

Belonging across borders, a study of the inter-destination transnational practice of second generation Egyptian Europeans.

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Belonging across borders, a study of the inter-destination transnational practice of second generation Egyptian Europeans

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ABSTRACT

Migration has commonly been theorized as a process that ends with settlement, however, studies show that immigrants often maintain attachments to their homeland. In that context, this thesis explores how identity and belonging develops in descendants of Egyptian immigrants in Europe.

Through fieldwork, participant observation and interviews conducted in Denmark and Egypt, this thesis focuses on development and negotiation of identity and belonging, when a group of second generation Egyptian Europeans creates and participates in the social and cultural activities of an inter-destination transnational (IDT) community.

Through analysis of the groups' senses of belonging and their transnational relations and practices, it is discussed how they are able to be a part of the Denmark, and at the same time maintain the attachment to the homeland of their parents. Through a transnational-perspective the relation to 'country of parent's origin and relations across borders will be discussed further. The attributes contributing to MYEPEs community creation will be analysed using the theoretical framework for sense of community.

I come to argue that the MYEPE community functions as an anchor point in the multi-stranded sense of belonging of SGEs by providing them with an in-group to which they can feel complete belonging. The study shows that this is something they crave and discusses its implications on their belonging and identity formation. Notably, the community constitute an IDT social field, which makes it possible for them to exchange social and cultural capital between different national fields.

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ACRONYMS

SGEE:	Second Generation European Egyptian
MYEPE:	Meeting Young Egyptian People in Europe
TEFD:	The Egyptian Federation in Denmark
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
VFR:	Visiting Friends and Family
IDT:	[Inter/Intra] [Diasporic/Destination] Transnationalism

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, people have emigrated and settled in new host societies for various reasons. However, up through the 1970s and 1980s immigrants have, for the first time in history, in general, been able to maintain strong ties to their country of origin. This has largely been possible due to modern eras' advancements in communication technology and transportation. The result was, and still is, immigrants who are able to forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. These processes are broadly termed transnationalism to emphasize that immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders (Basch et al 1994: 7). Initially, social scientists expected that immigrants would eventually assimilate into their new host societies by abandoning their unique customs, language, values, and homeland ties and identities. However, scholars are increasingly recognizing that contemporary migrants often remain strongly influenced by their continuing ties to their home country or by social networks that stretch across national borders (Levitt 2004). Hence, the lives of immigrants cannot be understood by looking only at what goes on within national boundaries. Rather, our analytical lens must broaden and deepen to grasp migrants' embedding in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields (Levitt 2004). Since its first definition in 1994 by Basch et al, research in transnationalism has surged to fine-tune concepts and explore transnational identity formation and the economic, political, religious, and sociocultural practices that propel migrant incorporation and transnational connection at the same time (Levitt 2004: 1004). As we move forward into a future with even easier means of communication and transportation, and more people leaving their country of origin to settle in the West either voluntarily or tragically due to armed conflict, it is evident that transnational social identities are here to stay. I therefore find it interesting to turn my attention to what happens with the descendants of the so-called transnational's. From the literature it is clear that this is an emerging field of research (Somerville 2008). This can in part be ascribed to the demography of the second generation of immigrants that arrived to the west in the 70s and 80s. Only recently have they started to enter their late 20s and 30s and developments in their transnational identities and behaviors become "researchable". In the introduction to her recent book gathering nine "transnational" case-studies on second generation, Helen Lee, summarily concludes that the studies reveal considerable variation in the transnational practices of migrants' children, thus highlighting, the importance of continued investigations of the transnational engagements of migrants' children in order to understand future trends in the global

movement of people, money, goods and ideas (Lee 2009). She continues by stating that “members of the second generation often have much weaker transnational ties than their parents’ generation, which has profound economic, social and political implications for nations that have long relied on migrants to send remittances and otherwise retain their involvement with the “homeland”. *“Yet the transnational ties of migrants’ children can also play a central role in the construction of their own cultural identity and shape their interactions with members of their own and other communities in the country to which their parents immigrated”* (Lee 2009: chapter: preface). This conclusion is further supported by fieldwork by Peggy Levitt in 2009. Albeit focusing on the first generation, Levitt interacted with enough second generation youths to argue against dismissing the *“power of being raised in a transnational social field”* (Levitt 2009: 1) influenced by people, objects and practices from country of origin. As evident from other recent studies (Somerville 2008) and my thesis, second generation immigrants access and explore their transnational attachments and identities and understanding how that affects their sense of belonging and identity formation is a focal point of my thesis.

MYEPE is an inter-destination-transnational organization (Meeting of Young Egyptian People in Europe), which was created 9 years ago. It centers on a yearly event where Young European Egyptians (18-35 years) from all over Europe meet in different European cities. Till now each event has been very successful with more than 200 attendants each time. In 2016, the event took place in Copenhagen, and my data collection focuses on the dedicated group of Young Danish Egyptians that organized the MYEPE event in Copenhagen.

1.1 Problem Area

In a world where the on-going globalization brings people together from different cultures and ethnicities, I find myself wondering how will that show in the generations to come? Will future descendants of immigrants group together in smaller communities defined by a sustained relationship to the country of origin or perhaps to a shared cultural heritage? Or will they slowly assimilate into the host societies? Or will we witness the unfolding of a post modernistic idea of a new form of fluid transnational social identity? (Bradatan 2010). By studying the transnational activities of the Second generation European Egyptian (SGEE) in connection with the MYEPE event I aim to gain an insight into these wonderings by exploring how their identity and sense of

belonging has developed and how these are affected by engaging in a transnational network such as MYEPE. In summary, this study aims to provide a timely insight how identity and sense of belonging is developing and is being negotiated among a group of young second generation immigrants in Europe. To achieve this, I focus on a group with clear transnational relations. In continuation hereof I hope to reveal why SGEEs seek and maintain a transnational social and cultural identity.

1.2 Research Question

How is identity and sense of belonging developed and negotiated among SGEEs through Transnational networks and why are these relations maintained.

1.3 Sub-questions:

- Which challenges do SGEEs meet in their search for belonging and how does MYEPE accommodate these challenges?
- *Which attributes of sense of community theory does MYEPE employ and how do they work together to attract and re-attract SGEE members*

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology approach of this project, indicating the reasoning behind the perspective taken. The goal is to provide justification for the decisions made in this project such as the choice of case, data, theory, literature and limitations of this research.

2.1 Ontology

The research conducted for this project will be based on empirical qualitative data (abduction strategy) which entails trying to understand why things are the way they are and deepen into the mechanism that cause them (Pedersen & Olsen 2008: 151). Hence, my thesis is based on a social constructivist perspective. Consequently, that means I do not see the world as being objective, and knowledge as something that already exists. Therefore the aim is not to determine the truth but instead to enable the researcher to see and act. The social constructivist presupposition implies that I perceive reality and the social world as socially constructed. This is not the logic that reality of the world does not exist unless some imagining it, but that one's ideas about the world and reality is crucial to how to act in it. People do not regard the world objectively, but interpret it in a historical and cultural context. They act like this from an inter-subjective perception of reality, and although this view may not be 'real', the consequences of it may very well be (Rendtorff 2003: 99; Halkier 2007: 28). Hence, from this ontological standpoint I want to uncover what is the nature of reality, and how this world is constructed. There is a classical distinction between essentialists and constructivists. The latter argues that the world is a social and linguistic construct, whereas the former argues that there exists a world on the other side of knowledge that has objective characteristics or in other words a nature or an essence (Pedersen & Olsen 2008:151). Although the academic position of this research is inclined to the constructivist perspective, I also include essentialist distinction. For instance, Glenn Bowman argues that Nationalism is an historical construct (Bowman 1994:320 within Anderson 1991) with mobilizing power, which is based on the theory by Benedict Anderson of “imagined communities” and their communality through linguistics. I hope hereby to be able to explain the stand of the research question and the theories and studies used in this research. I am interested in dwelling on the psychological aspects of migration which could be the focus of a micro perspective and its meaning for the dynamics of the interaction or effect on a larger group. In this thesis, the focus is on collective identity and belonging and transnational social relations and practices by "ordinary people" who are the focus

(Levitt 2001: 4). SGEE are due to their parents' migration process, in a situation where there is opportunity to be part of different national social fields. In this analysis of the SGEEs practice, it is relevant to examine how they are part of different social fields and how their position changes in the migration process in relation to the different fields. The research question is based on an interest in how identity and belonging develops and is negotiated in the context of international migration particularly in the descendants of immigrants. Cultural studies have a tradition to deal with issues in an interdisciplinary study perspective. To understand the processes related to international migration, development and negotiation of identity and belonging, I am especially inspired by the sociological and cultural thinking and method. Globalization Discussions are central for these subjects and has contributed to my attention to working with identity and belonging across national borders, and to work with them on different spatial levels (local, national and global).

2.2 Choice of Case

The choice of case is based on two criteria: First is: Egyptian-Europeans who organize the transnational social and cultural event called MYEPE, second criteria is: that my informants have to be second generation Egyptians born in Denmark or another European country. Thus, my informants are carefully *selected* as I feel that choosing a random sample will lead to information that perhaps is not relevant to the main research questions. Importantly, considering that second generation immigrants are not likely to continuously be activating and accessing their transnational resources (Levitt 2004: 1018), it was important for this research to select informants who are in such an activated transnational state.

I gathered five informants, 4 female and 1 male, whom all were Egyptians born outside of Egypt and raised in Europe. The interviews took place from the 21th December 2015 to 11th of January 2016, and were conducted in English, Danish and/or Arabic (schedule, location and language for each interview is provided in appendix 1). The interviews lasted 2-3 hours and were all conducted face-to-face in private or public spaces such as their private homes or library rooms. The four interviews with the organizers of the 2016 MYEPE event took place in Denmark, whereas the interview with the founder of MYEPE took place in Egypt. For the sake of the privacy of my informants, the names used in this study are not my informants' real names; instead I'll be using

fictional names, which are, Mia (Swiss-Egyptian), Nelly, Sally, Heba and Adam (Danish-Egyptians)

Although these interviews cannot be considered as a formal representation of the second generation Egyptian immigrants in Denmark, I believe they will contribute to the understanding of the importance and impact of transnational social and cultural networks in relation to sense of belonging.

2.3 Choice of Data and Method

This study will rely on two sources of data: a) primary fieldwork data, which includes interviews and observations, and b) secondary data, which include academic journals, as well as posts on social media such as Facebook groups.

Interviews: In this study I will be using qualitative methodology and specifically semi-structured interviews. This methodology is well suited for gaining an insight into my informants' reasoning for seeking and maintaining a transnational Egyptian identity and into the reasons for their current involvement. I believe that the qualitative method of interviews allows me to prime reflections on social relations and practices among SGEE in Europe on a local, national and transnational level to provide an insight into the reasoning behind each question. Moreover, the method has the flexibility to allow me to point out the relevant information and elucidate doubts in the same time space. Other more quantitative methods could be used but I feel they require more time to produce the same kind of information, and they will have a higher margin of error compared to face-to face interviews. In addition to the interviews, I participated in 11 planning meetings for this years' MYEPE event, which took place in Copenhagen 25-27 March 2016. Here I could observe my informants as they interacted on planning the event. However, I chose to use the interview data as the main base of my conclusions while observations made during these meetings are used in a supplementary fashion. Importantly, attending these meetings gave me the opportunity to introduce myself and build a connection with the informants before conducting the one-on-one interviews.

2.3.1 Interview guide

I chose to base the (semi)-structure of my interview guide on Steiner Kvale's theory of interviewing techniques from 1994 (Steiner Kvale 1994 Table 7.1: 135). Prior to the interviews, I compiled thematic research questions focusing on the MYEPE event, sense of belonging, travels to Egypt, and questions Denmark and Egypt. These thematic categories helped to manage, strengthen and

form each single question to ensure proper communication and to facilitate the analysis and categorization of the information. I included additional questions to ensure that the interviews became descriptive and cohesive, and to ensure many spontaneous descriptions of the informant's actions. These additional questions helped to clarify some of the answers given by the informants. The questions used in the interview guide are appended in Appendix 2.

2.3.2 Process

The interviews were recorded on an iPhone app called 'iTalk'. As I consider it of importance to protect the personal information shared by my informants, the audio recorded will exclusively be shared with the supervisor and examiner at the time of my oral exam in September 2016. The files will be shared with the supervisor and examiner via a USB stick, which will be returned to me after the exam to secure the interlocutor's personal information. I will therefore not make these audio files public.

2.4 Limitations

In this research I am dealing with the interpretations of my informants' responses to my questions about the MYEPE event, their emotions, sense of belonging, and identity. According to Martin Heidegger's philosophy (Olsen & Pedersen 2008:160), the meanings that this event represents for my informants are interpretations by them and, in turn, I interpret their answers as interviewer. As interpretations are filled with meaning they may differ from person to person (Olsen & Pedersen 2008: 161). I seek to avoid bias in my interpretations by corroborating and analyzing the answers from all of my five informants with other sources of information (such as scientific articles) to make a coherent conclusion based on their perceptions and my analysis that answers the main research questions. In this context, it should however, be noted that I analyzed the interviews in a setting that was suitable for the theories I found fit to the project. That means that I have selected quotes according to these theories as well, therefore my perspective and interpretation influences the structure of the study. Interview quality is of course dependent on the interviewers' questions, quality of answers by the informants and how articulate the informants is (Pedersen & Olsen 2008:231). I sought to overcome shortcomings by comparing answers to the rest of the informants, motivate the conversation or by asking additional questions to clarify answers.

Another limitation may arise when I ask my informants to reflect on the past MYEPE event, which happened a year ago. Their ability to remember specific details, feelings, actions and surroundings from an event about a year ago may diminish the kind of information I could get access to. I therefore tried to maximize the ability to remember by prolonging the interviews to allow the informants to return to questions or points that needed refreshing of their memory. In addition, I participated in the current MYEPE event, which took place March 25-27 2016. Based on my own observations during the event I can therefore critically assess some of the information my informants provided on past events. Lastly, I am myself a Danish-Egyptian. This is likely to lead to automatic understandings between my informants and myself as interviewer. Some aspects may therefore remain unexplored. On the other hand, I feel that the familiarity I have towards the subject resulted in us zooming in and discussing topics in a depth that would be hard to achieve for someone with a different background

2.5 Choice of Theory

At the heart of my research lies the assumption that there must be strong forces underlying the desire of SGEE to participate in and return to the MYEPE events and also underlying how this event is able to shape their identity formation and sense of belonging. Thus, when I ask the question *“How is identity and sense of belonging developed and negotiated among SGEEs through transnational networks and why these relations are maintained”*, I am in fact searching for and analyzing these forces. To find and analyze them I chose an empirical approach where I first conducted a series of qualitative interviews with members of the organizing committee of SGEE in Denmark. In the following sub chapters I present the theoretical framework within which I will conduct my analysis. My choice of theory is guided by the themes that have emerged from the interviews and which I have selected for analyses.

The process of immigration brings with it a challenging experience of adaptation to a new society (Sonn 2002). As evident from emerging research (and this study) this process of adaptation can span multiple generations. According to Christopher Sonn, part of the adaptation lies in establishing social and support systems that function as relational communities that facilitate the continuity of cultural identities and sense of community that are important for social and psychological well-being and adaptation to the new country (Sonn 2002). *“In a sense, immigrant-adaptation can be*

construed as a process of community making that involves the negotiating and integration of cultural systems and identities developed in one context to a new context and the development of ties with the new country”(Sonn 2002: 11). This perspective positions individuals and groups as dynamic and not passive recipients of acculturative forces. With this opening I wish to emphasize that I see my research as providing an insight into an adaptation process that is spanning multiple generations and which may be characteristic for immigrants in our current era with its technological advances in communication and transport. Moreover, I interpret his statement as saying that to understand the adaptation of immigration we must study the dynamic negotiation and integration processes of cultural systems and identities and how these are transferred between different contexts.

In his research on immigrant-adaption in Australia, Christopher Sonn explores the role of sense of community in the process of immigrant adaptation. He suggests that immigrant adaptation can be viewed as a process of community making that can be understood by using the notion sense of community. This notion reflects feelings of belonging and identification with and participation in communities (Sarason, 1974 within Sonn 2002: 208). Although, already coined in 1974, it was not until 1986 that McMillan based on a literature review provided a definition and theoretical framework on ‘*Sense of Community*’ which is now widely accepted and in the same study affirmed that the experience of sense of community does exist and that it does operate as a force in human life (McMillan 1986: 8).

