mwale, 2017). The interviewees chose settings and times themselves for more comfortable, *natural* and *authentic* interview-situations. All interviewees produced detailed conversations, lasting between 47 minutes and 1 hour 52 minutes (with 15 hours and 35 minutes in total).

Disrupted Internet-connections impacted *natural* flows of conversations, however, they still generated rapport and rich data. The data was collected between the 02.04.2020 and 03.05.2020

across Egypt. The participants were sent scheduled meeting-invitations via email and asked to download Zoom. Before the interviews, they received information sheets about research purposes, topics, anonymities and confidentiality, which were discussed individually in the beginning. All interviews were consented, recorded and transcribed with NVivo.

Ethics

Self-continuities, self-transformations and transcultural marriages can constitute intimate topics. Every interviewee was informed about the research-topic before the interviews to ensure they felt comfortable. Interviewing participants during a global pandemic rose ethical concerns about wellbeing and how it is affected by unusual, potentially stress-inducing interview-situations. Contrarily to expected rejections throughout recruitment-processes during the pandemic, every participant showed great interest in participating and talking about their migration and marriage experiences. Interest, open-mindedness and friendly environments were emphasized through word-choices and actions that addressed potential discomforts. All interviewees conducted rich interviews at home, illustrating the participants' comforts with the researcher.

The researcher's impact on research-processes should be reflected, similarly to ethical research-issues and their influences on interviewees. Researchers' subjectivities are intertwined with researches, as their reflections produce and shape researches (Flick, 2009). My own hybridized self, identities, assumptions, expectations and experiences needed to be reflected. I am a *Western, European* woman, living in Egypt and married to an Egyptian partner myself, who employs specific ideas about acculturation, self-continuity and self-transformation within transcultural marriages in Egypt. I aimed at being aware of my aspirations of striving against experienced

stigmatizations of “foreigners” and transcultural marriages in Egypt and how they shaped research processes, interviews, analyses and findings. By including myself as an interested, open-minded woman from a similar background with common experiences, I hoped to positively contribute to the research for comfortable and *natural* interviews-situations based on shared understandings. The data was confidential and anonymized through pseudonyms.

Data Analysis

The method of thematic analysis was preferred for analyzing qualitative data, which grants flexibility and identifies meaningful patterns of interviewees’ viewpoints (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Dialogical researches are argued to be conducted and analyzed qualitatively, while dialogical analyses focus on discourses and extraction of voices (Aveling, Gillespie, & Cornish, 2015). The analysis of *multivoicedness* – for identifying voices of I-positions of selves’ talks, others in selves and dialogues of interacting voices – was brought forward as ideal (Aveling et al., 2015). For instance, intercultural-contact-research utilized *multivoicedness* to analyze hybrid identities of migrants (Bhatia, 2002). However, this research focused on identifying meaningful thematic patterns among interviewees’ dialogically extended selves to explore their viewpoints and cultural practices as insightful windows into their selves (Linell, 2009). Thematic analysis accounts for complex, contradictory and conflicting tension across data and produces detailed and multifaceted analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This research employed an explorative, inductive approach to generating codes and themes close to the data, instead of deductive accounts applying theory-driven preconceptions of coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In line with Braun and Clarke (2006), a six-phase-guide was followed, starting

with transcribing the participants' interviews, continuously re-reading data and generating initial codes of cultural continuity, self-continuity, self-transformation and perspectives from participants and assumed others within transcultural marriages. The codes were collated and organized into themes of distinct patterns that were consistently refined in iterative processes. The NVivo-software was utilized for comprehensive analyses that collapsed or coalesced codes, established hierarchical orders and facilitated determining themes relevant for the research-question. A thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001) allowed the researcher to identify, represent and systematize eight codes, three themes and one global theme on three levels in a thematic map (Figure 1).

Results

How are the interviewed European and American women married to their Egyptian partners continuing and transforming their selves within their transcultural marriage in Egypt?

To answer the research-question, the theme "Self-Continuity Through Cultural Continuity" structures the first section. It displays the participants' ways of continuing their senses of self (feelings of being the same) and selves privately and publicly, through continuities of cultural practices from original home cultures. All women resorted to semantic barriers to block alterities and stereotypical meta-perspectives of themselves to stabilize their selves. The theme "Self-Transformation Through Cultural Adaptation" sheds light on how their selves are transformed, hybridized through adapted cultural practices in private and public. The theme "Self-identification and (unreflected) Hybridity" structures the last section. It shows reflections on how they identify themselves, with the majority displaying unreflected hybrid-selves and rejecting identifications

with being “Egyptian”. To resolve tensions between feeling “Egyptian” and being denied “Egyptian” identifications by the majority of “Egyptians” or rejecting these identifications themselves, as they are considered exclusive to being independent, they resort to their available, original nationality. The global theme of “continuing and transforming their selves to be adaptive and continue their senses of self in Egypt” encapsulates the themes. It means they showed adaptive strategies in fractured, constraining contexts of Egypt by transforming their selves and continuously identifying with their old nationality. All identified strategies can be found in the coding frame attached in the appendix.

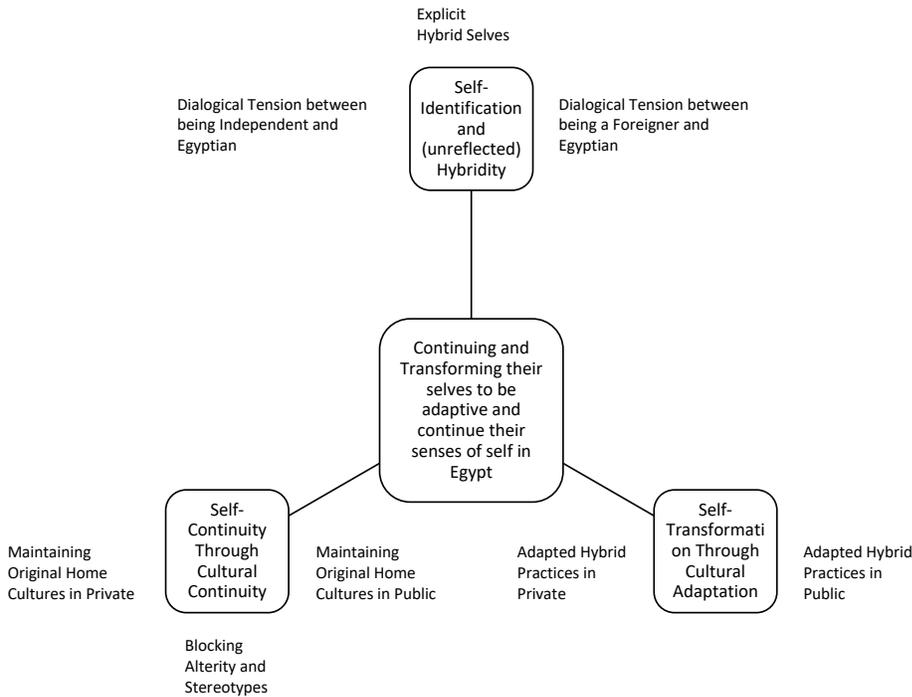


Figure 1: Thematic Map

Self-Continuity Through Cultural Continuity

This theme encompasses ways of how the participants re-establish cultural continuity – maintaining their original home culture in the self through cultural practices – for a continued

sense of self despite their immigration to Egypt. Without being asked directly, the women described common cultural practices of their original home culture done privately and publicly and blocked alterities and stereotypes for self-continuity.

Maintaining Original Home Cultures in Private

The code shows their common cultural practices done privately. Maintaining their own routine of waking up early, “doing everything in the day” (H), having set meal and bed-times “to have things structured” (San) was important for them and their “mental health” (Am), while everyone around was active at night or lived different routines. The significance of living days differently from others, including their husbands, for their wellbeing explicates meaningful, essential threads of individual self-continuity within differently structured contexts in Egypt.

Can you tell me about things you do in your everyday life you took from your country of origin?

. . . I prefer as an American . . . more of a daytime schedule. In my area, everybody is a night owl. I find that if I sleep all day and wake up all night, I get pretty depressed, so I would prefer a day schedule . . . I kind of have put myself on my own schedule that I prefer to follow . . . I find that for my own mental health as long as I have one or two days where I'm waking up early . . . then I'm okay. (Am)

Many women continued cooking food from their home culture in their daily lives to continue familiarities and experiences of feeling the same. The participant who lived with her husband's

family owned a fridge in her private room to store her food separately, which she often cooked and ate separately from the family to secure habituality and senses of sameness. Another participant continued eating pork and drinking alcohol in front of her extended Egyptian family of Muslim faith for self-continuity.

I do not cook Egyptian . . . I just don't want to. I'm just set in my ways when it comes to cooking. I make good old fashion Americanized food . . . [V]ery American dishes that my husband hasn't had before. (Li)

Cultural practices everyone maintained were traditional celebrations of Christmas, Easter, St. Nicholas, Thanksgiving, Halloween or specific ways of celebrating them and their birthdays, while most of their Egyptian families were of Muslim faith and did not celebrate Christian festivities before. Traditional celebrations re-established home-culture-environments as powerful means for senses of feeling the same and continuous in the different context.

I'm extreme about Christmas. The European in me is a big Christmas fan, so I obsess. I love Christmas decorations; I love the songs. I could be singing Christmas songs two, three months before Christmas. (Chri)

Regular contact with family and friends from their original home-country was described as intensified through their immigrations. All participants mentioned to be visited and to visit their original country at least once and up to four times per year, often alone, without their husband and children, to “live . . . German life a little bit” (M) and “to refill batteries to calm down” (Ani). Two

participants described their parents permanently moved to them to Egypt. Practices of contact are directly tied to original home contexts and established senses of comfort and continuity of their selves throughout new contexts.

My friends from Austria are still visiting in Cairo. So . . . even relationships to my friends in Austria got stronger, because we're talking so much more through social media like Skyping every day or talking every day. (San)

The participants furnished and built architectures of their spatial homes according to their continued senses of familiarity to make themselves feel home:

We built our house on our own. The architecture of our house is not Egyptian, we have a big kitchen which we are using also as a dining room . . . Egyptian kitchens usually are separated and the women are away, but the kitchen's our meeting point, which is also more German or European than Egyptian. (M)

Maintaining Original Home Cultures in Public

The women's ways of continuing their selves publicly included continuing working, as "it's normal as a European that . . . I'm working, and I have to work" (M) and to remain independent from their husbands. They did so, despite some husbands and fathers-in-law who preferred them to stop working. Personal meanings attached to cultural continuities of working were deeply intertwined with their selves, as part of their "identity" (Li), which were important for remaining senses of being the same.

I consider myself a really strong, independent . . . woman and that's just my identity. Since I've come to Egypt, and I met my husband, I feel now that I don't have to be, even though I know I can still be strong and independent, and take care of myself, and make my own money . . . I still make my own money just in case something happens that we don't work out, God forbid, I can still provide for myself, so that's important. I don't want to be totally, 100% dependent on my husband. (Li)

Everyone ascribed importance to remaining active and continuing hobbies from their original homes, such as riding bicycles, going for walks, coaching soccer, going swimming, playing tennis, dancing and continuing art projects, often with community-members from their original home-country. Continued hobbies were utilized as cultural resources bridging senses of self throughout the immigration and are partly attached to cultural meanings themselves, such as dancing to Spain:

I do the same actually, because when I was in Spain, I always liked dancing. I love dancing. Usually, I used to go to dancing classes and I do the same here. . . More or less I'm doing the same, so I cannot say that it changed my lifestyle. (N)

[W]ith my friends, I want to dance at their houses, we are Spanish and Latin-American, we are dancing all day. We love dancing. (N)

They often engaged with expat communities and friends of the same nationality without their husbands, providing familiar environments which tied their current selves back to meaningful

senses of their original home context, for continued senses of self in the current disparate context. Another participant added the importance of continuing practices of visiting each other's houses spontaneously to make herself feel "at home" (Z).

"You wouldn't have survived here if you didn't have that community." I did have this, always like one foot in and out. (Ang)

We don't have many Egyptian friends . . . Little by little I chose our friends, this is what I did in a French way. Our friends are French Arabic, they're mainly a mix or they speak French or this, I think we changed our friends my way. Now we have a bunch of friends who live like us, think like us. (MY)

Cultural practices of clothing similarly as before their immigration were considered important and continued their ways of being and feeling the same, also through assumed meta-perspectives of not being perceived as "Egyptian":

I definitely dress more American. Even though I'm in a fairly local area, I wear longer Bermuda shorts and tank tops and t-shirts and that kind of thing. (Am)

[T]here's a lot of women and girls here that wear the jeans and just jeans and shirts and stuff, but I think some of my shirts from America definitely show that I'm not Egyptian, nobody thinks I'm Egyptian when they see me. (Li)

Blocking Alterity and Stereotypes

Another (un-)intentional strategy employed by the participants was semiotic regulation, through which semantic barriers block alterity and uncomfortable meta-perspectives (e.g., stereotypes) to continue familiar senses of themselves (Gillespie, Kadianaki, & O'Sullivan-Lago, 2012). Alterities enter selves when they are open, trustful, respectful towards others, so that others' perspectives permeate and transform selves. Semantic barriers constrain transformational dialogues with others and generate rigid separations between them. The participants described blocking alterities of others in Egypt through closing their selves and distrusting alterities to maintain their selves:

If you let people sway you or let people influence you, you can easily end up losing yourself entirely. For example, I know quite a lot of women that have come here, and they've married Egyptians and they try to completely immerse in the language and the religion and every element, but they lose themselves in the process. You really have to know who you are, and what you're okay with and what you're not okay with and what you need for yourself. (Am)

They blocked assumed stereotypes by “Egyptians” about themselves as “foreigners” who were “less important” (Sand), “all promiscuous and partying and drinking” (H), and husbands who were with “foreigners” for money, visas (Ang) or to avoid “responsibilities” they have with “Egyptian” women (Sand). They blocked stereotypes through overgeneralizing others and creating separations between themselves and “Egyptians”. After talking about the above-mentioned stereotypes, a participant concluded:

[W]atching the culture here really discouraged me. I don't want to be like these people. Of course, there are many lovely individuals who are giving us [Islamic] classes and stuff, but in general, the Egyptian culture is not my cup of tea. I don't want to be like them. (Sand)

Self-Transformation Through Cultural Adaptation

All women accommodated cultural “external pressures” (Chri) and adapted to cultural practices in Egypt in hybridized ways in private and public. Novel cultural practices imply evolved complexes of contested, multiple, transformed hybridized selves of the participants.

