

WHOSE MAN AT HIS BEST?
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MASCULINE IDEALS IN *ESQUIRE* MIDDLE EAST AND
THE AMERICAN *ESQUIRE*

A Thesis
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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December 2010

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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The great support of my parents has allowed me to accomplish many things in life, including this thesis and degree. Thank you.

I also must thank Laura, Mary, Paul and Lauren for their continued encouragement and the many friends who welcomed me into their homes during the final months of my work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am immensely indebted to the encouragement, guidance and patience of my thesis committee and especially my chair, Mary Kay Blakely. When my initial plans to study the launch of *Esquire* Middle East from inside their newsroom in Dubai fizzled, Mary Kay urged me to continue my research stateside. Her unwavering belief in both the value of my research and my ability to complete it was a comforting constant in a period otherwise marked by uncertainty and variability.

However, this research would not be what it is without rest of my tremendous committee. Like Mary Kay, John Fennell signed on with his support of my research when it was proposed as a professional project centered around an internship at *Esquire* Middle East. While I am grateful for his guidance in the initial stages of my research, I am most appreciative of his willingness to stand by me when financial realities halted my plans and throughout the arduous process of developing my topic into a thesis. As my project transformed from a predominantly professional endeavor to an enterprise that was academic in scope and purpose, Amanda Hinnant provided me with much-needed guidance and a scholarly perspective, especially in regards to my methodology. Srirupa Prasad's expertise in the discipline of gender studies, a field that I had little familiarity with prior to this academic undertaking, proved a vital resource as I prepared to decipher and interpret the masculine constructs in the *Esquire* texts.

Finally, I would like to thank the editors of the *American Esquire* and *Esquire* Middle East for giving up their time to speak with me and for sending free copies of their magazines for my research.

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ABSTRACT

Men's magazines craft and produce representations of masculinity while also acting as a forum for gender norms to be circulated, negotiated and contested. As magazines follow globalization trends of other media, research into how gender norms are also globalized within their texts is imperative. In November 2009, *Esquire* magazine launched its first issue of *Esquire* Middle East. The purpose of this study is to determine (1) the defining characteristics of the *Esquire* "Man at His Best," both in *Esquire* Middle East and the flagship publication and (2) what the differences imply about the magazines' respective readerships. These questions were researched by using discourse and constant comparative methodologies to analyze the editorial texts in the first three issues of *Esquire* Middle East and the corresponding three issues of the American *Esquire*. The archetype of the Middle Eastern Man at His Best particularly stressed the importance of cross-cultural appeal, physical prowess, being a "single actor," and having an interest in appearance and fashion. Interesting aspects of the American Man at His Best included him embracing the role of family man, expressing interest in the world of food and cooking and struggling to reaffirm his masculinity.

Chapter I

Introduction

In November 2009, *Esquire* magazine launched its first issue of *Esquire* Middle East. As a men's magazine title that brands itself as a reader and lifestyle guide for the "Man at His Best" (MaHB), *Esquire's* success relies on its ability to pinpoint and reflect the defining values, narratives and cultures of its male readership by constructing and promoting a resonating ideal of masculinity. The purpose of this study is to identify how the Middle Eastern MaHB differs from the American MaHB and extrapolate what these differences in masculine ideals suggest about the magazines' respective readerships. The conclusions drawn from this analysis will be applicable across several fields of study. Relevant topics include magazine research, media globalization and cross-cultural gender studies.

Though the magazine was first studied seriously by Frank Luther Mott in 1930, widespread examination of the medium has failed to take off (Holmes, 2007). The library of scholarly magazine research resembles what magazine scholar David Abrahamson calls "brilliant fragments" (Abrahamson, 1995). He writes that such fragments are "worthy research of clear merit, but, it might be argued, occasionally unconnected to any larger framework" (xviii). However, the lack of magazine research is not representative of media research as a whole. "As a generalization about journalism scholarship, magazines as a research subject certainly have drawn less attention than either newspapers or television" (xviii). Abrahamson's claims

are not unsubstantiated. An analysis of twenty years worth of *Journalism Quarterly* found that magazines were represented as subjects in just 6% of the articles (Gerlach, 1987). A similar survey of *Communication Abstracts* from 1978 to 1991 found that less than 1% of their content focused on magazines while newspapers and television research accounted for about 5% and 20% respectively (Abrahamson, 1995).

More than a decade later, the dearth of magazine research is still so noteworthy that *Journalism Studies* dedicated its entire August 2007 issue to contemporary magazine research in an attempt to fill a few of the many gaps. In “Mapping the Magazine: An Introduction,” guest editor Tim Holmes writes that the magazine “is a form which scholars have, with few exceptions, tended to underestimate and overlook” (Holmes, 2007, p. 511).

As media conglomerates continue to expand across regional borders, research into the global expansion of magazine brands is both timely and crucial for understanding the global media market and how social and cultural norms are transmitted and retained (Holmes, 2007). Initial research into this subject (Berglez, 2007, Berglez 2008; Narunsky-Laden, 2007; Oh & Frith, 2007; Van Leeuwen & Machin, 2004, 2005) emphasizes that issues of globalization are vastly complex and in need of further study.

Studies that analyze the ways gender ideals differ and are expressed within global media titles are particularly rare. While some empirical research exploring the subject exists (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2003; 2004; 2005; Pugsley, 2010; Yun et al., 2007), substantially more research is needed to understand such a global topic.

Men's magazines align themselves as a particularly interesting form for case studies. As Benwell (2003) and Edwards (2003) suggest, they intertwine aspects of being both cultural texts and cultural phenomena. They craft and produce representations of masculinity while also acting as a forum where gender norms are circulated, negotiated and contested.

By using the constant comparative method to employ aspects of traditional media theory frameworks, including textual and discourse analysis, the magazines' respective masculine ideals emerge. This analysis will add to the foundation of information relevant to future studies of globalization, gender constructs and the magazine industry.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The *Esquire* Middle East Launch

With its debut in November 2009, *Esquire* Middle East becomes the magazine title's 18th international edition. Though *Esquire* is a Hearst Corporation publication, Hearst International has entrusted publishing duties of the magazine to ITP Publishing Group, a Dubai-based, British-run, Virgin Islands-incorporated publisher. ITP produces more than 80 magazines and directories in the Middle East, including regional versions of *Men's Fitness* and the popular *Time Out* city guides.