Before providing a description of McMillan’s definition of ‘*sense of community*’ with particular emphasis on its components and features, I would like to dwell on the above notion of “our current era” with its technological advances in communication and transport”. In his classical work on imagined communities, Anderson ponders the practical prerequisites for the realization of Nationalism. Anderson emphasizes that he believes that Nationalism became possible because of a series of technological developments. Namely, in the invention of the Printing press and the Capitalistic drive of book printing. The ability of millions of people to read the same texts coupled with the realization that it is only these millions that read these same texts create the imagined community as well as its boundaries (Anderson 2006). According to Anderson: “*The print-language laid the basis for national consciousness in three distinct ways; first, they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Speakers of*

the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even, millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that only those hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community” (Anderson 2006: 44). Anderson refers here to the development of the Printing Press in the late 16th century. He says: “*What made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity (Anderson 2006: 42- 43)*”. These very premises are strikingly applicable today where we are experiencing the development of social media and their global effects. Much similar to how the printing press allowed millions of people to feel a sense of connection because they were aware they were reading the same texts. Social media are allowing people that are not in geographical proximity to gather around the same narratives. The boundaries of imagined communities are thus no longer defined by neither geographical nor National contexts but rather by senses of belonging.

However, dwelling on Anderson’s prerequisites for imagined communities will not allow us to understand fully why the SGEE seek the transnational community of MYEPE. It is here that I turn to “sense of community” as a force that effectively drives the SGEE and why I will explain it in length in the following.

McMillan and Chavis’ (1986) definition of ‘*Sense of Community*’ contains four elements: *membership, integration and fulfillment of needs, influence, and shared emotional connection* that can be applied to both relational and geographical communities. The element of membership is further composed of four attributes: boundaries, personal investment, sense of belonging and identification, and emotional safety. These four major elements work together and are context dependent, which means that some elements may be more important than others. The ‘*Sense of Community*’ framework is concerned with identifying the structures and processes in communities that provide opportunities for belonging and identification and meaningful participation. By using the ‘*Sense of Community*’ framework, Christopher for example found that aspects of sense of community such as emotional attachment and perceptions of social support may be more important for the well-being of their target groups (South African and Chileans immigrant in Australia) (Sonn

2002: 218). Hence, I will adopt this approach in my research and explore sense of community as a main driving force for my informants' participation and maintained involvement in the MYEPE event. Interestingly, it is argued that groups may transfer the sense of community developed in one context to another and that this may have implications for their adaptation (Sonn 2002).

2.5.1 Sense of community

My data collection indicates that the MYEPE event and the transnational network it offers fulfill specific needs for my informants. Although differently flavored, these *needs* appear to center on the *need of feeling a sense of community*. As point of departure, I will therefore root my analyses in McMillan's widely accepted definition and theoretical framework on Sense of Community (McMillan 1986). Notably, one should distinguish between two major, mutually non-exclusive, uses of the term Community. One refers to territorial and geographical notions of community, e.g. neighborhood or city, whereas the other refers to a relational aspect of the term (Gusfield 1975, within McMillan 1986). McMillan proposes a definition of Sense of Community that encompass both and that consists of four elements, namely:

“**Membership**, membership is the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness. The second element is **influence**, a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members. The third element is reinforcement: **integration and fulfillment of needs**. This is the feeling that the resources received through their membership in the group needs will meet members'. The last element is **shared emotional connection**, the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences” (McMillan 1986).

Importantly, Sense of Community is perceived as a powerful force in society (e.g. Yankelovich 1981 within McMillan 1986). Based on the definition outlined by McMillan, I choose to analyze my informants' fulfillment within each element. Complementing the framework provided by McMillan a number of other theories and studies are incorporated. These are outlined below with the aim of giving the reader a brief overview of the theoretical framework that underlies the analyses.

2.5.1.1 Membership

“Membership is a feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and therefore has a right to belong (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Buss & Portnoy, 1967). It is a feeling of belonging, of being a part (Backman & Secord, 1959). Membership has boundaries; this means that there are people who belong and people who do not.”

Using the above sentences to describe membership, which is the first element of his definition of Sense of Community, McMillan highlights two important aspects, namely sense of belonging and boundaries. Thus, to analyze my informants’ feeling of membership, another sense becomes important, namely *“Sense of Belonging”*. This “sense” is particularly interesting as the SGEE are negotiating their identities and sense of belonging between different “worlds”; that of their parents’ country of origin (i.e. Egypt) that of residence (European country) and that of the inter-destination transnational (see later) space created by MYEPE.

2.5.1.2 Other attributes of membership

In addition to the sense of belonging, McMillan devotes much attention to the concept of boundaries with respect to membership. It can be difficult to define boundaries, however, they serve essential purposes, which are defining who is in- and who is outside the group and providing emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop (McMillan 1986: 9). According to social psychology research, groups often use language, dress code, and rituals to create boundaries, the use of which I will also investigate in my analysis. McMillan mentions three other attributes of membership, namely personal investment, emotional safety and common symbols. These factors are important in order to obtain smooth functioning and integration in the social life of a modern heterogenic community (ibid: 11). Collectively, McMillan argues that these attributes work together and contribute to a sense of who is part of the community and who is not. In my analyses I hope to uncover, if, why and how some of these attributes contribute to my informants desire to participate in and maintain relations to the MYEPE event.

2.5.1.3 Influence

Drawing on group cohesiveness research, McMillan proposes that, members are attracted to a community in which they feel that they are influential and when influence of a member on the community and influence of the community on a member operate concurrently. Thus, taken together, the sense of influence in a community has to be bidirectional to be significant. In this context, I will utilize Benedict Anderson's work on imagined communities. Especially, Anderson's fascination by how the concept of a Nation and the sense of belonging to it have mobilizing power is in line with my own wonderings. Moreover, Anderson argues that the concept of a nation to a great extent mobilizes its members by what it gives them in the form of cultural products. Taken together with McMillan's notion on bidirectional influence, I will explore potential reciprocal exchange of cultural products/influences between my informants and the MYEPE event/community.

2.5.1.4 Integration and fulfillment of needs.

The third component of McMillan's definition of sense of community is "integration and fulfillment of needs". This component centers on reinforcement as a motivator of behavior and is a cornerstone in behavioral research (McMillan 1986). McMillan's emphasizes that for any group to maintain a positive sense of togetherness, the individual-group association must be rewarding. Given the complexity of individuals and groups, however, it has been impossible to determine all of the reinforcements that bind people together into a close community, although several "reinforcers" have been identified. One is the mere *status* of being a member of a successful group, which is shown to bring group members closer together (Peterson and Martens 1972 and Sacks 1952 within McMillan 1986: 12). Another "reinforcer" seems to be competence of group members. As such studies show that people are attracted to others whose skills or competence can benefit them in some way (Hester, Roback, Weitz, Anchor, & McKee, 1976; Zander & Havelin, 1960 within McMillan 1986: 13). In short, McMillan's main point is not so surprising as it highlights that people will gravitate towards what serves their need best.

Lastly, McMillan highlights that a strong community must in the end be able to deliver the fulfillment of needs. Having established that people will seek communities that fulfill individual needs and that shared values are indicators of similar prioritization of needs between the individual

and the group, McMillan argues that people will associate stronger with communities that is able to fit people together so that people meet others' needs while they meet their own (Riley, 1970; Zander, Natsoulas, & Thomas, 1960 within McMillan 1986: 13).

2.5.1.5 Shared Emotional Connection

The last element in McMillan's definition of sense of community is a shared emotional connection. This connection may be based on a shared history, which the members can identify with i.e. they do not have to have participated in the history. But more importantly, McMillan highlights that interactions of members in shared events and the specific attributes of the event may greatly facilitate the strength of the community. Given my focus on the yearly event held by MYEPE, investigating the emotional connections shared by MYEPE members will constitute an important part of my analysis, wherein I will characterize to what extent McMillan's features of shared emotional connection are activated by MYEPE.

2.6 Choice of Literature

To the best of my abilities I was not able to locate studies on second generation Egyptian immigrants in Europe. I therefore rely on studies on a number of other "immigrant groups" to help me analyze and interpret my informants answers.

For example, I lean on a self-reflecting personal narrative by sociologist Niranjala Weerakkody (Weerakkody 2010), and her rather interesting use of Chavez' translation theory to understand the effect it has on my informants when they are asked where they are from (Chavez 2009 within Weerakkody 2010: 31-32). Born and raised in Sri Lanka, Niranjala's life journey has taken her from Sri Lanka, over Japan, the US before finally settling in Australia. In her narrative she analyses the large number of instances when she was asked questions about her origin or where others attributed to her an identity/nationality other than what it really is.

In another instance, where I seek to understand the significance of my informants' trips to Egypt, I borrow from the introduction to Loretta Baldassar's ethnographic work (*Visits home: Migration experiences between Italy and Australia*) (Baldassar 2001), where she reflects that the migration experience must not be understood as a linear event; but rather a process where so-called return visits (which she claims is a universal phenomenon among contemporary immigrants) play an

important role in the identity formation and development of both first and second generation immigrants. In this context, I include the work of Maruska Svasek on emotions and transnational fields. Svasek is included to understand in more detail how return visits through childhood may have affected my informants' sense of belonging to Egypt (Svasek 2010). One of the realizations that are made during my analysis is that my informants feel a so-called incomplete sense of belonging to both their European country and Egypt. This may also be phrased as a multi-stranded sense of belonging encompassing not only a single nation state. To help grapple with the hesitant answers from my informants when prompted to reflect on belonging to Denmark/Switzerland vs. Egypt, I use one of the few recent and dedicated studies on sense of belonging in second generation immigrants. Namely, I use Kara Somerville's study on the extent to which the second generation of Indo-Canadians expresses transnational connections in their self-identification (Somerville 2008). Although, Somerville's study deals with another group than mine, I think that her findings can be somewhat generalized as she focuses on the ways and processes by which the second generation are 'doing ethnicity', and less about the actual ethnicity that they do.

As I ventured deeper into understanding how my informants could feel a sense of belonging to multiple places yet fail to feel completely belonging to either place, I found Peggy Levitt and Nina Schiller's proposition of a social field approach to study migration and distinguishing between - ways of being and ways of belonging (Levitt & Schiller 2004) - instrumental in a way that complemented Antonsich's notions about place belongings. Another conceptualizing study by Cristina Bradatan, which draws on perspectives from sociology, anthropology psychology and political science, provided some interesting contemporary views on transnationalism. For example, that transnationalism fits "well within the postmodern idea of fluid identity, where defining one's self depends on the audiences without affecting the 'true' meaning of self" (Bradatan et al 2010: 169). Besides using their discussion during my analysis I discuss this notion in particular, in the light of my own findings at the end of my analysis.

As I move onto analyzing the MYEPE event itself, I draw on a number of other studies to help understand how it, as a community, activates the different attributes and elements of McMillan's theory on sense of community. For example, a study by Lelania Sperrazza¹ on the emergence of the Arabizi as a community marker for bilingual Egyptians at English speaking schools in Egypt

¹ This article is difficult to find. Here I therefore provide a direct link to the peer reviewed journal in which it was

(Sperrazza 2010), is used to understand how the communication form of the MYEPE organizers helps establish crucial boundaries for the MYEPE community. Among other things, these realizations are then used in combination with Benedict Anderson's theory on imagined community to gain an understanding of the mobilizing power of the MYEPE (Anderson 2006: 141). Lastly, Christopher Sonn's study on South African immigrants in Australia and his description their spiritual bonds and special understanding of what it means to be coloured from South Africa (Sonn 2002) helped me interpret my informants' descriptions of their interactions during the MYEPE event and identify markers of a spiritual bond between them.

One of the pleasures that I gained from performing this study was the realization that I am contributing something new to the field. Empirical studies on second generation immigrants are still scarce and to the best of my knowledge, this is the first example on second generation immigrants engaging in what by all measures appears to be community building between multiple destination/host countries. To convey the implications of this finding I include a brief discussion at the end of my analysis where I include the only two other studies that I could find that discuss similar findings i.e. where transnational ties circumvent the country of origin. Namely, these are: Helen Lee's study on Tongan migrants in Australia, where she notes that transnationalism can be expressed in many ways that do not involve movement between "home and host country" (Lee 2011) and Jessica Sperling's study on Columbian and Dominican migrants in Spain and the USA and their transnational ties between the two destination countries (Sperling 2014). Importantly, Sperling proceeds to "conceptually develop and provide concrete evidence for transnational ties between multiple destination societies, or '*inter-destination transnationalism*' (Sperling 2014: 1111). Based on my own findings, it these concepts coined by Lee and Sperling and their implications for individuals that I seek to take a step further.

2.7 Concepts and definitions

During this study I use some central concepts and definitions, whose meaning and understanding is not given i.e. their interpretation and understanding by the reader and me the author may vary. In this section I will therefore briefly the way I use these terms in relation to my informants.

2.7.1 Sense of belonging

As the notion of belonging will play a prominent role in this study, I devote this chapter to clarify how it is used in this study. When I conducted my interviews it became clear that my informants sometimes equated the term belonging with the notion of identity and/or citizenship and as I started my analyses I realized that the different facets of its meaning were perhaps not explicitly clear for me either. Despite being perceived as almost self-explanatory, Antonsich argues that belonging, as a notion, is in fact “*both vaguely defined and ill-theorized*” (Antonsich 2010: 644). Based on an extensive reading of literature across disciplines Antonsich provides a comprehensive analytical framework, which has proven useful for this study and is therefore briefly summarized here. Please note that it is not my aim to provide a comprehensive literature study on belonging. Antonsich introduces the term place-belonging to describe belonging as an emotional feeling of an individual to a particular place, which is often felt like “home” (Antonsich: 646). In this context, when referring to belonging, my informants often related to “where home is”. In consequence, Ralph and Staheli’s review of migration research that examines migrants’ engagement with the **notion of home** was also of value for interpreting my interviews (Ralph & Staheli 2011). Although they (Ralph & Staheli) are focusing on migrants, I found that their insights were of relevance for second-generation immigrants as well. Based on his literature study, Antonsich finds that five factors can contribute to an individual feeling place-belongingness; these are autobiographical, relational, cultural, economic, and legal (Antonsich 2010: 647). These will be explained in more detail when used during the analyses. Antonsich’s review shows, however, that one’s personal feeling of place-belonging must come to terms with practices of so-called socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion in the “place” of claimed belonging (Antonsich 2010: 649). Antonsich describes these practices as the politics of belonging. He highlights that “*Every politics of belonging involves two opposite sides: the side that claims belonging and the side that has the power of ‘granting’ belonging. This means, that a process of negotiation – as well as rejection, violation, and transgression (Croucher 2004: 41)– is always in place, either at the individual or at the collective scale or both*” (Antonsich 2010: 650). This means that the politics of belonging and the practices of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion condition an individual’s sense of space-belonging. To understand these practices, I find it warranted including theoretical aspects of ethnicity from Jenkins’ widely accepted “*basic social anthropological model of ethnicity*” (Jenkins 2008).

2.7.2 Transnationalism

As a definition for the term transnationalism, I take a point of departure in the following quote from Nations unbound: *“We define ”transnationalism” as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders”* (Basch et al 1994: 7). According to Bradata et al 2010, Transnationalism as a concept, can be traced back as far as to the beginning of the twentieth century, when Bourne in comment to a large influx of immigrants of non-Anglo-Saxon (Eastern and Southern European) origin to the US stated that immigrants socialized in different, non-American societies, and came there with their own, unique, cultural background. During the middle of the twentieth century immigration subsided due to the great depression and World War II and so did discussions of the concept of transnationalism. However, it resurfaced in the in the post 1970 era in Europe, North America and Canada, triggered by increasing globalization and an increasingly large number of migrants moving to these regions (Bradata 2010: 170-171). Acknowledging immigrants’ ability to keep strong homeland ties, studies focused on this very fact as a defining part of a transnational profile (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999 within Bradata 2010: 170-171).

CHAPTER 3 ANALYSIS

I found about MYEPE through a previous study (in 2014) on the mobilization of the Egyptian diaspora in response to the 2011 revolution in Egypt. MYEPE has remained successful since its creation, which means that not only is it able to attract new participants, it is also able to re-attract members of SGEE to its yearly event. In fact, it seems that its appeal is first realized fully by its members until they have participated. This sparked my interest and curiosity and generated numerous questions around which I have constructed my analysis:

- Why do second generation Egyptian immigrants travel to this event to spend time with hundreds of other Egyptians that they do not know?
- Why this event/network in particular?
- Why do they return?
- What drives the organizers to put in the extraordinary effort of organizing an event that hosts hundreds of travelers for three full days?

My hypothesis is that the MYEPE event, compared to any other social network, offers something unique at multiple levels. By analyzing MYEPE within the framework of McMillan's theory of sense of community, it will become apparent that MYEPE offers a strong community, which is as unique as my informants' own multi-stranded identity. In the theoretical section of this study, each of the elements and attributes in McMillan's definition and theory of sense of community was briefly and individually described. McMillan notes that to understand how a community is created and maintained one must study the importance of each element and how they work together (McMillan 1986). Accordingly, the analysis below is constructed around the elements (and attributes) of the theory on sense of community.

