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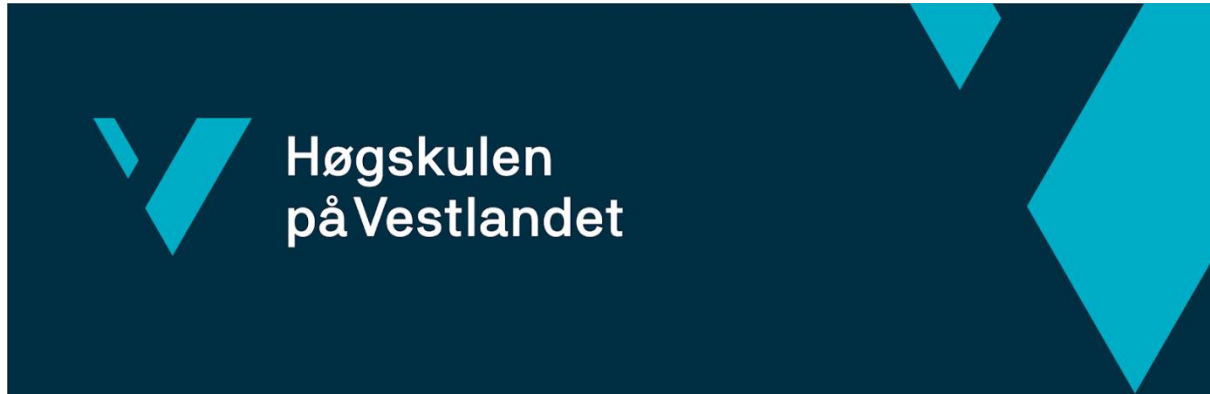
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Performative Masculinity

Exploring performances of Syrian men's masculinity in Norway

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Contents

Summary

Masculinity is a concept that varies over time, culture, intra-psychically, and is regarded differently in the different communities that belong to different cultures.

However, refugee men's masculinity and understanding regarding how it is pertinent to employment continue to be an under-explored area of research. This exploratory study aims to examine the interaction between men's masculinity and (i) the community and (ii) the employment in their new country. This thesis aims to highlight how masculinity as an identity is renegotiated as a person flees from one country to another, and this identity is performed in the new culture in the new host community, Norway. In qualitative research, new insights are generated by exploring participants' descriptions of their experiences. A thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with six Syrian male refugees who came to Norway after 2015, was performed.

The results indicate that the participants are performing or displaying a type of masculinity as an act to fit in their new community. It is concluded that refugee men experience diverse challenges both in the community and in the employment sector. This has implications for both refugee men and the system in Norway, namely how the system can facilitate expression of identity and appreciate refugee men experiences.

*Keywords***:** employment, masculinity, performativity, social capital

Acknowledgments

Some years went by without sunlight, with no access to books or radio, and no visitors. And all simply because of your opinions.
This thesis is dedicated to my friends who are political detainees in Syria.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents an introduction to my thesis and the principal reason behind choosing this topic for my research. It also provides an overview of previous research on this topic and how I see pertinence between this topic and community work. This chapter concludes with an analysis of what characterizes Syrian manliness.

1.1 Background – Reason for choosing this topic

As migrants come to new countries, they begin the process of integration. One of the ways to get integrated into the new community, among many, is employment and social adaptation. This study is focused on the interaction between Syrian men's masculinity with the community and with employment in Norway as they settle.

As an refugee man and a master's student in community work, I feel both solidarity and deep understanding for vulnerable groups in the community. And through my work as an interpreter in several mental health clinics in Bergen, Norway, I have met and interacted with numerous migrant men.

I have been an interpreter and gave my services for more than 200 hours in several mental health clinics in Bergen, Norway. The patients I interpreted for were all men who came to Norway during and after 2015. During my work as an interpreter in the mental health sector, I noticed the feeling of marginalization among male refugees. I also noticed their struggle from the rhetoric that was represented in "Western" politics and policies. (Price, 2013; Olivius, 2015).

The year 2015 was heavily influenced by not only the increased flow of refugees from Muslim majority countries but also the terror attacks on the office of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, and last was the terror attacks in Paris on November 13. All these incidents had wide repercussions on public debates on Muslims and Islam (Bangstad & Elgvin, 2015)

Studies in Norway show that refugee men tend to be homogenized by the system of equality in Norway, which therefore conceals asymmetries of power (Charsley & Liversage 2015). Masculinity is by no means an unnegotiated identity. Therefore, this study explored the interaction between Syrian men's masculinity with the community and within the employment sphere in their new home county, Norway. It was examined how this identity

adapts to the circumstances when a man moves from one country to another and what challenges are there when it comes to employment and everyday life.

I decided that this topic would fit in my master's study because the ultimate goal of community work is to have communities improve their wellbeing. Without empowerment, marginalized communities remain powerless over circumstances that prevail in their environments.

1.2 Context

Substantial displacement in countries such as Syria has made migration a major debate. Over the past decade, Syria has marked the largest recorded refugee crisis since the Second World War (MPI, 2020).

Some European countries came as favorites for Syrians to seek refuge after these countries started to grant Syrians' asylum. Since then, over 1 million Syrian asylum-seekers and refugees have chosen Europe to be their new home, with 70% being hosted in two countries only: Germany 59% and Sweden 11% (UNHCR, 2021), followed by the Netherlands, Austria, and Norway with 4.7%, 4.2%, and 3.2%, respectively.

Syrians are the seventh largest group in Norway, with more than 35,000 people (SSB, 2020), compared to slightly over 1,000 in 2010 (SSB, 2018). They are relatively scattered around Norway and are settled in 399 of the total 422 municipalities in the country. Most people with an immigrant background from Syria live in Oslo, a total of 2,600 people and 1,484 in Bergen (SSB, 2018).

In comparison to other newly arrived refugee groups, the gender composition among the Syrian group is relatively the same as there are far more men from Syria in Norway than women (SSB, 2018). Family reunification is likely to even out the gender balance with the passage of time (SSB, 2018).

When it comes to how it went with them after coming to Norway, the findings of a study reveal that 73% of male refugees who came after 2015 where the majority is from Syria, have started work or education, while 7% are unemployed and 19% have an unknown status (Fredriksen, 2021).

The higher the level of immigration, the more people are concerned about it. The anxiety around refugees generally is highly noticed in the mainstream media and parliament election

in the European host countries (BBC, 2019). The right-wing howls the "border crisis" or what Siv Jensen, who served as the leader of the Progress Party in Norway from 2006 to 2021, called "subtle Islamification" (NRK, 2009), a term that has been used very often in the Norwegian political debate since then (Dagsavisen, 2019)

Moreover, the greater extent of gender equality in the European host countries, where men and women perform more similarly in society and in domestic duties, makes male refugees confront additional challenges and have come to occupy the public interest in the host countries. Their masculinity is often described using terms such as oppressors, misogynists, dangerous, and is tied to discussions on terrorism, youth riots, and immigration (Archer, 2003)

For example, in Norway, 1 out of 3 ethnic Norwegian is afraid to pass by a group of Muslim men in the street (Vårt Land, 2019)

While immigration may be regarded as a key element of human capital to address labor and skill insufficiency, receiving countries are ambivalent about the contribution that forced migrants can make to the local economy (Backman, Lopez, & Rowe, 2020).

In addition, transitioning into a new country may mean that male refugees work to find a balance and manage tensions related to their masculinity as they explore employment opportunities and interact with society in general (Storm & Lowndes, 2018).

Therefore, the primary research question of this study is centered on the interaction between men's masculinity with the community as well as the employment in their new country and the transition from having the dominant gaze into being an object of another individual's gaze.

1.3 Previous research

Challenges in the labor market:

There are several studies on migrants, including refugees, within the employment sphere globally, including in the UK and Scandinavia. According to Eurostat (2020) and Eurofound (2007) globally, migrant men in the western world are less employed than ethnic men. According to an article published by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2000), immigrant workers and their families are confronted with major hurdles in obtaining jobs.

However, there is a dearth of research on male refugees' employment experiences in connection with their masculinity.

In Europe, there has been extensive research on the topic of migrant men after Europe opened its borders to refugees. For example, *Migrant Men in Europe and Beyond* by Ester Gallo (2016) discusses the employment of migrant men in different European countries by comparing the European context with other relevant geopolitical areas such as the US and Asian countries.

What is lacking in these studies is the exploration of how masculinity is renegotiated and how that would affect male refugees and their integration.

Attempt to imitate masculinity in the new land

Rana (2015) asserted moving away from the trap of viewing men as perpetrators and putting the focus instead on the social approval and internalization of masculine role identities. She focused on migrant men accompanied by "highly skilled" female migrants to the UK. Highly skilled in this study refers to the women pursuing their doctoral studies or working in the health sector. These women work in professionally advanced positions how men compared to their respective husbands. The study highlights men's vulnerabilities at a time when they are not the primary earner and how they experience anxieties for not fulfilling their own as well as their family's expectations to adhere to certain standards set by their societies. The study also shows how men, having moved to the UK, had to adjust not only to new customs and expectations of the host society but also to a shift in roles and ideologies as they adapted to their new lives.

The pressure on male refugees can also give rise to an emotional struggle in attempts to fulfil idealized visions of gender roles (Hakimi, 2020).

The study shows how the men's tendency to maintain so-called "traditions" like that of male breadwinner and traditional modes of marriage should not be taken for granted but understood as an active accomplishment. For example, the study introduces the story of a young man the author calls Yosuf. The story offers a critical perspective on traditional forms of marriage. Yosuf, in this example, has not seen his fiancée and does not even know what she looks like. The latter's family does not allow any contact between them prior to the family reunion in which they will be pronounced as husband and wife. The family reunion in which the finance will move to the country where Yosef is – that is – Turkey. The

story shows the emotional struggle and offers a critical perspective on traditional forms of marriage.

There has, however, been little attempt to explore pressures exerted by the host communities and challenges experienced in the employment sector that migrant men face after migrating to new countries. In Scandinavia, Khosrafi (2009) investigated masculinity under displacement and explored how migration has changed the pattern of power relations between Iranian men and women in Sweden. The study shows how Iranian men's "primitive masculinity," for example, expecting them not to cry and deal with problems themselves and even forcing them to play sports, is represented as a danger for Iranian women. It is also described as a force that violates Swedish norms and values. It shows how having an immigrant man as a boyfriend for Swedish women means to be associated with a lower social and class status, as it means that her status can be diminished to his level.

Pustułka, Struzik, and Ślusarczyk (2015) studied the emergence of new fatherhood among migrant men in Norway. Significant institutional and normative influences on fatherhood from Norway were paired with how individual agency for Polish migrant fathers was executed. The study concluded that (i) migrants should be treated as individuals with significantly varied biographies owing to the heterogeneity of experiences and (ii) the new fatherhood in the Polish context is neither independent of the institutional welfare state and the gender mainstreaming in Norway, nor is it a universal change.