Adapted Hybrid Practices in Private

Many participants adapted to transitioning indoors and taking over housework, additionally to some women working regularly outside of domestic work to remain independent. They took over daily chores of cooking, cleaning and doing laundry, which showed contesting negotiations within their hybridized selves between *acceptance* and *annoyance* of being *homier*:

I've become more . . . “homey”, whereas like- I'm Swiss, it's very about equality. We're all going to be cleaning this, we're all going to be doing that. Now, I'm more accepting, like I'm annoyed, but I'm accepting that I would take more of that feminine role, I'll do the dishes, I'll cook, I'll clean up after you . . . I'm more forgiving about those things. (Chri)

They did not go out to public social events as often anymore, such as weddings and funerals, neither alone nor with friends and avoided public male spheres, which explicates adaptations of practices and self-transformations:

If he's [husband] going to one of the local 'ahuas', the cafes that they play dominoes and stuff, I'm usually not going with him to that, because, I would be the only woman and there's kind of this cultural understanding among all the men that are there, there are no women there. (Am)

A participant illustrated hybrid adaptations and understandings of local practices in public, as she does not join her husband in events of his extended family to avoid invoking the “evil eye” or “envy”. The evil eye is a belief-complex which means a person can (in-)voluntarily cause harm to someone or something else by looking, praising, desiring or envying the person or property (Dundes, 1981). As she might invoke the evil eye by others as an attention-provoking-foreigner, she avoided public social events:

I join them on the level of if it's in the house, if it's something that requires going somewhere, not really, like if it's a wedding of someone, it should be really close family that I go . . . because personally, I really don't want to go . . . It would come to a situation . . . In these large gatherings when I show up as a foreigner, I'm exposed to certain things . . . bad eyes. (Z)

A hybrid practice done at home emerged from regularly cooking Egyptian food, often in their own way, or cooking Egyptian meals and meals from their original home culture during different times during the day:

Sometimes, I cook Egyptian. Today, I prepared to cook something Egyptian. "I'm going to do it the French way." I am changing a bit the recipe. Even something very known in Egypt, it's called Tahina, I put fresh cream in it, while they don't do it at all but it's my French way. (MY)

They learned cooking Egyptian recipes from their husband's family or online tutorials. Most participants described they cooked hybridized Egyptian meals more often than meals from their original home culture. The women who did not cook Egyptian meals ate them regularly when their husband cooked.

I mostly cook Egyptian style . . . I would say like 80% is Egyptian. Then that last 20%, if I'm by myself, maybe he's going to have dinner with his friends, which is fine, I'll make an American-type meal. Sometimes he'll say, "Let's do hamburgers and burritos or something like this" A little bit of American but a lot of Egyptian. (Mai)

Celebrating traditions learned in Egypt, such as Ramadan (month of fasting), constituted hybrid cultural practices and transformed selves. Although most women – beside five women who converted to Islam – did not fast, most of them did not cook, eat or drink in front of their fasting husband during Ramadan and consumed their main meals with them. Some participants woke up before sunrise to provide traditional foods for their husbands' fast-breaking, celebrated with their husbands' friends after sunset and decorated the house. The converted women celebrated Ramadan through praying and fasting.

We're greedy, we celebrate everything. My husband's Muslim, I try to do as much of the Muslim stuff as I know about. . . When it's Ramadan he fasts and then we have Iftar [fast breaking] on an evening or we go meet with friends to do iftar. We do celebrate Eid [Festival of Fast-Breakings], we put up some Ramadan decorations, we put up a Christmas tree. (H)

Participants, who converted to Islam, described their “personality” and lifestyle transformed (Sand), as they changed their way of dressing, stopped eating pork, drinking alcohol or going to bars, which became “totally normal” (M), while three women started wearing hijabs (veils). Prejudices transformed into positive experiences of “connecting yourself” or “having a reset every couple of hours” (M). They showed contesting negotiations within their selves between compromising lifestyles but respecting religion:

After so many years, accustomed to it. Sometimes, I don't see it as a compromise anymore. Yes, of course, I don't drink any alcohol, just out of respect and the kids are also not, as a respect for the religion. Of course, we all don't have pork meat and stuff and, you want to call it a compromise, it's a compromise, but I don't see it as a compromise anymore, it's totally normal. (M)

Adapted Hybrid Practices in Public

All participants adapted to “getting by” in public through knowing and understanding “the rules” of how to talk to people and deal with daily requirements, such as public transportation (N) and bureaucratic tasks with the “system” in Egypt (Ang).

If you move to any place, at the beginning, it's like, "Oh my God, I'm alone. I don't understand the rules." It's like you don't understand the rules. You don't know how to react . . . Once you know the rules, it's okay. (N)

Adapted hybrid, public practices encompassed “many different circles” of friends (N), who were mainly “Egyptian” women (Mai). Their male friendships were conditional on their male-friends not being “Egyptian”, on certain dressing rules, an installed GPS system or on their husbands’ permission. All showed hybrid practices of compromised male-friendships and male-specific behaviours, which was “odd” (Am), “challenging” (Chri) and a “learning curve” (M) at first but became normal. They preferred meeting female friends only to “feel free and this is very good because we can dance and we can do whatever we want in a free way” (N). A participant elaborated on tensions between wanting to meet male friends but respecting her transformed practices:

For my mentality that's fine but for Egyptian culture, it's not so ok. I'm torn between the two because I do want to hang out with my male colleagues but at the same time, I have to respect the religion as well . . . Just to respect my husband, respect the family and respect myself a little bit more. (Mai)

They adapted their clothing style to look more “modest” (MY), to be more “respectful” (Am) and because of “social pressure” or “verbal harassment” (San). Some women stopped wearing shorts in Egypt and their original home country, as they started wearing loose clothes to hide their figures.

A woman illustrated hybrid tensions between continuities of being “American” but transformations of “not being really scandalous”:

It took me a little bit of time to figure out where I lie on the continuum of what I feel comfortable being American wearing and compared to what is normal here in Egypt. I feel like I found a nice balance of still keeping my American identity and my clothing, but not being really scandalous if you will. (Am)

All learned Egyptian-Arabic on differing levels, with some being able to speak and read fluently. Translation issues of misunderstanding people to be “direct”, “angry” or “fighting”, ways of thinking and “processing” became understood (Am). Emphasizing hybrid practices, they adapted to being more direct themselves, which became too direct in their original home countries:

I have to be very direct here. Then when I go back to the US I realize I can be way more relaxed and don't have to be screaming at people if you will. That's one big thing I feel like I've adapted. Even my directness that I've adapted to here is not as strong as it could be. (Am)

Self-identification and (unreflected) Hybridity

Despite adapted hybrid selves, this theme shows most of them identified with their original nationality and rejected identifying as “Egyptians”, although many are technically “Egyptian” by having the Egyptian citizenship. Half described themselves as explicitly hybrid, however, only one identified explicitly as “Egyptian”. They resisted being “Egyptian” because of dialogical tensions

between being foreigners and “Egyptian” or independent and “Egyptian”, yet, many women described Egypt to be their (only) home and future.

Explicit Hybrid Selves

Half of the participants described themselves as hybrid, through being “confused” where they belong, “half and half” (Mai), “somewhere in-between”, “blended” (Z), “the best of both worlds” or “one foot in and one foot out” (Mai), while they disagreed with aspects of “Egyptian” cultures and are “back and forth” (Chri) between their identifications with their original nationality and being “Egyptian”. A participant illustrated hybrid tensions between different, continued aspects within her self:

I feel like I'm in the best of both worlds . . . I have one foot in and one foot out, I'm like, I'm half and half, I really am not sure. . . In Egypt it's mainly Muslim culture, I'm veiled, I still do the praying or fasting. I try to dress decently, but still trying to keep myself. I still wear makeup, but it's not as heavy as before . . . The other half is I can still read the classics. I can still eat the foods that I like while still doing Egyptian foods. (Mai)

Another participant elaborated on hybrid negotiations between perspectives within her conflictual self:

Even though I am [part of the Egyptian culture], I do still disagree with a bunch of parts of his culture, and a lot of the European in me would still be like, "I don't like that. I don't

do this." It's still back and forth, but I definitely feel a lot more part of his culture than I would say my Swiss culture. (Chri)

However, none of the explicitly hybridized women call themselves “Egyptian” in the cultural sense and only describe hybridized experiences, beside one participant:

When I'm here I feel very German. When I'm in Germany, I feel a bit more Egyptian. (M)

Dialogical Tension between being a Foreigner and Egyptian

Many participants rejected being Egyptian, although adapted practices showed their hybridized selves. They experienced being perceived as foreigners, often in stigmatizing ways, by their inner circle of Egyptian families, neighbours, friends and by the majority of others’ gazes in Egypt. The dialogical tension of being, feeling and acting Egyptian but being perceived as foreigners, excluded from and denied an ascribed Egyptian identity through their Egyptian families, was elaborated by a participant:

Can you tell me more about your relationship with his family?

. . . [I]f you are a foreigner, you will never be considered Egyptian and you will never get the same respect and rights as an Egyptian. Because Egyptians believe you only deserve their respect and attention when you're one of them. Anyone who is not one of them is totally an outsider and cannot be part of the family. It doesn't matter if you're a Muslim, if

you speak Arabic, it doesn't matter. If you're from a different country, you're not one of us. This is very difficult.

Of course, the Egyptian family there, you know how they are. They are loving, they're smiling, they will tell that they love you and they will welcome you, but when you are longer in the family, you can understand you are not one of them. They will treat you differently. When you start comparing yourself how the Egyptian wives are treated by the rest of the family, and how you are treated, you can understand that you are never part of this family.

(Sand)

After being asked how she thinks people in Egypt see her marriage, the same participant explained:

They believe he got married to a foreigner, maybe she's pretty, maybe this, maybe that, but she's not Egyptian. Less value. She's less. She's not like us. They would never say it, but you can feel it.

Due to social constraints on “Egyptian” identifications, she resisted identifying as “Egyptian” and resorted to identifying with her original nationality: “because we're never going to be one of them, it is very important to keep your own identity” (Sand). Reacting to experienced stigmas and devaluations, she repositioned herself as a *proud Polish*, making it a betrayal to call herself “Egyptian”. Essentializing Polish-belongings were means to stabilize, secure negotiated national identifications, making it impossible to identify as “Egyptian” without “betraying” Poland:

I'm like 1000% Polish, I would never call myself even 1% Egyptian . . . I consider myself totally Polish. Just because I follow some of the things from Egypt, or accepted the values from Islam, doesn't make me in any percentage Egyptian . . . We have also another foreigner in the family. She's covered and she's also Muslim and she's wearing like Egyptian. She feels the same way because we're never going to be one of them, it is very important to keep your own identity, not to soak everything that is from Egypt.

Why is this important?

We should be proud of where we come from. I love my country, my parents and this is where I come from. Just because I live in Egypt, I can accept many things but still by heart, by soul, by mind and language, I'm from Poland absolutely. (Sand)

Many participants explained being rejected in their original home-countries because of their immigration to Egypt, leading one participant to hide her transformed self, while others explained their transformation to their families, for instance their conversion to Islam. In both cases, they experienced rejections in the original home country, leading to a *double rejection* and a “double life”:

I feel like through being part of this [Egyptian] culture, I stopped having my identity because being a Muslim and I'm still hiding from my family so I'm having double life which is not healthy for me. When I'm going back to Poland, I feel like I'm not 100% Polish because I soaked some of the values from Islam and when I'm going to Egypt, even though

I am Muslim, I still don't agree with their Egyptian culture. I don't want to be part of the Egyptian culture, I'm still Polish. I feel like I do not belong to Polish or Egyptian culture. This is something which is really, really difficult and it makes me feel I don't have my own family or friends. This is really sad because I don't consider my husband's family as my own and also when I go to my family to Poland, they would never accept me if I told them that I'm a Muslim. (Sand)

The participant elaborated her confusion of being in-between identifications of being Polish but not feeling Polish anymore, while she felt Egyptian, which was rejected in Egypt and Poland, so she concluded she felt neither Egyptian nor Polish. To avoid “betraying” her negotiated Polish identification, the participant hid her hybridized self from her Polish side, including her own daughter in Egypt:

They would mock me to the rest of my days because Poland is very into Christianity and Catholic. For them, it's like I betray everything, so it really bothers me. Everything would be easier if my family knew that I am Muslim, because maybe I don't need them to support me, just at least to accept, then I wouldn't feel like I am hiding all the time. Whenever we travel to Poland, I don't pray. I used to enjoy wearing, for example, hijab in Ramadhan only. It was very somehow helping me. I like it but I don't like it again because the child is growing. I know she will ask questions and then later she would call my parents and she would say everything. This is like I'm always in a prison and I created it for myself, just hiding who I am. (Sand)

Most of the participants rejected identifying as “Egyptian”, due to constraining others’ gazes of Egyptian majorities considering them “foreign” and concluded they did not “fit in” (Ang).