The first edition of the English-language magazine boasted an initial press run of 15,000 copies distributed among seven Persian Gulf nations—8,000 at popular retail outlets in the UAE and 2,000 spread between fellow Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar. The remaining 5,000 were circulated for free among VIPs and other selected men in the aforementioned countries in addition to Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia (Esquire Media Pack, 2009; Veronese: *Esquire* Middle East, Apr. 8, 2010). These latter three nations did not receive retail distribution upon the magazine's launch. According to *Esquire* Middle East marketing and circulation director Debra Campbell and international editions editor Luis Veronese, they were awaiting ministry approval to start retail circulation in those nations.

Referring to *Esquire* Middle East's audience as "Middle Eastern" necessitates a qualification of the label. Though the magazine is being distributed in these

wealthy Persian Gulf countries, *Esquire* Middle East is not primarily targeting their national-born populations. The readers are Middle Eastern only by their present geographic location, not necessarily their lineage. According to the media kit, *Esquire* Middle East is marketing itself to educated, affluent and internationally-minded men aged 22 to 40 years old and will “enjoy a majority readership consisting of expats from across Europe, other Arab states and South Asia” (*Esquire* Media Pack, 2009. p. 4). However, Editor-in-Chief Jeremy Lawrence says in *Global Journalist* that despite its Euro-born editorial staff, the magazine is not just another European magazine. “Like the Middle East region itself, the *Esquire* Middle East magazine has a mixture of content and flavors. However, after all is said and done, the running theme will be Middle East content with a Middle East flavor” (Gross, 2009, p. 25). Despite the international audience, it would also be naïve to ignore the cultural and political realities of publishing a men’s magazine in the Middle East. The editorial staff must be conscious of Middle Eastern protocols and sensibilities, including the ramifications of public criticizing government, publishing risqué pictures of women and generally intruding on standards of privacy.

As for whether *Esquire* Middle East will feature the same type of content as its at-times risqué American predecessor, “ITP does not print titles that are not compliant with local laws,” says Lawrence. “We are also sensitive to what is socially acceptable in the market” (p. 25). He says that readers will likely see 60-70% of each issue’s content locally generated. The remaining 30-40% will be drawn from other international editions of the magazine (Gross, 2009).

An Abbreviated History of Media in the Persian Gulf

Despite a long-held, near-synonymous relationship between Middle Eastern nations and tightly controlled, puppet-like media industries, the region has been expanding press freedoms and attracting publishers and investors interested in developing the media market (McCarthy, 2009).

Beginning in the early 1990s, satellite television became widely available in the Middle East. This development allowed for the expansion of many Arabicized Western media outlets, including the BBC, Monte Carlo and Voice of America, though they did not experience the widespread support expected by some. Rather, they were viewed with suspicion and as colonizers (Maalouf, 2008; Miles, 2005). However, state-run media outlets weren't viewed much more favorably. Their government-pandering accounts of issues and events also spawned distrust among audiences (Maalouf, 2008).

Some scholars have suggested that the emergence of Al Jazeera acted as a catalyst for change in the Middle Eastern media industry--loosening the states' influence on the media and consequentially frustrating many Arab governments. The Qatar-based satellite news network launched in 1996 and has been dubbed the "CNN of the Arab World" (Straus, 2001). Cassara and Lengel (2004) write:

Al Jazeera is fundamentally redrawing the map of the Arab World—both the West's understanding of the region and the region's understanding of itself—both impacting the 240-million residents of the Middle East and North Africa and millions more in the Arab Diaspora around the world. (Cassara & Lengel, 2004, para. 9)

Al Jazeera contrasted itself from the media imperialists from Europe and the United States, presenting itself as an Arabic channel, run by Arabic journalists that

reported on Arabic news. And, at the allowance of the progressive Emir of Qatar, Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, their journalists held more open and candid discussions of issues than competing state-run outlets (Maalouf, 2008). Its success inspired the emergence of other competing satellite networks including the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya.

The 21st Century has featured an emergence of “media free zones” in the UAE that allow free-to-air transmissions, freedom from censorship, and exemptions from tax and customs clearance for equipment in addition to “Internet free zones” without the filters and proxies used elsewhere in the region that restrict access to certain sites (Shipside, 2000). These free zones, coupled with an ethnically diverse population—the UAE is home to around 160 different nationalities—have helped the UAE develop into a media hub, providing regional headquarters for a number of international media corporations as well as housing national and regional media outlets (McCarthy, 2009).

However, as Srebery (2008) notes, the relationships between the independent private sector media and their nations’ governments are complex and not perfectly emblematic of a true free press, specifically Al Jazeera’s.

Evidently a media channel (such as Al Jazeera) that does not pay for itself, running up million dollar deficits, and has to be maintained though digging deep into an oil-rent pocket, suggests a very particular relationship between oil, governmentality and media. (p. 15)

Yet despite taking steps towards a Western-style free press, Shipside (2000) writes that the region is not completely opening itself up for global media conquest.

The effects of media globalization, privatization and proliferation are all evident in Arab media but the desire to resist cultural homogenization remains as strong as ever. (p. 34)

This resistance of culture homogenization is perhaps why *Esquire* Middle East planned to target a majority of expatriates rather than a resistant population of nationals.

An Introduction to the United Arab Emirates

Because the United Arab Emirates holds the *Esquire* Middle East offices and receives the largest share of circulation, it's germane to review the national context that the magazine is being produced.

The UAE is a federation made up of seven *emirates* (states): 'Ajman, Al Fujayrah, Sharjah, Dubai, Ra's al Khaymah, Quwayn and its capital, Abu Dhabi. The UAE borders the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf between Oman and Saudi Arabia. Though its area is slightly smaller than the state of Maine's, it touts the 53rd-largest GDP worldwide at \$186.8 billion and ranks as the 23rd highest in GDP per capita at \$38,900 ("The World Factbook: The United Arab Emirates," October, 2010). Its wealth has stemmed almost exclusively from the discovery of crude oil reserves in the UAE more than 40 years ago ("Women's Work Force Ratio Low UAE," 2004, May 19). Since that time, the UAE underwent a massive population boom¹ and profound transformation from an impoverished region of small desert principalities to a highly modernized nation that exports 2.7-million barrels of oil a day, ranking fourth in the world. However a confluence of falling oil prices, a collapsing real

¹ According to the UAE Ministry of Planning, the population in 1970 (180,226) leapt nearly 15 times in a span of 32 years to a population of 3,754,000 in 2003.

estate market and international banking crisis in 2008-09 hit the nation especially hard. In December 2009, Abu Dhabi provided Dubai \$10 billion to settle debts with Dubai World, an investment company that handles much of Dubai's business and government project portfolio. Unlike the more financially stable Abu Dhabi, which claims expansive oil reserves, Dubai took a more aggressive approach to growth, investing its oil wealth heavily in real estate and government projects to build up its tourism, finance and trade industries ("Times Topics: Dubai," March 29, 2010).