3.1 Why a transnational community?

In the first part of my analyses I will investigate my informants' sense of belonging to Egypt and their so-called host societies in Europe (Denmark/Switzerland). Like in studies of other groups of contemporary second generation immigrants (e.g. Somerville 2008) my informants are reluctant to choose a single ethnic or nationally based identity. Rather they engage in processes of identification, which incorporate both countries of origin and settlement (of their parents), and hence express a transnational belonging. In a literature study by K. Somerville's on transnational belonging among second generation Indian-Canadians, she highlights that especially at the beginning of the 2000s, "researchers have been divided in their conclusions about the transnational trends of the second-generation" (Somerville 2008). On one side of the debate were scholars who predicted that transnationalism is a "one-generation phenomenon", i.e. that it is important for the first generation, but not for their children where the level of transnational attachments generation was expected to be small. (Portes (2001: 190); Rumbaut (2002: 89); Kasinitz et al. (2002: 119) within Somerville 2008: 24). In contrast, other scholars argued that having been raised in a transnational social field, the second generation is expected to maintain knowledge of their parents' native language and travel back and forth to their parents' country of origin. Rather than low or diminishing levels of transnationalism among the second generation, these scholars argued that the second generation will cultivate transnational practices as they attempt to (re)define their identities and social locations and that this transnational engagement may vary according to life-cycle stages or in response to particular incidents or crises (Smith 2002; Basch et al 2000; Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004, Somerville 2007 within Somerville 2008: 24). It is these latter points that intrigue

my curiosity and indeed, the latter constitutes the topic of a previous study (Youssef & Balandrano 2014), where we investigated the mobilization of Egyptian second generation diaspora in response to the 2010 revolution in Egypt. In this study, my analysis also points to transnationalism not being a phenomenon that is confined to the first generation. Hence similar to Somerville's the analysis in this study contributes to the debate on transnationalism among second generation immigrants. That is however not the goal in itself. By taking a point of departure in analyzing my informants senses of belonging I uncover at least some of the factors that contribute to a multi-stranded sense of belonging and gain an understanding of why and how they (can) feel that they belong to different countries. At the same time, in doing so, I also uncover that because of forces of exclusion (Denmark) and differences in "ways of being" (Egypt) they perceive themselves as not belonging completely to either country.

In Abraham Maslow's (1954) theory of human motivation a hierarchy of needs is listed. The list begins with physiological needs, followed by needs of safety, belonging and love, esteem, and the need for self-actualization (Maslow 1954). Most physiological and safety needs are met in Western societies. Consequently, higher level needs are of greater focus. In this context, the need for belonging is next in line and is even put in the same bracket as love. The need for belonging is hence emphasized already from Maslow's early theoretical viewpoint. Maslow himself described the need for belonging as, "hunger for affectionate relationship with people in general, namely, for a place in a group or family"(Maslow 1954: 43). In addition, sense of belonging constitutes a cornerstone in the first element (Membership) of McMillan's broader definition of Sense of community, which is regarded as a strong force in the community (McMillan 1986). It is therefore that I start my analyses exploring whether my informants' involvement in a transnational network such as MYEPE is by associated with an unfulfilled need for belonging/membership to the two communities i.e. Danish and Egyptian that they have access to.

3.1.1 Belonging to two countries

Born and in raised in one country by parents born and raised in another country, where do you belong? Typically, when asked about their sense of belonging my informants all smiled, thought about their answer for a while, and in the end provided rather similar answers. I have in the following grouped the answers according to the country being referred to. The purpose is to analyze my informants' sense of belonging to "host" country first, i.e. Denmark/Switzerland and then to

Egypt. For each country, I aimed to investigate their sense of belonging to the country, what factors contribute to this feeling, and how their sense of belonging (or lack thereof) affects them.

3.2 Denmark

I asked my informants if they felt they belonged to Denmark and at home here?

“I don’t feel as a guest here (ref. to Denmark) not at all, but I also don’t feel as a Dane... there are a lot of reasons, like my roots are not Danish... I will never feel as a Dane and people will never look at me as a Dane they are linked if you like it or not they are linked...” (Adam Audio#1 2:13:00)

I selected the above quote because it contained a very typical feature of all the answers that I got. That feature is the absence of affirmation. Neither in Adam’s reply nor in the others (that are not presented here) did any of my informants use the word “yes” or in any other way affirm a sense of belonging to Denmark. Rather a lack of belonging was implicitly given. Instead they embarked on these answers (as seen above) where they reflected on why they didn’t feel a belonging to Denmark. In their work, Ralph and Staheli connect *belonging* to *notions of home*. They argue belonging is not only a subjective feeling of being ‘at home’ and a feeling of identification and ‘fitting in’ but is also socially defined in relation to inclusion and exclusion (Ralph & Staeheli 2011: 523). I.e. a sense of belonging depends not only on an individual’s own feelings but also on the inclusion or exclusion by the community. This is in agreement with Antonsich’s notion about the politics of belonging, where he highlights that *‘to be able to feel at home in a place is not just a personal matter, but also a social one. In fact, if one feels rejected or not welcomed by the people who live in that place, her/his sense of belonging would inevitably be spoiled’* (Antonsich: 649). At the heart of the politics of belonging and its practices of inclusion and exclusion lies boundary establishment and maintenance that separate ‘us’ from ‘them’ (Antonsich: 649). In turn, this means then that belonging to a place requires feeling belonging to a group of people. With this in mind, it becomes easier to understand my informants’ answer. Adam, opening with *“I don’t feel like a guest here”* indicates that he feels a sense of place-belonging, i.e. Denmark is his “place” and he should therefore feel that he belongs to this “place”. However, almost in the same breath he declares that he does not feel as a Dane, which indicates that he doesn’t feel he belongs to the group of people that are the Danes. The reason for this can be found both within Adam and in the Danes. Firstly, Adam mentions that his roots are not from Denmark. I asked him what he meant by this to which he answered: *“...in the end you’re not living in the country you belong to but you do anyway because you have lived your whole life*

here... I belong to my parent that's where my roots come from..." (Adam Audio#1 2:09:00). Hence, Adam puts a lot of emphasis on Antonsich's autobiographical factor, which "relate to one's past history – personal experiences, relations, and memories that attach a particular person to a given place" (ibid: 647). As the children of his parents who migrated from Egypt to Denmark, Adam's autobiography is inherently different from ethnic Danes and this appears to contribute to him not feeling a belonging to them as a group. The other reason for Adam not feeling a belonging to Denmark appears to lie within the Danes and their exclusion of him (they will never look at me as a Dane). This means that Adam perceives that the Danes as a group will never include him. Similar conclusions were deduced from the other informants' answers as well. Hence, although a lack of belonging may partly be explained by their different histories and personal experiences, a major reason lies in feeling exclusion by the Danish society i.e. the Danes as a group. To understand my informants' (lack of) sense of belonging to Denmark, I must therefore understand how and why they feel excluded.

3.2.1 A feeling of exclusion - recognition not granted

I probed further into the feeling of exclusion by asking if they could provide examples where they had felt as being excluded, I got the following anecdotal yet informative answer from Adam:

"At work they know my name is Adam but when I was young my psychology teacher always called me Arne and she kept doing that until I in the end said yes I'm here, so now when people ask me what my name is I tell them Arne and they look at me so weird and I'm just joking, our guests always answer you're not an Arne! The reality is that my name could have been Arne I could have been adopted but I don't look like an Arne because of my brown eyes and black hair.. what I'm trying to say, you'll never be seen as a Dane not because I want people to see me and think he looks like a Morten or Christian or Adam...absolutely not I'm just saying even though how well integrated you are you still have this outside look that it's not Danish therefore they'll not see you as a Dane and therefore I don't see myself as a Dane" (Adam Audio#1 00:13:00)

and Nelly

"I think it's this that in Denmark, I'm Egyptian because people ask me where you from or where is your parents, your roots and therefore I'm always associated with Egypt because physically I don't look like a Dane, I speak Danish fluent, went to Danish schools, work here but I physically don't look it and conversely I physically look Egyptian but sometimes don't

*catch everything in the (Egyptian) culture of what I may or may not do
because it is socially unacceptable...” (Nelly Audio#1 01.21.00)*

According to Antonsich, the ‘requisites’ for one person to belong to a community can be that they must assimilate by adopting the language, culture, values, behavior and religion of the dominant group (Antonsich 2010: 650). Yet, even then, there might remain other dimensions such as skin color, which would prevent full sameness and, therefore, expose that person to discourses and practices of socio-spatial exclusion (Antonsich 2010: 650). “The problem is that dominant ethnic groups (in this case the ethnic Danish community) tend to fill the notion of belonging with rhetoric of sameness, which may prevent recognition of difference” (ibid). Hence, ethnic identification can be expected to play a strong role for my informants’ sense of belonging/exclusion to/from Denmark. Similar to the sense of belonging, ethnic identification is described as involving interplay between similarities and differences that is produced and reproduced through interaction (Jenkins 2008). Ethnicity is thus situational and constructed between subjects, where cultural common traits such as language, lifestyles and mutual ideas are among the resources for ethnic cohesion. Jenkins highlights Hughes’ arguments that “An ethnic group is not one because of the degree of measurable or observable difference from other groups: it is an ethnic group, on the contrary, because the people *in it* and the people *out of it* know that it is one” (Hughes 1994 within Jenkins 2008: 10). In this context, it is telling how Adam defines his own sense of belonging to Denmark –completely-based on how he thinks the surrounding society views him “*I’m just saying even though how well integrated you are you still have this outside look that it’s not Danish therefore they’ll not see you as a Dane and therefore I don’t see myself as a Dane*”. I understand Adam’ mentioning of integration as a collective factor that should strongly contribute to his feeling of space-belonging, whereas, Nelly was more specific by mentioning language fluency, education and work. For example, Antonsich highlights language as the most important cultural factor (in addition to other cultural expressions such as traditions and habits as well as cultural practices like food and music, which we will return to later). Economic factors matter as well, as they create a stable material condition, which in turn is a necessary factor in the process of generating a sense of place-belongingness (Antonsich 2010: 648). However, despite this fulfillment of Antonsich’s criteria for space belonging they still do not feel inclusion in the Danish society or in the group that is the Danes. According to Antonsich” each person needs to *feel* recognized and accepted in her/his diversity and be recognized as an integral part of the community where they live, as well as being

valued and listened to “(Antonsich 2010: 650). This means that even if my informants are fully part of the economy of Denmark (economic belonging) and participate in everyday social relations and exchanges; and otherwise can be regarded as legally belonging (e.g. citizenship), it may still not be enough to generate a sense of place-belongingness, if the rest of the society fails to ‘grant’ this recognition (Antonsich 2010: 650). Adam’ and Nelly’s quotes brought me a little closer to understanding their sense of exclusion. Namely they feel that their feeling of space-belongingness is not met by recognition by the ethnical Danish society. I want to assert this conclusion and also to understand the potential discourses and practices of socio-spatial exclusion in more detail. The following sections are, therefore, devoted to identifying and analyzing these practices.

3.2.2 Recognition not granted - hostility

As point of departure, I asked my informants whether they experience direct hostile (racist) interactions in Denmark.

“luckily I haven’t been suffering that much from discrimination because I could look half half” (Sally Audio#2 00:21:30)

“When I started my work at 7/11 I had been there 3 months, there was a regular customer that came in, one day I said good morning and she didn’t answer, I thought to myself she must be racist...I find out afterwards that she is deaf...”(Nelly Audio#1 01:31:00)

In general, my informants did not highlight incidents of hostility during the interviews and when I asked about it, they had to think a bit before answering. Hence, I conclude that direct hostility or racism is not a major reason for their sense of being excluded. Nevertheless, the above quotes are informative. From the first quote, it can be seen that even in the absence of racist incidents; my informants expect that physical appearance and especially (dis)similarities play a role for whether you are included by the Danish population or in Sally’s words why she has not experienced hostile incidents. In the second quote, a deaf woman failed to reply Nelly’s morning greeting and was perceived as “likely racist”. This rather anecdotal incident highlights an important point, which is that the answers analyzed in this study represent my informants’ subjective feelings and therefore reflect *their* interpretation of the interplay with the Danish community. It is because of this that I search for the reasons for feeling excluded beyond my informants’ own claims. The second quote further supported the existence of an expectation (within my informants) of exclusion based on appearance, but provided little evidence for direct hostility as being the cause for their sense of exclusion. It should be noted here that Nelly, in particular, in other parts of her interview told me that she had been exposed to hostile incidents. These were, however, according to her, targeted at

her scarf (Muslim attire) and not at her general appearance as not ethnically Danish (i.e. brown vs. white). All the informants that I interviewed are Muslim, but Nelly was the only one where this could be directly seen from her choice of clothing. The SGEE in Denmark (and Europe) includes a significant portion of Christians, which according to my informants feel the same lack of belonging to the European host societies (Mia Audio#1 00:27:00). Hence, the broader sense of exclusion is likely not rooted in hostile racist incidents.

3.2.3 Recognition not granted - your name is not Arne!

The first actual hint of experienced practices of socio-spatial exclusion comes from re-examining Adam's quote (Adam Audio#1 00:13:00 on page 26), specifically the laughing reaction of the guests in Adam's restaurant to his joking claim of being named Arne (a typical Danish name). In the interview with me, Adam reflected that he *could* in theory have been named Arne had he, for example, been adopted by (ethnically) Danish parents and hence shared all possible similarities (cultural, values, upbringing etc.) to the Danish population save his appearance. Although probably not intended as such, Adam highlights that he perceived "the laughing" as evidence for dissimilarity in physical appearance playing a major obstacle for the dominant group in the Danish society identifying him as belonging. Dissimilarity in physical appearance (i.e. brown skin and black hair) in a society wherein the dominating group is generally white, such as Denmark or Switzerland) can thus not be disregarded as a contributing factor to my informants' sense of exclusion. The laughter in the restaurant indicating to Adam that he could never be an Arne due to his physical appearance is surely an example of a "non-granted" recognition. Adam was not the only one to express such feelings. For example, in Nelly's quote she said: *"I'm always associated with Egypt because physically I don't look like a Dane, I speak Danish fluent, went to Danish schools, work here but I physically don't look it"* (Nelly Audio#1 01.21.00 on page 26). A frustration was sensed when she spoke this answer, which stems from the fact that Nelly feels she has done all she can to adapt and conform to the Danish society, yet she is not accepted due to the one thing she cannot change; her physical appearance.

3.2.4 Recognition not granted - where are you from?

With the above conclusion in mind, I hypothesized that the physical dissimilarities might trigger other more subtle socio-spatial practices or discourse of exclusion. I turn the reader's attention, once again to the quote above by Nelly (Audio#1 01.21.00 on page 26); specifically to her mentioning of

the questions she receives about her “origin”. This “question” is something all my informants mentioned as something they had continuously had to answer throughout their lives, and like Nelly all informants perceived it as a constant reminder of their difference from the person asking. In other words, the meaning of the question for them is that because “they” ask me where I am from - I must not be from here/different from them. Hence, to understand a major factor causing my informants feeling a sense of exclusion we must understand why potentially innocent questions about heritage or origin contribute to a sense of exclusion. In reference to this, Weerakkody’s analyses of the many instances she was asked questions on her origin becomes useful. She states: *‘these instances indicate how the color of my skin served as a marker for others to give me an identity based on their assumptions and stereotypes’* (Weerakkody 2010: 29). Hence, Niranjala’s argues that the question “where are you from?” is triggered by others “reading” or “translating” her body, much like a text is read or interpreted. Niranjala highlights that because different people in different countries would attribute her different nationalities, the “reading” of her body was context dependent. To understand this context dependency she suggests to use Translation Theory related to the reading of the (other’s) body-as-text and examine the six basic aspects or ‘scapes’ people use in any given communication exchange (Chavez 2009: 25 within Weerakkody 2010: 31). Briefly, these include 1. The textual signifiers of the body (e.g. race, gender, age, ability, clothing etc.) 2. Non-verbal communication (e.g. emotion) 3. Verbal communication (actual words used) 4. Primary context (the immediate location or situation). In comparison, the last two aspects; 5. Context (e.g. the interplay between the discourses of nation, power and education linked to the cultural, regional or national history of the interactants, such as those of colonialism, racism, ethnocentrism etc.). 6. Metaphysical communication (unconscious, subconscious, ideological and spiritual assumptions of individuals). In Weerakkody’s use of the theory, the first four aspects and how their perception fits into the “other’s” assumptions and stereotypes can be used to explain why different people may read a body differently. In comparison, aspects 5 and 6, may explain why migrants or ethnic minorities are sensitive towards the question “where are you from?” According to Chavez all translations are made based on and in relation to the dominant discourse (Chavez 2009 within Weerakkody 2010: 31). Therefore, when examining communication about and with (presumed) migrants when asking them ‘Where are you from? The recipient will gauge which of the above aspects, especially the less visible ones such as number 5 and 6, the speaker may be relying on ((Chavez 2009 within Weerakkody 2010: 31): 32). With this in mind, we come closer to why my informants perceive the questions “where are you from?” or “what/where are your roots” from

someone belonging to the dominant group in the Danish society as signs of exclusions. Simply, because if they were perceived as sufficiently belonging to the mainstream they would be asked that question less often. This means that regardless of the *causes or intent* underlying these questions about origin, the narratives of my informants show that they, as young persons of Egyptian descent, which physically means brown skin and black hair, interpret communication with the Danish population especially questions about origin through a lens that leads to *feeling* positioned as outsiders by the Danish community.