Dialogical Tension between being Independent and Egyptian

Participants rejected identifying as “Egyptian” themselves and resorted to their original nationality, as they understood being “independent” exclusive to being “Egyptian”. There were dialogical tensions between feeling “Egyptian” and being independent. A participant illustrated she rejected identifying as “Egyptian” to maintain her independence, without being asked about it:

I would say I'm firmly American . . . if you will because there are a lot of things in this culture that I don't really love for myself. I understand how they work, but I don't love them for myself. For example, in my area, women aren't really out in the street after 11 by themselves. Well, I'm American, and I will, and I feel like I'm in my 30s I will go do what I want when I want. It's not a safety issue, it's a talking thing . . . I also understand why Egyptian girls follow this rule. (Am)

Another woman juxtaposed being “Egyptian” and being independent to keep the “independent identity” (Li):

I'm very independent and I think that's probably quite challenging for him [husband]. I forget sometimes that it's very different than what he would have if he was married to an Egyptian woman. (H)

Dialogical tensions in hybrid selves of feeling but not calling themselves “Egyptian” through disagreeing with being less independent, was elaborated, although they became less independent:

I do still disagree with a bunch of parts of this culture, and a lot of the European in me would still be like, "I don't like that. I don't do this." It's still back and forth . . . I don't feel like I can be as fiercely independent as I was. Not 'can', but in general, I've calmed down . . . I've become more . . . “homey”. (Chri)

Although they identified with their original nationality, dialogical tensions remain, illustrated by the continuous negotiations of their inherent hybridity. The presence of a *European*, female researcher can create social expectations from the Euro-American participants to position themselves in line with their Euro-American identifications, with which they associate independence, as opposed to their “Egyptian” identifications. However, interview-situations produce *authentic* positionings similarly to other experiences in life, and, as it has been shown, their selves strive towards continuity across contexts.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research showed how the interviewed European and American women married to their Egyptian partners are continuing and transforming their selves within their transcultural marriage in Egypt. They employed strategies to re-establish cultural and self-continuity for continuing their sense of self, blocked alterity for maintained selves and adapted to cultural practices that led to transformed, hybridized selves. The participants reflected they continued their identifications with their original nationality and kept their transformed hybridity unreflected, which showed continued

and adaptive strategies to fractured contexts in Egypt. The results and global theme, “continuing and transforming their selves to be adaptive and continue their senses of self in Egypt”, are in line with previous research.

Self-continuity required work to re-establish cultural continuity through cultural practices. The participants engaged in common strategies of *homesteading* by re-creating their *homes*, which produced familiarity and made up stabilizing fields (Kinvall, 2004). In line with previously found strategies, they maintained their routine, cooking their food, their traditional celebrations, regular contact with loved ones and architecture or furnishings from their original home culture in private (Bourke et al., 2019; Bystydzienski, 2011; Grossen & Orvig, 2011; Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012). Contrarily to previous studies (Bhatia, 2007a), this research illustrated cultural continuity is not only planned privately – to unify original home cultures indoors at-home, opposite to public majority cultures – but showed to be intertwined with public practices. Maintained public practices included continuing working to remain independent, hobbies, friends of the same nationality and clothing from their original home cultures, leading to assumed meta-perspectives of not being perceived as “Egyptian” (Märtsin & Mahmoud, 2012; Mahmoud, 2010). Perspectives of others on selves had fundamental influences on how their selves were continued, transformed and identified (Kadianaki et al., 2015). Semiotic regulation was used for blocking alterity, stereotypes and stabilizing identifications through essentializing others, which aimed at maintaining self-continuity (Gillespie et al., 2012; Kadianaki, 2014). Self-continuity through cultural continuity was in line with previous acculturation-research and contributes to understandings of cultural practices transcending private and public self-continuity. Necessities for dialogical, practice-based approaches to self-continuity in migration research were exemplified.

In line with dialogical-acculturation literature (Bhatia, 2007a; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007), participants' selves transformed and hybridized through adapted cultural practices in Egypt. Privately, they negotiated conflictual parts within their transcultural marriages of transitioning indoors, taking over housework, avoiding male spheres, cooking Egyptian food, celebrating Egyptian traditions (e.g., Ramadan), sociocultural belief-complexes (e.g., the evil eye) or converting to Islam. Publicly, they adapted and hybridized practices of creating friend-circles with Egyptian women, conditional male-friendships, clothing styles, speaking Egyptian-Arabic and getting by with rules, people, transportations and bureaucratic systems. Contrarily to previously examined, adapted cultural practices in public (Bhatia, 2007a), this research showed transformations in private. Constant tensions between continuing parts and transforming practices within selves were negotiated, such as between foods, clothing styles or routines from original home contexts and Egypt. Necessities for dialogical approaches to simultaneously focus on contested transformations and continuities were shown.

All participants showed hybrid selves through transformed practices and half described themselves as explicitly hybrid, however, hybridized selves remained largely unreflected and they continued identifying with their original nationality. They rejected "Egyptian" identifications to solve conflicts between being "Egyptian" and constrained, denied ascribed "Egyptian" identifications by the majority in Egypt. Some rejected "Egyptian" identifications themselves to maintain their independence, which they considered exclusive to "Egyptian" identifications. Continuing identifications with original nationalities were a way of self-continuity, which showed transformed adaptations to constraining Egyptian contexts. Their experiences required dialogical approaches to account for ambivalent, contradictory and tensed acculturation processes (Hermans &

Dimaggio, 2007). Bhatia (2007, 2008) emphasized significances of asymmetrical forces constraining people's acculturations and identifications. Despite constrained identifications, the participants nonetheless represented hybridized identities, which are adaptive to fractured contexts (Aveling & Gillespie, 2008). Future research could look into their meaningful understandings of independence as opposite to being "Egyptian". Abu-Lughod (2006) illustrated *Western* imaginations of Muslim women in the Middle East as oppressed, dependent and traditional, contrarily to *Western* women, which may have led to the participants' rejections of "Egyptian" identifications to maintain their "independence".

The research showed the participants simultaneously continued their selves through re-establishing cultural continuity with private and public cultural practices, identifying with their old nationalities, and transformed, hybridized their selves to remain adaptive to fractured contexts. Necessities of dialogical approaches to self, migration, continuity, transformation and hybridity to recognize dynamic, contested interconnectednesses were illustrated (Bhatia, 2002). The study accounted for asymmetrical, dialogical acculturation processes, which enabled the focus on coexisting continuities and transformations within selves (Bhatia, 2002). Cultural practices were shown to provide meaningful insights into extended selves. Focussing on Euro-American women married to Egyptian partners in Egypt, illustrated conflicting and constraining acculturation processes, contrarily to largely assumed models of transcultural marriages and *Western* immigrants (Bystydzienski, 2011; Cangià & Zittoun, 2018). Transcultural marriages were not sites for positive incorporations but facilitated transformations and continuities of selves in contested interplays throughout private and public-spheres.

The research-scope with 15 interviews inhibits generalizations of the subjective experiences beyond individual insights into self-continuity and self-transformation. This research only attempts to contextualize the women's perspectives within their socio-historical-cultural environments shaping their selves and acculturation experiences. Future improvements include widened scopes with more participants to afford for deeper and comparative understandings of how European and American women married to their Egyptian partners are continuing and transforming their selves within their transcultural marriage in Egypt.

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Appendices

Interview topic guide

- Icebreaker to interview I: How are you today?
- Introduction
 - Clarify permission before voice recording
 - Clarify that identities of the interviewed persons are always anonymised in interview recordings, transcripts and results, and kept confidential and will be deleted after the course.
 - Communicate the interview topic of understanding the experience of living in an intercultural marriage and how this has changed you
- Ice breaker II: Can you tell me about the story of your relationship? (How did you meet, when did you move to Egypt? Did things go as expected/did you get surprised?)

Experience intercultural marriage in every-day life (relationship to Others I: partner)

- Can you tell me about your daily routines, how do you spend your days typically?
- Are there certain things you do together and alone?
- Can you tell me about things you do in your everyday life you took from your country of origin?
- Can you tell me about things your partner does in your everyday life that he took from his country of origin?
- Is that an issue for you/Is there anything which annoys you? Is there something which you enjoy?
- Do you join your partner in these things? How? Does your partner you in yours? How?
- Can you tell me how your lifestyle has changed since you're with your partner? Are there certain things that you don't do anymore and ones that you do now?
- How did you decide on using these particular things?
- Can you tell me how you and your partner are different? (Example of how they'd come up?)
- Can you tell me about daily struggles you experienced? How do you deal with them?
- Looking back, how do you think your relationship has changed over time? Is there something you miss in your relationship?
- How would you describe challenging aspects of being in an intercultural marriage? How would you describe positive aspects of being in an intercultural marriage?

Perception of Others on marriage (relationship to Others II: families, friends, community)

- How is the relationship between your own family and your partner? (How has your own relationship to your family changed since you're in a relationship with your partner?)
- How do you think your family sees your marriage? How does that feel to you/ does that reflect on how you see yourself?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with your in-law-family? How do you think your in-law-family sees your marriage? How does that feel to you/ does that reflect on how you see yourself?
- Can you tell me how your friends see your marriage?
- How do you think people in Egypt see your marriage?

Reflection on (hybrid) self

- What culture do you feel you belong to? How important is it to feel part of it? Do you feel part of your partner's culture? How important is it to feel part of it?
 - Do you think you've acquired something new through your intercultural marriage?
 - Looking back, do you think you have changed through being in an intercultural relationship? Can you elaborate?
- Cool Down
- Is there anything else you would like to say that you think is important, but we haven't talked about yet?
 - Thank you so much for your interesting thoughts and your time.
- Demographic Information
- Collect demographic information: Age, country of origin, nationality, educational background, occupation, length of marriage, length of stay in Egypt, number of children (if any)

Interview cover sheets

The interview 1

Date and time: 02.04.2020, 19 pm

Duration: 1:15 h

Place: Zoom, Cairo

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 30/ partner: 32

Gender: female

Citizenship: Austrian (not Egyptian one)

Education / employment status: PhD in Islamic studies, comparative religion; works for Austrian Cultural Forum in Cairo

Relation to the topic: Austrian/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo

Length of marriage: 5 years

Other: she moved to Cairo for him,

Method of recruitment: recruited through a common friend

The interview 2

Date and time: 05.04.2020, 14 pm

Duration: 00:57 h

Place: Zoom, El Gouna

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information (record only information that is relevant!):

Age: 40

Gender: female

Citizenship: Scotland (not Egyptian one)

Education / employment status: MA education, primary teacher

Relation to the topic: Swiss/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo

Length of marriage: 9 years

Other: she moved to El Gouna, Egypt to be with her husband, 1 child

Method of recruitment: recruited through a common friend

The interview 3

Date and time: 07.04.2020, 20:30 pm

Duration: 00:47 h

Place: Zoom, El Gouna

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 55

Gender: female

Citizenship: German, Egyptian

Education / employment status: Nurse, degree in teaching German + English, German teacher

Relation to the topic: German/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Gouna

Length of marriage: 25 years

Other: she moved to Gouna, Egypt for her husband, 2 children

Method of recruitment: recruited through a common friend

The interview 4

Date and time: 08.04.2020, 16 pm

Duration: 1:14 h

Place: Zoom, El Gouna

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 45

Gender: female

Citizenship: Macedonian, Egyptian

Education / employment status: MA Education, MSc Physiology + Sports Medicine, teacher

Relation to the topic: Macedonian/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Gouna

Length of marriage: 17 years

Other: she moved to El Gouna, Egypt for her husband to be with him, 2 children

Method of recruitment: recruited through a mutual friend

The interview 5

Date and time: 14.04.2020, 11 am

Duration: 1:52 h

Place: Zoom, El Gouna

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information (record only information that is relevant!):

Age: 38

Gender: female

Citizenship: Belgian (not Egyptian one)

Education / employment status: BA teaching secondary, teaching geography

Relation to the topic: Belgian/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in El Gouna

Length of marriage: 10 years

Other: she moved to Gouna to be with him

Method of recruitment: recruited through a common friend

The interview 6

Date and time: 15.04.2020, 16 pm

Duration: 1:19 h

Place: Zoom, Cairo

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection, daughter interrupted a few times,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 61/ partner: 63

Gender: female

Citizenship: French, Egyptian

Education / employment status: midwife in charity work

Relation to the topic: French/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo

Length of marriage: 40 years

Other: she moved to Cairo, Egypt for him from France (after knowing each other for 60 days/ met during her vacation)

Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expatriate women living in Egypt"

The interview 7

Date and time: 17.04.2020, 20 pm

Duration: 1:21 h

Place: Zoom, Sharm el Sheikh

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 33, partner: 34

Gender: female

Citizenship: Polish, Egyptian

Education / employment status: homemaker
Relation to the topic: Polish/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Egypt
Length of marriage: 18 years
Other: she moved to Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt for her husband, 1 child
Method of recruitment: recruited through a common friend

The interview 8

Date and time: 18.04.2020, 15 pm
Duration: 1:23 h
Place: Zoom, Cairo
Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:
Age: 32
Gender: female
Citizenship: U.S. American (not Egyptian one)
Education / employment status: BA in World Religion, MSc Social Work, Egyptian folklore dancer
Relation to the topic: U.S. American woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo
Length of marriage: 2 years
Other: she moved from NY to Cairo, Egypt for her husband from U.S. America; she shares a house with her husband and his whole family
Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expat women living in Egypt"

The interview 9

Date and time: 19.04.2020, 19:30 pm
Duration: 1:11 h
Place: Zoom, Cairo
Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:
Age: 50
Gender: female
Citizenship: U.S. American, Egyptian
Education / employment status: MA Education, Principle of an international school
Relation to the topic: U.S. American woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo
Length of marriage: 20 years
Other: she moved to Cairo, Egypt for her husband, 2 children
Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expat women living in Egypt"

The interview 10

Date and time: 20.04.2020, 11 am

Duration: 1 h
Place: Zoom, Cairo
Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:
Age: 28
Gender: female
Citizenship: Norwegian (not Egyptian one)
Education / employment status: MA Political Science, consultation
Relation to the topic: Norwegian/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo
Length of marriage: 2 years
Other: she moved to Cairo for her husband,
Method of recruitment: recruited through a common friend

The interview 11

Date and time: 25.04.2020, 16 pm
Duration: 1:28 h
Place: Zoom, Cairo
Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:
Age: 28/ partner: 30
Gender: female
Citizenship: Swiss (not Egyptian one)
Education / employment status:
Relation to the topic: Swiss/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo
Length of marriage: 8 years
Other: she lived in Cairo before she met him
Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expatriate women living in Egypt"

The interview 12

Date and time: 26.04.2020, 11 am
Duration: 1:16 h
Place: Zoom, Cairo
Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:
Age: 31
Gender: female
Citizenship: U.S. American (not Egyptian one)
Education / employment status: BA Art Therapy + Psychology, primary teacher
Relation to the topic: U.S. American woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo

Length of marriage: 3 years

Other: she lived in Cairo before she met him for 8 years

Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expat women living in Egypt"

The interview 13

Date and time: 26.04.2020, 16:30 pm

Duration: 00:53 h

Place: Zoom, Cairo

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 53

Gender: female

Citizenship: Spanish (not Egyptian one)

Education / employment status: PhD in biology, Spanish teacher at the American University in Cairo

Relation to the topic: Spanish/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo

Length of marriage: 10 years

Other: she moved to Cairo, Egypt to be with her husband

Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expat women living in Egypt"

The interview 14

Date and time: 03.05.2020, 09:30 pm

Duration: 00:52 h

Place: Zoom, Cairo

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 41

Gender: female

Citizenship: German (not Egyptian one)

Education / employment status: high-school diploma, secretary part-time

Relation to the topic: German/European woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo

Length of marriage: 18 years

Other: she moved to Cairo, Egypt for her husband, 2 kids

Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expat women living in Egypt"

The interview 15

Date and time: 03.05.2020, 12:30 pm

Duration: 1:27 h

Place: Zoom, Cairo

Contextual notes: sometimes bad internet connection,

Interviewee

Demographic information:

Age: 52

Gender: female

Citizenship: U.S. American (not Egyptian one)

Education / employment status: English teacher

Relation to the topic: U.S. American woman married to an Egyptian man, living in Cairo

Length of marriage: 5 years

Other: she lived in Cairo before she met him

Method of recruitment: recruited through a Facebook post in the group: "Expat women living in Egypt"

Interview transcript

Interviewer: Great, thanks so much for participating.