In Dubai, extravagance is king. The UAE's most lavish emirate has been quickly establishing a reputation of metropolitan legend among the historic greats of Rome, Babylon and Athens. In January 2009, Dubai officially claimed the world's tallest building with the opening of the Burj Khalifa. The city thrives and relies heavily on its consumer culture. Only a short stroll from the 2,717-ft tower is Dubai Mall, the world's fourth-largest mall. Despite claiming a population of just more than 2 million citizens, Dubai's behemoth mall shares consumer traffic within the metro area with four other malls that rank among the world's most lavish. They feature an indoor ski slope, the world's largest aquarium, and Dubailand, a theme park twice the size of Walt Disney World. This is all within eyeshot of an archipelago of man-made palm-shaped islands, the second tallest hotel in the world—the sail-shaped Burj Al Arab—and the proposed site for Hydropolis, an underwater hotel (Lindsay, 2006).

The Study of Masculinity

One advantage of studying the magazine medium is that the scope and editorial focus of magazines tend to be niche-oriented. Magazines are launched

specifically for audiences of men, women, gays, African-Americans, runners, gamers, guitarists, specific cities and regions, among other specialty audiences. The narrow scope of the medium provides researchers with clearly defined audiences for study.

A large portion of magazine scholarship has focused on gender issues. Men have always been prominent subjects for research, but scholars focusing on masculinity as a gender construct has been a relatively recent academic endeavor, first debuting in the mid 1970s (Morgan, 1981; Badinter, 1995). Most previous magazine gender studies have involved content analysis focusing on defining femininity and the visual and textual representation of women. The questioning of femininity was largely instigated and influenced by the Women's Movement (Kervin, 1990; Holmes, 2007). Some prominent studies include Betty Friedman's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Cynthia White's *Women's Magazines 1693 – 1968* in 1970, Marjorie Ferguson's *Forever Feminine: women's magazines and the cult of femininity* (1983). Also, according to Brod and Kaufman (1994), "gay studies had established its own journals, conferences, caucuses, homes in various scholarly presses, and the rest of the apparatus of academic publishing significantly prior to what has come to be called men's studies" (p. 6).

Following the works of these feminist and gay scholars, there has been a contemporary push for deconstructive analysis of heterosexual "masculinity," a term that became popular in the 1970s and 1980s along with a paradigmatic shift away from the historical "ideal of manliness" (Rutherford, 2003, p. 1).

Unlike the ideal of manliness, which was rooted in traditions of patriarchy, masculinity was conceived out of the women's revolt in traditions of patriarchal relations, as an oppositional, critical and deconstructive term. We use masculinity to describe, define and

problematize performances, representations and discourses of ways of doing and being a man... It has been a revolutionary term because it has named men as a gender rather than an unquestioned norm. Masculinity brought men into a new type of gendered subjecthood, which was open to self reflection, criticism, analysis and debate. (p. 1)

Deducing defining traits from the masculine ideal is a fundamentally nuanced and perilous task due to the complex anatomy of gender roles and variables of time and culture. Perhaps as a by-product of this binary approach, scholars have led efforts to build a lexicon of recurring characteristics separate from the binary approach. David and Brannon (1976) parse the stereotypical American masculine ideal into four imperatives: The first and foremost is “no sissy stuff... a ‘real man’ must never, never resemble women or display strongly stereotyped feminine characteristics” (p. 14). Second, he is a “big wheel”—successful, powerful and important (p. 19). The third imperative is that he must be a “sturdy oak”—independent, relying only on himself and never showing emotion or attachment (p. 23). “Give ‘em hell” encapsulates the fourth dimension of the male role in America (p. 27). It suggests that having the aura of aggression and violence is actually more important than their display, though display also bears significance. As Badinter (1995) illustrates the masculine icon, The Marlboro Man, beautifully exemplifies this super-male masculine ideal, his image popularizing a brand of cigarettes. Patterson (1999) also equates stereotypical American-masculine ideals with popular fictional characters: the cowboy, who is tough and unemotional, Superman, who conquers the world, and Mr. Universe, who is athletic and muscular.

Similar to David and Brannon, (1976), Franklin (1984) lists dominance over others, oneself and all situations, and willingness to engage in violence when

necessary or sanctioned—as in war or sports—as common traits of the masculine ideal. He also adds dedication to work to the list. However, he acknowledges that these traits are not present in all masculine cultures; they even vary within communities in the United States. Hon (2004) suggests that masculinity exhibits a variety of qualities and forms when deconstructing along fault lines of sexuality, generation, geography, race and class. The stereotypical American masculine ideal most often refers to characteristics specific to the white American male ideal and often differs from the masculine structures of racial and ethnic minorities.

Many attempts to derive a defining masculinity have arguably been attempted by simply reconstituting language from a binary not-feminine approach (Berger, Wallis & Watson, 1995). Kimmel (1987a) writes that as feminine gender roles evolved and morphed, definitions of masculinity have been “historically reactive” to changes within the definitions of femininity (p. 123). He argues further that masculinity must be approached “not as a normative referent against which standards are assessed, but as a problematic gender construct” in its own right (Kimmel, 1987b, p. 10).

Compare Americans with the Chinese. While Americans exude the aforementioned masculine traits stressing strength, attractiveness, heterosexuality, and whiteness (O’Shaughnessy, 1999), in contrast, the Chinese idealize the concept of *Wen-Wu*, emphasizing literary-martial, mental and physical attainment (Louie 2003). Their masculine ideal focuses less on physical prowess and is far less macho than the American ideal, and “desirable male images in a Chinese cultural context, as

reflected in advertising and media, still appear akin to the weakling of the Western males” (p. 6).

Studies have shown that nations and societies can also exhibit masculine and feminine culture constructs on a macro level and reflect gender role differentiation patterns. Masculine societies adhere to well-defined social-gender roles, while feminine cultures show more overlapping social gender roles (Hofstede, 1984). Additionally Coltrane (1994) writes, “in societies where men develop and maintain close relationships with young children, hypermasculine displays, competitive posturing and all-male enclaves are rare” (p. 49). These societies also generally allow both sexes to hold office, participate in public decisions, rarely require women to pay public homage to men and tend to view members of both sexes as inherently equal.