3.2.5 A sense of exclusion - how does it make you feel?

Not surprisingly, the perceived label of “not belonging” affects ethnical minorities as can be deduced from Adam’ reflection on when he goes for holiday in Egypt:

“I relax a lot on holidays in Egypt, I travel a lot to other countries but it funny I relax the most when I travel to Egypt, it’s there I really feel I can stress of and mentally relax more... I think it has something to do with belonging we are there with your family and your people.... Yeah your people...” (Adam Audio1 01:52:00)

Within this context, Ralph and Staheli highlight a number of studies that show that “*maintaining contact with places of origin – through travel, communications or through material objects – in some instances serves as an adaptive response to the hostile or unreceptive context in which migrants often find themselves. In these circumstances, migrant identities often incorporate strong attachments to the home of origin*” (Ralph and Staheli 2011: 522). Although, Ralph and Staheli’s work mostly concerns “first generation” immigrants, the above quote wherein Adam relates “*stressing of - and - mentally relaxing*” to “*belonging - and - your people*” indicates that second generation immigrants may be reacting in a similar fashion to the context of their host country, in this case Denmark. From Adam’ quote, it can be inferred that not feeling a sense of belonging to Denmark makes him feel mentally unrelaxed and constantly on guard. From a psychological perspective, a literature review by Jones on the effects of feeling a sense of belonging (Jones 2009), a wealth of evidence support a relationship between sense of belonging and a long range of indicators of psychological well-being, including self-efficacy, self-esteem and many others. Hence, the inability of feeling a sense of belonging to the Danish society arguably may constitute a continuous stress factor that the SGEE may seek to alleviate by searching for belonging elsewhere.

3.2.6 A sense of exclusion - Future?

My informants expressed frustration regarding the non-granted recognition of belonging to the European host societies. From their perspective they have done all that they can and in their reflections it was obvious that they could not see what else they could do to be accepted by the European communities. I use this perception later in the study as an argument for why my informants seek transnational networks to fulfill unmet needs of belonging. But here I would like to provide a simple outlook on a question I (and perhaps also the reader) found myself asking: What then? Is it a dead end? Must contemporary descendants of immigrants that carry distinct identity markers such as different skin color forever experience a sense of exclusion by the dominating groups in the European societies irrespective of their own sense of belonging? When I asked Mia about how she thinks she is being perceived by her surroundings in Switzerland, she highlighted the interactions she has with her boss' wife:

"I think that my boss' wife is amazed how I look Egyptian and how Swiss I am in my head and this is how that summaries it, I'm both." (Mia part 1 - 20:00) ... 'Some people that work or talk with me see that I look very Egyptian but they soon forget I'm an Egyptian because when you deal with me, my attitude, my type... I'm both I'm really both.'" (Mia Audio#1 00:21:22)

This quote indicates that through continued interaction the surrounding host society will slowly realize that looks alone are insufficient to assume the others identity. In time, one can, thus, expect that the surrounding community will invoke more aspects of aforementioned Translation Theory when reading the body of descendants of immigrants and place less emphasis on skin color as a major determinant. That Mia's boss wife is "amazed" that she (Mia) can look like she does (Egyptian) yet be so Swiss in her way of being indicates, however, that there is still some way to go and that she clearly had attributed a different identity to Mia. However, when Mia says, "*Some people that work or talk with me see that I look very Egyptian but they soon **forget** I'm an Egyptian because when you deal with me, my attitude, my type... I'm both I'm really both*" she indicates that the transformation in how her boss wife "translates" her body is generally experienced by others. Jenkins notes on identification: "As for [individual as well as for] collective identification, people must have something significant in common - no matter how vague, apparently unimportant or apparently illusory - before we can talk about their membership of collectivity. Reflecting on Mia's experience in this context, indicates that in time as the host societies recognize more similarities between themselves and second generation immigrants, the body of immigrants and their

descendants may be “read differently” than they are now and recognition of belonging may be partly granted.

3.3 Egypt

“... I always say when you go to Cairo you hate it but when your away you miss it, that’s just the way it is with Egypt.”(Adam Audio#1 1:06:00)

I open this section with the above quote to illustrate the complexity of my informants’ relationship to the country of their parents’ origin. In Egypt, my informants look like everyone else in the society and also speak Arabic fluently. This means that the external features (e.g. skin or hair color), which contributed to a (perceived) feeling of exclusion in Denmark, are absent. Thus, in this part of my analysis I expect to identify other factors that contribute to their sense of belonging. I start this section with the answers I received to the rather broad question; what do you *feel* when visiting Egypt?

“I relax a lot on holidays in Egypt, I travel a lot to other countries but it’s funny I relax the most when I travel to Egypt, it’s there I really feel I can stress of and mentally relax more... I think it has something to do with belonging you are there with your family and your people.... Yeah your people...”(Adam Audio#1 01:52:00)

“I thing that it’s hard to say, because I think that I just miss the things that are not accessible for me here in Denmark from my Egyptian part, because I feel it when I have been in Egypt for a month then I really appreciate Denmark and start missing the our norm and culture. ... the social life, family, friends... hasn’t been a part of my everyday but experienced it and therefore seen how good it could be if you understand I’ve tasted a bit of the sweet cake and it was good, I miss also the food... there is just another social life in Egypt...” (Adam Audio#2 01:00:00)

“the first thing I notice when I travel to Egypt is the feel in the airport, I just smell Egypt, it smells really good, then I go down from the airplane, then I notice the traffic the back ground noise from the cars, I feel very alive when I’m in Egypt, the city is very alive even when I’m sleeping, feel alive when I’m coming from a country that is quiet like Denmark. Family means also a lot to me... I feel very compassionate when I’m in Egypt... it just brings a lot of joy.” (Sally Audio#1 01:15:30)

“...What do you feel when you travel to Egypt? I feel as if I’m traveling back home. I am looking forward to seeing family...” (Heba Audio#1: 00:06:00)

Baldassar was the first to coin the concept of the return visit and investigate its significance for the identity formation of contemporary immigrants (Baldassar 2001). According to Baldassar, *'the return visit must be recognized as a central part of the migration process, it is one of its stages. The migration process extends beyond the settlement of the first generation, well into the experiences of those individuals who comprise the second and subsequent generations, who also participate in visits home'* (ibid: 8). Out of regular return visits, develops a complicated web of social relations which ultimately leads to the creation of fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their "old" and in their "new homelands" (ibid: 8). In her work on emotions and human mobility (and references therein), Svasek argues that the "self" should be regarded *'as a multiple, relational being-in-the-world that is captured by his or her surroundings, engaging with past, present and future situations'* (Svasek 2010: 868). Further, Svasek states that emotional encounters are shaped by direct interaction, memories and imagination (Casey 1987; Tonkin 2006 within Svasek 2010: 686). Hence, certain events in the past, such as a happy childhood or the experience of bullying at school, can have long-lasting impacts. Svasek also notes that objects, landscapes and senses all contribute to create a sense of attachment (Svasek 2010: 868). According to an IOM (International Organization of Migration) Report in 2010, Egyptian Diasporas in the EU visited Egypt at least few times per year (IOM 2010:33). Indeed, all my informants noted that they as children travelled to Egypt every year with their parents. Thus, strong seeds for a sense of belonging to Egypt were laid by frequent visits to Egypt in their childhood and adolescence. This is apparent from especially Sally's quote and her choice of positive words such as *'feel compassionate'* and *'joy'*. Even the negative things like the smell of fuel and the (loud) background noise are uttered in a positive context and indicate that she is linking Egypt to historical memories that she is fond of.

Based on the statistics provided by IOM and the widespread return visits by Egyptian immigrants, these feelings likely represent a general phenomenon in the SGEE. i.e. the SGEE can due to frequent visits to Egypt in general be expected to harbor a strong attachment to the country. This was perhaps most evident from the following quote:

"What connect us is Egypt and the culture ... from your childhood you get something in with your breast milk, you are Egyptian, it's difficult to describe exactly what it is but it's something you get from your home which you take with you..." (Audio # Heba 1:06:00)

My informants informed that as adults they are continuing their visits to Egypt, both together with their parents but also independently. Thus they are sustaining the link between the societies of (their parents') origin and settlement. To capture the purpose of the so-called return visits more accurately human geographers have coined the term VFR (i.e. visiting friends and family) (Duval 2003 within

Lee 2011), which is now widely used (Lee 2011). Regardless of the terminology, however, my informants' behavior agrees with Baldassar's notion that return visits should be seen as part of a migration process, which in turn is part of a continued process of transnational interactions that in our current era of facile communication and transportation spans several generations (Baldassar 2001: 9). Notably, my informants' felt a lack of belonging to Denmark, which was defined by the perceived exclusion by the dominant group. From this chapter we learn that they harbor strong emotional attachments to Egypt. In the next chapter, I investigate whether this translates into a sense of belonging to Egypt.

3.3.1 Not belonging to Egypt either

I next asked my informants whether they feel a sense of belonging to Egypt.

"I'm a product C – product A is Switzerland and product B is Egypt or vice versa, I can't talk about my background because I'm something new, like anyone of us that are living with two cultures, I'm neither that or that, we just try to take the best from both cultures, and try to have a new product, so it doesn't work when someone asks you do you feel more this or this. So what do you say when people ask you where you from? I say I'm a 100% Egyptian and I'm a 100% Swiss because I feel I'm a part of both and the thing is that here² people make you never feel 100% Egyptian and in Switzerland it's the same you're never 100% Swiss because you're different." (Mia Audio#1 00:21:22)

"When people ask me I tell them I'm Egyptian. But I don't see myself as 100% Egyptian or 100% Dane even when I'm raised in Denmark. But sometimes you have to put stuff on a crystal scale and therefore I always tell people I'm from Egypt ..." (Adam Audio#1 00:13:00)

"I consider myself not quite Danish when I'm in Denmark and not quite Egyptian when I'm in Egypt, so I figured out I'm more global, you know citizen of the world somehow..." (Sally Audio#3 00:20:00)

"In Egypt I'm Danish and in Denmark I'm Egyptian but know I kind of started saying I'm Danish Egyptian like African American". (Nelly Audio#1 00:09:00)

Hence, despite the emotional attachment to Egypt and the mental refuge it appears to provide for my informants (see above), the lack of belonging to Denmark is not compensated by a 100% belonging to Egypt. It may seem that my informants "suffer" from a non-belonging 100% to either

² Mia's interview was conducted in Egypt, where she now works

country. However, in Somerville's study on transnational belonging among second generation Indo-Canadians another suggestion is provided (Somerville 2008). According to Somerville, second generation immigrants struggle to answer questions about belonging because they share unique experiences as the children of immigrants that have maintained strong transnational ties (e.g. communication, travel, food etc.). Hence, they are inherently different from their parents (who have undergone an immigration process), from native-born Danes in Denmark (they look different) and - as we shall see in more detail in the following section- also from native-born Egyptians in Egypt. Therefore, the identity of a second generation immigrant with transnational ties cannot be specified based on existing identity categories, such as Danish or Egyptian, which leaves them struggling with the question. The latter can be seen from the different variations over the same answer. For example, *"not quite Danish when I'm in Denmark and not quite Egyptian when I'm in Egypt, so I figured out I'm more global"*. This quote shows that the struggle Sally faces in labeling her belonging is caused by it being coined relatively to the native-borns, in the respective countries. Nelly's response reveals that when she reflects on her sense of belonging to Egypt, she feels a reciprocal context-dependency regarding her sense of belonging e.g. *"I am Danish when in Egypt and Egyptian when in Denmark"*. Notably, when reflecting on her sense of belonging to Denmark in isolation, her expression of affiliation to Denmark was scarce. So why did she express a sense of belonging to Denmark when reflecting on Egypt? In Somerville's study on Indo-Canadians this difficulty to self-identify and rationalize a chosen identity is described as a *"way for the second generation to come to terms with transnational belonging. They feel one identity, by itself, does not fully capture the essence of who they are or what they believe"*. In this context, Mia, who is the founder of MYEPE answered; that she is –both– and –neither– at the same time, that she is –a product C– and –something new– encapsulates this very realization and as we shall see later this realization seems to have played an important role for how MYEPE was constructed and likely also its success. Before we proceed, I would, however, like dwell on why my informants feel they do not fully belong to Egypt. By doing so I hope to gain a deeper understanding of how they can claim simultaneous belonging to different countries.

3.3.2 Way of belonging vs. way of being – Egypt vs. Denmark?

In Egypt, my informants look like everyone else in the society and also speak Arabic fluently, so dissimilarities in physical appearance should play a lesser role for their (lack of) sense of belonging compared to the case in Denmark. So why do they not feel a sense of belonging to Egypt? When I

asked my informants why my informants felt that they were not 100% Egyptian, a different set of factors was presented. These are summarized below:

“...There is a difference the difference between the ones (referring to Egyptians he encounters) that live in Europe and the ones that live in Egypt. It is that those that live in Europe they understand more your way of thinking than the ones living in Egypt because they (European Egyptian) are open minded but of course it's not all that are like this depends on how people are raised...” (Adam Audio#1 00:43:00)

“In the way you're thinking you're more proactive. You're just thinking differently I just really sense we think different...” (Sally Audio#2 00:15:00)

“... women in Egypt would talk in a very low voice and not really express loudly what they believe in while here in Europe you will have many woman talking openly and this is something you really feel in the youth and something that is reflected also in young women having an Egyptian background, the European part has reflected some kind of equal worth as a man.” (Sally Audio#1 00:25:00)

“In Egypt I feel a more restricted role, I don't see them as big things but others do. For example on our way to Luxor in the bus³ there was a group in the back of the bus joking and having fun and it was a boy and a girl and they got in trouble for that and that's something we wouldn't consider a problem...” (Nelly Audio#1 00:59:00)

“...there is a lot I don't like in Egypt... corruption, I can give you an example, once I lost my Danish passport and luckily my father was with me in Egypt. I would have figured it out but its more what we did to make it work out as fast as it did. We called the Danish embassy, they told me to go to the police station and report it and then get a temporarily traveling document to travel with. I went to the police station and the police man told me wait until it's your turn. The stamp I needed would take him 3 seconds to give . and we were going to wait 3 or 5 hours depending on their mood. Then I saw that my father greeted him with 50 pounds in his hand, and I looked at my father and told him what are you doing? You're crazy to do that. He's just doing his work, that's how people like us would think grown up in Denmark, he gets payed for what he does - why are you giving him money? My dad explained that because if you didn't do that you would be waiting here for 5 hours for a stamp that takes 32 sec. and that is something I don't like...” (Adam Audio#1 02:01:00)

³ During the visits to Egypt organized by the Egyptian embassies

“Why do u like Denmark Adam? I like the system in Denmark where there is respect for humans.. that’s worth everything, I don’t feel there is this in Egypt, I miss having that in Egypt...” (Adam Audio#2 02:05:00)

Collectively, from the quotes above, a number of differences are perceived by my informants as separating them from feeling that they belong completely to Egypt. Specifically, the differences emerge from their interactions with Egyptians, Egyptian society and institutions. They include for example, differences in open mindedness, social and gender equality. But also, the ability to deduce and agree to codes of social conduct, which makes them feel like Danes/Europeans (e.g. with regards to interaction between youths of opposite sexes). Differences also emerge from their interaction with institutes as exemplified by the “bribe” provided at the police station to speed up a legal process. Levitt and Glick-Schiller differentiate between ‘ways of being’ and ‘ways of belonging’ in a transnational space. ‘Ways of being’ refer to the actual social relations and practices in which individuals engage, whereas ‘ways of belonging’ refer to a connection to a homeland through memory, nostalgia or imagination (Levitt & Schiller 2004: 1010). According to their distinction, ways of belonging entail awareness and actions intentional to identify with a particular group. For example, individuals that engage in social relations and practices that cross borders and explicitly recognize this and highlight the transnational elements of who they are, then they are expressing a transnational way of belonging (Ibid: 1011). In comparison, a way of being “*refers to the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than to the identities associated with their actions*” (Levitt & Schiller 2004: 1010). Grappling with explaining these terms, which are difficult to distinguish, Levitt & Schiller highlight that the distinction lies in the individual’s *awareness* of the identity a particular social relation or practice signifies (Ibid: 1010). From the quotes above it can be seen that my informants realize/mention their sense of belonging to Denmark only when reflecting on the difference in their values to the Egyptian society. This means that they do harbor a strong sense of belonging to Denmark, which is visible in their everyday social interactions and practices but that they themselves are unaware of the identity these practices signify. Using Levitt & Schillers terminology, my informants can, thus, be regarded as exhibiting a sense of belonging to Egypt in their *ways of belonging* whereas they exhibit a sense of belonging to Denmark through their “*ways of being*”. With these insights it is now possible to understand why and in particular *how* the SGEE can feel Egyptian, yet also Danish and vice versa.