Interviewee: Yes, sure, no problem. I'm excited for it.

Interviewer: Maybe we can start, and you can just start telling me about the story of your relationship.

Interviewee: I am 33, so Wael is 34. We met in-- I don't remember what year it was, but I was 15, Wael was 17. We were children of course; I'm not going to go into details how we kept our-- There was nothing like relationship in the beginning because we were friends. Our relationship or just friendship was through Skype or something like this, and we never thought about each other like partners or anything. We were just children. Then around 2008, Wael, asked me to come to Egypt because we were on-off in contact. Sometimes we didn't speak to each other for one year, and then we come back just like friends.

Then I went to meet him once again, 2008 and 2010 we got married. From 2010, we're going to start the story. This is what is important. This is what we're going to focus on. Since 2010, I live in Egypt on-off. It's between Egypt and Poland. Whenever someone asks me how is it to be married to an Egyptian, I would never be able to answer with one sentence. However, I would discourage every single woman to marry an Egyptian. [chuckles] This is not easy, and I'm always saying I'm meeting very young ladies who are coming to Egypt, they have boyfriends or they're freshly married. I'm trying my best to explain to them what they should do, what they should not to do, as to have a happy marriage as much as possible. Because they're cross-cultural or when people are married and they're having a different religion, this is absolutely a challenge. It's very difficult.

When I talk about a marriage between me and Wael, it's very difficult because people have to remember that when you are marrying an Egyptian, you never marry one person, you marry the whole family. The most important thing before getting close to Egyptian is to know first the Egyptian culture. You can be in love and believe the person is perfect and he's very good Muslim, but most of them are Muslims. However, you have to

understand you're not allowed to enter marriage without making a research and living in the country first, that's important. As I mentioned in the beginning, you don't marry one person, you marry the whole family, and not everyone can manage this. It's very difficult. Very difficult.

Interviewer: Thank you so much --

Interviewee: Maybe I can say that about the religion, most of the time men really want women to become Muslim when they're Muslims. What I found, it's not because they value Muslim more, it's more for the family to accept her. Because if there is no family around the guy from Egypt, probably he could accept any religion. Because of the family, he understands, he wants to be sure that she's accepted.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about your relationship with his family?

Interviewee: It's been very difficult and it's never going to be perfect. It's proper, however, if you are a foreigner, you will never be considered and you will never get the same respect and rights as an Egyptian. Because Egyptians believe you only deserve their respect and attention when you're one of them. Anyone who is not one of them is totally outsider and cannot be part of the family. It doesn't matter if you're a Muslim, if you speak Arabic, it doesn't matter. If you're from different country, you're not one of us. This is very difficult.

Of course, the Egyptian family there, you know how they are. They are loving, they're smiling, they will tell that they love you and they will welcome you, but when you are longer in the family, you can understand you are not one of them. They will treat you differently. When you start comparing yourself how the Egyptian wives are treated by the rest of the family, and how you are treated, you can understand that you are never part of this family.

Interviewer: Can you give me an example?

Interviewee: Speaking Arabic, for example, till now, I cannot speak Arabic fluently. I can just manage, but I cannot participate in a conversation. For example, we have a family gathering like Ramadhan or any other event or birthday party, anything. Even though all the family members, the young ones, speak English in a gathering, they will never switch to English. They always speak in Arabic. If I'm the only one who cannot understand, they will not care because they believe the most important is to express themselves in their mother tongue, and they do not care about the someone who is from outside. They do not bother. You understand? For example.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: This is maybe a small issue. The most important issue when I mentioned that the foreigner will never get the same rights like an Egyptian, is when it comes to the marriage and the rights of the wife said by the law. When I mean the law is, of course, the religious law because this is the law we have in Egypt. The trend, something which is

known between Egyptians marrying foreigners, is not giving them rights. I will be honest with you, and I said many, many times to my husband, I share my opinion. I was very honest and of course, it hurt him deeply. I told him that Egyptians get married to foreigners to avoid responsibilities. This is the very important sentence because this is the key of our conversation. It's what we're going to speak about, that's what all of the conversation is going to go around the sentence that they marry foreigners to avoid responsibilities. What responsibilities we are talking about? Because here in Egyptian culture, marriage is all about money, unfortunately. It's all about money. It's about social status. It's about the families matching, or not matching. Do you know what man has to do before getting married, or while getting married to a wife? You understand the step. You know that's when he gets married, of course, he has to approach her in a proper way. Go to her father, speak to parents first, make everything make public. Not to hide somewhere. The second thing which is always overlooked by Egyptians is mahr. You know what mahr is?

Interviewer: No.

Interviewee: When a Muslim is getting married, it's his obligation and a full right of the future wives to get a mahr, which is like we can translate it's like a dowry or the marital gift. In Egypt, marriage will never go without this marital gift, which is usually money. We are talking about the social class or just middle or higher class. I do not mention about that lower-class here in Egypt. The marriage will never go with a proper amount showing that he respects her and he is able to provide for the family. No one will let their daughter gets married to a man who would offer her one Egyptian pound. You understand? This is simply unacceptable. Unfortunately, Egyptians who are getting married to foreigners, they overlook, they never mention and they pretend like nothing happened when it comes to mahr.

This is absolutely disgusting because this is the right God put on men. This is a-- sorry, obligation God put on men. It doesn't matter whether she's Christian, Muslim or Egyptian or any other nationality. It's a hypocrisy that suddenly they forget this is one of their responsibilities. It's very difficult in Egypt to get married because you have to be financially prepared. You have to show that you are able to provide for family because marriage it's not only husband and wife, soon it could be children, somebody has to pay for it. Let's and a man of honor would never send his wife to work and ask her to provide for the house expenses, even if she wants to but it shouldn't look like this.

In my opinion, it's just haram. That's what I said to my husband. It's simply cheap to marry a foreigner because one of the responsibilities is not there. I'm just wondering why they've-- I think it's like taking an advantage of someone who comes to the country, comes to the Egyptian culture [phone buzzes] without any knowledge.

If he has this honor and he knows God told him to do ABC, why he doesn't mention? I really don't like it. I see all my friends-- nearly all of them they got married having mahr written in their marriage contract which was one or two Egyptian Pounds.

This is not happening in Egypt between Egyptians. It is really disappointing and it should be forbidden. Another thing which is also related to religion, most of the foreigners are just signing up the papers not reading the contract and the contract in most of the cases

is written in Arabic. That's a huge mistake. It should never be like this. What else? Also, someone called Wali, you know what is Wali?

Interviewer: No.

Interviewee: The woman should have a guardian who is on her side, who knows her and would be responsible of helping her in case there is any problem. Advising, of course. That's been pretty not possible to have someone like this because imagine you are coming from a different country. You're leaving your whole family; your whole friends and you're coming to Egypt and who will be your Wali? There's no one so you use the friends of friends or the groom's father but this is not the real. It should never be like this. Women should be advised to actually be in contact with a very good imam or sheikh who is speaking in English and trained in the cross-cultural marriages who could advise because it's very serious. Marriage is not a joke. It should have someone like this. They have to be trained because unfortunately most of the sheikhs-- in order to help marriage if there is any problem, it's not enough to have a good knowledge about Islam. You also have to be trained in psychology and relationships like a counsellor. We have many people who are Muslims. They love to follow and they attend the Islamic lessons from Dr. Haleh Banani.

She's an Egyptian from USA. She could be a perfect example of who should be the person advising women because she is Muslim, she is very good in the religion. She's really well educated plus she's a marriage counsellor and she knows what she's talking and she is-- you know?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Though this is a separate subject how terrible it is when it comes to getting help or the advice from imams in Egypt. It's terrible, that is absolutely separate subject. If you are having problems in marriage you're absolutely on your own. There's no one who'll help you. First because there is a language barrier, they do not speak with English and the second they are so soaked by the Egyptian culture. They are unable to provide any proper information outside this Egyptian way of thinking which is not as you want to be. That's why it's really important for us to have this background.

[crosstalk]

Interviewer: Okay, yes?

Interviewee: Yes. And definitely that's what I'm always saying to all the girls who are very young and they are trying to get married in Egypt. While just in the beginning of the way, I'm trying to explain to them the most important is to attend with any imam or the counsellor. As I mentioned before someone who has knowledge in psychology and cross-cultural marriage to sit and explain what are the rights and the responsibilities of husband and wife.

Unfortunately, when you have Egyptians, they have absolutely no idea why they get married. They don't know, they are just either in love or not in love and they dump. He

doesn't whether he's in his 20s, in his 30s, they have absolutely no idea about their religion. Maybe just a small percent now. They have no idea what are their rights. They don't know even how-- which is the process of divorce, of the right process of treating wife. This is the most important right now, a lady to know and sit with someone to check because maybe the person feels in love. Maybe he's just great and nice but maybe she cannot really check him because she doesn't know who are his friends, right?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: She's just coming to a new culture and there is no possibility to check this guy.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Thank you.

Interviewee: That's the very-- that's one of the things. The mistakes, "we", foreigners make when we're getting married that we do not prepare ourselves. Another thing is also about the finances. Maybe you will not agree with me but when a lady is very young, let's say she leaves her country, she leaves her parents or friends and she jumps into totally different culture, she left everything behind her. She's in a new culture. She has a full right to expect from her husband financial security.

This is what we are not taught in our cultures. We are taught to be independent, to pay, and to provide for ourselves but this is not correct when you live in Egypt and it is also not correct when you are married to an Egyptian. When you're married to an Egyptian in Egypt, you make everything to be on the safe side financially. There is nothing wrong to ask future husband to provide for you apartment, for example. Because you lost your family, you left everything and-- right?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: You cannot just go to a foreign country in which you have no rights or even-- do you understand?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: [chuckles] Egypt will never give you rights. At least the financial aspect should be well discussed before getting married and we should never be shy to ask for-- to be treated with respect when it comes to money. We should ask for mahr; we should ask for the house that should be usually on the wife's name because you're not the owner because after divorce you're left-, you stay with nothing and this is not what you want in Egypt to be because, when you are in your county, you can always get support, you can get help but when you are in Egypt you can be pretty sure you'll stay on your own. This is important and this one of the mistakes we make. We don't ask for the financial security from the husband. They are of course-- they are happy because we are foreigners and we are happy to contribute to family budget. We go to work.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: This is also where we come back to lack of responsibilities and the reason why they get married to foreigners.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. Can you maybe tell me a little bit about your everyday life and tell me about your daily routine?

Interviewee: Okay. Since we live in Sharm the days are a little bit different because the lifestyle here is different. It's more relaxed than in Cairo. Here most of the time, we wake up around 8:00, I'm talking about the days without school. We wake up in the morning around 8:00. We have our breakfast together. After we have a schedule, we have to follow. We have to homeschool our child. I'm talking about the-- during quarantine. We share the responsibility which is great. My husband is responsible of something, I'm responsible of something. Then we give her a free time to play. She can do wherever she wants, go to friends, she can invite her friends. There's two hours we usually spend together at home or we just go to swim. We prepare the meal, then we eat together. Then everyone is getting busy with his own things. Evening time is for a family sport. Yes, we are having a bicycle together all of us with our child. Then it's bedtime around nine, she has to go to bed so then you're just spending time together, watching TV, or separately because while he's working online, so yes.

He's traveling a lot in general so Wael is the one who is like a guest at home because he's traveling to Poland all the time. He's like two weeks in Sharm to maybe one week in Egypt, in Cairo, I mean. Then like five days in Poland, and he's like between three cities. It's quite difficult because most of the time I'm alone, not lonely. I'm pretty fine with it. However, it's very challenging because I am in a different country, in different culture. Everything is different, no family, no husband. I have to also organize myself as not to suffer which means I have to surround myself by good environment. This is most important. Early when you are a mother, most important because you can have the best husband in the world, but if you live in a bad area in Cairo or any city you will suffer greatly because it's not Europe. That's how our day looks like pretty much it's family. We like to spend time together.

Interviewer: Are there certain things that you do together or alone?

Interviewee: I can mention here about the responsibilities. Maybe I would say it's very classic because I haven't been working for a long time. Wael is the one who works, he's the one who is responsible for bringing money, paying for everything. Because he's responsible of working, traveling, bringing money and taking care of all the finances. I'm the one who is cooking, organizing. I don't like this, but let's call it housewife. Yes, this is pretty classic example like men outside, women inside the house.

Recently, I went to work. It was great because we start sharing more responsibilities at home. Yes, it is much more comfortable. This only works for men who are from middle and higher class. If someone is married in Egypt with the guy from the lower class. It's not going to be like so maybe probably stay a home and you wouldn't be allowed to work anyway. That's why when I mentioned, we're talking about certain group of people in Egypt.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. Are there specific things that you like to do together?