Following the development of masculinity as a term, some writers began investigating masculine archetypes that strayed from the mainstream. Benwell (2003) notes that the dominant masculine archetypes and notions of what it meant to be a man particularly shifted within the context of men’s magazines (p. 13). Two of the most thoroughly analyzed of these archetypes were the “new man” of the 1980s (Stoltenberg, 1989; Stoltenberg, 1993; Nixon, 1996; Edwards, 1997; Mort, 1996) and the “new lad” of the late 1990s (Jackson et al., 2001; Benwell, 2003; Crewe, 2003; Gill 2003), both born out of British men’s magazines.

The new man was generally characterized as being sensitive, emotionally aware, respectful of women both in the workforce and relationships, committed to fatherhood, possessing an egalitarian and narcissistic outlook, and being an avid

consumer, highly concerned with his physical appearance (Benwell, 2003; Gill, 2003). Conversely, the new lad construction was often distinguished by hedonism, post-feminism, a lack of reference to fatherhood, addressing women as sexual objects, being ethnically white, and being preeminently concerned with partying, beer and football.

A prominent academic narrative shared by Gill (2003) explains this shift and contrast in masculinity is that the emergence of the new lad was both a reaction and rejection of the new man and feminism that birthed him. The new lad attempted to reassert aspects of traditional masculinity that were conceded to the feminist cause by the new man (Benwell, 2003). Other less enduring and resonating masculinities have included the “new father” ... “superwaif” ... “black macho” ... “soft lad” ... “new boy” ... “modern romantic” (Gill, 2003, p. 34). While Foucault (1979, 1980, 1987) would suggest that naming these new masculinities is a means to normalize their ideas and practices, gender is typically described with a sense of liquidity.

Rakow (1986) writes that gender must be viewed as a fluid, fundamental process working to maintain inequalities within society—a meaning system, “used to describe, define and categorize much of the rest of the world, animate and inanimate” (p. 22). To subject gender ideals and attitudes to static terms like new man and new lad oversimplifies an ocean of profoundly complex gender identities. However, the creation of new gender terms suggests that masculine ideals evolve and morph with socio-cultural sea changes (Benwell, 2003). As Kervin (1990) contends, this constant state of evolution calls for continuous study of how gender is

performed to understand the construction of contemporary masculine ideals and how they affect society.

Without ever losing sight of the patriarchal nature of social institutions, more needs to be said about the characteristics and roles society expects males to acquire, how these aspects of masculinity have changed, and the implications of taking on a dominantly-defined masculine role. (Kervin, 1990, p. 52)

While questions regarding the nature/nurture determinacy of gender are complex and worthy of scholarship, some disciplines have instituted academic blinders on the matter, simply choosing one school of thought (Jandt & Hundley, 2007). Many scholars employing quantitative perspectives consider gender as “medical classifications of sex types based on chromosomal evidence” (Brettell & Sargent, 1993, p. 151 as seen in Jandt & Hundley, 2007) connected to physically observable traits and behaviors, while other qualitative scholars consider gender roles socially constructed attributes (Condit, 2000; Fejes, 1989; Gilmore, 1990; Wood, 2005). This study generally aligns itself with the perspective that gender roles are more nurture-based than nature-based. It infers that the differences between the masculine ideals of the Middle Eastern and American MaHB are predominantly influenced by their differing cultures.

History of Esquire Magazine

Published in the fall of 1933, in the midst of the Great Depression, the first issue of *Esquire* sold 100,000 copies at 50 cents apiece (Merrill, 1999; *Esquire*, 1933, p. cover). It was an era in which men suddenly had leisure time pressed upon them

due to reduced work weeks (Breazeale, 2003). *Esquire* offered itself as a guide to spending that time, answering the question of “‘What to do? What to eat, what to drink, what to wear, how to play, what to read’—in short, a magazine dedicated to the improvements of the new leisure” (Gingrich, 1971, p. 102).

Arnold Gingrich, the editor and unofficial publicist of *Esquire*’s early years, proclaimed it to be the first American magazine for men and called its launch a “job that should have been done a long time ago” due to general magazines’ increased catering to women’s interests (“A Magazine for Men Only,” 1933, p. 4; Merrill, 1999). Among American magazines, *Esquire* claims one of the most storied legacies. Between 1998 and 2010 it was selected as a finalist for 47 National Magazine Awards and won 13, doubled its advertising pages while also increasing both newsstand sales and overall circulation, and pushed the envelope of the magazine form with technological innovations like the animated E-Ink cover in October 2008 and the Augmented Reality issue in December 2009 (“Esquire: Man At His Best,” n.d.; “National Database of Past Winners and Finalists,” n.d.). With a byline catalogue featuring literary giants like F. Scott Fitzgerald, Earnest Hemmingway, Norman Mailer, Gaye Talese, and Tom Wolfe and a history of legendary designers and illustrators like Adber Dean, George Lois, George Petty and Alberto Vargas, *Esquire* has emancipated itself from the literary and visual constraints of the men’s magazine genre.

Esquire’s opening feature article in Autumn 1933 sets the tone for both the legacy of the American title, as well as its future international editions. It is a letter by Ernest Hemmingway from Cuba entitled “Marlin off the Morro.” He wakes each

morning, the Havana sun shining on his face through an open window, pulls on an old pair of khakis and sets out to sea after a breakfast of a glass of milk, bottle of vichy and piece of Cuban bread (Hemmingway, 1933). He spends the summer days fishing for marlin with a man who “can literally, gaff a dolphin through the head—back-handed” (p. 8). The letter swims in masculinity, Hemmingway embodying traditional masculine attributes of strength and dominance (of the fish), while elevating the MaHB archetype beyond the everyday street-corner man with his wit, literary abstraction and sense of adventure and beauty.

While never explicitly stating it in the magazine, *Esquire* addresses a heterosexual readership. The issues frequently feature pictures and articles about sex and relationships with women. Breazeale (2003) writes that from the magazine’s inception, the founders were concerned that *Esquire* may appear to be targeting homosexuals. So, they took strides to be clear that women were the object-sex of attractions by prominently featuring erotic textual representations and illustrations of women, most notably the pin-up style Varga Girls and Petty Girls of the World War II era.