3.3.3 To belong or not to belong enough

Maslow's described the need for belonging as a *'hunger for affectionate relationship with people in general, namely, for a place in his group or family'* (Sonn 2002: 43). Hence, by concluding that my informants harbor an unfulfilled need for belonging I am implicitly arguing for lack of belonging as an explanation for why they seek participation in a transnational network like MYEPE that (as we shall see later) promise to provide them with exactly that. However, before continuing, I would like to focus on the fact that my informants seem to not be suffering from -not belonging- but they are rather appearing to have difficulties coming to terms with belonging to multiple places at the same time. "To belong or not to belong enough⁴?" then becomes the question. In a recent review on transnationality, Bradatan claims based on her literature study that it appears no *'longer required to be true to self in the same way in all situations, 'but rather of being true to self in context or self in relationship'* (Howard, 2000: 387). *A transnational would interact in one way with the fellows from his/her origin country while s/he would use a different set of rules and behaviors when interacting with the host country's natives, as a way to respond to different expectations. Language and gestures need to adapt to different contexts, and, together with them, the identity and the person would feel as comfortable in one context as in the other without seeing him/herself as schizoid'* (Bradatan 2010: 176). In other words, Bradatan is suggesting that transnationals will be able to live happy and fulfilling lives without feeling a form of *complete* belonging to a (single) nation-state, but instead will cope with adapting to the setting and contexts surrounding them. In yet another set of words, my informants could consider Ralph and Staeheli's argument for a loosening of their identity moorings and markers to allow for a more fluid model of identification with various places. Thereby they could claim a multi-stranded, 'hybrid' identity that reflects their true experience of home, self and belonging (Ralph & Staeheli 2011). In this context, Sally offered the possibility of belonging to the world rather than to the confinement of a single nation-state: *"I consider myself not quite Danish when I'm in Denmark and not quite Egyptian when I'm in Egypt, so I figured out I'm more global, you know citizen of the world somehow..."* (Sally Audio#3 00:20:00). Indeed, *'there is empirical evidence that a 'sense of belonging to the world' is a rather diffused form of identification among some people across the globe* (Schueth and O'Loughlin 2008), Calhoun (2003, 536) *rejects any forms of cosmopolitanism from 'nowhere', by affirming that belonging to particular groups and cultures is an inescapable condition of humanity'* (Antonsich 2010: 651).

⁴ This reworking of the famous Hamletic dilemma is borrowed from Beck, Ulrich. "The analysis of global inequality: from national to cosmopolitan perspective." Global Civil Society (2003): 45 as cited within Antonsich 2010.

Similarly, and in more concrete terms, Baldassar concludes that *‘one of the consequences on migrant identity from the complicated web of social relations that develop out of regular “return visits” is that, on the one hand, migrant status marginalizes them (migrants) in the host country- while on the other, while in the home country it entraps them in a **circular quest** for an increasingly elusive identity’* (Baldassar 2001: 8-9). By studying the MYEPE event in the following part of my analysis, I hope to answer some of these questions about transnationalism in second generation immigrants.

3.4 MYEPE - a community?

Arguably, my informants’ incomplete sense of belonging to either Denmark or Egypt is a major causality for searching for a community to which they can feel that elusive complete sense of belonging. Sense of belonging is, however, but one of the five attributes of the “membership” element in McMillan’s theory on sense of community. To what extent does MYEPE promise and deliver these attributes? To answer this question, I will analyse MYEPE within McMillan’s theoretical framework on communities to see whether and how MYEPE fulfils its attributes.

3.4.1 How it started

I start by analyzing the following post from MYEPE’s Facebook group page that new participants are bound to read when they, like me are getting to know the event/organization. The post was posted by the founder (Mia) during the registration period for this year’s (2016) event in Copenhagen. Importantly, the message was written in Arabizi. This is a phonetic (written) language wherein Latin letters are used to write Arabic (Yaghan 2008). The original post can be found in appendix 3 and is translated to English below.

“It all started 8 years ago, when the young of Zurich (Switzerland) invited the young of Geneva for a dinner. And then the young of Geneva challenged them back and told them that they would gather young Egyptians from Europe. That’s how the idea was born – just all of a sudden. The challenge was even more that it should happen after two months. But we overcame it and we continued. And after that MYEPE circled through several countries. And with Gods help we will continue to continue.

And because everyone who has participated has added something to the event, we now long for meeting each other again.

The feeling that you meet others with the same questions about haweya: one leg in Egypt and the other in Europe, and also the exchange of thoughts and experiences makes you feel at ease.

There is one month left until the 9th MYEPE event, and team Copenhagen is working very hard to make the programme perfect so all that participate will be happy and come back with new energy.

... And of course and with al respect to everyone else, the biggest THANK YOU to my team, team Geneva, who supported and is the reason the idea succeeded and endured me for 5 years where we gathered the people and broadcasted Egyptian culture and created a network in Europe.

With Gods willing I will see you in a month. Have a wonderful day everyone⁵

From this post we learn that the MYEPE event was born spontaneously. Indeed, Mia highlighted during the interview that MYEPE started independently of any government support or for that matter organizational support. However, in parallel to when the activities of MYEPE started, the Egyptian government had organized two trips to Egypt for young Egyptians living abroad. During the interviews, I asked my informants if they thought that these trips had had an impact on the attendance to the MYEPE event.

“it started with the Egyptian embassy inviting Egyptian abroad to come to Egypt where the Egyptian government paid all expenses for accommodation” (Adam Audio#1 00:16:00)

“The travel to Egypt... we got to meet people in person because of this trips and therefor we didn’t need Facebook so much, because we already got to meet Egyptian from Europe in Egypt because of the embassy” (Heba Audio#2 00:31:00)

Thus, these trips to Egypt apparently had a strong positive impact on the number of participants in the MYEPE events and also on the number of European countries from where participants come from. For this study, it has unfortunately not been possible to interview the Egyptian embassy that organized the Danish groups travel arrangements. However, from my informants I learned that the goal was and still is to give the option for young Egyptians living abroad to get to know each other but also to experience Egypt and learn more about the country’s history and cultural background.

⁵ Mias Facebook post 24th of February: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/326486754172816/?fref=ts>

According to my informants the trips were a success and occurred twice during 2010. Young Egyptians were invited from all over Europe, USA, Canada and Australia. But because of the instability that was caused by the 2011 revolution the trips to Egypt have since been put on hold.

“...They stopped the event because of the revolution, and there was girls from Switzerland that got the idea to keep maintaining this contact that many got from this gatherings in Egypt. We started our own events, we don't need the to wait for the Egyptian Foreign Minister or the embassies”(Adam: Audio#1 : 19:00)

Hence, given the impact return visits can have on immigrants and second generation immigrants' sense of belonging to the “home land” (Baldassar 2010), return visits appear to constitute part of a strategic state policy that utilizes such visits to strengthen and maintain transnational identity structures between Diasporic communities and homeland (Duval 2003 as cited in Chang et al 2015: 4-5). This strategy is for example also employed by the government of South Korea that organizes a yearly Korean national sports festival, where South Korean Diasporic communities return to South Korea to compete against each other under the flag of their host society (Chang et al 2015). Although, the trips were discontinued because of the revolution they had already achieved a perhaps part of their purpose. They had created a platform where second generation immigrants from Europe physically met and thereby laid the some of the seeds for MYEPE's success. Here it is of relevance to note that as indicated about most Egyptian immigrants (Zohry & Harrel-Bond 2003), my informants have shared that their parents referred to their migration to Europe as a temporary migration with intent to travel back to Egypt once they had saved up money. Hence, at least for my target group of second-generation Egyptian Europeans (SGEE), the first generation migrated voluntarily.

3.4.2 Sense of belonging and boundaries

From Mia's Facebook message we also learn that MYEPE was started without any apparent consulting of the theory on community making. Yet the posts illustrate that a large number of its prerequisites are in place. Foremost, as a community organizer, Mia identifies a common need that the event promises to fulfill; *“The feeling that you meet others with the same questions about haweya⁶: one leg in Egypt and the other in Europe, and also the exchange of thoughts and experiences makes you feel at ease”*. That sentence sums up exactly what my informants feel they

⁶ Haweya means identity in Arabic

need. In a later post Sally, the head of the organizing committee in Denmark, wrote another post on the group page where she welcomes participants 17 days before the event begins: (message was written in Arabizi and can be found in its original form in appendix 4, translated version below).

*“17 DAYS LEFT (if God is willing) people, AND WE ARE SUUUUUPER
EXCITED! :D we will see the (old) loved ones and the neeeeew people that
are attending the event for the first time and EVERYONE will be met with
acceptance, love and appreciation. We want to tell you all that we are
EXTREMELY EXCITED and planning the last details”⁷!*

Hence, MYEPE promises to fulfill a need of belonging to a particular group. Moreover, as Mia mentions the *target* group of MYEPE “*young Egyptians in Europe*”, she establishes the first boundaries of the community. As mentioned earlier boundaries are important for the sense of belonging as they define who is in and who is out, and thereby may serve to separate “us” from “them” (McMillan 1986). In this context, I return to MYEPE’s language of preference, which according to McMillan, in heterogenic groups can be seen as a common symbol system, which defines the community’s boundaries (McMillan 1986). Mia chose to communicate in Arabizi (instead of Arabic or English). In fact, the vast majority of the posts on the Facebook page are in Arabizi. Arabizi is a system of writing Arabic in English letters and is often used in contexts such as Twitter and Facebook among young bilingual speakers (Al-Aziz 2011). The term is composed of two words; Arabic and “Englizi”, which is a Latinization of the word for English in Arabic (Yaghan 2008). With the spread of Internet and cell-phones in the mid-nineties, Arabic was not yet readily accessible through these technologies (Sperrazza 2011). Hence, the only way to communicate in the digital world was by Latinizing the Arabic alphabet (ibid). Beyond its practical necessity, however, Lelania Sperrazza brings to light that Arabizi has also emerged as a community marker for bilingual Egyptians at English speaking schools and universities. According to Sperrazza, as the offspring of two different yet interconnected cultures (Arabic and English speaking), speakers of Arabizi comprise a real and growing cultural-linguistic community of Egyptian youth (Sperrazza 2011). Employing Pierre Bourdieu’s theory on how language is used to legitimize—and also exclude—certain members of society based on how they speak, she shows: *‘With regard to Arabizi, when Egyptian youth construct their Arabic words using English letters, they are choosing a linguistic identity similar to the way one would choose an “avatar” in the virtual world: By physically assembling bits and pieces from the English language to electronically represent their thoughts,*

⁷ Sallys Facebook post 8th of March: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/326486754172816/?fref=ts>

Egyptian youth are creating a desired reflection of who they want to present to the world' (Sperrazza 2011: 96). Thus, Mia's (and also the other organizers') use of Arabizi as the language of communication in MYEPE can be seen as reflecting who they are as a group. A similar perception was shared by Heba when asked about what she saw as linking her with the MYEPE group

"We have Egypt that connect us, we have the language that connect us, there is also some stuff where you can't express yourself as good as you can in Arabic, and that is also a part of your identity and that maybe comes more to expression with some one that understands you... a form of good dialog"(Heba Audio#1 00:57:30).

Thus, MYEPE's group boundaries are contained both within the actual words of the text "*young Egyptians in Europe*" and "*others with the same questions about haweya: one leg in Egypt and the other in Europe*" and in the language (Arabizi) used. In other words, MYEPE includes those youths of Egyptian descent that are in between Western and Egyptian Culture. This reflection of identity through linguistics lies at the core of Benedict Anderson's concept of imagined community, which is imagined '*because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion*' (Anderson 2006: 6).

I asked my informants: Why do you think young Egyptians participate in the event? The most comprehensive answer was provided by Sally who was head of the organizing committee for the 2016 event in Denmark:

"... I don't think people know why they come to this event and therefore come to find answers to find out what it is... I also think Egyptians like to meet every year in a new European country to do activities and get to know each other and very young, it's an age where you are very curious as an 18 year your being raised in a certain way into some values you know it can be Islamic cultural values in your home but then your being raised in another culture values outside your home and then you ask yourself what is right what if the question your asking is wrong what right and what is wrong, what if your both. I have been asked how do you want to live your life do you want to be a Dane or Egyptian and I answered why can't you be both? I'm both there must be people like me living in Europe, feeling what I feel, feeling you're part of two countries not only Egyptians but your also from another country. I think that was a part of my greatest motivations people asking me you have to pick sides..." (Sally's Audio#2 1:10:00)

Sally's reflections show that the promise of fulfilling a sense of belonging is sufficient to spark the curiosity of SGEE and attract them as new participants in the MYEPE event. Hence, a community

that appeals to the multi-stranded identity feelings and sense of belonging of the SGEE partly explains why SGEE join this event. In addition, Sally adds two other aspects. One is timing and the other is content. The latter will be considered in more detail later in the analyses. The statement of new participants apparently lacking awareness as of why they participate should, however, not be taken out of context. Rather this question was posed in the middle of a three-hour interview with Sally following a lengthy description of what she herself has gained from participating in the event through the years (see later). With this in mind I asked my informants, what feeling the event gives them?

“Well it does give me the feeling of Cohesion to a group where you can be yourself and don’t need to explain yourself because they have a cultural understanding which the ones you associate with in your everyday life do not have....” (Heba Audio#1 00:27:00 min.)

“I was afraid... it was mixed feelings, I went there not knowing what to expect and didn’t expect anything ... what made me go was a curiosity, a curiosity to meet Egyptians also living abroad. Until I came and when I came I met some people from London and some from the United States and some girls from Italy and I just sat there and talked with people, we talked about education, from what country, where and why, what we thought about the event, emails that had been posted on the Facebook group and it was so exciting to meet others... we talked as if we already knew each other and that was quite strange that we went to an event where I know no one and talk to people as if we have already known each other, so I feel this welcoming and opening atmosphere throughout the event ...” (Sally Audio#2 00:38:00)

“The weight you carry of being Egyptian Swiss or Egyptian Dane it feels like it being taken away in those 4 days, because you feel you’re not alone about this...” (Mia Audio#1 1:22:40)

The four answers indicate that the true/full reason for participating (and returning) becomes clearer after one has attended and experienced the event. Namely, that MYEPE delivers on its promise by providing a group with whom they can identify completely and which from the intimacy statements and mentioning of weight being lifted off shoulders appear to “*provide members with the emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop.*” (McMillan 1986: 9). The latter is something that has not been accessible to them through their everyday interactions elsewhere (Heba 00:27:00 this page).

3.4.3 Boundaries of their own – creating a second generation transnational identity

On Identification, Jenkins notes: *"identification is a game of 'playing the vis-à-vis' (Boon 1982: 26). Identity is our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us). It is a very practical matter, synthesizing relationships of similarity and difference". (Jenkins 2008:18).* In continuation he argues, *"it doesn't make sense to separate similarity and difference in this way, or to accord one greater significance. We cannot have one without the other: to identify something as an A is to assert that it has certain properties in common with all other As, and that it differs from Bs, Cs and so on. To say who I am is to say who or what I am not, but it is also to say with whom I have things in common"*(Jenkins 2008:21). When I asked my informants about how they perceived their identity, one answer stood out due to its strikingly similar use of Jenkins above terms:

"We are living in another area and we are facing different problems, we have a different view towards life... as I'm telling you they are a product A or B and we are a product C.

What is a product C if you should describe it for me?

I'm a product C – product A is Switzerland and product B is Egypt or vice versa. Product C is someone who is a mix between two cultures and that is between culture A and culture B. But the ones that leave Egypt and come to study takes them a while to become a product C but even though they don't become a product C they become more a product A that has expanded a bit but never a product C. A product C has drunk for both cultures". (Mia Audio#1 00:56:15)

Thus, it can be argued that by providing the SGEE with a group with whom they identify (completely), it becomes possible for the first time to simultaneously explore both the similarities and differences they perceive as important for who they are. To explore this, I asked my informants what they saw as binding them together.

"YES, it is an Egyptian community, which becomes the Egyptian community in Europe... this is a community of young people, that want to meet other people, we have a curiosity to know more about Egypt to meet similarities and differences of others who are like them... you have to be originally of Egyptian to be a part of community, pure interest is not enough" (Heba Audio#1 1:43:00)

"it is important to know your roots... in the end you're not living in the country you belong to but you do anyway because you have lived your whole life here... I belong to my parent that's where my roots come from..." (Adam Audio#1: 2:09:00)

“We are different because we are from different European countries and we take that with us but we all have roots from Egypt and ehmmm this is going to sound so cheesy but you feel kind of your home with these people ... because we know we have these roots in common ... it’s a kind of comfort you get from this group”. (Nelly Audio#1 00:50:00)

“What connect us is Egypt and the culture ... from your childhood you get something in with your breast milk, you are Egyptian, its difficult to describe exactly what it is but it’s something you get from your home which you take with you and that’s what makes us homogenous group, because we know where we come from as a group ... ” (Heba Audio#1 1:06:00)

“...so when I ask are you Egyptian or Austrian and he answers I’m both, I become so happy, I’m like YES, WE FEEL THE SAME WAY, where have you been – kind of feeling. You don’t have to be either if you’re both, and I think a lot of people seek that,..., why should I pick side...” (Sally Audio#2 1:10:00)

Not surprisingly, Egypt and their Egyptian heritage are highlighted by all my informants as a strong factor that they have in common. Here the emphasis that is placed by Adam on belonging to his parents is significant, because it should be remembered that his parent are not “standard” Egyptians. They are Egyptians that migrated to Europe. This is in agreement with Mia’s statement on product B’s (native Egyptian’s) that leave Egypt for Europe can never quite become product C’s (SGEE). Conversely, Mia’s product A’s (Europeans) can never become members either because they have to have drunk from both cultures and gotten something that is difficult to describe *“in with your breast milk”*. Hence, in the same breath as my informants are reflecting on the similarities that bind them together, they are constructing boundaries of their own that exclude the two groups they have felt a lack of belonging to from ever gaining access to their new found group. Thus, upon finding *“their group”* the SGEE are able to formulate a clearer identity by outlining what they have in common with their group and -as importantly- how other groups differ from them.