Maziva (2020) investigated migrant masculinity. It was an exploratory study on African men negotiating manhood and fatherhood in Bergen, Norway. The case of the transnational African fathers raising their children in Norway and how migration (re)defines their constructions of masculinity as men and as fathers has been discussed in the study. The study examined how migration contributes to the plurality of masculinity among African men who are fathers. The study shows how studying men as gendered beings provide deeper insights into the intersectional analysis of gender relations and how the migratory experience is somewhat a gendered performance of masculinity. The study concluded that the experience of migration manifests an ambivalent and contradictory way of being a man.

Renegotiating masculinity

Literature has focused on how migrant men are adjusting their identities in different parts of Europe. The authors of a recent study demonstrated the egalitarian attitudes toward gender relations (Zadkowska, Kosakowska-Berezecka, Szlendak & Besta, 2020). The study compared the household arrangements of Polish couples in Poland to verify whether the migration to a socio-democratic welfare state country might encourage the use of egalitarian capital within household duties. The study revealed that living in the society with active policies enhancing gender equality within the household helped Polish couples sustain equal arrangements regarding their household duties and parental roles.

However, much is still unknown about men and the interaction between their masculinity and employment. This is a noteworthy research gap, and therefore, this study is anticipated to contribute to how men's masculinity interacts with employment in their new countries, which is Norway in this case. The primary research question of this study is: How masculinity is experienced in the case of migrant Syrian men in Norway? The chief objective was to discover the intersection between masculinity and employment.

1.4 Relevance to Community work

One of the main prerequisites in community work is to strengthen the community on the individual level before one can achieve collective goals. Social inclusion in the society and being included in the working environment is an ultimate goal for the integration process. (Hutchinson, 2010, p. 13-23) asserted that for social inclusion to take place, one should focus on both: the individual and the individual's belief that change is possible.

Community work is a way of working that focuses on mobilizing forces and work that can contribute to changes at institutional and societal levels. Empowerment is, therefore, central to community work through the mobilization of the driving force of the individual that can lead to action (Hutchinson, 2010). In community work, a community's social capital is strengthened where strong social networks are established. Social networks contribute to trust and cooperation, can create engagement, and contribute to increased ability for collective action and chances for employment. To achieve collective goals, one must also strengthen the individual (Hutchinson, 2010). It should be understood how identities as masculinity of male refugees change. Renegotiation aims to strengthen an individual, and thus, I firmly believe it is relevant for community work. Twelvetrees (2008, p.1) defined community work as "the process of assisting people in improving their own communities."

Statistics from SSB show that non-Western immigrants are, to a greater extent, a marginalized group compared with the rest of the population in social arenas such as workplaces and educational institutes (SSB, 2008).

Community work aims to contribute to collective empowerment. It supports vulnerable groups and be aware of their strengths and resources and offer the latter a supportive environment to improve their life situation. In other words, community work has an inherent belief in an individual's abilities to change his/her living conditions through collective action (Henriksbø & Sudmann, 2011, p. 52). It is in groups with people in the same situation as oneself that one can identify what structural barriers one has. Thus, can develop the power to influence these (Hutchinson, 2010, p. 25-30).

1.5 Migrant men and employment in Norway

Over the last decade, the arrival of asylum seekers within European borders after fleeing predominantly Muslim countries has fueled heated debates on both the socio-economic and cultural integration of Muslims in Western societies.

Many studies have searched the question of employment opportunities for migrants and compared the same to majority populations and reported especially strong penalties for Muslims, regardless of their ethnicity (Lindley, 2002). Job seekers who signaled their affiliation to Islam in the job application were at a severe disadvantage compared to equally qualified candidates of different religions (Adida, Laitin, & Valfort, 2010; Pierné, 2013). Although Syria has no official religion, 85% of the population is Muslim. Approximately the same percentage is represented by refugees coming to Europe from Syria (UNHCR, 2021). A study that compared discrimination against Muslims in employment processes in five Western European countries, namely Norway, Netherlands, Germany, Spain, and the UK, indicated that discrimination of this group is greater in Norway than in other countries. In Norway, 67% of immigrants between the ages of 20 and 66 are working. The percentage is up to 79% of native Norwegians belonging to the same age group (SSB, 2020).

The Scandinavian countries offer newly arrived refugees' introductory programs with an emphasis on language training and work training (IMDI, 2019). The purpose of these introductory programs is for these refugees to be equipped for rapid and lasting participation in education and professional life. Several studies have confirmed that there is great variation between Norwegian municipalities when it comes to offers and goal achievement. So far,

there is only limited information regarding the effects of such programs. A recent study from Norway suggests that the introduction program led to increased employment among UN refugees, but it did not have an effect on the employment level of asylum seekers (ISF, 2019). Nordic research indicates that individually tailored qualification courses have a positive effect. It is also beneficial if the refugee himself/herself is involved in formulating the plans (Sarvimäki & Hämäläinen, 2016).

A number of obstacles can impede migrant men from finding a job in Norway. Bufdir (2020) (The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs) reported how applicants with Pakistani names have a 25% lower chance of being called for a job interview compared to equally qualified applicants with Norwegian names. The report also furnished two new findings: the first was about how 11% of people with Sami background experienced discrimination in working life, and the second was about the lack of research-based knowledge about experiences of discrimination in professional life among national minorities.

Another study showed that 16% of immigrants state that they have experienced discrimination in working life because of their immigrant background in Norway. Among immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Afghanistan, a large proportion have experienced discrimination, compared with immigrants from other countries. Immigrants from Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Vietnam generally experience less discrimination (Hamre, 2017).
A report was launched by Bergen municipality showed how 43% of people from ethnic minorities have experienced discrimination in their meetings with health sector, labor market, and housing market (Bangstad, Larsen, & Grung, 2021).

Another barrier that could make it difficult to find a job is the language. In this regard, the system was changed in 2019 as settling of refugees became directed toward municipalities that have shown good integration and language results (Solberg, 2019).

There are several reasons why immigrants, especially refugees, have lower employment than the remainder of the population. In Norway, there are smaller differences in the salaries of the employees compared with many other countries. This places high minimum demands on productivity and competence. It can thus be unprofitable to hire a person with low

qualifications because one cannot offer a salary that suits the person's productivity level (OECD, 2015). Norway is one of the countries in The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with the lowest proportion of employees in occupations with low requirements for formal qualifications. Statistics reveal that it has become more difficult to get a job in Norway without formal competence (SSB, 2018). Many refugees come from countries without well-developed education systems and therefore have an inadequate level of education when they come to Norway (UNICEF, 2017). Low or less relevant competence and little knowledge of the Norwegian language thus become substantial barriers for many newly arrived immigrants when they enter the Norwegian labor market. Most refugees have experienced trauma and disorders that can give rise to health problems, thereby hampering their capacity to find jobs. Refugees can experience trauma before, during, or after their long journey to Europe. They may have experienced distressing situations such as violence, detention, and torture, in both, their countries of origin and along their journey to a safe location. Afterward, long periods spent waiting in overcrowded and often isolated reception facilities in the new host countries can exacerbate an already arduous experience, as can the lack of optimism regarding the future. These can surface soon after arriving or after a certain time (Sandalio, 2018). In addition, refugees can experience minority stress, which can be described as increased stress among the people who belong to a minority (Meyer, 2003). Research has shown that minority stress can be negative for both mental and physical health. For example, gay people are at higher risk of developing anxiety and depression, and African–Americans have a higher incidence of heart disease than White Americans (Kongsvik, 2021). In Norway, 20% of immigrants from India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan have developed diabetes, against 3%–6% in the rest of the population (FHI, 2021). Poorer health, along with a more marginalized labor market connection, may be a reason why refugees are overrepresented among social help recipients (IZA, 2018).

1.6 Men's masculinity in Syria within the community

In this section, I will not present a comparison but rather explore the cultural and relational components of masculinity in Syria and cite examples to demonstrate the same.
Men in Syria are the first and foremost as breadwinners, which is accompanied by enormous stress and economic pressure. Some additional pressure comes because of the unemployment rate (UN Women & Promundo, 2017). They tend to measure themselves in relation to how much they succeed in performing their roles and responsibilities as men – whether they can

provide for their wives and families, or whether they are hardworking and can manage to make a living.

Men in Syria also have the responsibility to pay for all the wedding expenses and must accrue wealth before they decide to get married, as in most instances, the parents of the bride do not provide consent for a marriage with a man if he is not financially stable enough to support his future wife (Suerbaum, 2018).

Some young men choose their partners, especially those who go to university are likely to meet someone. However, most Syrian marriages are arranged by their families and are preceded by a formal engagement, which is the main period for a real conversation between the couple. Sometimes an engagement may be broken during this time. There is pressure on men too (Suerbaum, 2018).

From my own experience, masculinity in Syria is highly intergenerational, i.e., men try hard to imitate their father's journey. They inherit the morals, attitudes, and generally follow the profession. At an early stage in primary school, a typical question is asked about what one would like to be when one grows up. Most of the answers by male students highlight their desire to be like their father, especially if the latter is working in a profession that is either highly respected like a doctor or an engineer, or professions that come with enormous powers such as working in the police or the military.

The family dynamic is generally patriarchal, which means the father in a nuclear family or the eldest male member in a joint family has the most authority in the household. The male opinion typically prevails in arguments. In divorce proceedings, it will be presumed that the children automatically belong to him (Cultural Atlas, 2021).

So far, I have covered the background concerning this study, research questions, and previous research conducted on this topic. The following describes the structure of this thesis.

1.7 Outline thesis structure:

This thesis is organized into six chapters. This introductory chapter is followed by a review of the theoretical framework for this study, which comprises performativity theory and social capital as a concept.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, including research design and methods of data generation. Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the findings and limitations of this study. Chapter 5 provides a theoretical discussion. Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of key findings and recommendations for research and practice.

This chapter described the reason I chose to write about this topic, relevant literature about migrant men in new communities, and the challenges it comes with, and its relevance to community work. Chapter 2 focuses on prominent theories and the theories utilized in this study.

Chapter 2: Theory

This chapter is about theory and covers the following theories that are relevant to community work: Gender performativity by Judith Butler as a background theory and social capital as a theoretical concept. Under gender performativity, I will cover the following sub-topics: performativity as a way to adapt to new environments, hegemony, and the power of discourse in forcing performativity. Under social capital, I will cover the varying definitions of what it is and entails as well as the types of social capital I focus on (human capital and social networks). I use different well-known social theorists who have investigated and written about social capital, including Pierre (1930–2002), Robert D. Putnam (1941), Francis Fukuyama (1952) and James Coleman (1926–1995).

2.1 Theories
2.1.1 Gender performativity

The main theory of this thesis is Judith Butler's (1990) theory of performativity.
Before I define gender performativity according to Judith Butler, I would like to define the concepts of gender and performativity.