Though the American *Esquire* has routinely features photos and illustrations of such scantily clad women and drinking guides (Breazeale, 1994; Merrill, 1997), *Esquire* Middle East will need to make editorial considerations to account for the more predominately conservative Muslim populations within its circulation range, regardless of whether they are included in the target readership. For example, the July 2009 American *Esquire* cover features Israeli supermodel Bar Rafaeli donning only body paint and her own opportunely positioned limbs to cover herself up. This

is precisely the type of content that will likely need to be altered or discarded altogether in the Middle Eastern edition—not only for the nudity, but also the nationality of Rafaeli (Cohn, 2009).

The rate and ferocity that news about cross-cultural insensitivities within the media travels across the global media landscape is perhaps best illustrated by the perilous backlash from the 12 cartoon sketches of the Prophet Muhammad published by the Danish weekly *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005. The images ignited international uproar among Muslim communities and triggered a global media storm. Danish products were boycotted by many Arab countries in the Middle East, and protests were even staged in Dubai, the most liberal of Middle Eastern cities where religious protests are virtually unheard of (Fattah, 2006). According to Powers (2008), the cartoons were commissioned in hopes of sparking a debate about self-censorship in Denmark.

Global Media Expansion

Within the 21st century, the expansion of American magazine titles into international markets has been neither foreign nor exclusive to *Esquire*. Consumer magazines have been expanding into non-Western nations throughout the past decade including *Cosmopolitan* in Taiwan (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2003), *Rolling Stone* in China (Madden, 2006), *The Fader* in Japan (Ives, 2006) and *Travel + Leisure* in Thailand (Fell, 2007).

Though *Esquire* Middle East is the first edition of the American title published in the Middle Eastern world, it is one of 16 foreign editions of the

magazine under the arm of Hearst Publications International. Other non-western editions include markets in China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Thailand and Turkey (“Man at His Best,” n.d.; “Masthead,” 2010).

Interestingly, the Middle East is still a largely untapped and untried market for American magazine titles, especially by the men’s magazine genre. However, *Playboy Magazine*, which features a considerably more risqué editorial focus than *Esquire*, at one time boasted regional editions of the magazine in Israel and Saudi Arabia, though they have not yet ventured into Dubai’s market (“Playboy International Editions,” 2009).

Characteristic of this global media growth are secondary trends: increased segmentation of target readerships and ever-narrowing specialization of genre and content (Doyle 2002, Doyle 2006). A publication’s ability to cut through the clutter of other titles vying for readers’ attention and reach a specific interest group is an obvious selling point for advertisers. The growing number of new titles produces a competitive market for a limited amount of advertising dollars. Thus, a new magazine identifying and projecting an accurate value of its target market is vital to its success (Gasson, 1996).

In addition to focusing on specific readership demographics and a narrow breadth of content, established titles use branding techniques as a means to expand to foreign markets successfully. Needle (2000) defines branding as attributing a specific name or logo to a product to help distinguish it from market rivals in hopes of building customer loyalty to garner repeat purchases. Often, the strength of a magazine’s brand is sufficient enough to attract moderate attention from a similar

lifestyle group or niche market as its home region, though some local adaptation of the product is often necessary (Doyle, 2006). Because producing the local adaptations of the primary title costs only a fraction of producing the original title, “the marginal costs associated with facilitating large increases in the readership base for that title can be kept low” (p. 107). For some magazines, especially those with a strong emphasis on visual content, “local editions and reprints in other languages can be generated without necessarily losing any of the title’s essential flavor or appeal” (p. 106).

Within the efforts to globalize particular media and titles, Cross (2000) suggests that there are generally three ways for firms to become active participants or competitors in international markets. The first and most basic way is to continue producing media from the home country or region, then export the finished product (Doyle, 2006). This process often involves the physical task of transporting the hard copies of the media across borders or by electronically distributing it via the Internet. A second means of internationalizing is to acquire or arrange contracts with operating subsidiaries in the desired region while still keeping the bulk of the production in the home country. (Albarran & Chan-Olmsted, 1998; Hollifield, 2004). Lastly, there can be a direct relocation of media production to the foreign market, in which an independent company makes the product under a contract-based agreement, as is the arrangement between *Esquire* and the Dubai-based ITP Publishing Group.

As nations and corporations continue to become more interconnected, media trends show that magazine, film and television media becoming increasingly

international (PPA, 2000 as seen in Doyle, 2006). This applies to both the editorial coverage of issues and the physical expanse into foreign media markets. Berglez (2008) contends that this progression is both logical and expected.

Global Journalism stems from economic, political, cultural, ecological, etc., necessity. It is the natural consequence of increasing connectedness, boundarylessness [sic] and mobility in the world: it is the form of journalism needed in times of globalization. (p. 855)

Within academic analysis of media globalization, a few varying interpretations have emerged. Among globalization theories, the schism between homogenization and cultural diversification theorists is one of the most enduring and controversial (Appaduri, 1996).

Homogenization, also known as “cultural imperialism,” theorists believe that global media tends to homogenize local culture when positioning and marketing their products worldwide (Oh & Firth, 2007; Shippside, 2000). Scholars including Schiller (1971) and Machins and van Leeuwen (2003), many media scholars have analyzed and written about the ways that US and British corporations like Reuters, AP, CNN, Viacom Disney, etc. and their models of broadcasting dominate the world’s media industry and create homogeneity.

However, a study conducted by Machins and van Leeuwen (2003) of all 44 international editions of *Cosmopolitan* magazine shows a more complex relationship. Even when each international edition is distinctly different and features local editorial content carefully tailored to fit their respective audiences, many of the differences are only surface-level. Deeper similarities and agendas still persist throughout the title.

Like the Bible in the colonial age, the message is translated into many different languages and adapted to the local circumstances of many different markets, but never to the degree that the essential global economico-ideological [sic] interest behind it is lost from sight. (Machins & van Leeuwen, 2003, p. 494)

On the other side of the debate, cultural diversification theorists, like Munshi (2001), argue that although the global flow of mass-mediated culture affects local culture, it fails to produce a consistent global, homogenizing effect. Rather, local cultures respond in their own ways. Some studies including Katz and Liebes (1986), Robinson, Buck and Cuthbert (1991), and Willis (1990) have suggested that local audiences abroad infer their own meanings from Western media, though they are not necessarily the producer's intended message

Additional research suggests that audiences prefer locally produced products to global options (Tsai, 2000; Straubhaar, 1999). However, Street (1997) suggests that many modern manufacturers of cultural products make it intentionally difficult to determine the products' origins. Many appear to be local in context, yet embody global content. This type of "homogenized diversity" makes it important to acutely note which aspects of a product are local or global. Machins and van Leeuwen (2004) explain that global media output is increasingly homogenous while its editorial content is increasingly localized.