Earlier, I mentioned that the behavior of my informants where they actively upheld multi-stranded relations to country of origin and their host country according to Baldassar would lead them to remain trapped in a circular quest for identification and belonging between the two countries. As an alternative, I briefly discussed the possibility of accepting a more fluid context dependent model of identification. According to Bradatan, in this fluid model, my informants would assume a transnational identity, which in essence negates the necessity of having both an in-group with whom to identify and an out-group from whom to distances him/herself. Instead, a transnational identity

implies the *concomitant* identification with two different national groups (Bradatan 2010). It also implies that identity should merely be seen as a role and a transnational would be one that is able to play different roles in different contexts (Bradatan 2010). Whereas this is not impossible as claimed by Bradatan (Bradatan 2010: 177), this analysis shows that this combined way of being and belonging is far from preferable. Like everyone else, second generation immigrants crave for a group with whom they can identify completely. Moreover, this study shows that such groups exist for second generation immigrants and that when they find these groups they reject the idea of fluid identity by constructing impermeable group boundaries. In turn, these boundaries create an -in group- with a level of emotional safety that permits them to **not** have to assume any roles of identity and just be their composite selves.

3.4.3.1 MYEPE vs. outgroups – 1st generation

MYEPE is not the only transnational network in Denmark. There are, for example, large groups of second generation immigrants from other Arabic countries and also other transnational networks involving Egypt and Denmark. In fact most of my informants (and myself) have up through their childhood gotten to know a large part of the second generation Egyptian immigrants in Denmark through a federation called “The Egyptian Federation in Denmark” (TEFD). TEFD was founded in the late 1970s by several members of the first generation of the Egyptian immigrants in Denmark. The object was to create a meeting place for the various members of the Egyptian community in Denmark. In the Articles of Association of TEFD it is stated; “Purpose of the society is through cultural, social and sporting activities to strengthen relations, both within between the Egyptians residing in Denmark, as with the motherland. In addition to its members' interests to the authorities and to keep them informed”.

From my informants it appears that TEFD had a big role in creating an Egyptian community in Denmark. From its creation till 2007 TEFD was characterized by having a location wherein gatherings for various social events occurred on a regular basis. For example, they would gather to watch newly released Egyptian movies, eat together, celebrate birthdays, holidays and help newcomers by giving them an Egyptian network. Often members would have their parents visiting from Egypt and they would attend the social gatherings at TEFD, which brought a sense of comfort and homey feeling for everyone.

Thus, it appears that the TEFD could provide a group for my informants to belong to, namely, other Egyptian (both first and second generation) immigrants in Denmark. I asked my informants if they preferred MYEPE to TEFD and if so why? The answers were generally negative and below I present the part of their answers where they explain why:

“...Not because I mind families but it gets more officially when there is older people... a lot of Egyptian like to talk a lot (gossip and politics) and that is also fine but therefore the event gives a free space...” (Adam Audio#1 00:47:00)

“My goal its not politic it’s not about who did what... I don’t care about this... We need to meet people that live the same way as you do you need to meet people of product C just to share experience, to help each other... The idea behind the event is to network to help each other... the goal is really networking... you feel that people are relieved that ok I’m not alone that all are feeling this having the same problems its not even religion because you have Christian people and Muslim people... its about excitation...” (Mia Audio#1 00:26:00)

“I feel more belonging to Egyptians in Europa more than the ones in Denmark, I don’t know why but maybe because they are so diverse that I feel that I fit more in... but I feel the once in Denmark and the once in Egypt are a tie... I can’t explant” (Nelly Audio #1 01:57:00)

“...people that understand you and have the same humour as you... understand your way of thinking, we have more or less the same values as Egyptian that live in Europe, we have the same traditions, norms and values... the Egyptian part of me...” (Adam Audio# 1 00:43:00)

From McMillan’s theory on sense of community, fulfilment of needs is mentioned as a major marker of strong communities (McMillan 1986). Not surprisingly, he highlights that people will gravitate towards what serves their need best. However, McMillan continues to ponder why people are attracted to certain groups. Or in other words, given that people have many needs and that there are many groups that could benefit various subsets of such needs how do people prioritize those needs that are not concerned with basic survival? According to McMillan, direction is supplied by the concept of shared values. He states,

‘Our culture and our families teach each of us a set of personal values, which indicate our emotional and intellectual needs and the order in which we attend to them. When people who share values come together, they find that they have similar needs, priorities, and goals, thus fostering the belief that in joining together they might be better able to satisfy these needs and obtain the reinforcement they seek (Cohen, 1976; Doolittle & MacDonald,

1978)' (McMillan 1986: 13).

It is important to note here that McMillan underlines that shared values are not in themselves an individual need that is fulfilled. Rather, when joining a group wherein members have shared values there is an implicit expectation that they will have similar individual needs (McMillan 1986). Hence, the probability of fulfilling ones individual needs is higher when community members have shared values. Indeed, Adam highlights shared values as one of the reasons why he prefers MYEPE over other networks. This indicates that he sees MYEPE as a network that fulfils his needs. This is supported by Mia's answer where she states that the purpose (of MYEPE) is to provide a platform for also fulfilling each other's concrete needs and a group with enough similarity and diversity for members to fit in. Hence, to understand the motivation of the SGEE to seek the MYEPE we should also acknowledge a self-interest as they seek to improve their own lives. The mentioning of discussions about politics as something that MYEPE is not about (by "politics" it is implicitly understood that they are referring to discussions about politics in Egypt), shows that although they feel a strong sense of belonging to Egypt they are not as preoccupied by what is happening in the country politically as is the 1st generation. Hence the presence of the 1st generation in the TEFD shifts the focus away from what MYEPE does. That is *uniquely* focusing on the needs and belonging of the young SGEE. Notably, as we shall later this is not at odds with another purpose, which is to benefit Egypt as a nation.

3.4.3.2 MYEPE vs. outgroups – other young second generation immigrant groups

Next I asked how important it is that MYEPE is only for Egyptians living abroad as opposed to including other Arabic nationalities also living abroad (in Europe).

"...you need to find yourself and to be able to find yourself you have to set/meet people like you. If it's a Moroccan from Denmark you're with the culture is different, so you select one way or another so we decided to select like this..." (Mia Audio#1 1:15:00)

"I see it with my own Moroccan or Palestinian friends that the culture is different, I'll say it with a funny tone the situation is already sensitive, we (Egyptians) are already different! Try to imagine differences between different Arabic countries that have different cultural backgrounds... plus when someone tells you have you heard Hamai's new song I know the others also know him or when saying el SISI did this and this that is something Egyptians will relate to because of their background or because of we all have Egyptian parents" (Nelly Audio#1 00:41:00)

"I think it has to do with that it started in Egypt and we all are Egyptian and therefor it became like this, but it is also because you have a belonging to the group, not because you can't have that with others and other youths of course you can, but deep down that is what makes people come to the event, and there is something unique about Egyptians they are a proud nation... not to hang someone out but I'm not Arab I'm Egyptian... maybe because the Arabs don't have a good reputation, I think it has something to do with integration again and trouble making and crime, luckily I'm not grown up with that and for me that's the case..." (Adam Audio#1 00:49:00)

The quotes show that the importance of MYEPE being only for Egyptians cannot be understated. In Ander's words it is why he thinks people deep down come to the event and it is highlighted as a prerequisite for feeling a sense of belonging but more importantly because it assures an implicit understanding of cultural components and exchanges. The nature of these will be discussed in more detail when I analyse the element of emotional connections established during the MYEPE event. Here I will, however, focus on another aspect that can be drawn from the quotes above. That is the distinction from other Arabic groups or rather from being labelled as an Arabic community. With emphasis on the proudness surrounding the Egyptian nation, my informants said that it is important that MYEPE is labelled as an Egyptian community. It is important to note that it is not their aim to hang other groups out, which is a Danish saying translated literally to English. It means that it is not their aim to point any fingers at other groups who might be responsible for the bad reputation they perceive is being attributed to the label of being Arabic (e.g. trouble making and crime). Not surprisingly, this is a reputation that they reject. Indeed, in Bradatan's review she highlights how *'sometimes people might define themselves as 'transnationals' in order to emphasize some personal uniqueness or to avoid being looked upon as part of a marginal/inferior group. The Portuguese immigrants in the case cited above felt their status was higher by claiming a transnational profile (a community linked to both Portugal and Netherlands) than by defining themselves as a minority in the Netherlands. Being part of a stigmatized group is a challenge, and people from that group (in our case, immigrants) can fight against the stigma either by disassociating themselves from that community, by trying to get quickly assimilated into the majority, or trying to change the status of their group, by emphasizing their belonging to the origin country national group'* (Bradatan 2010: 175). In another example, Caribbean immigrants in the US instil in their children a strong Caribbean identity to avoid being identified as African Americans, which are perceived as a low status ethnic group (Waters, 1999 within Bradatan 2010: 175). With this in mind the desire for a

clear Egyptian label to MYEPE may be understood as helping distinguish its members from a broader Arabic label which is perceived as lower status in the European countries.

3.4.4 MYEPE and a higher purpose

I started the second half of this analysis with a list of “questions”. One that I have not yet addressed is: What drives the organizers to put in the extraordinary effort of organizing an event that hosts hundreds of travellers for three full days? To justify the effort, which involved biweekly meetings for more than 3 months I assume that organizers are driven by extraordinarily mobilizing force. Attempting to understand this “force” is not done only to satisfy my own curiosity. As reviewed by Somerville, there is an agreement in the literature *“that transnational engagement among the second generation may ebb and flow according to life-cycle stages (Somerville, 2007) or in response to particular incidents or crises (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004). Levitt and Waters (2002) point out that transnational practices amongst the second generation might be sporadic or selective, but they “add up”, so research needs to examine if they are cumulatively significant”* (Somerville 2007: 24). Hence, understanding these extraordinary transnational efforts by the organizing committee of second generation immigrants can give an insight into the inner workings of these varying transnational practises. I asked my informants if they saw a higher purpose for MYEPE? Below I have selected the answers from Mia (founder of MYEPE) and Sally (head of the organizing committee for this year’s MYEPE event in Denmark), as these persons have arguably sacrificed the most amongst my current group of informants.

“It feels like ... hmmm yeah... Egypt outside of Egypt and it feels like the Egyptians that are outside of Egypt are the ones that can do something for Egypt or change it and within all areas, doctor, energies and more, and why not...?” (Mia Audio#1 01:22:40)

“The aim is to change something but how I don’t know but I take it as it comes

... the people that keep coming I feel that we share the same goal but not the ones that come only once... in 2017 we have to think bigger... it’s all about Egypt, the activities are a part of Egypt, the food, the entertainment” (Mia Audio#2:00:45:00)

“... how can we all use this knowledge to help Egypt? we all have seen Egypt perform better, there was once this Egyptian philosopher that said the ones that will change Egypt would not be the ones that have lived in Egypt but the ones that are living outside of Egypt and are returning to Egypt, and

I think that this is the idea that we have the knowledge and can we do something...” (Sally Audio#1: 00:26:00)

In his theory on Nations and imagined communities, Anderson emphasizes the strength by which nationalism or rather *imaginary communities* are able to make people across social inequalities and geographical distances believe that they are united and relate to each other (Andersson 1991). According to Anderson nationalism came about when the ebbing of religious belief required a secular transformation of fatality into continuity (Anderson, 1991: 51). Anderson stresses that few things are better suited to this end than the idea of a Nation. He proposes that this power stems from our inability as human beings to cope with the very concept of fatality. Inherently, we as human beings are prone to crave a purpose with our lives, and if that purpose attains an eternal nature it can mobilize us. Anderson notes that Nations attains an eternal nature, as something that has always been there and whose survival depends on the strife of its members. This is better phrased in Anderson’s own words on the mobilizing power of Nations: *‘it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism- poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts – show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles.’* (Anderson 2006: 141). The quotes above display a deep affection for Egypt as a nation and a desire to help build that nation through self-sacrifice. Especially, Mia’s remarks about having to “*think bigger in 2017*”; “*gathering people with the same goals as her*” and not knowing how to implement the changes but “*taking it as it comes*“, indicates that she sees the MYEPE community event as a proxy to gather people with the same goals as her (helping Egypt) and to facilitate their interaction and networking. From this she hopes that ideas and ways to help Egypt will arise. In this context, another quote from Mia became relevant. When I asked about if there were any rules on the content of the events, she answered: “*I supervise because we need to stay on the same track, it’s not only about gathering and having fun there is also some goals we have need to share...The first goal is networking, the second get to know each other ... to get to know other people that are like you*” (Mia Audio#1 00:51:00). The logic seems to be that such interactions are bound to lay the foundation for ideas that will help Egypt. As an example, a group of SGEE doctors that had met several times through the MYEPE event have created a group that visits rural areas in Egypt to provide medical services⁸. Hence, based on this and earlier chapters the organizers of the MYEPE events are strongly motivated by a need to help. By creating a community

⁸<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSekVtDiSaOYM2lQjNr5N9fw8shM31M2RQicMPUIsIPN9G1vKQ/viewform>

that gathers young second generation Egyptian Europeans and allows them to interact and get to know each other they provide the participants with an in group where they with their multi-stranded and incomplete senses of transnational belonging suddenly can feel a complete sense of belonging. But in doing so the organizers are also creating a community, which serves a higher purpose, which is to help the nation of Egypt, which is the common thing that binds them together. Within McMillan's theoretical framework, influence is mentioned as a force that can attract members to community. Influence is described as a bidirectional concept. From the example above we could see that beyond the influence of various organizing committees, normal members can also influence what the community does. According to McMillan, this alone serves to attract members to the community (McMillan 1986, page 11-12). However, a sign of a strong community is when the community also exerts influence on its members. In this context, Mia's supervision could be seen as the MYEPE community exerting influence on its members to attain conformity and to create group norms. In continuation, the recent collective action by the doctors in MYEPE shows that through MYEPE, its participants are able to exert a greater influence on Egypt as a nation.

3.4.5 MYEPE and the emotional connection

In Mia's Facebook post (see appendix 3) she briefly describes the history of MYEPE. It is a history that was filled with challenges that were overcome. It is a history that most of the members have not experienced but it is a history that they are invited to share by participating in- or by organizing the event in different countries. Notably, by cycling the organization of the event through different countries she is ensuring personal *investment* by its members. This investment and effort is then in turn honoured through Mia's thank you to the original and present organizers on Facebook but also at the event itself (Personal observation). "Shared history", "personal investment" and "honouring/rewarding members" in the presence of community represent three of the seven attributes of the "*shared emotional connections*" element, which McMillan highlights as one of the "*definitive elements for true community*" (McMillan 1986: 14). In brief, the other four sub-elements include: Contact hypothesis, Quality of interaction, Shared valent event hypothesis and Spiritual bond. The latter is, according to McMillan, perhaps the most important attribute of *shared emotional connection* and also the most difficult to describe. In his theory, McMillan cites Bernard's likening of a spiritual bond to the concept of "soul" in black communities:

“They [blacks] had a spiritual bond that they understood and that white people could not. Soul was an indefinable, desirable something; black people had it but white people could hardly aspire to it. It was the animating spirit behind their music, their dance, and their styles. It even expressed itself in their taste in food, their language, and their speech”. (Bernard, 1973, p. 130)

In Christopher Sonn’s study on South African immigrants in Australia, he found that a Shared emotional connection was the strongest factor for feeling a Sense of Community among the immigrants and he showed that their shared emotional connection was based on a shared history and common understanding of what it means to be coloured in South Africa. Importantly, through interaction in social settings people had the chance to reconstruct their cultural roots and what it meant to be South African in the Australian context (Sonn 2002: 212). Inspired by this, I dedicated part of my interviews to explore if and how the MYEPE fulfils any of the other attributes of the emotional connection element. Briefly, however, I find it is relevant to provide the reader with an overview of what actually transpires during the yearly MYEPE event (In addition the program for this years event is found in appendix 5):

Typical program for a MYEPE event

The structure of the event was laid out by the initial organizers and has been maintained since.