Interviewee: Watching movies. I know swimming, going out shopping. What else? Yes, bicycle. That's what we do together.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. Are there any things that you do in your everyday life that you think are from your country of origin?

Interviewee: I don't think so. I'd love to, but that's what I mentioned. Actually, you're making me realize that my husband isn't really interested into Polish movies. He doesn't like it much. Anything that comes from my side, it's only when we travel to Poland. I do things which are from Poland to keep the traditions, but I only do it with my child. I teach her Polish. We attend Polish school online. We read Polish books. We speak Polish, but I don't think Wael is really part of it except that from time to time he jumps in and just trying to copy Polish words or just for fun. He's not really interested because that's how Egyptians are, they believe their culture is the best, their food is the best, their movies are the best. They marry foreigners but they still are in love with everything that's Egyptian because it's the best.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you tell me about things that he does in your daily life that –

Interviewee: What he does? He's workaholic. He works online. What he does? He's eating, watching sci-fi movies and hanging-- No he doesn't hang out with friends. Thank God he does not. I think he does not. He loves going to restaurant which is limited in Sharm but he does. Smoking cigarettes, calling friends. That's what he does. Maybe some support but not too much from time to time. We love trips like a city break to Dahab. That's what we like, going to desert, having fun. What he does on a daily basis, it's just work, work, work.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything he does that you think he took from Egypt?

Interviewee: Absolutely everything in my household is Egyptian from A to Z. It's very difficult-- Maybe his taste is similar to mine. He started accepting the furniture. For example, the furniture for me must be modern. He agrees to that, but sometimes he jumps with an idea. I don't know from where he takes it but it's totally Egyptian -- you understand?

Interviewer: Can you think of more examples?

Interviewee: For example, he has absolutely no idea how to fix something in his house when something is broken. Egyptians will leave it for ages until you call someone to come and fix it and they will just supervise. They don't know how to fix it. The daily house chores. Also, they have to be encouraged and reminded. Anyway, he's better than the typical Egyptian because he will for example, wash the dishes once in a week. He will cook once in a week. He will clean the house when it's really messy.

What else? I'm just thinking about something. Being messy, leaving clothes on the floor, this is also typical Egyptian thing because Egyptians come from the-- They're brought up in a way that there is always someone after them who will come and clean. This is again, middle and higher class. They growing up in houses full of maids who do things for them which is crazy because after they get married and they believe someone is there, but there is no one except wife. Yes, the house is in a mess. What else? Excessive eating, like food, must be a lot. For example, on Egyptian table, even when we are three of us, he used to ask in the beginning of the marriage, it has to be rice. It has to be pasta. It has to be potatoes, and a little bit of everything which is unhealthy and totally Egyptian I think, but slowly, slowly it's vanishing because he understands that this is not correct way of eating and we change with years. I cannot remember about anything else.

Now, being absolutely irresponsible when it comes to children. They have absolutely no imagination, and they cannot understand children needs. Not being responsible, like for example, he brought a swing from IKEA, and he put it on a balcony, so good that I was supervising because if it's not me they're probably the swing could be made in a way that my child would be swinging outside the balcony. This is not example only from my husband but from all the husbands of my friends, the stories. They have absolutely no idea that when the children are outside, they need to wear a jacket. When we go to Poland, he's surprised that suddenly we have to wear hat or the winter boots. There is no understanding about child's needs. This is again like Egyptians are not taking care of children because they believe wife is the one responsible of it. That's typical Egyptian thing.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. Is there anything that you enjoy that he does in your everyday life?

Interviewee: From Egyptian culture, typical Egyptian culture, eating outside, eating in a restaurants. He doesn't mind to spend money on a mate, for example, if I asked for it, I could have a mate no problem. Being generous, he understands the man is the one who should give money to his wife. She doesn't have to ask for it. Like there is like a monthly allowance of money I should have and he should give me not because of something but because I needed it, mostly because I did a work before or something. This is important because you need a personal gift money to just buy something for yourself, so she doesn't have to ask for it all the time. What else? He's quite a good father, he's very gentle. We have a girl I don't know how to deal with a boy but he's very gentle with her. He loves her dearly and I'm not saying he takes care of her or provides her needs, she needs, but he's very responsible of paying for everything she needs like the school and clothes and everything. So, he's freely taking care that she has everything. He's generous. Most of the Egyptians are generous. Also, jokes funny. Yes, this is what I enjoy, but I think it comes more mostly from his personality. I don't think not everything-- I mentioned is strictly Egyptian, I think except going out to the restaurant and having a maid, which is very important for some ladies.

Interviewer: Are there certain things that you don't do anymore or things that you do since you're together?

Interviewee: Oh yes, many things. Changing my personality because I changed my religion because I'm Muslim since 2010. I changed my religion months before we got married but also when you live in Egypt, of course you see with them the culture and you understand things in a different way, something which is obviously normal. When I was living in Poland, I would never accept it again, like for example, before getting married, before knowing the Egyptian culture, before living in Egypt, I thought it's pretty normal for a girl to have a boyfriend. That's when I live here and I am a mother and I understood how it really looks bad and it's destroy female reputation. It's really not worth it. How important is it for a girl not to hang out with boyfriends, not to kiss with them, you understand?

Interviewer: yes.

Interviewee: That's what is accepted in Poland and everywhere in Europe, but here not. Before I couldn't understand, why, what's wrong with these Egyptians? How could it be there's nothing wrong in having boyfriend but now thing's changed. Also, backbiting speaking about other people was pretty normal and when I was living back in Poland, but now in Egypt after attending Islamic classes you learn a lot. I'm not talking about Egyptian culture because you will never learn Islamic values from Egyptian cultures. They're two different things and people have to remember that if you want to know about Islamic never watch Egyptians Unfortunately. What else? We are talking about the good things that's changed?

Interviewer: Oh, both.

Interviewee: What else? I don't remember now. I like not backbiting, they're being kind and giving away money. Before I couldn't understand how could they just go on the street and give money to someone but now it's pretty obvious and normal to give tips. For example, for people and sharing your money because they understand you're not becoming poor when you share money, is just how it works and you should be doing it. I don't know what else. There are also many, many negative aspects as well.

Interviewer: Yes, tell me about them.

Interviewee: I feel like being part of this culture, I stopped having my identity because being a Muslim and I'm still hiding from my family so I'm having double life which is not healthy for me. When I'm going back to Poland, I feel like I'm not 100% Polish because I soaked some of the values from Islam and when I'm going to Egypt, even though I am Muslim, I still don't agree with their Egyptian culture. I don't want to be part of the Egyptian culture, I'm still Polish. I feel like I do not belong to polish or Egyptian culture. This is something which is really, really difficult and it makes me feel I don't have my own family or friends. This is really sad because I don't consider my husband's family as my own and also when I go to my family to Poland, they would never accept me if I told them that I'm a Muslim. They would never accept it. It's difficult.

Also watching the most difficult thing is to watch how Egyptians understand Islam, or how they don't understand it. How they filter Islam through their culture, and the result is really

bad. This is what I don't like. This is a hypocrisy here. That's why I was saying always to my husband because I became Muslim when I was living for a short time in London, I told him if it happened to live in Egypt first, I would never become a Muslim because watching the culture here really discouraged me. I don't want to be like these people. Of course, there are many lovely individuals who are giving us classes and stuff, but in general, the Egyptian culture is not my cup of tea. I don't want to be like them.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about what you mean when you say "the Egyptian culture is not your cup of tea"?

Interviewee: The behaviour. For example, higher class treating lower class in a very ugly way. Speak to them in a bad way, treating them like servants. I don't like people lie here terribly, terribly. People lie here and I don't like that people are presenting themselves in a best beautiful way in front of their family members in gatherings, but inside the houses, they don't behave nicely. There is like a silent permission for husband for cheating also. Everyone believes this is fine as long as we look nicely in the picture. One of the things I would never accept and this is not what you find in Islam. Egyptians believed that really when the husband is cheating you have to just get over it. He's a man this is just fine. This is unacceptable. You don't want to hear about these things because it doesn't come from Islam.

When you clash, these two things clash, you start thinking what is wrong with these people? How someone who was born in let's call it Islamic country and his parents are Muslims. You learn from Koran and you will listen and you follow something so bad from where it comes, actually. You cannot understand how can you be a Muslim call yourself Muslim and behave this way.

This is really the most difficult thing because when you come here and everyone is Muslim. You expect from these people or you hope they will behave in way as you see in books. You will find something absolutely opposite. It's really challenging to stay Muslim and being around Egyptians.

Interviewer: Can I ask you what made you convert?

Interviewee: Yes, yes. Of course, my husband in the beginning when we were still friends, he was just encouraging me, "Oh please read about something and stuff." Of course, the result was opposite. I didn't want to read because, of course, for me it was something. I knew he is not right and he's just following fake religion. Then somehow at school we had to prepare the subject about Islam appear in history lesson and then the Geography lesson.

I remember the geography lesson we had to prepare a presentation, each one of us, about the different religions of the world. The teacher was saying, "Oh, you prepare about the Christianity or about the Buddhism or about the Orthodox or something, and you, Interviewee, you'll prepare about Islam." This was like I had to make a really good research. It was the first time I was actually forced to read and think what is really what is it really about?

Then I started being more curious, plus I knew someone from Egypt who is Muslim. I was very interested how it works what he believes, you understand? This is how it started. I

always think about Islam on-off. It has always been somewhere there if I converted for years. Then in London, of course, I met very nice ladies.

They were very strict Muslims actually, and they were very beautiful and very smart. This is the people really, I actually would like to be around because they were not Egyptians, not hypocrite. They were very strong and they knew what they were talking about. Their understanding of Islam was different than in Egypt.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Of course, I would rather leave my husband and all Egypt but I wouldn't leave Islam that would be infidel for me. Though I enjoy being a Muslim but it takes lots of work and courage to separate it from all this Egyptian madness. It's very important. Even when it comes to Ramadhan which is coming soon.

I didn't understand why I don't like Ramadhan because my husband was telling me, "Oh it's so beautiful in Ramadhan, and you will see and it's great how people are nice." I was so surprised like, "This is Ramadhan really? This is so bad." I couldn't understand why I actually hated Ramadhan for the first year when I was Muslim. Then I realized it's actually because I was not following Ramadhan. I was participating in the hunger games. We call it in a funny way. It was just, yes though I stopped doing it. I stopped doing what Egyptians are doing and I started looking for the ways to enjoy Ramadhan on my own. Again, we're part of this culture but you're not part of this culture. That's it.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about what you mean when you're part of the culture but also not? How do you deal with it?

Interviewee: No, I cannot deal with it, it's very difficult. I don't think I could say the truth to my parents because they would be very upset. They would mock on me to the rest of my days because Poland is a very into Christianity and Catholic. For them, it's like I betray everything, so it really bothers me. Everything would be easier if my family knew that I am Muslim, because maybe I don't need them to support me, just at least to accept then I wouldn't feel like I am hiding all the time. Whenever we travel to Poland I don't pray. I used to enjoy wearing, for example, hijab in Ramadhan only. It was very somehow helping me. I like it but I don't like it again because the child is growing. I know she will ask questions and then later she would call my parents and she would say everything.

This is like I'm always in a prison and I created it for myself, just hiding who I am. I'm like 1000% Polish, I would never call myself even 1% Egyptian. This conflict hiding religion is very difficult. Still, me, I consider myself totally Polish. Just because I follow some of the things from Egypt, or accepted the values from Islam, doesn't make me in any percentage Egyptian.

Also like it's funny because for example, Wael's parents many times they mention, "Oh Interviewee, you eat this and that or you speak in Arabic like this and, oh you're Egyptian." They want to-- because they will never accept me as a foreigner, they want to say, "Oh you're Egyptian, you're one of us." Then I stand and I say, "No, I'm not Egyptian." I see how angry they are and disappointed because for them they can only accept those who are one of us. If you're different, "Oh, we cannot take it." We have also another foreigner in family. She's covered and she's also Muslim and she's wearing like Egyptian. She feels

the same way because we're never going to be one of them. It is very important to keep your own identity, not to soaked everything that is from Egypt.

Interviewer: Why is this important?

Interviewee: We should be proud of where we come from. I love my country, my parents and this is where I come from. Just because I live in Egypt I can accept many things but still by heart, by soul, by mind and language, I'm from Poland absolutely.

Interviewer: How do you share this with your husband?

Interviewee: I say like with you he knows my-- I'm just telling him he knows exactly what I don't like. He knows everything that I told you, that's what I share with my husband. How I think about the hypocrisy, how I view them, the culture, of course, it makes him so upset. This is so upsetting that-- this is true. We are married and I want to tell him the truth. He should know it because as an Egyptian I see that most of the Egyptian love to wear these pink glasses and believe their country's so great. Nothing wrong is happening here and they don't have gays. That's what I heard from my husband last time. They have gays and stuff, I said, "Please, you have everything," and the hypocrisy is on top and he knows that. What I'm happy-
[crosstalk]

Interviewer: Sorry, go ahead.

Interviewee: I'm actually happy because in the beginning of the marriage. We had a very serious conversation about our child, how we're going to grow her up, where we going to live. He was very stubborn and he was trying to convince me that for the first years we should live as a family in Egypt, so she can understand the values. I couldn't understand what kinds of values you can give your child? All the values come from home whether you're in China or Poland or wherever. All the values come from home. He believed that this culture is so great and so beautiful that the lesson she gets from people and society would impact her for the rest of her life. We used to live in Egypt but somehow, I don't know, this is probably God listening to my prayers but somehow he opened his eyes and one day he said, "Khalas, we are going to live in Poland because we're not going to stay here." He decided to go to Poland and he realized that actually, he admitted this culture is not really easy to grow children up because of many aspects.

My daughter has to follow the values we teach her, so she has to believe in God, she has to understand what is right, what is wrong. She has to be good to people, no lying, she has to be a good friend, she has to be confident, she has to learn, she has to support if someone is different, she's not mocking. If someone needs help, she's helping. The money is not a value, when someone is rich you are not, some people have less money, it doesn't mean that you cannot be friends with them. Have to respect other opinions, these things we teach her.