Gender is a state of being and a mode of life. To define gender, we need first to define what gender is not, as it is very easy to mix it with biological sex and sexual orientation. Biological sex refers to the biological traits that are usually determined by chromosomes. Most people are born male or female, with some people born intersex, people who are born without the typical XX and XY. For example, to be born appearing female but having a male anatomy in the inside (Medical News Today, 2021). Gender identity, however, is a social construct and refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys and how they are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. (WHO, 2019)

People who have their biological sex aligned with their gender identity are considered cisgender. The prefix "cis" here means "on the same side as." While people who are transgender move "across" genders, people who are cisgender remain on the same side of the gender they were initially identified as at birth (Healthline, 2017)

Performativity is the repetition of acts through time. If something is performative, it means it is stylized in a technical way. Performing certain behaviors that construct our feelings of gender. These behaviors are taught and enforced, and repeating these behaviors every day will create our idea of what it is to be male or female (Buttler, 1993, p.176)

Bulter (1990) integrated these two terms to form the theory known as "gender performativity." In her theory, Butler argues that being born male or female does not determine behavior. Instead, people learn to behave in particular ways to fit into society according to the gender construct of that particular society. In this context, Gregoriou (2013) observed that it can be complex and even difficult to define and categorize gender and gendered practices in intercultural contexts. Gregoriou's study of performativity in intercultural schools concludes that "collective performative" can be unfair and inconsiderate of minority cultures. In her book, *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1999) argued that people must accept the most basic of human identities in order to make society better. She asked skeptical questions about sex, gender, and sexuality and how these define people's identities and how categories such as male and female contribute to prejudices in the society. Butler answered how questioning these labels can help change these societies and how labeling people as normal would result in "non-normal" people having fewer fulfilling lives. Her ideology presents gender as a process, which comes into being as a consequence of performativity. This performance is influenced by dominant conventions of gender, which exist in particular settings.

> As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the
> discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is
> produced and established as ''prediscursive,'' prior to culture, a
> politically neutral surface on which culture acts (Butler, 2007, p. 346).

Butler argued that there is no natural basis for gender and no inherent link between someone's sex and gender, but instead the social conventions about dress and behaviors give the *appearance* of a natural basis. This makes it seem as though masculine and feminine behaviors are natural.

Butler (1999, p. 376) asserted that "The exclusion of those who fail to conform to unspoken normative requirements of the subject."

Butler argued that men and women, acting as expected, makes masculinity and femininity exist. She called this process performative. Performative is not just a performance but rather a performance that makes itself real. Boys become men, as cultural practices expect them to become. In each culture, there is a limited set of behaviors, roles, and scripts that men are supposed to learn to become "men." For migrant men, this set is different between the country of origin and the country of destination. They have to disavow dependency from the authority of the dominant "other" to bestow upon them particular kinds of recognition. Studies have shown that in most cases, minority cultures make an effort to distance themselves from the practices of the dominant culture to bestow upon them particular kinds of recognition. However, in most cases, they are met with resistance and may either have to compromise and perm practices of the "new" culture or choose to live as "different".

However, there is a dearth of studies that explore how this identity construction might operate in the context of migrant men, who bring with them notions of gender from their countries of origin that interact with "local" gender practices in the "receiving" country. The aim of using gender performative theory in this study was to examine gender identities in the context of "transitional situations" such as migration and how migrant men establish notions of masculinity in their experiences of finding employment in Norway.

Very few studies have used Butler's theory on men and migration. A previous study (McDowell, Dyer, & Batnitzky, 2009) used Butler's theory to show how gender identities are (re)negotiated in the context of migration, often resulting in the production of flexible and strategic masculinities different from those performed in the country of origin. The study illustrates the complex process of negotiation and resistance that occurs as migrant men construct, perform, and (re)evaluate their particular gender identities, through reflection on, reaction to, or affirmation of gender identities in their countries of origin in contrast to dominant gender systems in destination countries. The authors of the study concluded: "migration might also be relevant to masculinity in its ability to facilitate the renegotiation of gender identities even when is not directly involved." They further emphasized how this was exemplified by the narratives of middle- and upper-class men who migrated to the UK in order to evade patriarchal social controls. They said:

''An arranged marriage or entry into a particular career. We have shown how multiple forms of masculinity are performed in the daily working lives of migrant men, and how their labor-

market experiences provided them with an opportunity to display what Guerrier and Adib (2004: 336) call 'a different masculinity.''

Generally, there is a dearth of studies that have used Butler's theory in studying men and employment in Scandinavian countries and even in community work studies. However, the few studies quoted above show it relevant for community work because gender performances occur in the community sphere and are constructed and exercised by the community. In the case of my thesis, the employment sphere is part of the community, and what happens in the community influences how men (in this case, Syrian men) are treated in the job market as they exercise their masculine behaviors.

2.1.2 Definition of terms

In this part, I will define particular terms that are used interactively with my data and with the theory of gender performativity, namely hegemony, and masculinity.

The power of discourse: Hegemony

The term hegemony stems from classical Greece, where this has been used to refer to a state that holds political and military dominance over others. In contemporary scholarship, however, this term was developed to refer to control outside of the relatively simple notion of physical control. The dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. The theorist who is mostly to thank for is Antonio Gramsci (1971). Hegemonic, alongside ideology and organic intellectuals, is a key component of what Gramsci (1971) described as his philosophy of praxis. These three terms were used by Gramsci to analyze how social classes come to dominate society and how such power and control come not only through physical power but rather through cultural domination. Hegemony is a form of an agreement in which the person agreeing does not necessarily understand what it is that they have agreed to. Gramsci (1971) argued that in hegemonic thinking, people do not control ideas, but rather ideas control people, or people do not wield power, but power wields people. This collective influence of all these different ideas on our actions is what Gramsci (1971) meant by cultural hegemony.

We might observe that some media outlets tend to have an editorial outlook that will support specific ideas on the way we talk about migrant men, which legitimize specific policies toward them. These media outlets do not present this as one-side of a many-sided argument

but as simple common sense. Cultural hegemony then is something that is often not clear to see but hides itself within and beneath cultural texts.

The idea that the only way for migrant men to be part of the community is to forget about the way they think about their role as men in their home country and learn the language and get a job is presented as the de facto way of ensuring integration.

For example, in 2016, in Stavanger, a city located on a peninsula on the southwest coast of Norway, refugee men who just came to the country as asylum seekers were obliged to attend courses on how to respect women. According to the teacher who was interviewed by The Guardian, the goal for these classes was "to teach these men that if a woman wears a skirt, then they cannot harass her" (The Guardian, 2016).

In the same interview, the journalist asked the teacher that the consequences for such a course might leave them feeling marginalized, to which the teacher's answer was "they need to feel marginalised."

From this example, we see those negative ideas about migrant men embedding themselves in a society to a point that those whom this kind of thought process actively harms might actively support it.

BBC covered a similar course in Haugesund, a municipality on the North Sea in Rogaland county, Norway, where Western relationship norms are taught to migrants who just arrived in the country. According to the article, the course begins with a picture of a Western woman in a miniskirt. The men are asked what they think the woman does for a living, to which they respond a model or an actress (Longman, 2016).

Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously 'born' in each individual brain: they have had a centre of formation, or irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion-a group of men, or a single individual even, which has developed them and presented them in the political form of current reality. (Gramsci, 1971)

In the case of refugees, the right-wing populist political discourse established them as an incompatible ontological category predicated on culture and kept the national focus on refugees as an imminent threat to the welfare, and the debate kept positioning men as a possible threat. Through this theory, it is possible to understand the public discourse on the perceived "refugee crisis," which has often been framed in terms of "problematic foreign

masculinity." Mariann Amstrup Sondresen provides a closer look at the discourse that was created by the Integration minister (2015–2018) in Norway Sylvi Listhaug. Sondresen, in her research *The Listhaug effect: Right-wing populist discourses in Norwegian immigration policy,* critically analyzed Listhaug's texts and involvement in the immigration debate that arose in connection with the refugee crisis in 2014–2015. She examined whether the debate led to new or reinforced right-wing populist discourses on immigration and the extent to which these may function as polarizing and exclusionary of immigrants.

Sondresen showed how Listhaug's method uses pronouns contributing to a negative perception of immigrants. She claimed:

Pronomenet «de» eller «dem» forekommer imidlertid kun fem ganger i tekst 2. Listhaug referer ellers til dem som «flyktninger» eller «migranter» og det er dermed brukt substantiv som svarer til en instrumentaliseringsprosess i stedet for personlige pronomen. Ved å tydelig skille «oss» fra «dem» kan man bidra til å fremme en praksis hvor innvandrere fremstår som en generalisert, negativ gruppering av noe fremmed og truende. Ved å referere til dem som en gruppe, bidrar Listhaug til å skape en mer upersonlig fremstilling av en gruppe «vi» ikke identifiserer oss med. (Sondresen, 2020, p. 62)

Gender performativity, in general, is about any performance of any gender. However, the focus of this study is on men. Therefore, I will explore masculinity and how migrant men perform masculinity in a new area.

Masculinity:

It is important to define the term masculinity because it was used interactively with the data in this study. Masculinity is not used as a theory but as a term.
 According to Kimmel and Diefendorf (2020), masculinity refers to the behaviors, social roles, and relations of men within a given society as well as the meanings attributed to them. The term *masculinity* stresses gender, unlike *male*, which stresses biological sex (Hines, Sally, & Sanger, 2010). However, there are a number of variables and various backgrounds that can determine or illustrate what masculinity is. First, historically, masculinity is a concept that varies over time. Second, masculinity varies between cultures and has different meanings in the different communities that belong to different cultures. Third, masculinity

varies intra-psychically—what it means to be a man changes over the course of one's life. Finally, masculinity varies *contextually*—even within a given society and time period, masculinity can mean different things to different people (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Masculinity has been theorized in many ways by several authors, for example, West and Zimmerman (1987), Butler (1990), and Guillaumin (1995). This chapter focuses on the approaches that link masculinity to mobility, losses, and gains.

Mobility is the primary characteristic in the world today such that solid and fastened features of identities are to be challenged and contemplated in a more dynamic way (Blunt, 2007), losing physical assets and being uprooted against one's will make forced migration a distinct experience. The theme of exile was central in various scholarly works, such as Edward Said, who described exile in his book *Reflection on exile and other essays* as:

It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home. (Said, 2000, p. 173)

However, both forced and voluntary migrants share the experience of having to adjust to a new environment where identities are required to be renegotiated.

Identity is a series of steps of ongoing discussion linking the several elements that shape the self with time and environment in which each individual is a part (Taussig, 1993). Ascriptive differences between a migrant's homeland and the host country are not only about the level of integration in which he/she can be successfully part of the host society and the social and cultural capital they can mobilize in it, but they also describe the negotiation of their identities (Meeteren, Engbersen, & van San, 2009).

Masculinity is one of those identities that change from a social class to another and from culture to culture (Budgeon, 2003). To demonstrate a man's sense of masculinity and the ambiguities of his gender are reworked and negotiated with the surrounding environment (Budgeon, 2003).