- 1st day (typically a Friday). is the day of arrival The tradition is to pick people up at the airport, take care of practical stuff such as hotel accommodation and thereafter everyone join in communal dinner.
- 2nd day (Saturday) is the day of the main event. The activities are planned by the “local” designers within a framework that specifies that they should create activities for relation-building and networking and the dinner has to be Egyptian cuisine, the tradition is that the Egyptian mothers (first generation) from the hosting country make the Egyptian food and last but not least there has to be entertainment during the event.
- 3rd day (Sunday) is a of sightseeing and cultural exchange.
- 4th day is of departure

One of the first things, my participants mentioned when I asked them about factors that they felt triggered emotions during the event was the food (Sally Audio#2, 2:09). Notably, Heba stressed that *“the food itself has to be Egyptian and cooked by the mothers, to create a mood, and this is a part of the*

foundation ... this is to get the feeling of that you're in an Egyptian crowd, to get into the atmosphere..."

Heba Audio#1 00:53:00. Hence, not only must the food be Egyptian it must also be cooked by the mothers (of volunteers and organizing committee). Antonsich's concept of place-belonging could be triggered by autobiographical factors, which relate to an individual's past history, personal experiences and memories that attach a person to a given place (Antonsich 2010: 647). This means that by serving home cooked Egyptian food the participants are likely to remember their shared histories and personal experiences from home and may therefore associate MYEPE with the notion of home. Indeed, Nelly answered as follows to the question of what feelings the event triggers in her:

"We are different because we are from different European countries and we take that with us but we all have roots from Egypt and ehmm, this is going to sound so cheesy but you feel kind of you're home with these people ... because we know we have these roots in common ... and if I tell XX did you know what happened in Egypt she will know what I'm talking about, it's a kind of comfort you get from this group" (Nelly Audio#1 00:51:00)

Although, not explicitly linking the feeling of home to the food, this quote illustrates that participating in the event creates an emotional connection between the members that links their sense of belonging to the group with the notion of home. Generally, my informants' answers to the question above indicated that they felt a strong sense of belonging to the group. This is something that was unattainable for them in either of their two former choices (European country and Egypt).

With the program layout in mind, I asked what other factors my informants thought were important to maintain the MYEPE community? As exemplified by the two answers below, the answers focused on two themes the opportunity to create personal relations and cultural exchange.

"You have to create activities that make you get to know each other on a more personal plan, it has to be on a deeper level, I need to know more than just what his name is where he's from, I also need to know what he believes and how he's thinking and who he thinks he is because that gives me a better understanding of who he is that's one thing and another thing is that he feels understood by me..." (Sally Audio# 1, 1:13:15)

"YES [in relation to whether live music was important], that's what I feel gives it a bit extra in some way to the event... that there is someone that comes kind of surprise ... you know that it has to be someone from Egypt, so we always know there is someone from Egypt... I was to an event once and there was a band called West el Balad (translates to "Downtown"), and their songs are very nationalistic, at that moment I felt that I was missing Egypt and felt

very Egyptian... I don't remember the song but I remember the feelings it has awoken and that I cried..."(Nelly Audio#1 1.51.00)

"Well it does give me the feeling of Cohesion to a group where you can be your self and don't need to explain yourself because they have a cultural understanding, which the ones you associate with in your everyday life do not have. They [every day friends] maybe have a degree of understanding for your cultural behaviour but these [MYEPE members] know accurately, they know everything about the cultural background you come from... its some kind of national knowledge sharing..."(Heba Audio#1 00:27:00)

The contact hypothesis within McMillan's theory on community predicts that *"The more people interact, the more likely they are to become close (Allan & Allan, 1971; Festinger, 1950; Sherif, White, & Harvey, 1955; Wilson & Miller, 1961)"* (McMillan 1986: 13) and *"the more positive the experience and relationship, the greater the bond. Success facilitates cohesion (Cook, 1970)"* (ibid). By focusing on interpersonal relations and quality interaction the MYEPE event thus fulfils two more attributes of McMillan's emotional connection element. However, it is not enough to just plan for fulfilling the attributes to achieve success. In Christopher Sonn's study on South African immigrants in Australia, he found that a Shared emotional connection was the strongest factor for feeling a Sense of Community among the immigrants and he showed that their shared emotional connection was based on a shared history and common understanding of what it means to be coloured in South Africa. Importantly, through interaction in social settings people had the chance to reconstruct their cultural roots and what it meant to be South African in the Australian context (Sonn 2002: 212). In this light, the mentioning of a "deep understanding" by Sally and "cultural understanding" reaffirms that the group within MYEPE shares a special bond of intimacy or in Heba's words an understanding others **don't have**. This brings us closer to what McMillan described as the attribute of emotional connects, which is perhaps most important but also most difficult to describe. I sought to get a better grip on this special thing that they see as Egyptian. To this Sally answered:

"Egypt is where the Egyptian people are, Egypt is inside of us. So sitting next to an Egyptian you laugh and go into jokes and all can understand each other...we are all coming with so many different reasons and yet we are not so different after all... I think that it was partially the way we were speaking, I think when Egyptians speak together there is this irony in the talk a little bit like Danes, so it comes out quit funny and Egyptians are quite alive...someone can start to sing and the other would take a drum out and then there is music and people are happy to be together, that is something you don't see in other cultures and relate to, because when you hear that drum it reminds you of

sitting in Egypt and hearing that same drum, that irony reminds you of your cousin, I think this is what make us relate, because you like OWW I have a cousin in Egypt that is just like you, and I have a friend in Egypt that's just like you, it all relates back to Egypt, just by being Egyptian..." (Sally Audio#1 00.40.00)

With this quote we get an insight into what makes Egyptians tick. All that MYEPE has to do is to bring them together and give them the opportunity to interact and they will do the rest. Spontaneity, happy to be together, the special kind of joking, the special language, the shared history, to be alive are some of the elements that deduced from Sally's reply make up what it means to be Egyptian. In other words my other informants gave similar answers to this one indicating that there is agreement about this perception among them. Thus, during the interactions at MYEPE the SGEE's shared symbols (e.g. language, food, humour and music) and shared histories are retold and propagated as part of a remaking and integration of identities (Sonn 2002: 213).

During my research, and especially when I participated in the MYEPE event, I was struck by the emotionality by which my informants described the feelings that were triggered by certain components of the MYEPE event (for example the music) ignited these emotions to the point of them crying when asked about what they felt. Hence "emotions" may constitute a strong factor for why SGEE return to the MYEPE events.

3.4.6 Elements that work together to make the MYEPE community

In the theoretical section of this study, each of the elements and attributes in McMillan's definition and theory of sense of community was briefly and individually described. McMillan notes that to understand how a community is created and maintained one must study the importance of each element and how they work together (McMillan). In summary, the MYEPE event employs a large number of McMillan's elements to the point where it must be perceived as a community. Primarily, new participants are attracted by curiosity and a promise of fulfilment of needs. In this case the need alludes to a "group to which they can feel a complete sense of belonging". This in turn is one of three attributes of membership. The other two attributes of this element, namely boundaries (i.e. the promise of belonging to the in-group) and a common symbol system (in this case the special Arabizi language) are also invoked. Importantly, by providing SGEE with "*their group*" the SGEE are able to formulate a clearer identity of who they are. Partly by outlining what they have in common with their group and -as importantly- how other groups differ from them. Moreover,

membership in MYEPE with its Egyptian label and boundaries provides status and emotional safety that permits them to **not** have to assume any roles of identity and just be their composite selves which is something they crave.

In addition, to membership, several other attributes are employed. For example, MYEPE is a community where membership means that you're influential and can affect what the community does. This was particularly important for the founders and organizers of the event who sees the MYEPE event as a proxy through which they serve a higher purpose, which is to help Egypt. MYEPE is also a community where normal members (because of a perception of shared value and high degree of diversity) can expect to obtain rewarding personal relations and fulfillment of needs. Importantly, the strong sense of belonging was described as an essential prerequisite for MYEPE's ability to establish strong emotional connections between members. Hence, to a large extent MYEPE appears to draw its strength by simply facilitating contact and quality interactions. In addition, the existence of- and possibility to participate in a "Shared MYEPE history" and that those efforts of personal investment are highlighted and honored also contribute to establishing emotional connections between members. However, the most important factor contributing emotional connections seems to be the activation a special spiritual type of bond between the members of MYEPE (SGEE). This is achieved by partly by the members' own spontaneous activities but also through cultural components such as food, music and language. Thus all four elements from McMillan's theory on sense of community are put in play when SGEE participate in the event. Hence, MYEPE offers something significant to those who fulfill its boundary criteria; it promises to provide something that they want in their lives, MYEPE provides what McMillan defined as a sense of community: *"Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan, 1976)". (McMillan 1986: 9).*

3.5 MYEPE an inter-destination transnational identity in the making

So far I have loosely called the MYEPE event a transnational event/network/organization/community. I believe that my analysis shows that it fulfills the criteria for being called a community. In this chapter, I will discuss the "transnational" part of the name. I will then use that to formulate, what I think, is one of the major contributions made by this study to the research on transnationalism. As mentioned in the beginning, the term transnationalism, in its contemporary

use, was defined by Basch et al. in *Nations unbound* (1994) as “*the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders.*” (Basch et al 1994: 7). This definition of transnationalism, as keeping strong ties to the origin country, brings the concept close to diaspora, which is defined as a group living out of their origin country, keeping a strong attachment to a ‘homeland’ and maintaining a distinctive profile within the host country (Bradatan et al 2010). As evident, neither of these definitions fit very well when talking about the second generation of immigrants. Although it is true that they maintain multi-stranded social relations (as discussed earlier), they do not fit the description of the target group, mainly because they were born and raised in the so-called host country, never migrated and probably never will. Drawing on an investigation by Helen Lee on Tongan migrants and their transnational behavior, she notes that transnationalism can be expressed in many ways that do not involve movement between “home and host country”. Especially when considering the second generation, Lee calls for the introduction of three forms of transnationalism, namely intra-Diasporic, indirect and forced transnationalism (Lee 2011). The term intra-Diasporic is meant to encompass ties across national borders as well as translocal connections that serve as “*means of maintaining a sense of belonging to a global ‘nation’ that has spread out from the original homeland*” (Lee 2011: 303). She emphasizes that the term is distinct from previous attempts to capture links across Diasporic populations, as these have all implied that the home country was included in the transnational practices (Lee 2011). But as Lee points out: “*Many migrants inhabit a transnational space that is intradiasporic, but does not include the homeland, and this is even more likely to be true of their children*” (Lee 2011: 304). In a later study by Jessica Sperling, an effort is made to theoretically develop and conceptualize this concept. She introduces it as inter-destination transnationalism (a slight variation in wording compared to Lee), and begins the conceptualization by stating what it is not, namely: “*Most clearly, inter-destination transnationalism differs from transnationalism focused on the home society (the standard understanding of transnationalism, hereafter referred to as ‘home society transnationalism’)* in that the nodes of connection are not limited to the home society and destination society” (Sperling 2014: 1100). For the sake of simplicity, I will in the following use the acronym IDT to encompass both terms ([Inter/Intra] [Diasporic/Destination] Transnationalism). Because people engaged in home society transnationalism have “*deep rooted and experiential connections*” (Sperling 2014: 1100) (for example, they were born and raised there) certain topics

and issues, such as political involvement, are prominent for them. Both Sperling and Lee show that these issues are less central for those people engaged in IDT. Interestingly, non-interest in political issues was highlighted as one of the reasons for why my informants preferred the MYEPE event to TEFD. Lastly, Sperling argues that because of the “lesser lived experience” in the home society, the role of imagined reality can hold greater relative importance. As discussed earlier, for my informants, MYEPE certainly holds some of the bearings of Benedict Andersson’s imagined community, for example, through their reflection of identity through linguistics. However, in contrast to Andersons premise on members of imagined communities, the MYEPE members do in fact meet each other annually. Hence, the imagined community of the MYEPE becomes non-imagined and real once a year, and as I saw this encounter is of outmost importance for my informants’ sense of belonging to the MYEPE community. Based on the considerations outlined above and each of their respective studies, both Lee and Sperling agree that IDT holds greater appeal for the second generation (Lee 2011, Sperling 2014). Sperling focused on Dominican and Columbian immigrants and their ties between one host society (Spain) and another (USA), whereas Lee’s respondents consisted of Tongan immigrants in Australia who did not specify which other destination countries they maintained ties with. In both cases “Ties” was used merely to describe their respondents’ *communication* with family members and friends in the other host countries. Lee’s study of IDT is mostly descriptive, i.e. she is mostly highlighting the fact that this concept exists. Sperling arrives at the same conclusion but takes the discussion a step further. She shows how inter-destination communication between one host country (Spain) and another (USA) affects the generally positive conceptions of her respondents towards their current location (Spain) compared to their home society. Although, her respondents expressed positive conceptions of Spain, this positivity was tempered by comparison with the USA, which seems more promising than their current location, particularly regarding economic opportunities and overall quality of life (Sperling 2014). To the best of my knowledge there are no other studies that have characterized instances of IDT let alone its meaning for the identity development of second generation of immigrants. Hence, both Lee and Sperling point to the need for much more transnational research into the concept of IDT. In this context, this study on the transnational behavior of the SGEE adds several new insights. Firstly, I show that IDT can be extended beyond maintaining ties to family members and friends in other host countries. Secondly, I show that the practices of IDT can extend vastly beyond simple social communication and interaction via social media. In the case of MYEPE and the SGEE these practices has reached the point where they have created what I hereby define as

an inter-destination transnational community. Within the group of this community my informants share a common history, share values, fulfill the need for experiencing a strong and complete sense of belonging denied by their respective countries of residence and parent's origin, fulfill other needs, feel emotionally connected through among other things a strong spiritual bond, and finally feel that they contribute to a higher purpose, which is to help Egypt. Hence, the IDT MYEPE community provides SGEE with a real third option when considering belonging and identity, the effect of which I discuss briefly in the last chapter of the analysis. Thirdly, as I describe the factors and events that contributed to the creation of MYEPE and its success, a sort of roadmap for creating an IDT community is provided. Although, it is most likely not directly reproducible this knowledge may serve as an inspiration for others wishing to establish similar communities. Whether, this may be for the sake of grounding the identity development of second generation immigrants (see below) or for maintaining a transnational relationship to a home society that relies on continued remittances or for both, this knowledge may, thus, be of general benefit.

4 CONCLUSION

Which challenges do SGEE meet in their search for belonging and how does MYEPE accommodate these challenges?

My research has revealed that in general, when asked about Denmark, my informants expressed that they do not feel that they belong 100% in Denmark. The cause appears to be a sense of exclusion by the Danish community. This sense of exclusion is rooted in the dominant group not granting my informants recognition of their belonging to Denmark by. I have highlighted two examples of discourses and practices of socio-spatial exclusion and discussed them in the context of Translation theory. This enabled me to understand how my informants' awareness of their ethnical difference and a context-defined interpretation of communication with the broader Danish population affect their sense of belonging. It is important to note that my informants' claim to the Danish identity through mastering the language, dress code, profession and customs is not sufficient for the granting of the "belonging label" by the Danish society. This non-granting of recognition by the dominant group in the Danish society appears to be the most important factor for my informants feeling a lack of belonging to the Danish society. In comparison, they expressed a strong sense of belonging to Egypt through various aspects of Egyptian culture: such as social competencies, music, humour/entertainment and food. Interestingly, my informants realize a sense of belonging to Denmark only when reflecting on the difference in their values to the Egyptian society. This means

that they do harbor a strong sense of belonging to Denmark, which is visible in their everyday social interactions and practices but that they themselves are unaware of the identity these practices signify. My informants can, thus, be regarded as exhibiting a sense of belonging to Egypt in their *ways of belonging* whereas they exhibit a sense of belonging to Denmark through their “*ways of being*”. With these insights it becomes possible to understand why and in particular *how* the SGEE can feel Egyptian, yet also Danish and vice versa. In this context, the MYEPE allows the SGEE to meet others with the same experience of both worlds (Denmark and Egypt) and experience acceptance, recognition and understanding. From the analyses, it was clear however that the MYEPE provides the SGEE with more than a group to belong to. This led me to ask:

Which attributes of sense of community theory does MYEPE employ and how do they work together to attract and re-attract SGEE members?