McDonalds may sell 'sushiburgers' in Japan and 'curryburgers' in India, but burgers remain burgers, and it is in their 'burger-ness,' in the burger *format*, that the essence of their global significance must be looked for. (Machins & van Leeuwen, 2004, p. 99)

Like burgers, media formats are not neutral containers. They are key tools in the dissemination of the global corporate ethos. A regional example of this is the animated cartoon *Al Shamshoon*, an Arabized hybrid of the syndicated American

television show, *The Simpsons*. Launched in September 2005, executives at the Arab network MBC translated the theme song into Arabic as well as changing some other elements of the show. Hot dogs became Egyptian beef sausages, donuts turned into Arab cookies called *kahk*, and Duff beer transformed into simple soda (Ferrari 2009). It will be valuable to note in this study which editorial elements of *Esquire* Middle East were shared and pulled from the pages of other worldwide editions of *Esquire*.

Robins (1997), referencing Hannerz (1993) elaborates on the various effects that globalization has on specific cultures and says that a person's experiences and responses to the forces of globalization are based on his or her economic, social and geographic position in the world. For some, globalization represents a positive development; whereas others find it disruptive and disorienting, driving them to reject it.

However, Rantanen (2005) concludes that such a debate between proponents of homogenization and heterogenization is moot because both are present in the process of globalization. Their possibilities are not mutually exclusive, and this duality should be accepted as the primary outcome of globalization. This concept, called "glocalization," contends that we live in a "cultural melange" where there is a complex flow of cultural influences and transformations around the planet (Machins & van Leeuwen, 2003; 2004; Wang & Servaes, 2000).

Chapter III

Methodology

Research Questions

RQ1: How do masculine ideals differ between an international edition of *Esquire* magazine and its flagship publication?

RQ2: What are the defining characteristics of the “Man at His Best,” both at *Esquire* Middle East and the American *Esquire*?

RQ3: What do the differences in the “Man at His Best” ideals imply about the magazines’ respective readerships?

Sample

The sample for this study consists of two pools of content. The first spans all editorial texts featured in *Esquire* Middle East, from the magazine’s debut issue in November 2009 to the January 2010 issue. These three monthly magazines total 322 pages of editorial, non-advertisement content including the covers: 126 pages in November 2009, 96 in December 2009, 100 in January 2010. Similarly, the second pool consists of all editorial texts published in the American flagship edition of *Esquire* magazine, from November 2009 to January 2010, totaling 333 pages: 99 in November 2009, 134 in December 2009, 100 in January 2010.

I selected these six magazines for two reasons: 1.) I wanted to use the first three issues of *Esquire* Middle East because they set a precedent for the style, direction of content, and editorial voice of the title. They also suggest what future

issues might be like. Since the commencement of this research, *Esquire* Middle East has continued publishing new issues each month. While this study's relatively small sample size may exclude some developments and adaptations that took place within the *Esquire* Middle East texts following its first three months of publication, the narrowly defined sample will allow for a more in-depth study of the magazines economic first quarter, when the necessity to define and attract their target audience is most crucial and instilling confidence in its advertisers and establishing base circulation is imperative. 2.) I wanted to use the three issues of the American *Esquire* that corresponded with the aforementioned issues of *Esquire* Middle East. This decision attempted to limit unnecessary variables, including contemporary world news and trends that the magazines might choose to feature for their timely news value.

Methodology

This examination of *Esquire's* editorial texts seeks to determine which characteristics of masculinity appear most often and whether certain masculine traits exist more prevalently or infrequently in *Esquire* Middle East when compared to the American *Esquire*, and vice versa. A combination of the qualitative discourse analysis methodology and constant comparative method were employed to construct portraits of these masculine ideals. Discourse analysis has shown to be an effective means of extracting themes of gender representations in media (Hinnant, 2009), specifically in men's magazines (Beggan & Allison, 2003; Beggan, 2001; Breazeale, 1994) and cross-cultural and globalization schema between international

editions of consumer magazines (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2003; Machin & van Leeuwen, 2005).

Discourse analysis emerged as a transdisciplinary methodology in the 1960s. Van Dijk (1991) writes that it focuses on the systematic study of structures, functions and processes of text, while utilizing theories developed for the several themes and levels of discourse present in the text for further exposition.

A crucial component of analyzing discourse is the process of interpreting ideology. Specifically, as Thompson (1990) explains, “the connection of the meaning mobilized by symbolic forms and the relations of domination which that meaning serves to establish and sustain” (p. 293). In the context of this study, the ideology of interest is the masculine ideal that *Esquire* promotes. Hinnant (2009) notes in her study of health-focused articles in women’s magazines that extracting meaning about gender issues is complicated by the lack of a definitive feminine ideology. An analogous conundrum exists in studies of masculinity, which, as discussed in the literature review, also lacks an absolute ideology.

Discourse analysis may include visual elements such as photographs, layout design, information graphics and other elements of a story package. However, these types of visual elements will not be considered in this study. Because there are limited funds for the magazine as a newly launched international edition, many of the photos and other visual elements are not exclusive to *Esquire* Middle East. A large number are pulled from other international editions of *Esquire*, or they are stock photos chosen to fit the text’s content. While an analysis focused on investigating which visual elements are original and which appear in other

international editions would make for an interesting study, again, it is not the focus of this research. Similarly, the presentation and placement of articles and stories in the magazine will not be considered, though it, too, would be an interesting topic of study. And finally, editorial content may be influenced in some measure by business motives to attract advertisers. This study will not consider these influences. Instead, the texts will be read and interpreted as a typical media consumer might, without any insider knowledge of how the magazine publishing industry works.

Though guided on a macro level by discourse analysis methods, this study will also employ the constant comparative method, also known as the grounded method, to methodically and reliably extract and interpret data, meaning and ideology from these texts.

Rather than presupposing a hypothesis, then testing it to develop a theory, as is the basis for the scientific method, the constant comparative method grants some flexibility in the beginning of the data analysis. The researcher utilizes explicit coding and analytic procedures to guide the data gathering and ongoing process of crafting and revising a theory to explain relationships within the data while the researcher simultaneously continues the coding process (Glaser, 1965).