2.1.3 Social Capital

Social capital is not a new concept in the social sciences, but despite that, there are still varying definitions of what it is and what does it entail. There are several well-known social theorists who have written and researched it. Pierre Bourdieu is one of the most famous sociologists in recent times and wrote in his book *The Forms of Capital* (1986) about various forms of capital. Examples of social capital by Pierre Bourdieu include cultural capital in his book, Bourdieu distinguishes between economic, cultural, symbolic, and social capital and

underlines the fact that social capital differs from other capitals. The former, unlike the latter, remains completely dependent on other people in order to exist. He defined it as follows:

> Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a sustainable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the blackening of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248).

He further wrote that the premise for social capital to exist is that people develop relationships with each other. The quality of people's social networks with other people is therefore important, and it is these relationships that constitute the level of social capital.

Robert D. Putnam

While Bourdieu focused on the importance of social ties and shared norms for the well-being of society and economic efficiency, Putnam expanded this form of capital in his works *Making Democracies Work* (1993) and *Bowling Alone* (2000) by linking civic associations and voluntary organizations with social capital.

He considered this important for both political participation and effective government management. He wrote mainly about governance in Italy but also implied that this applies to all states outside Italy. He defined social capital much like Bourdieu – in the sense that it is based on relationships between people – but also formulates and includes other aspects of the concept than what Bourdieu does. For Putnam, social capital is: "connections among individuals - social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). He defined social capital as an attribute and added the word *trust*. Putnam's definition strongly emphasizes networks and social relations between people and gathering social capital together into a "collective social capital" in a population, a state, or a society. This is a matter of general trust with other members and groups in the society. Trust and community involvement are closely linked because people who participate and get engaged in organizations within their community are more likely to trust each other (Putnam, 2000). What makes social networks so interesting to Putnam is the emphasis that they also affect people living in the same area as the networks exist (Putnam, 2007). For example, criminologists have shown that the social networks in the neighborhood counteract crime and therefore help people outside these networks. Social networks thus provide benefits to all members of that local community. Children grow up to be healthier, live safer, are better

educated, and people live longer and are happier in societies with high social capital (Putnam, 2007). Putnam's concept of social capital has three components, namely moral obligations and norms, social values (especially trust), and social networks (especially voluntary associations).

Francis Fukuyama

Fukuyama built a little further on Putnam's concepts and revealed that many subgroups in some societies have more confidence in their group identity than on other groups in society. This means that identity groups may have difficulty trusting other subgroups in society, including immigrants from unknown cultures who do not always fit as well into the larger society (Fukuyama, 2000). Fukuyama (2002, p. 27) defined social capital as "shared norms or values that promote social cooperation, instantiated in actuals social relationships." Social capital is what enables individuals to unite with others and defend their interests and organize the same to support the needs of the collective (Fukuyama, 2002). Social capital thus plays a prime role in any society in how different social groups communicate and collaborate with each other, and the fundamental premise for this is that the groups trust each other. Fukuyama (1995) illustrated this as follows:

> Social capital thus concerns general trust between people in society, at the crossroads of social identity groups. Mobilization of social capital in a society requires that the members of society trust and cooperate with each other, even when they do not know each other (Putnam, 2001). Thus, generalized trust is formed which in turn promotes so-called spontaneous sociability. This makes individuals more willing to participate and cooperate in society.

Migration and Social Capital:

For Putnam (2007), migration and ethnic diversity can reduce social solidarity and social capital. This leads to people "hunking down," withdrawing from the collective community, and trusting their neighbors less – regardless of their skin color. In several countries, ethnic heterogeneity is associated with lower social trust.

According to Putnam (2007), immigration and ethnic diversity are detrimental to social solidarity and hamper social capital. If Putnam is right, migration can erode social capital and from there can lead to, for example, a more violent crime. In previous studies on migration and social capital, it has been questioned whether immigration has a negative impact on social capital, measured by general trust and political commitment. It was concluded that immigration has an insignificant effect on social capital. In light of general confidence and

political commitment, political participation increased after immigration (Kesler, 2010). While there are different examples of social capital, this study includes social networks and human capital as they seem to be the forms of social capital most represented in the study data. Social networking is critical as a platform for gender performativity and revelation of masculinity.

This study includes social networks because migrant men are stickling in and networking with the community trying to be part of it.

The other type of social capital I would like to elaborate on is human capital, where every member of the community is considered productive. Human capital as a socio-economic concept involves and expresses the population's knowledge and skills.

Human capital can be increased through education and training, which is thus an investment in human capital.

Studies of the economies of developing countries confirm that human capital is an important factor in explaining why some countries are poor and others economically advanced (Economic Research, 2017)

Human capital inputs prioritize the development of social and work-oriented skills that equip the individual for suitable and lasting work. The rationale behind the human capital approach is to prevent social exclusion of those who have been marginalized from the labor market. Work-first approaches emphasize attachment to the labor market and are based on the principle that having any job is better than having none at all. The reason for work first is that the individual should not be encouraged to depend on passive social security benefits but have individual responsibility for active participation (Djuve, 2011; Bonoli, 2010; Dean, 2006)

There are a few Norwegian authors, such as Helene Marie Kjærgård Eide, Anne Homme, Marry-Anne Karlsen & Kjetil Lundberg, who have demonstrated through their research that migrant men are seen as good human capital (Tidsskrift for velferdsforskning, 2017).

These authors have examined how the healthcare sector is used as a component in the qualification and training of refugees and immigrants. The central focus of this study is how local measures can strengthen the participants' human capital and connection to the labor market. Later, the study reveals tensions in the measures, which provide different prerequisites for building the participants' human capital.

The next chapter is methodology and will discuss the system of methods employed in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I will discuss the research design and philosophical positioning of my methodology that was chosen and the reasons behind this choice. I will present the outline of the research methods followed in the study. This chapter provides information on the participants, that is, the criteria for inclusion in the study, participants' background, and how they were sampled. The method that was used for data collection is also described in addition to the procedures followed to conduct this study. Lastly, trustworthiness, reflexivity, and ethical issues that were followed in the process are also discussed.

3.1 Methodological choice

Qualitative research is based on exploring people's personal experiences of a phenomenon. Unlike *quant*, which emphasizes objectivity, *qual* is open to subjective experience. The analysis reveals patterns or themes for change. It can be inductive when we want to observe a problem to establish a theory. The analysis can also be deductive when we have a theory of a phenomenon, whose durability and correctness need to be tested (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The purpose of the study is to gain knowledge about migrant men's experiences with their everyday life in Norway and how their masculinity faces many challenges with a focus on employment. The qualitative method with individual interviews was chosen because I reckon that this method is best suited to illuminate and answer the research questions.

Malterud (2013) claimed that qualitative methods can be used to learn more about human experiences, which provide better understanding of why people do as they do or act in a specific way.

3.2 Method and philosophical position

This study aims to highlight how masculinity as an identity is renegotiated as a person flees from one country to another, and this identity is performed in the new culture in the new host community, Norway. In qualitative research, knowledge is produced by exploring participants' descriptions of their experiences. I work on the assumption that meaningful phenomena must be interpreted to be understood, and thus, this study has a scientific theoretical foundation in phenomenology and hermeneutics.

Through interaction with other people, try to interpret meaningful phenomena because without this interpretation interaction would not be possible (Gilje & Grimen, 1993). In

hermeneutics, interpretation is based on the understanding that is developed during the study and on the pre-understanding the researcher possesses prior to the study (Grønmo, 2016). A basic idea in hermeneutics is that as a researcher you never meet the world as a "blank canvas." Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960) presumed that the pre-understanding we bring with us in the encounter with social phenomena is a necessary condition for understanding (Gilje & Grimen, 1993). Knowledge and experience from the past constitute a researcher's preconception. As stressed in Chapter 1, I have experienced being a migrant man in Norway. I have developed positive associations with the Norwegian community because I have experienced it as an inclusive and welcoming one. At the same time, I have also experienced being treated as an "outsider." This is because I was confronted with numerous struggles because of preconceptions on my masculinity.

It is vital to reflect on my preconceptions because it can affect both the collection and interpretation of data. It can make me "blind" to pertinent and valuable findings and can influence my interpretation of data. It is therefore important to be candid about my insight and take on questioning the participants' stories. At the same time, my position as a person who is integrated and works provides a perspective that is useful to be able to see the whole image without influencing the data. Hermeneutics advocates that no phenomenon can be understood independently out of the larger whole image it is a part of (Grønmo, 2016). In this study, I sought to see and understand the whole image and was critical of my own pre-understanding during data collection and analysis. I reflect more on this under the topic reflexivity.

Phenomenology

In this study, I used a phenomenological approach both as a scientific approach and as a research method. Phenomenological approach attempts to describe the essence or core of an experienced phenomenon. One identifies a phenomenon that is interesting to study and then describes the same. Data are collected from the individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, using interviews. Themes are generated from the analysis of significant statements. Textual and structural descriptions are then developed. The essence of the phenomenon is then reported using the compound description. Finally, an understanding of the essence/core of the experience is presented in writing (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenological approach is especially useful when a phenomenon has been weakly defined or weakly conceptually clarified (Polit & Beck, 2017). However, the approach may

appear unstructured. Such an approach also requires certain prior knowledge/understanding of major philosophical assumptions, and researchers should identify these assumptions in their studies. Furthermore, selection is important. Finding individuals who have experienced the phenomenon one wants to study can be difficult (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

In phenomenology, one is concerned with how man actively creates his world (Thornquist, 2003). This is in line with empowerment within community work, where people work to ensure that people themselves are involved in creating changes in their own problems (Hutchinson, 2009). Økland (2012) asserted that empowerment addresses the idea that there are resources in everyone, and community work is about using these resources. Through a project such as area investment, one needs the local resources and the inhabitants with themselves. One cannot come up with solutions that are biased but has to listen to the experiences of those who live in the area. We see this again in the quote from Spiegelberg, where one must have background knowledge before embarking on a project.

The world of life is a key concept in phenomenology. Phenomenologists think that we live in a world that has meaning and significance for us. We have an original experience of the world where we live with others like us and take it for granted that everyone is of the same kind (Thornquist, 2003). Theorists in phenomenology have different ideas about what the content of the life world is. Husserl sees the world of life as our common surrounding world. The world of life is the world that remains when all theories about the world are removed. According to Schutz, the term should have a social content. He looked at the actors' experiences in the context of practice and interaction, socialization, and the sociocultural context (Thornquist, 2003). Schutz's way of looking at the world of life is in line with empowerment. Through empowerment, emphasis is placed on the participants' own thoughts and experiences. Participants themselves want to be able to convey their own reflections. Participants are also allowed to see opportunities where they previously did not see anyone (Hutchinson, 2009).

An advantage of phenomenology is that one sees the connections between science, philosophy, and life (Thornquist, 2003). This provides a clearer overview of different perspectives when working with, for example, empowerment. When working with societal changes, it is important to have the knowledge but also to be able to see the world and life in the big picture and weigh this equally. It is also important here that one comes up with such blank sheets and restraint that one does not overlook important aspects of the world or life because they focus too much on science (Thornquist, 2003).

A disadvantage of phenomenology is the idea that *we are all of the same kind*. This idea is problematic when it comes to helping others through empowerment. We want a different starting point than those we are to help, and thus, the phenomenological way of thinking about the world of life makes it difficult to perform empowerment work.