In the theoretical section of this study, each of the elements and attributes in McMillan’s definition and theory of sense of community was briefly and individually described. McMillan notes that to understand how a community is created and maintained one must study the importance of each element and how they work together (McMillan). In summary, the MYEPE event employs a large number of McMillan’s elements to the point where it must be perceived as a community. Primarily, new participants are attracted by curiosity and a promise of fulfilment of needs. In this case the need alludes to a “group to which they can feel a complete sense of belonging”. This, in turn, is but one of three attributes of membership. The other two attributes of this element, namely boundaries (i.e. belonging to an in-group) and a common symbol system (in this case the special Arabizi language) are also invoked. Importantly, by providing SGEE with an “*in-group*” the SGEE are able (perhaps for the first time) to formulate a clearer identity of who they are. Partly by outlining what they have in common with the MYEPE group and -as importantly- how **other** groups differ from them. Moreover, membership in MYEPE with its Egyptian label and boundaries provides status and emotional safety that permits them to **not** have to assume any roles of identity and just be their composite selves which is something they crave. In addition, to membership, several other attributes are employed. For example, MYEPE is a community where membership means that you’re influential and can affect what the community does. This was particularly important for the founders and organizers of the event, who needs to be extra motivated and driven to organize such a large event. I found that they see the MYEPE event as a proxy through which they serve a higher purpose, which is to help Egypt. MYEPE is also a community where normal members (because of a

perception of shared value and high degree of diversity) can expect to obtain rewarding personal relations and fulfillment of needs. Importantly, the strong sense of belonging was described as an essential prerequisite for MYEPE's ability to establish strong emotional connections between members. Hence, to a large extent MYEPE appears to draw its strength by simply facilitating contact and quality interactions. In addition, the existence of- and possibility to participate in a "Shared MYEPE history" and that those efforts of personal investment are highlighted and honored also contribute to establishing emotional connections between members. However, the most important factor contributing to emotional connections seems to be the activation a special spiritual-type-of-bond between the members of MYEPE (SGEE). This is achieved partly by the members' own spontaneous and uniquely fun behavior but also through cultural components such as food, music and language. From this it appears that all four elements from McMillan's theory on sense of community are put in play when SGEEs participate in the MYEPE event. Hence, MYEPE offers something significant to those who fulfill its boundary criteria; it promises to provide something that they want in their lives, MYEPE provides what McMillan in essence defined as a sense of community: *"Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan, 1976)". (McMillan 1986: 9)*. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of community structures in impacting social processes between second generation immigrants. It shows that they as a group can create social settings separate from the mainstream to provide their peers with opportunities for participation, social identities and propagation of cultural values. The creation and participation in the inter-destination transnational MYEPE community provides social settings in which people construct and negotiate shared understandings of identity. Participation in MYEPEs social settings or events with its cultural activities creates belonging, identification and cohesiveness. It protects group members and links them in a broader social and cultural context.

In a broader perspective, this study adds to the ongoing debate that divides the scholars on transnational trends in second generation. It does so by asking the question "To belong or not to belong enough?" i.e. is the model of multi-stranded and fluid sense of belonging sustainable? The answer from this study is that if presented with an alternative, the answer is a resounding no. The SGEE and perhaps most other second generation immigrants with strong ties to their parents' country of origin crave for an in-group to which they can feel a complete sense of belonging. Thus, I conclude that SGEEs have a sense of belonging, which in the absence of especially, acceptance,

recognition, and understanding creates a need that they could satisfy by creating and joining inter-destination transnational communities. Membership in such legitimate and valid communities is not about turning their backs on their respective belongings to Egypt or European country. Rather, it is about finding an identity that reflects who they are and validates their existence. As young persons with multi-stranded belongings, membership in MYEPE empowers them by the notion of unity that they find. Instead of confusion and frustration because they are not completely Egyptian or European they find meaning in their own identities, which can now be constructed by them, not for them.

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- The article is difficult to find. Here I therefore provide a direct link to the peer reviewed journal in which it was published.
<https://www3.aucegypt.edu/auctesol/Default.aspx?issueid=dc82a931-ec50-4ac8-98a3-4878b73f0399&aid=03fe1954-d237-44b6-9e73-5fd4e78bcd6> (03.06.16)
- Mias Facebook post
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/326486754172816/?fref=ts> (24.02.2016)
- Sallys Facebook post
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/326486754172816/?fref=ts> (8.03.2016)

6. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

No.	Name	Date of interview	Place of interview	Language of interview
1	Mia	Dec. 2015	Privat home in Egypt	English and arabic
2	Nelly	Jan. 2016	Privat home in DK	Danish, Arabic and English
3	Adam	Jan.	Privat home in DK	Danish arabic
4	Sally	Feb.	Privat home in Dk	English, Danish and arabic
5	Heba	Feb.	Privat home in DK	Danish and arabic
6	Ali	Feb.	Hellerup Library	Arabic

APPENDIX 2:

Interviewguide.

Briefing: we want to interview you for about one to two hours of your thinking about ***belonging*** to different groups in Egypt and Denmark. Do you mind if I record our conversation? Do you have any questions before we begin?

Theme / research questions:	Interview Questions:
<p>1</p> <p>Introduction Question:</p> <p><i>Presentation</i> of the informant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please briefly introduce yourself (name, age, education, language, occupation, how long you and your family been living in Denmark? • When did your family travel to X(Denmark) and what were their reasons? • In order to make sure I use the correct words, how would you describe your ethnic background?
<p>2</p> <p>Informants' description of MYEPE</p> <p>Concrete questions</p> <p>Informants' thoughts about MYEPE. What do their answers say about their priority?</p> <p>Open questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is MYEPE (Meeting of Young Egyptian People in Europe) • How did MYEPE start? (where did the idea come from?) • When was MEYEPE founded? • What's the goal of MYEPE? Or what is it you wanted to create with this yearly event? WHY? • What countries attend MYEPE? • How do people hear about MYEPE? • How do you communicate with others up to the event? • How is MYEPE funded? If there are profits generated where do they go? • Why is there an age restriction/limit? • Why is it only Egyptians? • What made you attend MYEPE? • When was the first time you traveled to attend the MYEPE • What do feel you get from attending MYEPE? • Who are the organizers? • Can you describe the other participants? Who are they? And what do they bring to the event? • How did you get information about MYEPE • What was the first thing that struck your thoughts when you learnt that there is this kind of group/gathering? • Why did you want to be a part of MYEPE?
<p>3</p> <p>How do the informants' identify with the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me what happens at the MYEPE meetings? • Does this travel give you something, which other travels don't? • What is it you especially like about MYEPE? • Is this different from traveling to Egypt? How?

<p>MYEPE Descriptively!</p> <p>(narrative story telling)</p>	<p>(Do you travel often to Egypt?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you discover new sides of young Egyptians (in Europe), which you feel are different from what you would find in Egypt? • Did you identify with these? (which?) • Did you discover other sides that you did not identify with? Which?
<p>4</p> <p>Has the informant previously been active in activities with focus on <u>Egyptian</u> <u>politics</u> or <u>culture</u>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you previously been involved in activities with Egyptian? (culture or politics in focus?) • What kind of activities were you part of? • What language do you use in these activities? • Are you active in any other activities, that not necessarily involve Egyptian or Egypt? • Are you associated with any Egyptian/Danish associations or the embassy? • Can you describe the group dynamic that has been involved in these activities you participated in? (is there a kind of community about it)
<p>5</p> <p>Emotions triggered by participating in MYEPE.</p>	<p>What has it meant for you to meet other young people with Egyptian background at the MYEPE?</p> <p>Can you describe whether participating in the MYEPE gatherings has created new feelings in you? What feelings?</p> <p>If so, do these feelings affect you personally in your every day?</p> <p>Do you share the same feelings with Egyptians in Denmark?</p> <p>Has the meeting/events triggered values or attitudes in you that make you feel closer to Egypt or Denmark than before, and why?</p> <p>Have you been more interested in Egypt or Denmark after these gatherings or is it as before?</p>

<p>6</p> <p>Thoughts about communities</p> <p>and what <i>internal forces drive the members</i> together in a common commitment?</p>	<p>Did you make new friends at the gathering?</p> <p>Is this friend group different from other groups?</p> <p>Why do you think so?</p> <p>Do you perhaps feel connected to them, as a community?</p> <p>How would you describe this community?</p> <p>Do you think or know if this community shares the same goal or values.</p> <p>Could you describe these?</p> <p>What forces do you think drives the members of this group together? (cultural, religious, political, emotional or?)</p> <p>Is it only outside forces in the form of events or can there be an inner drive that has been awakened? (feelings)</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>What factors do you think are essential for maintaining this community?</p>
<p>8</p> <p>How do you <i>identify yourself with the Egyptian population?</i></p>	<p>How do you feel when you travel to Egypt? Can you describe emotions, activities you normally do there?</p>

<p>How do the informant relates to other Egyptians?</p> <p>How has this changed since the beginning of events?</p>	<p>How often do you speak danish/arabic?</p> <p>How that makes you feel when you do it?</p> <p>Do you identify with Egyptians in Egypt? In Denmark? In Europe?</p> <p>Did this identification change/develop since you started participating in MYEPE meetings?</p> <p>What are the values/traditions/customs from your Egyptian heritage that you feel more identified with?</p> <p>What are the values/traditions/customs from (X)Danish society that you feel more identified/conflict with?</p> <p>How do you describe your own identity (considering you have Egyptian heritage)?</p> <p>How do you see the phrase "one has to know his roots"?</p>
<p>9</p> <p>MYEPE, sense of belonging and participation in Denmark vs Egyptian society</p>	<p>Do you identify with the Danish community?</p> <p>If we talk about belonging? What are your first thoughts when I mention this word?</p> <p>How would you characterize your sense of belonging before and after you started participating in MYEPE?</p> <p>Is this a subject you talk about with your friends? Egyptian? Danish or European friends?</p>

	<p>Has the frequency of your visits to Egypt changed? If so why?</p> <p>Have you supported Egypt economically? or for example been involved in development or humanitarian projects (freelance-work contribution) in Egypt?</p>
<p>10</p> <p>How does the informant view the dynamics of <i>identity</i>?</p>	<p>MYEPE meetings have been happening for 6-7 years now.</p> <p>How many times have you attended?</p> <p>Have you noticed any changes in the relations within the group and in their relation to the Danish society? Egypt and groups in Dk.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>How do the informant linked to the group of Egyptian in DK?</p> <p>How does the involvement <i>changed</i> since the events occurred?</p> <p>How do you think other people will see you as a group?</p> <p>What does this mean to the informant that they are categorized as such?</p>	<p>Now I want to ask about the group of committed Egyptians in Europe.</p> <p>If we look back to before MYEPE started. How has your association with this group changed?</p> <p>How do you identify with the group of actives who have participated in several engagements?</p> <p>Possibly, deepening of attachment to the group?</p>
<p>12</p> <p><i><u>Diasporas, cosmopolitans, or global communities</u></i></p>	<p>The Egyptians groups you are part of Do you see the that the' shared view of the group' is to ;</p> <p>A) Maintenance of <u>relations</u> with the <u>homeland</u> because you feel more Egyptian than danish</p>

	<p>B) Citizen of the <u>world</u></p> <p>C) Creation of <u>communities</u> through <u>membership</u> sharing ethnical, political, cultural and sport-like interests</p>
	<p>We have talked about how you identify with different groups in Egypt and your European society. Do you feel that one “identity” dominates more than the other?</p> <p>And are there groups that you identify with more than others? How?</p> <p>Do you think you can talk about you having a overall identity?</p>

-How do you feel about this interview? How did you like the questions, where they difficult or easy?

-I am going to transcribe our conversation. Should I encounter any difficulties during this process, do you mind if I get back in touch with you? Can I contact you, when other questions arise?

APPENDIX 3:

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JJEE ya3ni: Journée des Jeunes Egyptiens d'Europe. In case 7ad sa2al ya3ni 😊 (Wel English beta3o "Meeting for the Young Egyptian People in Europe")

Kollo bada2 menn 8 seneen (el soora di), lamma shabab Zurich (Switzerland) 3azamo shabaab Genève 3al ghada 😊 W raa7o shabab Genève et7addoohom w alolhom ennohom 7aye3melo event ygamma3 shabaab masreyeen menn Europe. El fekra gatt keda fag2a, wel ta7adi kaan enn dah ytemm ba3diha b shahreim. W konna addaha. W kammelna. W ba3diha laff el JJEE/MYEPE f kaza balad.

W b fadi Rabbeni, e7na mkameleen. W 3ashaan koll wa7ed eshtarak zawwed 7aaga lel event, ba2eina benestannah w benestanna n2aabel ba3d taani. E7sas ennak teb2a bet2aabel naas 3andohom nafs el tasa2olaat 3ann el haweya: regl f Masr, w regl f Europe, w tabadol el afkar wel experiences biraya7 el wa7ed bardo 😊

Faadel shahr 3al 9th JJEE/MYEPE, w team Copenhagen aatel nafso 3ashan el programme yeb2a zay el fol w koll elli yshtarek yetbesset w yerga3 balado malyaan b taaqa egabeya.

For the cheesy part, but really, and truly: Shokran I koll wa7ed sharek I nagaa7 el event menn bedayto, Shabab Zurich, w team [Moustafa Said](#) f Brussels, w team [Usama Ali](#) f Stuttgart, w team [Maysara Soliman](#) f Vienna, w team [Sarah Hassan Dahab](#) f Copenhagen. W tab3an, w ma3 e7terami I ay 7ad taani, bass MERCI akbar lel team beta3i, team Genève, elli kaan sanad w sabab I naga7 el fekra w esta7melouni 5 seneen 3ashan ngamma3 el naas w nonshor saqaafet Masr, w ne3mel network f Europe.

InshaAllah ashofko kamaan shahr.

Have a wonderful day, kolloko 😊



APPENDIX 4:

ela" x

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8. marts

17 DAYS LEFT inshaAllah ya naaaaaas AND WE ARE SUUUUUPER EXCITED! 😊 Hanshooouf el 7abayeb el 2adeema we el nas el gediiiida elo awel mara yeego el event and EVERYONE will be met with acceptance, love and appreciation 😊 3ayzeen ne2olokom enana EXTREMELY EXCITED and planning the last details! 😊


A7na me7tageen delwa2ty that EVERYONE ATTENDING THE 9TH MYEPE/JJEE in COPENHAGEN send their FLIGHT INFORMATION and notify us if you want to book an extra night or two at the hostel. Booking an extra night at the hostel through Team Copenhagen will cost you 35€ per night per person. If you come with another kind of transportation, please notify us as well.

You can send the needed information to the MYEPE/JJEE e-mail address: myepe.jjee@gmail.com

More practical information will come soon for your stay in Copenhagen and for your arrivals at Copenhagen Airport.


Hatnawaro Copenhagen ya gama3a :) YAY!

[#EgyptmeetsDenmark](#) [#YallaBEENA](#) [#El7obNadany](#)



Synes godt om

Kommenter

 Nabe Abd Elmehdy · Inil Mahmoud Mustafa og 26 andre · 15 kommentarer

APPENDIX 5: (Quality is unfortunately poor)

9th MYEPE/JJEE Copenhagen 2016 25.03.2016 – 28.03.2016

Friday the 25th of March:

- During the day: Meeting and welcoming you in Kastrup Airport (CPH) and at the hostel, guided public transportation to- and check-in at the hostel
- 18.00-19.00: Gathering in the lobby, receiving the rest of payment for participation* and walk towards the restaurant at 'Strøget' (Down Town Copenhagen)
*NOTE: kindly make sure to have the amount of 100€ (option 1)/ 50€ (option 2) in cash
- 19.00: Welcoming and dinner
- 21.00: Proceeding to a cozy Café at 'Strøget' (Europe's longest pedestrian street: 1111 meters)

Saturday the 26th of March: MAIN EVENT

- 09.00-10.00: Breakfast will be delivered to your rooms
- 10.00-13.00: Free time to explore Down Town Copenhagen, the Danish people and do some (souvenir) shopping etc.
- 13.00-14.00: Gathering and guided public transport towards The Main Event
*NOTE: Meeting point = Town Hall Square. In Danish: Rådhuspladsen, pronunciation: [ˈsoˈd̥ˌhaːˈplasˌeːn]
- 14.00-15.00: Welcoming by various interesting people
- 15.00-15.30: Refreshments: coffee/tea, cake, biscuits and fruit
- 15.30-16.00: Division into smaller groups for the social activities
- 16.00-19.00: Social activities ('Egypt meets Denmark')



- 19.00-19.30: Common photography - all together
- 19.30-21.00: Egyptian Dinner
- 21.00-00.00: Entertainment → SURPRISE!!
- 00.00-01.00: Public transportation to the hostel/Down Town Copenhagen

Sunday the 27th of March:

- 10.00-11.00: Breakfast will be delivered to your rooms
- 11.00-12.00: Gathering in the lobby and walking towards the meeting point for the Canal Tour
- 12.00-13.00: Guided Canal Tour
- 13.00-14.00: Sightseeing
- 14.00-15.00: 'Papirøen' (Paper Island) and street food (everybody buys whatever they feel like having *)
*NOTE: bring cash = Danish Kroner (DKK)
- 15.00-16.00: Transportation to the PAINT BALL EVENT!!
- 16.00-19.00: PAINT BALL EVENT* at North Europe's biggest paintball park (outdoor)
*NOTE: bring/be wearing comfortable shoes



- 19.00-20.00: Guided public transportation back to Down Town Copenhagen
- 20.00: Dinner* in Down Town Copenhagen in smaller groups/together
*NOTE: To make sure everyone gets more or less the same out of the paid amount of money, and since some people will be leaving during the day, dinner is not included in the fees.

Monday the 28th of March:

- 09.00-10.00: Breakfast will be delivered to your rooms
- 10.00: Check out of the rooms
- 10.15: Gathering in the lobby
- 10.30: Guided public transportation to Kastrup Airport (CPH) /
- 10.30: Walking towards 'Amalienborg' (the winter home for the Royal Danish Family), including the courtyard with characteristic Royal Life Guards



MYEPE/JJEE
Team Copenhagen