As described in Glaser (1965), there are four distinct stages of the constant comparative method:

- 1.) Comparing incidents applicable to each category.
- 2.) Integrating categories and their properties.
- 3.) Delimiting theory.
- 4.) Writing the theory.

Because this study closely follows the procedure of the constant comparative method, I will describe the intricacies of each step in detail.

1. *Comparing incidents applicable to each category.* In this process, the researcher begins coding each instance of the desired event and placing them into descriptive categories. For the purposes of this study the events were the appearance of men, the description of men or the representation of masculine behavior.

In an effort to streamline the coding process of the magazine texts, a citation format and key were invented and utilized. The shorthand form adheres to the following examples:

Key: (Magazine edition).(issue).(page number)
AM1.1 — American *Esquire*, November 2009 issue, page 1.
ME3.87-89 — *Esquire* Middle East, January 2010 issue, pages 87 through 89.

While coding an event, the researcher constantly compares it to previously coded events in the same category, generating theoretical properties of the category (Glaser, 1965). “The act of categorizing enables us to reduce the complexity of our environment, give direction for activity, identify the objects of the world, reduce the need for constant learning, and allow for ordering and relating classes of events” (Dye, et al., 2000, p. 2).

The researcher must also temporarily pause to record memos on theoretical notions during the coding process. These musings should be logical conclusions grounded in the data, rather than speculative thoughts (Glaser, 1965). This type of inductive analysis allows for the patterns, themes and categories of analysis to

“emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (Patton, 1990, p. 390).

2. Integrating categories and their properties. As the coding process continues and the library of recorded data becomes larger, the researcher begins to compare each new event with the theoretical properties of a category rather than the individually recorded events (Glaser 1965). These “categories must be meaningful both internally, in relation to the data understood in context, and externally, in relation to the data understood through comparison” (Dey, 1993; as cited in Dye, et al., 2000, p. 3). Theory develops as categories and their subsequent properties become increasingly integrated through constant comparison, forcing the analyst to construct theoretical explanations of the relationships (Glaser, 1965).

As the data log grew larger, reshaping the initial categories of “men” and “masculine behaviors” and adding the subcategories became necessary. Categories became more descriptive, like the “Reason for Fame/Recognition as a MaHB” category that placed the men within professional industry subcategories: real estate/business, chef/food industry, entertainment, visual arts, musicians, writer/journalist, politics/government job, athlete, and other. As my notes continued to fill, trends showing a disparity between men working in the business world and food industry became increasingly evident between the American and Middle Eastern magazines.

3. Delimiting the theory. As a theory develops, the constant comparative method restricts the coding and theorizing tasks from becoming too overwhelming for the researcher by delimiting both the theory and the list of categories. As the

terminology and generalizations are reduced by constant comparisons, the researcher approaches two requirements of theory: (1) *parsimony* of variables and formulation and (2) *scope* in the applicability of the theory to a wide range of situations (Glaser, 1965).

Meanwhile, the criteria for including and excluding events, though rather vague in the beginning of the analysis, become more precise (Dey, 1993). As the categories become *theoretically saturated*, the coding process grows increasingly efficient as the researcher can quickly decide whether a new event fits into an established, theoretically saturated category or a new category (Glaser, 1965).

In this study, there were notably fewer incidents coded in the last pair of magazines than the first. As the coding and categorizing process went on, it became easier to trust my discretion when choosing to leave out irrelevant character traits and actions. A secondary page of notes was also started to document macro trends within the data and act as a table to formulate the initial stages of theories.

4. *Writing theory*. Using the discussions in the coding memos as a guide, the researcher completes the analytic process. Each major category turns into a section title and its coded data becomes a resource for validating a suggested point, providing illustration and pinpointing data for future hypotheses (Glaser, 1965).

A note to readers,

*As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I employed a citation method, which I invented, to streamline the data-coding process of the magazine texts. (See key on p. **TK**) I find that this citation format is also better suited for sourcing the magazine texts than standard APA formatting in this instance.*

My in-text citation method is shorter than APA format for easier readability, while still providing the edition, month and page information. When relevant, I name the title of the article and the author of the text, if one is listed. I found that in-text APA-style citations fail to concisely differentiate and communicate frequent and multiple sourcing within the same periodical. I will only use my citation method when referencing articles within my sample. Otherwise, citations will follow APA style guidelines.

Chapter IV

Analysis

While this research fully intends to delve into the detail and nuance of the Man at His Best (MaHB) masculine ideals, as derived from both the *Esquire* Middle East and the American *Esquire* overt and implied texts and subtexts, it is first helpful and intriguing to look at the men the respective magazines tout as icons and models for the MaHB. In both magazines, one man or composite man, as the case was, rose above all of the other men featured in the magazines in terms of the positive light in which he's framed and his abilities to encapsulate the resonating qualities of each MaHB masculinity. The two icons are Imran Kahn for *Esquire* Middle East and for the American *Esquire*, a composite of the combined legacies of Kennedy brothers—John, Robert and Edward.

I. Kahn as icon for Esquire Middle East MaHB

As an initial offering, the November issue of *Esquire* Middle East noticeably strives to make clear the values and purpose it stands for. The issue is dogmatic and cohesive, more so than either of the subsequent issues.

Kahn is singled out as a prime example for the Middle Eastern MaHB in Editor-in-Chief Jeremy Lawrence's "Opening Salvo" letter from the editor, the first piece of editorial content in the genesis issue of *Esquire* Middle East, besides the table of contents (ME1.20). Lawrence introduces Kahn as a man who was an "all-conquering sports hero and playboy only to renounce it all for the campaign trail in rural Pakistan... [and] able to shift so effortlessly between the West and the East," before ultimately deciding that "his country need[ed] him more than he need[ed] Jemima Goldsmith," his wife of nine years and a prominent English socialite, 21 years his junior. Despite Kahn's renouncing his former lifestyle for a quest for purity, he retains the look of power: a Savile Row suit, hair "suspiciously black for a man in his fifties," and wearing dark sunglasses indoors (ME1.20).

With only this brief introduction of Kahn, the first masculine character discussed in the magazine, Lawrence has already established several key themes of the Middle Eastern MaHB, namely the importance of 1.) cross-cultural appeal, 2.) physical and athletic prowess, 3.) the image of the MaHB as a single actor, unrestrained or reliant on a family or female partner, and 4.) noteworthy concern with appearance and image.