3.3 Data collection:

In a phenomenological approach, it is most common to conduct in-depth interviews to obtain data, but it is also possible to use observations and documents (Polit & Beck, 2017). In qualitative studies, interviews are described as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world "(Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 164).

In an interview, it is easy for the researcher to control the conversation and partly the answers. One must thus think about how to ask the questions, not have leading questions, and be aware of non-verbal statements through body language. Interview as a data collection method is adequate to get close to the participant, which provides good insight into the experience from the "I" perspective. It may also be necessary to conduct several interviews with the same participant in order to obtain as much information as possible (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During an interview, it is common to either take notes or record the conversation and transcribe later (Polit & Beck, 2017).

If the participant does not feel safe with the researcher, the former may withhold information or answer misleadingly. In such interviews, it is also important not to get too close to the participant in person but to hold on to the researcher–participant roles (Polit & Beck, 2017). In some situations, it is a good idea to have the interview at the participant's residence such that the researcher can observe the participant's "world" and take observant notes. In some situations, the location is given, such as when interviewing people who are admitted to an institution. If the researcher does not have the opportunity to conduct the interview at the participant's home, the former can suggest other places such as cafés (Polit & Beck, 2017). The most important thing is to choose places that offer privacy. In the context of this study, it was important to think of a location with a universal design so that the participant can participate. It is relevant to the study to see how easy or difficult it is to find such a place and this can be included in the study.

For data collection, I utilized semi-structured interviews. I chose individual interviews rather than focus group interviews because my preconception was that the topic could be difficult to talk about in a group. As Malterud (2013, p. 68) says: "The group dynamics in a focus group

can block divergent views or prevent information about sensitive or intimate matters from coming up."

A semi-structured interview is a meeting in which the interviewer does not strictly follow a formalized list of questions. Instead, they ask more open-ended questions, allowing for a discussion with the interviewee rather than a straightforward question-and-answer format. Such interviews are particularly useful in providing greater depth and breadth of information. They allow more probing as the questions are open-ended and not closed with plain "yes" and "no" answers and involve subjective experiences of a phenomenon, storytelling, etc. (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi. 2016). I had six questions that were prepared in advance as an interview guide or a discussion guide. The questions were open-ended to allow the participant to talk freely. These questions acted as a base for my interview. During and after the interviews, I asked follow-up questions to amass richer data.

The guide included open-ended questions, such as the following:

-What is your understanding of your role as a man (for example, in your home, your community, and in the employment sector? Can you give some examples?

-How do you experience the way the community perceives you as a man (and even as a Syrian man) in Norway?

-How does being a man from Syria relate to finding employment in Norway?

-How was your experience of job seeking in Norway?

Data Recordings and Storage

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted using Zoom platform. All interviews began with the signing of consent and an invitation to ask questions about the process of the interview. Participants were allowed to ask questions during the interview and were notified that they can withdraw from the interview at any time during or after the interview. Security was ensured regarding the use of the private video recorders, and video recordings were deleted at the end of the analysis.

3.4 Participants – Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This study focused on men from Syria. Therefore, the inclusion criteria for interview participants included the following: (i) Syrian men who are residents of Norway and came to the country as refugees or because of family reunion after 2015, and (ii) age must be 18 years or above. All men who are not Syrian, living in Norway, within the selected research site

were excluded. However, the limited number of participants also excluded all others who could meet these criteria after data saturation was reached.

The participants who were interviewed in this study were self-identified Middle-Eastern Syrian men between the ages of 29 and 45 years. All participants were residents of Norway at the time of their interviews.

Respondents were approached with the help of gatekeepers, who were leaders of a local public non-profit organization and using snowball sampling within my existing network. According to Burns and Grove (1993), snowballing is a convenient sampling method where the existing study subjects recruit future subjects among their acquaintances. Sampling continues until data saturation. The advantages of snowballing are efficiency and cost-effective to access people who would otherwise be very difficult to find (Polit-O'Hara & Beck, 2006). I planned to use snowball sampling by asking all interview participants to refer to other participants. This worked effectively for me because of many factors such as COVID-19 restrictions.

Two participants were recruited through people in my network and the last four were provided by another participant. I contacted the participants through email, only one who I contacted through the usual cell phone message.

The interviews took place on Zoom platform, which was used as not all the participants were living in Bergen at the time of the interview.

However, the participants were very familiar with the program because of the pandemic and the turn we had to the digital world.. Only one of them has heard about it but did not get to use it before. According to him, people use Zoom if they work or study, but he does neither. Three of the participants had a job at the time of the study. One of them indicated that he had a permanent job, two other participants indicated that they had a temporary job at the time of this study.

Participants

Two of the participants were students, and one was getting social help from NAV. The rest were employed. Table 1 showing their background data.

Three of the participants were married at the time of the study, two others were single, and one was divorced. They are all as mentioned earlier, meeting the following criteria for eligibility:

(1) originally from Syria.

(2) came to Norway in or after 2015

Participants (All males)	Age	Civil status	Job or study	Norwegian language level
1	29	Married	Part-time job Part-time student	B2
2	45	Married	-	A1
3	28	Divorced	Part-time job	B1
4	31	Single	Full-time job	B1
5	36	Single	Full-time student	B2
6	30	Married	Part-time Job	B2

3.5 Reflexivity:

Reflexivity generally refers to the assessment of one's own beliefs, judgments, and practices during the research process and how these may have an effect on the research (Finlay, 1998). My main education is in medicine with specialty in oral surgery. The Arab world's social fixation with "doctor" titles was useful in helping me gain direct respect and confidence from the participants who I have not met before. The pitfall with this could be power, as the title places me in the position of power. I neutralize that by asking them to call me by my name and call me doctor.

In certain situations, during the interviews, I felt the need to disclose my experience and thoughts about masculinity and about being a foreigner in Norway. I also disclosed my experience as a refugee who came to Norway in 2015.

However, during the interviews, my experience in working as an interpreter in mental health clinics in Bergen helped me ensure objectivity. I, therefore, continuously used what Creswell (2012) called bracketing. Bracketing is a method that is utilized in qualitative research to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process. My experience helped me perform my role of an active listener where I stay neutral, and my role is all about transforming the information without changing it or attempting to

have an influence on it.

On the whole, I found the period of the interviews intense and requiring high focus. Therefore, I tried to follow some self-care regimes including activities such as running or hiking, after I finished the interview.

The interviews were very interactive, and participants described it as a conversation. They felt it was important to discuss masculinity in their mother tongue, which allowed them to express their genuine feelings and thoughts. Some expressed how happy they were to discuss masculinity with another man, and some said that the interview was a bit similar to going to a psychologist.

After the interviews and while I was transcribing and translating the interviews, I noticed how the participants were very motivated to talk. In all the interviews, the participants took the major role and did not take much time to become familiar with me. Some of the participants described the interviews as very comfortable and told me afterward how it was the first time for them to share some confidential details with someone.

3.6 Ethical Considerations/Ethics

Research ethics is a codification of scientific morality in practice. Guidelines for research ethics specify the basic norms and values of the research community. They are based on general ethics of science, just as general ethics is based on the morality of society at large. (NESH, 2019)

Privacy is important while collecting data and this is usually ensured by free and informed consent (NESH, 2016). This means that there must be no external pressure and sufficient information is provided. The consent also means that the participants clearly state that they have understood what it means to participate in our research project (NESH, 2016).

When a research project deals with personal data, researchers are obliged to inform the participants to obtain their consent. The consent must be freely given, informed, and in an explicit form (NESH, 2019).

After signing a consent form, the participants were notified that they could ask questions during the interview and were told that they can withdraw from the interview at any time during or after the interview. The consent form for this research included the interview guide and the procedure were obtained through Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) Project number 248961 (see appendix 2)

Interview participants were all informed about the purpose of the study and furnished a copy

of the Informed Consent letter, which was also explained to them verbally. The participants signed a second copy of this letter, which they gave back to me, and two gave their consent verbally. They were all told that their involvement in the research was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the process at any time.

When collecting data, we as researchers have a statutory duty to provide information and the information must be provided in a neutral manner (NESH, 2019). Our target group especially requires that information that is adapted to their cultural background and disseminated in a language that the participants understand (NESH, 2019). It must also be considered whether we should make use of an interpreter, which was not the case in this study as I share the same mother tongue with the participants (NESH, 2016).

Transcripts of interviews did not contain participant names, and I took care to maintain the anonymity of interview participants. I gave my participants numbers/pseudonyms to protect their identity. Throughout the discussion chapter, the informants will be identified numerically (e.g., participant 1 will be written as (1), participant 2 will be written as (2), and so on.

Careful consideration was also given to developing sensitive interview questions and to ensuring that participants felt comfortable and could speak freely during interviews.

The best means of ensuring confidentiality is through anonymity, i.e., when we cannot link participants to data. However, when anonymity is not possible, other procedures for confidentiality will apply (Polit & Beck, 2017). A promise of confidentiality means that we do not pass on information in a way that identifies the participants (NESH, 2016)

The data were saved and secured using HVL SAFE, locked laptop, locked in a safe place, pseudonyms used, and eventually, data will be destroyed.

Framework for data analysis

The method that was used for analysis was Attride Styling's thematic network analysis, a way of organizing a thematic analysis of qualitative data. A thematic analysis seeks to unearth the themes salient in a text at different levels, and thematic networks facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes (Stirling, 2001). My supervisor recommended me to use NVivo as a software (if possible) to analyze the data, but I felt anxious about learning a new software. I had the choice of doing it manually on printed papers, but the process of highlighting the codes with a different pen torch was not possible as I have partial color blindness.

I decided to use Microsoft Word as a software for analyzing my data and felt the need to

create and develop a way to do it using the accessible tools in this software.

Braun and Clarke (2006) have developed a six-step guide for thematic analysis of qualitative data, which I followed. However, on several occasions, I had to go back to my interviews and do a new thematization.

Generally, six steps have been important:

Step 1: The first step in the analysis work was reading all the interviews and trying to get an impression of what was important, i.e., an attempt to know the data material and be more familiar with it (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). I read each interview twice before starting the next step in indicating the codes. The fact that I did the transcript and the translation myself helped me be very familiar with the texts.

Step 2: This step included creating codes, identifying similar codes, and clustering them (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). First, I created a table with two columns. In the first column, I copied the interview transcript. The second column was used to indicate the codes. Coding the interviews was done by describing and summarizing the given part of the text.

Step 3: This step included coding the data into organizing themes, which are patterns that are significant or interesting for the research question and/or for the data material (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The first themes I outlined were masculinity, performativity, and social capital.

Step 4: After forming the first themes and placing the codes below them, I read through the themes and re-evaluated them. Therefore, I started another file where I created a table with six columns, each having the codes from each interview. I found this way very useful to see the similarities between the codes, yet to distinguish between the different transcripts.

Step 5: This step included defining the themes by determining or identifying the essential qualities or meaning of them (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Before developing a thematic framework, I had to organize the codes and make sure the code names and themes were consistent across the different transcripts by finding all the inconsistencies within the table, first within one transcript, then across all these transcripts. After that, I traced these codes in the original transcript.