Interviewer: Are there certain cultural aspects that you like her to know from both sides?

Interviewee: From my side, since she is born I'm teaching her everything, actually my child, she believes she's Polish, not Egyptian but I am not going to say it in front of my husband because that will make him upset. What I like from Egyptian side, I don't know, I see children are quite friendly for each other and adults are very soft for children and very open and they have conversation with children and they value them, they like spending time with them. Which is opposite to Poland because when adults approach children, they are not so soft, they don't talk to them, they don't give them gifts but here is the opposite. The family ties are very important here. You really care about your parents, you don't leave them alone and you are close with your brother and sisters. You check on your friends. What else from the Egyptian culture? Yes, that's all.

Interviewer: From your culture?

Interviewee: From my culture, I teach her everything, language, she has to know everything like the kids are learning at school. For example, that's what I miss, because I'm not happy from Egyptian education. I want to be sure she's following up and she knows what children know in Poland. I have to try to teach her, for example, that gifts are not the tool to do something which is in Egypt, like for example people asking her for kisses. I teach her like this is bad, you don't have to kiss anyone if you don't want to or no one has to offer you chocolate to make something, this is not correct. To appreciate what she has, not to be too proud if she has something other than other friends, she has to value also the neighbor, she has to respect animals and appreciate what is around her.

We don't have it in Egypt, people don't really know how to care of animals or appreciate the nature. They have to go, they're consuming a lot, Egyptians. This is what I don't like, that's what I try to teach her. She can spend her time in the park or in the zoo or whatever, she doesn't have to go and buy something to make herself happy, this is important.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about misunderstandings or daily struggles you have with your husband?

Interviewee: Yes, there are many things. I think the biggest issue is when the husband and wife don't speak the same language because my English is a little bit better than his English so it's very important to be on the same level let's say. I don't know, most of the Egyptians, they lack this common sense. The common sense is a huge issue and from the conversations, from other foreigners, I know they have the same. They do not have a common sense, they don't know what to do in a right time and they sometimes say things they shouldn't be saying. Yes, this is the main issue especially you know it is not an issue when you're just husband and wife, it appears when the children are, this is absolutely a disaster. Marriage can work as long as you are just husband and wife but when the children appear, then you can see the differences.

Their parental approach and the parenting is totally, totally different, totally. This is what people struggle mostly, the real problems in marriage start when children come. Yes, this is it, otherwise, it's just fine. There are some differences but you can deal with it when both people love each other and respect each other but the parenting is one of the biggest issues.

Interviewer: How do you deal with it?

Interviewee: Lots of talking, explaining, also having friends, foreigners with husbands sometimes in a funny way. Funny how serious you open some subjects and you try to bring up the subject and then they understand it or make the same and it's wrong. It comes with time, you cannot just overlook, you cannot teach them, it takes years. For me, it took lots of explanation, lots of articles, lots of Youtube channels to explain what is right, what is not right when you are a parent because my husband couldn't understand this. This is very difficult, it will take time. You must be willing to listen.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more how your relationship has changed over time?

Interviewee: It changed totally and it changed only because of the child. Parenting it is something that actually destroyed the marriage because we became absolutely strangers for each other. I would never accept his way of being a parent and he didn't understand like why I'm so upset and what's wrong because there's lack of common sense in the responsibility in an Egyptian man when it comes to being a parent. This is how they grew up, this is not their fault but also responsibility to be open for conversations and to learn. The relationship was good as long as we were without a child and after, strangers, so it was a very challenging. Also separate subjects you could speak and speak and speak about it. In general, Egyptian men do not believe that the husband should be at home, they believe their role finishes to make women pregnant and bring money. They do not understand the child needs, the wife needs, they don't understand they have to be present with mind. They do not understand that many things you should not say to a child, many things you should say. Not to, for example, make child to do something by buying them gift or prizing them with gift all the time which is the huge issues here. Parenting is something that can really destroy the marriage.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about how you think your husband's family sees your marriage?

Interviewee: Definitely less important than if I were an Egyptian. Why? Because my family is not Egyptian so the key role is the family should be on the same financial level. They should be good people or respected in the society, then that will be fine. Because there is a language barrier, they don't know my parents and maybe they're not so well-off like my husband's family, their relationship absolutely does not exist except, "How are you?", "Good morning," and then sending gifts from time to time. This is the thing because when you marry, you have to be sure the family is - and I told you, marriage is not between husband and wife, it's between families.

Interviewer: Can you give me an example of this?

Interviewee: Yes. They have always something to say, what they cannot accept in Egypt is that parents in law are asking us, for example, to sleep at their house, which I cannot understand how a married couple can go to their parents and just sleep there if we have our own house. What is very Egyptian and I also cannot accept it is spending lots of time

together in one house like going for holiday to North Coast, for example, and we have to stay in one house and enjoy our -- I cannot accept it. No, I cannot. They don't believe we need a privacy.

For example, when my husband was sick, my mother in law was calling me asking, "Can you please not sleep with your husband in one bed because he has a flu?" Who is thinking like this? You cannot do this. They do not understand that married people have their own life. Why is it, why they interfere? Money. In Egypt, when someone, when the family is well of, they offer money to son or daughter. They are pulling the strings. Unfortunately, their money is a huge tool here to control children because, "We bought you this house, we got you this one, so you owe us. You understand? You owe us." The son sometimes cannot say no to parents because he knows that everything he has comes from parents. This is, again, what I say that you get married to the family. You don't have your own life. You don't build your house with your wife. Most of the time, the money are there from parents.

Interviewer: How do you deal with these conflicts then?

Interviewee: I don't deal with it. It was pretty bad for me. When I used to live in Cairo, it was very difficult. Of course, I was considering divorce, running away, crying and stuff. It was very bad. It got worse when I got pregnant because my child was the only granddaughter, so of course, they wanted to see her daily and come over and invite us and telling what to do, what not to do and feeding her things you don't want her to be fed. They do not understand that when you say no, it means no. Because I am quite kind and shy person, I didn't set the boundaries from the beginning, and it destroyed me. It destroyed me because the healthy boundaries should be there from the beginning. You shouldn't be afraid to say no. I paid a huge price for being too kind.

It got really better because I didn't destroy any relationship. Still, when they come over or I come, we smile, we hug, we exchange the gifts and stuff, but there are healthy boundaries and I make them understand. I don't want to be around them much. I didn't say it. For example, I like I don't travel to them. This is how it has to be, the hard way, unfortunately. Because otherwise, they will sit over your head and they would tell you what to do, what not to do.

This is not only my opinion. I speak also to many foreigners. They have the same. The family is always there, always there. Which is not so annoying as long as you're only married, and then child comes, you're already in trouble. You are in trouble.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your own family and how you think your family sees your marriage?

Interviewee: Of course, they are extremely disappointed because they believe I betrayed the whole country getting married to Egyptian. Of course, they are sad. How come I left the country? I'm living in Egypt. They see me as a total failure because I left my country and I traveled to Egypt, which is a third-world country somewhere in a black Africa. They know I don't have a right here. Then, the schools are not so good. If they are good, we have to pay a lot of money for it. What else? I cannot just walk on the street. I cannot take a bus. I cannot this. I cannot that.

Their healthcare is not as they wish. The streets are dirty. People are dirty. They know what kind of country is it. Also, they watch TV. They are very disappointed that I am part of this society where 90% of the Egyptians are circumcised. I'm talking about the women. From time to time, they pull our statistics and tell me like, "Now, explain to us why you live there and stuff?" Also, I am a failure for them because there is a way of life you have to follow when you're Polish. You get married, and then you have to take a loan, you have to build a house, you have to pay the loan for the 30 years, and then you are someone. Because we didn't do this, they always remind me like, "Oh, my God, Interviewee. You are 33 and you have nothing." They understand, for them to be someone, it means you have to take a loan from bank, have a house, a husband, child. Because we don't own any house in Egypt, they also believe this is not correct.

Also, I don't work because I don't have any -- Someone has to take care of the child. When my husband is traveling and he is a workaholic, someone had to be there because I would never allow to have a nanny to look after my child and just go to work. That's why after just seven years, I came back to work. I just didn't have other possibility before. They believe I destroy my life because I should focus more on career, collecting money and stuff, not just sitting here being by the side of my husband. This is how they see it.

Interviewer: Has it influenced your relationship?

Interviewee: No. Relationship, no, but my self-confidence, yes. The relationship, maybe. I don't know. I'm not sure. Actually, yes, because my husband also was very upset that I don't work. He believes that I should be working instead of watching the child, which was very upsetting. I couldn't understand. It was very difficult for me, of course, being in a foreign country and just working and leaving my child. Yes, I felt like I, how to say it? Wait because I'm looking for the right word. I committed all my life for husband and for a child. For husband to have a free head working and traveling, and for a child because she needs me, but they actually didn't make anything for myself.

Of course, no one will say thank you for me, but I believe I made the right thing. Of course, if I could turn back time, I would never agree to leave to come and live in Egypt because I was still very young. I was just 24. Instead of staying in Egypt and being wife and creating my life, I could have stayed in Poland, complete my studies. That would be much better for me. Yes, so that's why it's very important. That's what I mentioned in the beginning, the financial security. When you get married to Egyptian, get married, but be sure that you are financially secure. It's either you buy a house for yourself and you know you have a place, and you have a work or he has to do this for you. There's no other option. Later, it is very difficult because the children come and stuff. Same will be for them. You don't want to be like Egyptian who are just giving birth to children and they have their nannies from Nigeria. This is not correct. This is not what I want. I get pregnant, I have child, I'm responsible of it.

Interviewer: Can I ask why you didn't continue your studies in Egypt when you moved?

Interviewee: All paid. It's all paid. Actually a few months after we got married I start working in a company. It was also very difficult because I used to work for three shifts. Just going to work took me a minimum of four hours a day, back and forth. It was difficult,

and after two years, I got pregnant. This is where everything changed. I was not actually thinking. When you are 24, you are in love, and you are just newly married. You don't think about continuing your studies, you just think how your marriage is going to work. It was just a mistake. That's why when I meet new girls who are still young, maybe they don't have children or just planning to get married, I make sure they understand everything as not to make mistake I made, because it was a mistake.

Interviewer: Getting married?

Interviewee: Yes, I could marry an Egyptian, fine, but living in Egypt, not really. I should be prepared much better, especially being a mother. Also we used to live in a very bad place. No one wants to live in a bad place in Egypt. You can get pregnant, you can be a mother, but be sure this is your standard. You can go out, you are not bothered, you have a clean street, you have a place to get your child out, not to stay home all the time, it's very important. You have to be prepared.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you tell me how you think Egyptians see your marriage?

Interviewee: Same like the family. It has a less value. It has a less value, because, again, I'm going to be back from the beginning, less responsibilities. Because people know, people understand that most of the foreigners when they get married, they do not have this wow wedding. We are not paying thousands of Egyptian pound to create a wedding. We don't invite thousands of people. They realize we don't get this wow jewelry from the family just to show off. No, which is fine, which is a gift. We deserve it. They also realized that there is no mahr. They believe he got married to a foreigner, maybe she's pretty, maybe this, maybe that, but she's not Egyptian. Less value. She's less. She's not like us. They would never say it, but you can feel it.

Interviewer: Okay. What about your friends? How do you think they see your marriage?

Interviewee: From Poland, of course it's not accepted, because, "How come you got married if you don't do it in church? Disaster, of course. Again, "You betray everyone. Are you crazy?" Here, the rest of the foreigners have the same story and they're just fine. As long as they see my husband taking care of the family and being good to us, everything is fine. It doesn't have a less value because they are on the same level. They have the same story, we share the same -- We're on the same boat. A small percent of the foreigners prepare this wow Egyptian wedding and stuff. The rest, the bigger percentage, usually there's a small party, and it's less expensive.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay. Can you tell me if you have acquired anything new through being in your cross-cultural marriage?

Interviewee: I don't know. If anything, I would never recommend a cross-culture marriage to anyone because it's difficult. When you marry, try to marry someone from your background. It's just easy. Marriage is difficult in general, so imagine how difficult is it when you don't speak the same language? When you don't come from the same

background. When your parents were totally different. They grow up in a totally different way. When you joke sometimes you don't understand the same jokes. It can go. The cross-cultural marriage can work only when people follow the same values. Only, because even they follow the same religion, it's not going to make them happy, or make the marriage secure or work. It has to be the same values. I don't think I learned anything. Of course, everything is a test. I don't know. I just learned about the mistakes I made. I learned that I didn't make homework before me getting married. This is the right answer. Because Poland and Egypt is totally different cultures, far away, so first you have to make your homework. You don't just jump to the marriage, believing that love is enough, because it's not. You have to make your homework, you have to go, you have to study. You have to be there for a couple of months. You have to understand how people behave. It's not right just to come and get married straight away. Because I have learned I made a mistake, not making enough research. I thought learning about Islam was the key, but this is not. Because Islam is one, Egypt is one. It's totally different.

Interviewer: I would like to ask you something else from the beginning you mentioned. You said that there's nothing from your home country in your everyday life with your husband, right?

Interviewee: Yes, I don't bring it. Yes, that's right. No, sometimes I make Polish dish, for example, but I know my husband will never value this. He will try, but he's not going to be happy. This is not what he likes, so anything that comes to the Polish and bringing my part into this family is only parenting. Definitely parenting, so he doesn't maybe realize it comes from Poland, but anything I do which is Polish comes to my child. This is what I'm also disappointed with because of course I wish my husband knew more about my culture, anything, but he doesn't really care. This is also difficult for Egyptians. They don't just bother to know other nationalities, because they believe they are the best. It's how I see it. However, he will enjoy listening to a story in Polish, or he is happy that Jenna speaks polish. He's very happy that I take the effort, and I put it on my child. He's happy that I do the work. Right? He's happy from it.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Sometimes he does something nice, like we got a new car so he made sure that, he download Polish music for example, for me. When we go to Poland, he makes sure that he buys from Polish shops or Polish products for me so, yes. From his side, I would be happy if he could be more interested on my part but it's typical Egyptian thing, not only for my husband, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to say that I haven't asked about yet?

Interviewee: I'm not sure. If anything pops to my mind I can just text you. Not now. I don't think, but I'm happy, if you have any question, I can just answer you. Nothing in my mind now.