This led to both changes on the themes I had and to increase the number of them. My data analysis gave me four major topics/global themes, namely, views on masculinity, performativity, social capital, and challenges.

Step 6: Write about the findings of this study.

The next chapter discusses the findings of this study, and there I will provide an overview of the main findings in my data.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings of my data. As mentioned in Chapter 3, using Attride Stirling' thematic network analysis, data gathered about experiences of Syrian migrant men's interaction of their *masculinity within the community and employment* sector in Norway were analyzed. Four major topics/global themes were developed, namely 1) views on masculinity, 2) acting to fit, 3) belonging, and 4) challenges in the community.

Throughout this section, the participants will be identified numerically (e.g., participant 1 will be written as (1), participant 2 will be written as (2), and so on.

4.1 Views on Masculinity

I have two sub-themes under this theme of views on masculinity: perceptions and descriptions of masculinity between Norway and Syria. Participants were asked about their views on the concept of masculinity. They were asked how they interpreted masculinity and if they could define or describe it as they see it in Norway and in Syria.

It was not easy for the participants to answer what masculinity meant to them, especially because they tried to define it differently between the Norwegian and the Syrian context. Instead, they gave descriptions of masculinity and elements, activities, and actions that characterize the same.

4.1.1 Masculinity in Syria and Norway

Masculinity was defined in different ways by the participants either directly or by comparing Syrian men to Norwegian men's attributes of masculinity. According to participant (1)

To be a man is to have responsibilities like being the breadwinner in the family. It is the behaviors and the acts that determine my manhood.

Some tried to draw the differences and make a comparison between masculinity in both countries. Participant (4) concluded by saying:

In Norway, men have privileges everywhere. Better salaries and they are hired in leading positions. However, in Syria, the privileges come with a lot of responsibilities, while in Norway, men are privileged without having responsibility.

While participant (6) concluded that men in Norway benefiting from equality in Norway without really acting like women are equal to them, and he said:

We talk about equality all the time, but I do not see total equality, actually. A friend told me about the pay gap differences between men and women. You can easily see how men are dominating the community in Norway. Men are privileged here, but the blame is only on migrant men.

4.1.2 Definitions of masculinity

I tried to simplify the term masculinity by explaining it a bit further as follows:
Things that are considered typical of, or appropriate to, a man or manliness.
Three of the participants answered that masculinity in Syria means that the man is the only breadwinner in the family, while in Norway women are expected to equally fend for their families as breadwinners (like men). This expectation is from all women regardless of whether the family is of Syrian or Norwegian origins, as long as the family resides in Norway. Participant (1) illustrated this as:

It differs very much. In Syria, the man is responsible for everything, and he is the breadwinner for the family, which gives him so many powers.

Participant (2) said:

For us Syrians, the man is the breadwinner of the family. He is the one the family comes back to when they make final decisions that concern the family. In Syria, men are perceived as more powerful physically, which makes it easier for them to do the hard jobs and technical jobs such as that of a carpenter or builder.
The man should also protect those who are vulnerable in his family and most importantly protect his honor by protecting his wife, daughter, sister, and be concerned about their reputation.

Participant (3) elaborated further and explained how being the breadwinner in the family is more of a problem than a privilege. The reason is such responsibilities are accompanied by a number of difficult roles/tasks. He said:

It is not easy to answer this question. It is extremely complex. Although we look different, in Norway, I do not see my roles as different from a woman. In Syria, a man has more

privileges, but that comes with a lot of responsibility. Men are breadwinners there; they are the ones who pay for the wedding. In Syria, men are expected to afford a house in order to get married, no matter whether the woman works or not. Also, men are the ones who do the mandatory army service, and there was more pressure on them during the war. Probably we have more freedom in Syria, but our role is not as easy as people imagined.

The rest of the participants did not find it easy to define or describe masculinity as they said it is a concept that varies with time and place. <u>It is not an internal reality or something that is simply true about men. But rather it is a phenomenon that is being produced and reproduced all the time</u>. This was well illustrated by participant (6), who asserted that the concept evolves with time. He also showed their adaptation and flexibility to the way "place" defines it, not rigidly holding on the way the other Syrian men described masculinity. He said:

It differs so much from generation to generation and from country to country. I do not see the old-time image of the man in Syria as valid today. Men who are supposed to be only tough, the only breadwinner for the family, and who do not cry do not exist, and we all know that it is an old-time fantasy practice. I do not see one way of defining or describing masculinity. In all countries that I lived in (Syria, Turkey, and Norway), the expectations around manliness fit me, and so many other behaviors and qualities described as unmanly, feminine are all right for me.

However, participant (5) emphasized that living in Norway has made it easier for him to undertake roles that do not necessarily match what characterizes men in Syria.

What it means by masculinity here in Norway is so much influenced by what has been achieved when it comes to gender equality in this country. So many roles men take here were a direct response to the many laws that pushed gender equality. Although I have been here for a few years, I already feel free to mention things or activities I have done that are related to femininity, for example, cleaning or cooking.

This result highlights that masculinity does not have clear or straightforward definitions and how it equates to a model of social reproduction.

4.2 Acting to fit

Acting to fit means the way Syrian migrant men display masculinity in their attempt to adapt to the new community. This theme was the most predominant one. It was present throughout all participant's descriptions, about how men displayed a specific type of masculinity to fit in their new homeland. The participants mentioned the pressure they feel as migrant men, which led them to hide their traditional masculine norms. In order to do this, they try to imitate Norwegian masculinity.

4.2.1 Hidden masculinities

Participants explained how the pressure they experience forces them to act in a specific way, as they believe if they perform the type of masculinity they are used to, it will make it more difficult for them to be accepted in their new community in Norway. As participant (1) illustrated:

I do not know, I do not feel like I am so free to be a man here and always try to act in a specific way that fits with the Norwegian expectations of men. In the south of Norway, I feel people are more racist toward me. Maybe it is because there are more immigrants here than in the North. I mean if people are more racist makes it more difficult for me to be myself. Here, I just feel that I am being watched all the time and therefore feel I am acting like someone who is not me whether in the street or in the bus or at the shop.

Participant (6) said:

So many positive experiences are forbidden now because of the way Norwegian men display their masculinity. For example, the way we greet each other is less intimate here. This is because of the way the community looks at men who kiss each other on the cheek. If they do that, they are considered gay. In Syria, male friends walk arm in arm, but we cannot do that anymore here, and very similar experiences are forbidden.

4.2.2 Averting homeland masculine norms

Syrian men's masculine actions are challenged in Norwegian Society. Many claimed their attempt to hide their practice of masculine identity is stopping them from being their "nice self" toward others. Many explained the difficulty in finding the cultural codes or the gender codes and playing what they think is an appropriate role for the situations they encounter in

their daily activities. This was well illustrated by participant (2):

Everything is a challenge in the community here. I feel that I am acting like someone who is not me but rather like someone the Norwegians like. I try to be tough at home and not cry, although sometimes I feel that I want to cry so much because of the pressure I feel on a daily basis. In the street, I cannot be nice, for example, I cannot help a woman carrying heavy things or let her go first waiting for the door.

4.2.3 The attempt to imitate Norwegian masculinity

Many of the participants felt the pressure to imitate Norwegian men so that they are not criticized but rather accepted by the Norwegian community. They said they imitate Norwegian men in acts they do not necessarily agree to, but do so only to avoid criticism. Participant (5) illustrated this by saying:

It comes with a lot of difficulties to figure out the cultural roles. Maybe that is why I feel my human experience is limited. For example, I want to help people who are carrying heavy things in the street or let an old person or a pregnant woman to sit in my place on the bus. But somehow, I feel so much pressure when I want to offer help to someone, but at the same time fear that my actions of kindness will be labeled as those of a Middle-Eastern Arab man who thinks that women are not able to do things themselves.

Participants also discussed attempts to imitate Norwegian masculinity at work. This was well illustrated by participant (4):

I am trying to imitate what Norwegian men are doing, and as a result, so many positive experiences are forbidden now because of the way Norwegian men display their masculinity. For example, I was trying to observe how my male colleagues would react if a female teacher is carrying heavy stuff, and I concluded that they do not help not because of feminism but because Norwegian or European men, to a big extent, do not like to take responsibility.

4.2.4 The pressure of being a migrant man

Participants expressed their bottled up feelings caused by two factors: the pressure of being a migrant and being a Middle-Eastern Arab man. Some shared their thoughts about how the combination of being a migrant male is harder than being a migrant female. They explained that the gender pressure on them is greater because of the many stereotypes and assumptions the community meets them with. Participant (6) highlighted:

To conclude, I can say that trying to imitate Norwegian males is stopping me from being my nice self (to be a gentleman according to Syrian expectations) *on so many occasions. Also, the pressure of being a male migrant is so massive. I sometimes feel that I am watched if I do anything that is slightly wrong. If I throw something in the ground anywhere, for example, people would say 'look at how migrant men are making our country dirty'. If I simply look at a girl they say 'look how migrant men are looking at Norwegian girls'. Being a migrant is a very difficult task in the community whether you are a male or a female, but being a migrant male even comes with extra difficulties as the community already has assumed and determined me before they even talked to me.*

4.3 Belonging

The interviewees identified what seemed positive and negative points about the host country in terms of belonging. Men mentioned the difficulty of maintaining friendships with the host community. They particularly mentioned challenges when it comes to dating and relationships.

4.3.1 Difficulty in maintaining a friendship with the host community

Questions related to developing networks were very difficult to answer by the participants, and four out of six participants expressed difficulties in finding or maintaining friendships with Norwegians. An interesting fact was the difficulty some found in understanding the social codes. Again, here they mentioned the social pressure they feel from the new host community because of the stereotypes that seem to exist. This was illustrated by participant (4):

I do not know; it is very mysterious how to be friends with Norwegians. Norwegians are very nice people but are so difficult to understand. For example, at the gym they talk to me, while outside the gym, if I have eye contact with the very same person, they behave as if they do not know me. In such instances, I feel it is very difficult for me as a migrant man to maintain friendships with them. Maybe, it is because they are closed people in general. But I guess it has more to do with the negative image about us in the media.

Participant (1) explained the difficulty in making friends in the university and the difficulty in understanding and breaking the Norwegian social codes, which makes it very difficult for

him during the study period.

This challenge and loneliness even led him to stop going to the university.

It is difficult in both, finding a job and making friends. I remember how I was a student in Syria and how I am a student here. I use the space and facilities here in a very different way. I do not know how to react to my classmates, should I say 'hi' when I see them in the street?

(.....)

When I met them the first week, which is all about partying, everyone got drunk and talked to me, but they stopped talking to me the week after when they were sober. Because of that I stopped attending lectures and considered even leaving the university completely. Now I am so happy with digital education because it saves me from such stress.

4.3.2 Dating and relationship challenges

In this part, I looked closely at the experiences with dating. They mentioned a feeling of rejection based on their background when it comes to dating. Dating sites were a tool to use as they mentioned being highly apprehensive to contact someone directly. A feeling of discrimination in dating sites also seems to be widespread among participants. One of the solutions was to change the name as three of the participants did; this action was an attempt to free themselves from stereotypes as participant (5) described:

On dating sites, you can easily notice that girls are so afraid of us. And if you change the name on Tinder, you see that you get more matches. Many recommended me to do that when I apply for jobs in order to be called for the interview

(....)

The very same day I changed my name on Tinder, I noticed the difference. In the chat and after we matched, I felt I needed to emphasize my Norwegian identity, so I started writing in a certain dialect.

Two of the participants shared their very private experiences, the first in being in an abusive relationship, the second about unwillingly having sex. The main difficulty, as both informants

illustrated, was the fact the community did not trust them because of what they called "unconscious bias" toward migrant men. Participant (1) shared an incidence that referred to the same as quite dangerous and life-threatening:

I had a very abusive relationship with a Norwegian girl. She always threatened me when I tried to leave her. She was even threatening to kill me. When I reported this to the police, they did not listen to me and I felt that I was not taken seriously when I tried to contact them to report her behavior toward me. It was easier for them to believe a Norwegian girl than to believe a refugee Muslim man. She once said this to me: '`Who would believe a terrorist from Syria that a Norwegian girl is threatening him?'

The threat he received from her was the main reason for him to move from the North of Norway to the South.

After all of this and after the police ignored me for almost two years I decided to move to the south of Norway, although I had a lot of success in the North.

When asked about the meaning of being successful, participant (1) answered:

I was very well integrated. I was also studying, working and active politically. I was accepted and everything was fine until this happened.

The case was illustrated by participant (3), which happened after several unpleasant experiences on dating sites, where he was forced to have sex. The experiences were, dehumanizing according to him:

After I downloaded some dating sites, I experienced so much violence. Women wanted to have sex with me but not going on a date for example. I once dated a Norwegian woman and went to her place and all she asked for was sex. I felt so much humiliated and reduced to a nobody.

4.4 Challenges of finding employment

Informants described challenges that they encountered in their daily life, which seemed to have a big effect on their well-being. Challenges in their meeting with the labor market were also mentioned.

4.4.1 Job seeking:

Difficulty finding employment was mentioned as a challenge for all the informants. All interviewees said that in accordance with their Syrian traditional practices, men feel the need to be providers and breadwinners of their families. The job as very important to their identity and work was expressed to be very central to who they are, as participant (2) illustrated:

I always feel a sense of worthlessness in my life when I do not work. You are not really a man if you are not working. I do not know how to describe it. I think it is a massive pride thing, especially for us men from Syria. These ideas of men being the breadwinner back in Syria are still inbuilt in us, no matter where we are, Syria or Norway. We still have them as sort of values.

Finding employment in Norway with a foreign diploma was described as a challenge. All participants mentioned the problem of their education not fitting Norwegian standards. Participant (5) illustrated:

When it comes to work, I have a master's in physics, but I did not get to be a teacher here but rather an assistant. And it is the reason why I am taking a new course now.

I got my last job after I was in work training for a few months. They felt that I was overqualified, and they let me work as an assistant. The people I assist have lower education than me.

Some expressed feelings of frustration for not having their education recognized. Participant (4) said:

Another challenge was to adapt to the fact that Norway did not accept my education. After I got the decision from NOKUT, I felt so bad and started smoking weed. It was very difficult for me to accept that decision. My family did its best so I could be educated and suddenly and because I am a refugee, my education was not accepted. It is still affecting me now. I think about it all the time.

Even though I work now, I still think about it. Actually, going to work is a constant reminder that I did not get my education approved.

Another problem the participants encountered in their journey of finding a job was not being called rarely to any interview since they came to Norway. More than half of the participants were never called to an interview for the jobs they applied for. As participant (6) illustrated:

I have applied more than 100 times to get a job as a nurse, but I did not get it. I also applied more than 100 times for a nurse practitioner, and nobody answered.

Participant (3) expressed how difficult it was to apply for so many places and wait for an answer from the employers:

I have sent more than 200 applications to different workplaces like supermarkets, clothes shops, etc. Although I have a nice CV, and it is written that I speak both Norwegian and English B1 level, I was not called for any interview. In fact, it was only three or four times that I was sent a message where they said they found someone else.

When asked about what solution they tried to overcome the challenge of not finding a job and for not being called for interviews, the participants came with different answers. Three of them thought about changing their name as the name plays the main obstacle for the employee to call someone to a job interview, as participant (4) said:

Some recommended me to change my name, and I thought about doing it then canceled the idea only one day before sending the application to do it. I lost my education, which is one of my identities, so I am not ready to lose my name. It shocks me how we talk about individualism in Norway but then we deal with refugees in a collective way instead.

Five of the participants found another solution by shifting their career as an act to adapt to the new realities in the new community where their education and competence are not recognized. They also mentioned the criticism they received from the Norwegian community for receiving social help from NAV, as participant (1) illustrated:

Anyway, I looked for a job in a kitchen, but none of the restaurants accepted me, but then I went to the commune/municipality offices to ask for help, and they recommended that I try nursing homes (sykehjem). I went there and they hired me for cleaning. I do not like cleaning and it is not my profession, but I was happy to find a job. That way I would be less dependent on NAV. I do not want to be labeled as someone who depends on NAV like what politicians talk about. I wanted to study politics or political sciences, but I could not follow my dream. I found out that it is easier just to get a trade from high school so that it is easier and quicker

to get a job. Yes, I could not pursue my dream, but at least I will not ask for money from
NAV.

For some participants, it did not work for them to change their profession, and the only alternative that was left was to start working illegally, despite the fact that it is very low paid. Participant (2) illustrated:

I tried to send my CV so many times, but no one cared. Who would hire someone who does
not speak the language, and is an Arab? I hear this politician talking about us all the time
that we do not want to work, but she does not know how difficult it is to find a job.
Two years ago, and after I gave up, I tried to work in an Arab restaurant. I worked almost 12
hours for 400 kr.
Some Syrian men said that the traditional practice of marriage was regarded as bad in
Norway.
I got problems with my back, so I stopped. The same psychologist who thought that my
problem was that I wanted to marry another woman, was hinting that I was working there
only to avoid paying tax. It is ridiculous to think like that. Why would I work there when I can
earn double in a Norwegian place?

4.4.2 Daily life:

All participants explained the difficulty associated with feeling the pressure of being watched all the time. They attempted to hide or to avoid contact with the community. One participant (2) said how the microaggression he met in public places led him to avoid going out in order to reduce the possibilities where he might experience microaggression. For example, he bought a car and stopped using collective transport:

I still remember how good it was to stop taking the collective transport. There I did not know
how to act, where to sit and how to pay. People looked at me in a very skeptical way. Maybe
because I look very Arab. Once I remember the control came up to the bus and I was trying
so hard to buy a ticket, but I did not know how to use the application. When they came up and
asked about the ticket, I honestly felt worse than when checkpoints asked for my ID in Syria.

Three participants mentioned the debate that affects every aspect of their life. Participant (3) illustrated this point:

The challenges are so many and are the reason why we act in a very specific way. We

migrant men are a very hot topic in the media. You cannot help but see the immigrants and especially us men when you scroll down on your Facebook.

4.4.3 Well-being:

Well-being plays a major role in successful integration. As mentioned earlier, the informants felt very comfortable during the conversations. They felt motivated to discuss and open up about private topics. The questions about maintaining well-being were brought up to see the psychological effect of being a migrant refugee man in Norway. Four of the participants talked about going to the psychologist; one of them felt the psychologist was the only person who he could open up to. Problems they faced in Norway made it more challenging to discuss old stories with the psychologist. As participant (2) illustrated:

My psychologist is the only one who I talk to about these things. I talk about how difficult it is to be in the street, in the supermarket, in NAV, in finding a job. After a while, you start feeling you are less worthy than others in the community.

Difficulties with maintaining well-being were very serious, to a limit made two of the participants think about committing suicide. As participant (3) said:

If it was not for my parents, I would have committed suicide long time ago. But they have enough to struggle with and I do not want my relief to be another punishment for them.

An important finding here was the missing trust between some of the participants and the public services. Participant (2) said that he felt misinterpreted and misunderstood by service providers.

I had a psychologist before that was talking to me in a very strange way. He was convinced that my problem was that I do not have the chance to marry another woman. I told him so many times that I love my wife, and I do not think about that. I stopped going there. But when APP forced me to have a psychologist to follow up with me, I asked to meet a different one and luckily, we had it better. It was the first time I demanded my rights and it felt very good.

The next chapter is the discussion, in which I will discuss the findings of my data.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss my findings using the lens of performativity and social capital.

Research problem

With this study, I aimed to explore how migration as a process influences the changes in defining and performing masculinities and how the masculine identity of one's migrant is renegotiated when moving from a country to another. The background theory is performativity by Judith Butler, according to which gender is a performative act that is renegotiated because of time and place. This study aimed to explore how masculine identity construction might operate in the context of migrant men, who bring with them notions of gender from their countries of origin that interact with "local" gender practices in the "receiving" country. I also hoped to examine how migrant men from Syria have perceived the discourse around them, and what is their reflection if the discourse has affected their integration and social capital.

Summary of the main findings

The data and the discussion findings presented in the previous chapter gave me four major topics/global themes and raised some unexpected sub-themes and unresolved questions, for example, the sub-theme about the participants' attempt to imitate Norwegian men. As presented earlier, the participants felt the comfortability to share many experiences, which is something that helped so much to build a sub-theme about well-being.

The results indicate that the participants are performing or displaying a type of masculinity as an act to fit in their new community. This comes as a response to the pressure they feel from different actors. This will be discussed more in this chapter. Limitations and challenges as Syrian men were also encountered during the research process, which will be presented. This chapter will be initially crafted around the theory and the theoretical concepts that were used to frame the study, namely performativity and social capital.

5.1 Discussion of findings in relation to performativity

Gender performativity cuts across all the data in this study. The first research question asked about the participants' experiences of their role as men in their daily life. Gender performativity theory argues that being born male or female does not determine behavior, and gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo. As

a result, gender is an identity instituted through a *repetition of acts*, and a phenomenon produced all the time and reproduced all the time (Butler, 1999). The participants when asked about their opinion about masculinity, managed to draw lines between the Syrian and the Norwegian type of masculinity. Findings showed that my participants see Norwegian men as privileged who do not take responsibility toward their families. The awareness of privileges shows how that the participants went into a dialogue about their masculinity in the new community.

Generally, an interesting finding is how difficult it was to define masculinity, with only connecting it to being the breadwinner in the family. Like this example here by participant (1)

To be a man is to have responsibilities like being the breadwinner in the family. It is the behaviors and the acts that determine my manhood.

There was very little mention to honor when trying to define masculinity, but it was more about protecting those who are vulnerable in the family despite their gender.