Interviewer: Okay, great, thank you!

[01:21:08] [END OF AUDIO]

Thematic Analysis Coding Frame Template

Research Question: How are the interviewed European and American women married to their Egyptian partners continuing and transforming their selves within their transcultural marriage in Egypt?			
Global Theme: Continuing and transforming their selves to be adaptive and continue their senses of self in Egypt			
Theme	Code	Description	Example
Self-Continuity Through Cultural Continuity	Maintaining Original Home Cultures in Private	<p>Women’s ways of continuing their (sense of) selves in private include re-establishing their cultural continuity through maintaining cultural practices from their original home culture, by:</p> <p>(re-) creating their spatial home (through decoration and architecture), keeping their routine, traditional celebrations, food habits, media and entertainment habits and contact with and visits of family and friends from their home culture</p>	<p><u>Spatial Home:</u> We were lucky that Z [husband] just got a new apartment here. So we kind of moved in together which made it much easier for me to feel home, as we decorated together and made it a home in my own way. (San)</p> <p>We built our house on our own. The architecture of our house is not Egyptian, we have a big kitchen which we are using also as a dining room, and we sit together there, we invite friends there and family, so it's the stop for everyone-- Egyptian kitchens usually are separated and the women are away, but the kitchen's our meeting point, which is also more German or European than Egyptian. (M)</p> <p><u>Routine:</u> The other thing that I would say that I prefer as an American that's different than here, is that I would prefer more of a daytime schedule. In my area, everybody is a night owl. I find that if I sleep all day and wake up all night, I get pretty depressed, so I would prefer a day schedule . . . I kind of have put myself on my own schedule that I prefer to follow. I will plan to meet friends or whatever during the day earlier so that way I'm waking up earlier. It's definitely resulted in some frustrations because like I said, we go to</p>

		<p>Khan el-Khalili to do work and I'll go at 2:00 in the morning but that's what time everybody's working there so it's okay. I find that for my own mental health as long as I have one or two days where I'm waking up early and feeling productive, then I'm okay. (Am)</p> <p>So sometimes for sure for me it's been good to have things structured and it's hard sometimes to not being able to fix with Z an activity, for example in one week we are doing this and that this is not working here, with no one. With no one of my friends. So, this might be sometimes a bit challenging for me . . . I'd just say this is one of the things that sometimes go on my nerves, because I'm still more a planner, and this might be a bit challenging for me. (San)</p> <p><u>Celebrations:</u> We have come to one arrangement for us, where we celebrate all the holidays that would normally be celebrated both in my house and both in, let's say, in my mom's house and in his house. For me personally, let's say, it's Easter, we normally color eggs. There are some traditions that I cannot do, for example, we light the fire, I'm not going to light the fire here, but then we still we'll sit as a family for the lunch and do the things that I would do normally in my mom house. (Z)</p> <p>I'm extreme about Christmas. The European in me is a big Christmas fan, so I obsess. I loved Christmas decorations; I love the songs. I could be singing Christmas songs two, three months before Christmas. My husband's really-- He's like "It's two months away." I was like "But Jingle bells, jingle bells." (Chri)</p> <p><u>Food:</u> I do not cook Egyptian. It's not because I don't-- I just don't want to. I'm just set in my ways when it comes to cooking. I make good old fashion</p>
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		<p>Americanized food. I realize all food in America, most of it, comes from other cultures, of course. Mac and cheese, southern biscuits, lasagna, a lot of pasta bakes, tuna noodle casserole, things very American dishes that my husband hasn't had before. (Li)</p> <p>If I get tired of Egyptian food, which I often do, I'll cook my own food separate. Usually, I cook earlier in the day because everyone here is usually eating late. If they're eating at 9:00 PM, I'll cook my food at 5:00 so that way I use the kitchen and then it's clear for anyone else who needs to use it. . . I have my own refrigerator in my room so if I don't want everybody to eat specific things, I will put it in my refrigerator. (Am)</p> <p><u>Media/Entertainment:</u> As far as things like entertainment, he hates my choice in what I watch. I'm a huge horror fan. I love horror, <i>American Horror Story</i>, horror movies, slasher movies. The bloodier, the better, the scarier, the better. He hates those things. . . Those things are a little bit different. He says, "I don't understand why you like to watch those violent things." I said, "It's just, I guess, normal from my upbringing. Horror is very popular in the American culture." (Li)</p> <p>I would watch German Austrian shows for example, because this might be something I'm missing, this Austrian humor for example. (San)</p> <p><u>Contact/Visits Friends/Family:</u> Once a year, usually once a year and it can happen twice and happen also three times, but usually I try now once a year. I go alone. I want to see my friends. I would live my German life a little bit. (M)</p>
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<p>Maintaining Original Home Cultures in Public</p>	<p>Women's ways of continuing their (sense of) selves in public include re-establishing their cultural continuity through maintaining cultural practices from their original home culture, by:</p> <p>Continuing working, mainly in national or international schools and projects associated with their nationality (also to remain and feel independent), continuing the same hobbies/activities, the same clothing style, and an international community and friends, often of the same original nationality in the host culture and same habits of meeting them, conditional male friendships also show a hybrid practice</p>	<p><u>Working + independence:</u></p> <p>I consider myself a really strong, independent . . . woman and that's just my identity. Since I've come to Egypt, and I met my husband, I feel now that I don't have to be, even though I know I can still be strong and independent, and take care of myself, and make my own money . . . I still make my own money just in case something happens that we don't work out, God forbid, I can still provide for myself, so that's important. I don't want to be totally, 100% dependent on my husband. (Li)</p> <p>I never had to fight for the special place of a woman that I find it's normal as a European that I've studied and I'm working and I have to work. That was never a problem. I went to university and I worked, and we respect each other's work. We are lucky. (M)</p> <p><u>Activities:</u> I do the same actually, because when I was in Spain, I always liked dancing. I love dancing. Usually, I used to go to dancing classes and I do the same here. I was very lucky because I went to the gym and in my gym, there are a lot of classes for dancing, there is belly dance, there is Zumba, there is ballet, so I'm doing the same. More or less I'm doing the same, so I cannot say that it changed my lifestyle. (N)</p>	

		<p>The art parts, I'm definitely influenced by my gaming community. I do have a lot of friends who are artists, so we'll try to either do art trades or we'll show each other works in progress. That's something that I do from home. (Mai)</p> <p><u>Clothing:</u> I definitely dress more American. Even though I'm in a fairly local area, I wear longer Bermuda shorts and tank tops and t-shirts and that kind of thing. (Am)</p> <p>The way I dress is probably more American than what you would see a lot of the Egyptians wear. A lot of the women wear the abayas with their hijab and long sleeve t-shirts. I do wear kind of like workout pants, I hate dresses, hate them. I always have hated dresses since I was a little girl. I don't wear the abayas, I don't wear the gowns and stuff that a lot of the Egyptian women wear when they go out. I wear some things that-- Like I have this grateful dead t-shirt that I wear out a lot. It's tie-dye and it has a grateful dead on it and it has and a lot of people they're not used to seeing that. I get a lot of attention when I wear that shirt. I mean, there's a lot of women and girls here that wear the jeans and just jeans and shirts and stuff but I think some of my shirts from America definitely show that I'm not Egyptian, nobody thinks I'm Egyptian when they see me. (Li)</p> <p><u>International/national community:</u> I go to a monthly meetup with expat women in the area, and that's a women-only event and it's been really fantastic to be able to have that connection. I go do that on my own. (Am)</p> <p>We don't have many Egyptian friends . . . Little by little I chose our friends, this is what I did in a French way. Our friends are French Arabic, they're mainly a mix or they speak French or this, I think we</p>
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			<p>changed our friends my way. Now we have a bunch of friends who live like us, think like us. (MY)</p>
	Blocking alterity and stereotypes	Semantic barriers block alterity and stereotypes about them as foreigners to secure, stabilize and continue their selves	<p>If you let people sway you or let people influence you, you can easily end up losing yourself entirely. For example, I know quite a lot of women that have come here, and they've married Egyptians and they try to completely immerse in the language and the religion and every element, but they lose themselves in the process. You really have to know who you are, and what you're okay with and what you're not okay with and what you need for yourself (Am)</p> <p>I don't want to be like these people. Of course, there are many lovely individuals who are giving us classes and stuff, but in general, the Egyptian culture is not my cup of tea. I don't want to be like them. (Sand)</p>
Self-Transformation Through Cultural Adaptation	Adapted Hybrid Practices in Private	The participants adapt to local practices in private by creating their own localized hybrid practices, through which they show a transformed self; the hybrid practices include: food, celebrations, transitioning indoors and homework or conversion to Islam	<p><u>Food:</u> After such a long time, it's such a mix up of everything. Our breakfast, for example, is very German. We use self-made German bread, cold cuts, and a variety. It's not Egyptian at all. Whereas, our dinners usually are, for example, Egyptian food that I'm cooking. (M)</p> <p>Sometimes, I cook Egyptian. Today, I prepared to cook something Egyptian. "I'm going to do it the French way." I am changing a bit the recipe. Even something very known in Egypt, it's called Tahina, I put fresh cream in it, while they don't do it at all but it's my French way. I don't know. I think yes, I kept a lot of things from France. (MY)</p> <p><u>Celebrations:</u> We do Christmas in our house. We're greedy, we celebrate everything. My husband's Muslim, I try to do as much of the Muslim stuff as I know about. . . When it's Ramadan he</p>

		<p>fasts and then we have Iftar on an evening or we go meet with friends to do iftar. We do celebrate Eids, we put up some Ramadhan decorations, we put up a Christmas tree. (H)</p> <p>We do the full-on German Christmas here, including the Christmas tree and the presents and the dinner and everything on the 24th in the evening. Again, we are making it a bit wider, but usually, we are inviting friends as well so it's not a family thing, it's a friends and family thing. . . On the other hand, of course, we're doing the Ramadan. We do the iftar, the fast breaking together. We are inviting friends and we are going to friends to have iftar together. (M)</p> <p><u>Transitioning indoors and housework:</u> In the UK, everything would be more shared whereas here, it's the house, the parents' stuff, the child stuff, everything's more on the women. You don't particularly mind, so I would like some more help with the housekeeping but it's not that big a deal. (H)</p> <p>I've become more . . . “homey”, whereas like- I'm Swiss, it's very about equality. We're all going to be cleaning this, we're all going to be doing that. Now, I'm more accepting, like I'm annoyed, but I'm accepting that I would take more of that feminine role, I'll do the dishes, I'll cook, I'll clean up after you . . . I'm more forgiving about those things. (Chri)</p> <p>Now, I don't go out as often with friends, as I used to. Alone, I mean that alone, if it's me and my husband we will go often together. My husband does not like me going to weddings by myself . . . I can't go to engagements or weddings, any formal event on my own. That's</p>
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		<p>something that I still find weird. I accepted, but I still find weird. (Chri)</p> <p><u>Conversion to Islam:</u> My lifestyle, of course, in America was very different. Before I converted to Islam I went to bars, and I drank, and I went out, and had a good time, and socialized a lot more. When I came here, of course, I stopped doing all that which was difficult at first because I enjoy my couple of glasses of wine or whatever, my whiskey sours. Of course, I had to give that up. (Li)</p> <p>Again, it's very difficult to see the compromise we're doing because we got, after so many years, accustomed to it. Sometimes, I don't see it as a compromise anymore. Yes, of course, I don't drink any alcohol, just out of respect and the kids are also not, as a respect for the religion. Of course, we all don't have pork meat and stuff and also, you want to call it a compromise, it's a compromise, but I don't see it as a compromise anymore, it's totally normal. (M)</p> <p>A lot of things that you look from outside which you thought that you have a second view on it and you think they're negative and if you look into detail, they are very, very positive. For example, praying, if you look at it from the outside, five times a day they go to pray and why are they doing it and you see that okay, it's giving you an earthing. At least four times a day you are just, it's like a mini-meditation if you do yourself and you just connect yourself with a routine and you just have a reset every couple of hours which is, I think, not bad. It's like a lot of things that you would see as a restriction and as a negative, if you live with it actually on a daily basis, you see it as a positive thing. (M)</p>
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	<p>Adapted Hybrid Practices in Public</p>	<p>The participants adapt to local practices in private by creating their own localized hybrid practices, through which they show a transformed self; the hybrid practices include: “getting by”, family friends and community relationships, clothes and speaking Egyptian Arabic</p>	<p><u>“getting by”</u>: If you move to any place, at the beginning, it's like, "Oh my God, I'm alone. I don't understand the rules." It's like you don't understand the rules. You don't know how to react. You don't know if you can shout and scream, if you can slap someone or not [harassment in public]. It's like at the beginning, you don't know the rules. Once you know the rules, it's okay. (N)</p> <p>When I was here first, I was with trousers, but my T-shirt was not very long. Now, I learned. I already learned that I have to go with longer things and don't look too much like a foreigner and adapt to the way of moving, walking, and everything. At the beginning, you don't know the rules. You don't know if you can stare at the eyes. No, you can't. If you look at a man in the eyes, he will come to you [chuckles] All this kind of rules, you have to learn. I learned slowly, slowly. . . I can say I don't feel that I have a lot of problems anymore. (N)</p> <p><u>Family, Friends and Community</u>: For me, I adapted to understand these relationships with family, so strong in some ways. In Spain, the family relationship is very strong. Maybe even stronger than here or similar but in our case, our parents when you are married, you are in another house. You know what I mean? They never interfered. Here no, it's like always there is only one house, so that was difficult for me at the beginning, the most difficult part but now it's okay. I mean, I understand and it's like this, I adapted to it. (N)</p> <p>Even how we interacted with our families. I would say, "Your mom needs to call before she comes over. She just can't pop over into our house." I would come home, and she'd be in my house cooking. He's like, "What do you mean?"</p>
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		<p>My mom can come over whenever I want." I'm like, "No, we don't do that. We don't." (Ang)</p> <p>Like social wise it was pretty much the same as I'm a very social person I met a lot of friends. I made a lot of my own made friendships on my own like with people that are not of Z's group but also felt very welcome in the already existing friendship groups of Z. (San)</p> <p>I go out with my friends, with my Spanish friends, once per month with my Egyptian friends, once per month Latin America, and once per month the English speaker ones. It's like a lot of meetings because there are a lot of different circles here, different groups. There is the group of the Spanish people, group of everything, Latin American, and Spanish together. After that are all the expats. There are lots of groups. (N)</p> <p><i>Male friends:</i> The challenging is again, how we deal with the friends around you, how close you connect them because, in Europe, you are quite giving your best friend a hug or something, this is not a big deal. Whereas in Egypt, it is a deal. This is a bit of a learning curve. (M)</p> <p>Well, of course, he has that Egyptian male mentality so if he's with his friends, I don't go with him. I respect that because as Muslim people, we do have our "places" in society. If I'm going to go out with my friends, it's always with my girl friends. I don't usually hang out with male colleagues at work unless it's a full provided dinner type celebration. That's the only time where I'll really interact with the males but I don't really mind this. Growing up, I was a complete tomboy so I had a lot of guy friends, had very limited girl friends but then when I became Muslim and I started living in</p>
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		<p>Egypt, my husband does care with whom I hang out and I do respect it because as I get older, I find out that it is for me beneficial to have lady friends than it is to have male friends and to avoid situations. . . (Mai)</p> <p>For my mentality that's fine but for Egyptian culture, it's not so ok. I'm torn between the two because I do want to hang out with my male colleagues but at the same time, I have to respect the religion as well. That way, for me it's not so much as an image but so much for as a religious aspect. Just to respect my husband, respect the family and respect myself a little bit more. (Mai)</p> <p>We ended up compromising. It took us a few weeks of back and forth with the discussion and we ended up being like, "Okay, what's going to happen? I'm going to see my guy friends, but you get to meet them before I hang out with them alone so that you can tell me, okay, from a guy's perspective, do you think that he's there to flirt with me or whatever. If you accept them then I can hang out with them alone. (Chri)</p> <p><u>Clothes:</u> While before probably I would walk with shorts now I will not walk with shorts outside neither here nor there, not because someone prohibits because I don't feel comfortable. (Z)</p> <p>I mean, there's a lot of women and girls here that wear the jeans and just jeans and shirts and stuff but I think some of my shirts from America definitely show that I'm not Egyptian, nobody thinks I'm Egyptian when they see me. (She is veiled) (Li)</p> <p>It took me a little bit of time to figure out where I lie on the continuum of what I feel comfortable being American wearing and compared to what is</p>
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		<p>normal here in Egypt. I feel like I found a nice balance of still keeping my American identity and my clothing, but not being really scandalous if you will. (Am)</p> <p><u>Learned Egyptian-Arabic language:</u> I know that's also like I said with language, it's also a language thing. So I have to be very direct here. Then when I go back to the US I realize I can be way more relaxed and don't have to be screaming at people if you will. That's one big thing I feel like I've adapted. Even my directness that I've adapted to here is not as strong as it could be which is really like a crazy thing to think about. (Am)</p> <p>With my poor Arabic it's still enough to communicate with my workers after 38 years. I'm not really good but it's enough to communicate. I make a lot of mistake but finally I had made for 20 years and another one for about 12 or 15 years. They understand me, what type of my Arabic is. They know what I mean so I communicate. Even for doing my shopping, when I am upset and shout, especially my Arabic is much better when I am upset. (MY)</p>
	<p>Critical Self-Reflection</p> <p>The participants show a transformed, hybrid self by being able to reflect back on the original self, practices and their original home culture from a transformed, hybrid perspective</p>	<p><u>Self-reflection:</u> you start to reflect, you get accustomed to many things. You question some of the things you're used to, which you might have never thought about if it's right or wrong. You just took it as this is the only way you know, but with the new cultural way you will start to think, maybe another way of seeing it is also right. (M)</p> <p>I'm able to reflect on some of the traditions and some of the German ways of thinking and how to see the world a bit better because I see it from distance. Maybe I see some of the things more critical and I just don't accept how things are, how people think. I just don't accept</p>