Of particular interest in these findings was the main argument for performing Norway's expectations of masculinity. This is one of the outstanding findings that show that masculinity can be adapted and performed (Butler, 1999). It also shows that masculinity is being produced and reproduced all the time. The findings agree as well with research regarding living in a society with active policies enhancing gender equality within household helps migrant (polish in this case) couple sustain equal arrangements regarding their household duties and parental roles (Zadkowska, Kosakowska-Berezecka, Szlendak, & Besta. 2020) As according to the participants, some tasks they did in Norway already exist back there in Syria for men but were difficult to mention in front of friends or colleagues, because it is considered to be tasks for females. Also, living in Norwayhas made it easier to talk and mention these tasks.

The theme "acting to fit" is the most prevalent and endemic one among my analysis. It was present throughout all participants' descriptions, about how men performing a specific type of masculinity in order to fit in their new homeland. The performing according to the participants happen in two different ways: Hiding their masculinity by staying from homeland masculine norms and their attempt to imitate Norwegian masculinity.

Hiding their masculinity happens through avoiding expressing themselves in discussion or in public spaces. An interesting finding was about the participants expressing difficulty in being more caring and intimate, because of the way Norwegian masculinity is and the need to man up to avoid discrimination. The difficulty is based on their attempt to act according to the new norms and how that is preventing them from the positive experience from hugging and walking arm in arm.

The stereotype of hypermasculinity, the exaggerated forms of masculinity, virility among Middle-Eastern men was very evident.

These findings revealed that changing names is one of the acts that manifest performativity. According to my participants here, this applies to the definition of social stigma and how it leads to feeling of inferiority and can create a mental or behavioral disorder. As participant (3) mentioned:

The very same day I changed my name on Tinder, I noticed the difference. In the chat and after we matched, I felt I needed to emphasize my Norwegian identity, so I started writing in a certain dialect.

Imitation

Another negative aspect of performing this new type of masculinity was by staying away from masculine norms they are used to, and this included helping those who are in need, especially if the person was a woman. Participants expressed the fear of offering help to someone since it might not apply with the new norms. I found this negative as it prevents migrant men from changing or challenging the form of masculinity we have in the community.

Moreover, participants also explained how constantly feeling like a suspect led to a kind of shame. Therefore, their behaviors are affected by the fear of being regarded as someone who does not fit in the culture of the host community.

Performing a specific type of masculinity was not only through avoiding or stopping being the right self but also through imitating Norwegian men and the Norwegian form of masculinity that exists in their network. They try to imitate them at work or in public places.

Research has shown how stigma is a process in which the normal identity is affected by the reaction of others (Seeman & Goffman, 1964). We see this in how participants' behaviors are

influenced by the way the community is expecting them to behave, as participant (6) highlighted:

To conclude, I can say that trying to imitate Norwegian males is stopping me from being my nice self (to be a gentleman according to Syrian expectations) *on so many occasions. Also, the pressure of being male migrant is so massive, I sometimes feel that I am watched if I do anything that is slightly wrong.*

This shows both the pressure they feel because of carrying foreign masculinity. They therefore imitate Norwegian men as a way to avoid this pressure because Norwegian men's way of acting is well embraced in the community. Goffman emphasized that stigma is the process where stigmatized individuals are advised to reciprocate naturally with an acceptance of themselves and the community.

Performativity theory argues that gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original; (Noad, Alexander, & Seidman, 2002)
Therefore, the imitation of Norwegian men came as suggesting that the Norwegian masculinity is the "original," which might let them adapt negative behaviors if they happen to meet men with negative behaviors in their network.
A research question was asked to the participants and was intended to explore the opportunities, if any, that they experience are maintaining their role as a man.

Threat

The participants did not see any opportunity for them being migrant males in the new community, as a result of the pressure of being portrayed as a threat to the community. Following Gramsci (1971) idea that cultural hegemony is not something to see, but it rather hides itself within and beneath cultural texts. When participants tried to answer the question, they made an attempt to see how the cultural texts favor migrants from another gender. They expressed the feeling for them being portrayed as a monolithic group and not as multiple different ways of being a man and performing masculinity. Research has shown how migrant men experience internal conflict and resultantly a sense of "double consciousness" when they fail to fulfil cultural expectations (Chipo, 2020).
The findings also emphasize how stigma is a result of the "us versus them" approach (Brashers, 2008). For example, the use of specific in-group language by some politicians to

reinforce in-group belongingness, as participants illustrated, can also promote out-group differentiation.

Migrant men encounter masculinity in the new country (Norway), which is not so different from their own, at least in regard to work and family and the responsibilities that attend both of these. But yet they described how only their masculinity is to be criticized in the cultural contexts and how they were often met with stereotypes about Middle-Eastern men.

Work

An interesting finding was how the participants see their masculinity through work and being breadwinners, and how this idea matches with the hegemony about migrant men and the expectation by the Norwegian society that they must work. Their hegemony being taxpayers was not something to criticize by the participants as they see a fair point. Moreover, they criticized the rhetoric about them being misogynist and they concluded how this rhetoric is creating unconscious bias and negative emotions, such as anxiety and fear, subconsciously affect the way the community perceives and interacts with migrant men. All the participants mentioned implicit bias and the role it plays in the way people perceive them. Participants mentioned how difficult it is to face all these dynamics that implicit bias is generating. Only a few studies in literature have examined the case of migrant men and the difficulties they find on their way to find a job, but the research by Chipo (2009) has shown how the failure to fulfill cultural expectations regarding breadwinning can be a main factor to have mental issues, something was illustrated well by the participants who expressed the difficulty in accepting neither finding a job nor getting their education recognized in Norway.

Seen as not responsible

Especially when the participants start drawing comparisons and making stereotypes about Norwegian men, labeling them as irresponsible. The discussion regarding the challenges in maintaining their role as males, also generates a rhetoric of "us" and "them." By "us" was meant migrant men, and by "them" was meant Norwegian men. When the media was brought up to the discussion, the rhetoric was mentioned as it affects their sense of belonging.

The findings also show how participants struggle with minority stress in their daily life as migrant men, and how the stress is controlling their behaviors and their attitudes. As research has also shown (Khosravi, 2009) how migrant men being displaced from the position of

having the powerful gaze, makes them invisible after this identity has been challenged and renegotiated by media work

On the one hand, they need to cope with similar post-migration challenges as the general refugee populations, such as overcoming barriers to the job market, difficulties finding housing, and problems within the asylum process. On the other hand, they are required to master additional challenges, which can be explained by their experiences of minority stressors.

In line with the hypothesis, participants did show how gender is performative and how it is an identity being produced all the time and reproduced all the time as an ongoing discursive practice.

5.2 Discussion of finding in relation to social capital

Social capital cuts across all my data. One aspect of social capital, lack of networks was clearly pronounced – particularly because of being Syrian. Building friendships with Norwegians was seen as difficult and hard to establish. The disconnection from the larger society created loneliness and affected normal participation in society, for example, in education.

Difficulties in being included

The answers showed difficulty in both. The results contradicting the claims about social networks emerged as particularly important in relation to language ability, as the difficulty in maintaining friendships was a common issue for all the participants despite their mastering of the Norwegian language. Yet, language ability helped more in finding a job, in what participants described as employment language. The only participant who did not speak Norwegian at the time of the interviews was the one who mentioned dependency on contacts with co-national and other groups to increase the chances of receiving help with housing and employment. As a result, he worked illegally as he found it impossible to get employed through the routine process.

Regarding friendships and networks, the participants discussed the difficulty in maintaining a close friendship with Norwegians owing to the lack of knowledge about the social codes and language, even though five of the participants speak the language at the level of B1 or

above. With language, participants meant more than the assemblage of the alphabet, grammar, and cultural idiosyncrasies one might try to master during the first two years in introduction program. But with language here it was meant all the past and future contexts of its use.

Contrary to the hypothesis, the findings show the need to examine how well the phenomenon of language conforms to the definition of social capital, not *vice versa*. Also, there was found no evidence that refugees living with secured family reunions were more likely to be healthy and employed.

In line with the hypothesis, the findings show social capital as an attribute and add the word trust, and Putnam's "collective social capital" general trust. Trust and community involvement are closely linked because people who participate and get engaged in organizations within their community are more likely to trust each other (Putnam, 2000). Participant (1) showed a lot of trust in the community during the interview despite having experienced an abusive relationship with a Norwegian person. His participation with a political party helped in building general trust with the community around him.

In line with the thoughts and experiences of the participants of this study, Khosravi (2009) has shown how belonging is highly affected when one's socio-economic status goes down. Moreover, many of the participants experienced an unaccountable gaze in their daily interaction with Norwegians, something highlighted in the same research (Khosravi, 2009). It shows how a biased discourse was constructed against male immigrants who are represented as "primitive," "oppressors" who should be educated in "sex equality" (Khosravi, 2009), and how this lead the community and to take a distance from migrant men because of their view on women, something forced one my participants to change his name in dating apps for example, or made the claims of another participant about being abused in the relationship unreliable.

Contrary to the hypothesis in what Fukuyama suggested, many subgroups in some societies have more confidence in their group identity than with other groups in society. Participants did not show the importance of relations with the co-national, or co-religious citizens. Generally, the concept of Norwegian during the interviews was limited to ethnic Norwegians, which indicates a gap in the participants' definition of the term "Norwegian."

The next chapter presents the conclusions of this study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The results of this study have shown that refugee men are experiencing challenges in Norway. They are experiencing minority stress as a result of various microaggressions in their endeavors to be included. This is a challenge as their masculinity is a challenge in the community and the employment sector.

This study has demonstrated that refugee men are performing masculinity in order to fit. They perform by imitating, or by changing their names. These are acts that aim to hide their masculinity and happen through avoiding expressing themselves in discussion or in public spaces. The difficulty is based on their attempt to act according to the new norms and how that is preventing them from the positive experience. Imitating Norwegian masculinity is prohibiting them from specific experiences as being more caring and intimate in order to avoid discrimination. It engenders a feeling of inferiority, which can lead to a behavioral disorder.

This has implications for both – refugee men and the system in Norway.

This means the community in Norway needs to consider the new cultures and show openness to have new experiences. That can be by facilitating expression of identity and appreciate refugee men experiences.

The following measures could help resolve the issue under consideration:

- Having a broader understanding of integration and thinking about the language as it is the main element but not the only one.
- A study should be conducted to see the integration among refugee men who speak fluent Norwegian.
- A study should be conducted to understand why employers are not responsive to applications with foreign names.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: NSD assessment

Prosjekttittel

Performative Masculinity

Referansenummer

248961

Registrert

11.11.2020 av Osama Shaheen - 588049@stud.hvl.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Høgskulen på Vestlandet / Fakultet for helse- og sosialvitskap / Institutt for helse og funksjon

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Masego Katisi, Masego.Katisi@hvl.no, tlf: 4799878837

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Osama Shaheen, osamaira918@gmail.com, tlf: 45844399

Prosjektperiode

01.01.2021 - 15.06.2021

Status

14.12.2020 - Vurdert

Vurdering (1)

14.12.2020 - Vurdert

Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 14.12.2020, as well as in correspondence with NSD. Everything is in place for the processing to begin.