			<p>it because I know it can be also different. A different way can also be right. (M)</p> <p>Change of perspective because you're seeing things from a different angle through different pairs of glasses. Living in a different culture, you are more judgemental to the other culture than you are with the one you're living within. You create more understanding for how people are and why they are like this because you live with them. (M)</p> <p>I definitely became more tolerant for example, through living abroad. I think it would be the same different we go to Austria. I think it just opens your eyes to different life realities and you're not so stuck in your own bubble and I realized how, what white privilege is in so many ways and I try to be more critical with myself. (San)</p>
	The Husband's Role	husband as facilitating/introducing them to the Egyptian culture and how to behave and/or explaining "social pressure"	<p>You learn how to understand them [cultural differences] and how to adapt to them. I understand you are like this. Okay, I'm like this, there are things also for him that are difficult. We understand each other. (Chri)</p> <p>He taught me how to, for example, put gas in the car and how to ask for which kind of gas and that kind of thing so he knows I can do all of that. He's relaxed a lot about that. Like I said, when it comes to doing shows, when I first started gigging here he'd come to every single one, to make sure nothing would happen or there would be no confusion. Now he . . . knows I'm okay. He knows I can handle myself so he's not worried about it so much. (Am)</p>
Self-identification and	Explicit Hybrid Selves	Half of the participants describe themselves as explicitly hybrid, but only one participant identifies	Even though I am, I do still disagree with a bunch of parts of his culture, and a lot of the European in me would still be like, "I don't like that. I don't do this." It's still back and forth, but I definitely feel a lot

<p>(unreflected) Hybridity</p>		<p>herself explicitly as “Egyptian”</p>	<p>more part of his culture than I would say my Swiss culture. (Chri)</p> <p>When I'm here I feel very German. When I'm in Germany, I feel a bit more Egyptian . . . I think I'm German with a twist. (M)</p> <p>I think recently I've been really into just American everything. I'll see a picture and I'm like, "I miss that," or I see something that reminds of my mom. I'm still veiled though. I feel like I'm in the best of both worlds. As I was explaining earlier, I still have a lot of open-minded things I'd like for my future child or even for myself to experience, but I'm still in Egypt, I have one foot in and one foot out, I'm like, I'm half and half, I really am not sure. . . In Egypt it's mainly Muslim culture, I'm veiled, I still do the praying or fasting. I try to dress decently, but still trying to keep myself. I still wear makeup, but it's not as heavy as before. In some respects, I've calmed down my youth days to be more age appropriate. The other half is like, yes, I can report on but I can still read the classics. I can still eat the foods that I like while still doing Egyptian foods. . . One of my colleagues, she's Canadian. She's also in that boat. The thing is she's half Egyptian, half Canadian. She has the best of both worlds too. (Mai)</p>
	<p>Dialogical Tension between being a Foreigner and Egyptian</p>	<p>The participants experience being seen as foreigners, although they feel and act Egyptian, which creates a dialogical tension, which the women aim to solve by identifying themselves with their original nationality, and</p>	<p><u>Being seen as a foreigner:</u></p> <p>I definitely feel like I'm more American . . . Here [in Egypt] I still feel like you walk into places, and they're like, "There's the foreigner. There's the token foreigner," although I've lived here for such a long time . . . I think that I don't fit completely both, either place. (Ang)</p> <p>He [husband] got massive pushback here from also people he didn't really know that much. He had a police officer tell him once that now he's dating or married to an American, he'll never</p>

		<p>reject Egyptian identifications</p>	<p>drink from the Nile again, which is a huge insult. (Am)</p> <p>His family was not that happy too. They thought foreigners are not good wives and they're not taking care of the house and all this cliché everybody is having. . . His parents thought I will jump over any men crossing by. (MY)</p> <p>They were not really fond of it in the beginning, because they think, yes, we are different, and we are not serious, and we are not house women, and that I will not have kids, for example. Or we are like-- I don't know how to say it in Arabic, not prostitute, but very sexually liberated or whatever. (MY)</p> <p>. . . [I]f you are a foreigner, you will never be considered Egyptian and you will never get the same respect and rights as an Egyptian. Because Egyptians believe you only deserve their respect and attention when you're one of them. Anyone who is not one of them is totally an outsider and cannot be part of the family. It doesn't matter if you're a Muslim, if you speak Arabic, it doesn't matter. If you're from a different country, you're not one of us. This is very difficult.</p> <p>Of course, the Egyptian family there, you know how they are. They are loving, they're smiling, they will tell that they love you and they will welcome you, but when you are longer in the family, you can understand you are not one of them. They will treat you differently. When you start comparing yourself how the Egyptian wives are treated by the rest of the family, and how you are treated, you can understand that you are never part of this family. (Sand)</p> <p>. . . They [Egyptians] believe he got married to a foreigner, maybe she's pretty, maybe this, maybe that, but</p>
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		<p>she's not Egyptian. Less value. She's less. She's not like us. They would never say it, but you can feel it. (Sand)</p> <p>[marriage] Definitely less important than if I were an Egyptian. Why? Because my family is not Egyptian so the key role is the family should be on the same financial level. They should be good people or respected in the society, then that will be fine. (Sand)</p> <p>I feel like through being part of this [Egyptian] culture, I stopped having my identity because being a Muslim and I'm still hiding from my family so I'm having double life which is not healthy for me. When I'm going back to Poland, I feel like I'm not 100% Polish because I soaked some of the values from Islam and when I'm going to Egypt, even though I am Muslim, I still don't agree with their Egyptian culture. I don't want to be part of the Egyptian culture, I'm still Polish. I feel like I do not belong to Polish or Egyptian culture. This is something which is really, really difficult and it makes me feel I don't have my own family or friends. This is really sad because I don't consider my husband's family as my own and also when I go to my family to Poland, they would never accept me if I told them that I'm a Muslim. They would never accept it. It's difficult. (Sand)</p> <p>. . . I'm like 1000% Polish, I would never call myself even 1% Egyptian . . . I consider myself totally Polish. Just because I follow some of the things from Egypt, or accepted the values from Islam, doesn't make me in any percentage Egyptian . . . We have also another foreigner in the family. She's covered and she's also Muslim and she's wearing like Egyptian. She feels the same way because we're never going to be one of them, it is very important to</p>
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			<p>keep your own identity, not to soak everything that is from Egypt. (Sand)</p> <p>They would mock me to the rest of my days because Poland is very into Christianity and Catholic. For them, it's like I betray everything, so it really bothers me. Everything would be easier if my family knew that I am Muslim, because maybe I don't need them to support me, just at least to accept, then I wouldn't feel like I am hiding all the time. Whenever we travel to Poland, I don't pray. I used to enjoy wearing, for example, hijab in Ramadhan only. It was very somehow helping me. I like it but I don't like it again because the child is growing. I know she will ask questions and then later she would call my parents and she would say everything. This is like I'm always in a prison and I created it for myself, just hiding who I am. (Sand)</p>
	<p>Dialogical Tension between being Independent and Egyptian</p>	<p>Although the participants feel and act Egyptian, they reject Egyptian identifications because they want to call themselves independent, which they see as exclusive and opposite to being Egyptian;</p> <p>Being Egyptian but not wanting to be "Egyptian" creates a dialogical tension, which the women aim to solve by identifying themselves with their original nationality, and reject Egyptian identifications</p>	<p>I would say I'm firmly American . . . if you will because there are a lot of things in this culture that I don't really love for myself. I understand how they work, but I don't love them for myself. For example, in my area, women aren't really out in the street after 11 by themselves. Well, I'm American, and I will, and I feel like I'm in my 30s I will go do what I want when I want. It's not a safety issue, it's a talking thing . . . I also understand why Egyptian girls follow this rule. (Am)</p> <p>I'm very independent and I think that's probably quite challenging for him [husband]. I forget sometimes that it's very different than what he would have if he was married to an Egyptian woman. (H)</p> <p>I do still disagree with a bunch of parts of this culture, and a lot of the European in me would still be like, "I don't like that. I don't do this." It's still back and</p>

			<p>forth . . . I don't feel like I can be as fiercely independent as I was. Not 'can', but in general, I've calmed down . . . I've become more . . . "homey". (Chri)</p> <p>I think that over time, when we started dating, I was very fiercely independent. I like doing things on my own and this was contention between us because he was coming from this Egyptian thing, he's like, "No, I need to do this, I need to do that as well." I tried to pay for our dates. Of course, that was a thing. It happened probably once that I paid for our date and then after that, it's not happening. (Chri)</p>
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Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Thank you for considering participating in this study which will take place from April to May 2020. This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part.

What is this research about?

The present research will investigate the experience of being in an intercultural marriage of European or American women married to their Egyptian partners in Egypt, what you think positive and challenging aspects are and how this has influenced the understanding of yourself. The research is rooted in broader concepts of dialogicality, self and acculturation.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part, I will ask you to verbally confirm your consent at the beginning of the recorded interview.

Who is doing this research?

My name is . . . , I am a Postgraduate student in Social and Cultural Psychology at the London School of Economics. I am undertaking this research for my final dissertation under the supervision of Professor. I am available via email at all times to answer any questions you may have.

What will my involvement be?

My research focuses on what it means to live in an intercultural marriage, what issues and strengths are and how it has impacted the understanding of yourself. Specifically, I focus on European and American women married to Egyptian partners that are living in Egypt.

Your participation will take the form of an interview. We will be talking about your marriage experience, and how you view yourself since you are married and living in Egypt. The interviews will be semi-structured, meaning I will root the open conversation in specific topics. However, the tone will be informal, as I want it to be as close as possible to a normal every-day conversation about your experiences. Your interview will last no more than an hour. It is possible for the interview to take place whenever it is most comfortable for you.

How do I withdraw from the study?

You can withdraw from the study at any point without having to give a reason. If any questions during the interview make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. If you withdraw from the study I will not retain the information you have given thus far, unless you are happy for us to do so.

Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only myself and my supervisor will have access to the files and any audio tapes. Your data will be anonymised – your name will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All digital files, transcripts and summaries will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Any hard copies of research information will be kept in locked files at all times. A pseudonym can be chosen to guarantee your anonymity.

If you are willing to participate, then please verbally confirm your consent at the beginning of the recorded interview. You can keep this Information sheet for your records.