Cross-Cultural Appeal and Success

The Middle East has served as a link between the East and the West both geographically, by linking Europe, Asia and Africa, and economically, culturally and historically, by its location on the Silk Road. It comes with little surprise that one of the most prominent characteristics of the Middle Eastern MaHB, as demonstrated in the *Esquire* Middle East texts, is the ability to be cross-culturally and internationally successful. As Lawrence puts it, “Imran Kahn typifies the commendable ability of men in this region to breeze across borders and cultures... The question is not whether he wears a dish dash, business suit or kurtha, but, rather, how he carries himself... And that, too, is the inspiration for *Esquire*” (ME1.20).

The importance of cross-cultural appeal is echoed by the men they feature throughout the magazine series, including their business profile of Mohammed Ben Sulayem, also in the debut issue (ME1.59-61). He is a 14-time Middle East Rally Championship winner with more *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* (FIA) regional championships and international rallies than any other FIA racer in history. Following his professional racing career, he became the vice president of the FIA, president of the Automobile and Touring Club of the UAE (ATCUAE), the official FIA representative for Middle East FIA events at its European headquarters, and helped bring the first ever F1 race in Abu Dhabi. He also owned—and later sold—Dubai’s iconic Hard Rock Café, which stood for more than a decade on the famed Sheikh Zayed Road. “For its first five years it was the lone symbol of development for what was to become the new Dubai” (ME1.60).

Rather than turning to a career in politics after his sporting career, as Kahn had, Ben Sulayem ventured into the business world. But like Kahn, he also works to improve his community with efforts to bring investment to the region via racing events in Abu Dhabi and elsewhere in the Middle East. Ben Sulayem's ability to attract investors from the Euro-based FIA and other non-Middle Eastern organizations and businesses is a testament of his ability to be successful across cultures and international borders.

Nitin Sawhney is yet another masculine character in the November issue with Kahn-like cross-cultural abilities. But, rather than using them for business success, a prominent theme to be discussed later, he applies them to the worlds of art and entertainment (ME1.34). Profiled by Lawrence, Sawhney is a multi-national—British-born Asian—musician who navigates across traditional musical borders of genre, venue and high-art-low-art lines. He “effortlessly fus[es] electronic beats with Asian, Arabic and western melodies,” plays flamenco guitar, classical piano and jazz piano, and “you’re as likely to see him in a club as you are in an opera house, theatre, dance hall or orchestra pit” (ME1.34).

And finally, along related entertainment lines, David Hasselhoff is also the subject of a feature in premier issue. Hasselhoff made his fame by starring in the lead role of the 1980s American television hit, “Knight Rider,” becoming a European pop-music star, and most recently, judging “America’s Got Talent” (ME1.82-86). He talks about wanting to create a Knight Rider-style show based in Dubai about a tycoon with an incredible yacht (ME1.84). Ritman writes about Hasselhoff in a look-how-ridiculous-this-guy-is kind of way. “It’s a bit like talking to a hyperactive child.

Non-sequiturs fly in all directions as he skips between subject matters like a conversational schizophrenic,” yet despite how laughable the American-born Hasselhoff is, he serves as yet another example of someone who has proven his ability to travel back and forth from the United States, Europe and now maybe Dubai, and still be cross-culturally successful (ME1.84).

While the American MaHB is occasionally commended for being All-American (Eric Loewem, AM2.159; John, Robert & Edward Kennedy, AM3.10), *Esquire* Middle East trumpets their MaHB examples like Kahn, Ben Sulayem and Sawhney for their multi-nationalism (ME1.20; ME1.34; and ME1.59-61 respectively). This revelation should come with little surprise. As previously mentioned, the media kit for *Esquire* Middle East shows that the publication targets a “majority readership consisting of expats from across Europe, other Arab States and South Asia” (Esquire Media Pack, 2009). The magazine continues to feature stories and men of many nationalities throughout the three-issue sample. However, there is generally more coverage of western politicians, celebrities, women, etc., than eastern. This may be influenced by British ex-pats comprising the majority of the editorial staff.

Physical Prowess and Sports

Athletic ability, physical prowess and sports all play prominent roles in *Esquire* Middle East. Several of their leading featured men have individual backgrounds and legacies in the sports world. Kahn was a star cricketer for two decades and led Pakistan to its only World Cup victory (ME1.20). As previously

mentioned, Ben Sulayem was a 14-time Middle East Rally Championship winner before heading the ATCUAE, being the vice president of the FIA and bringing the first ever F1 race to Abu Dhabi (ME1.59-61). Sulaiman Al-Fahim, the subject of the December business profile, was the owner of English Premier League soccer teams, Portsmouth FC and Manchester City FC (ME2.41-43). And, Sir Jackie Stewart, featured in a January “What I’ve Learned” Q&A, is a former F1 driver (ME3.88).

Other, less prominent sports references include a Q&A article with Dubai-based golfer Henrik Stenson about mental toughness (ME1.50), a story on the Middle East’s dwindling chances to have a soccer team qualify for the World Cup (ME1.49), and a short feature on the Algeria-Egypt African World Cup games that eventually took Algeria to the World Cup (ME3.59). The latter spoke of the hatred between the opposing teams and fans, the violence surrounding the game and how the excitement and rioting existed far outside the Middle East, specifically France and also London, the neutral site of the tiebreaker game. This article speaks to the sprawling influence the Middle East possesses, while also informing readers of the sporting events in their home countries. International coverage, sports or otherwise, is largely missing from the *American Esquire*.

In addition to sports coverage, *Esquire* Middle East also features a back-of-book department in each issue dedicated to articles on health, improving your strength, agility, athleticism, etc. The first issue gave an endorsement for the importance of strengthening your core and a guide for how to do it correctly (ME1.164). The article stresses several times that attractive-looking six-pack abs doesn’t indicate a strong core. The editors’ choice to highlight core strength instead

of a more showy muscle group like biceps/triceps or pectorals seems like a distinct nod to the age of their core readership. An older male readership is likely more concerned about back and spine issues than an audience of 25 year olds. The department also offers a breakdown on the type of workouts most beneficial to the readers in their 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s (ME1.165). Though most of this is general fitness advice, the differences in word count are interesting. The 20s have the least written about them, 40s and 50s are tied for second and the 30s have by far the most. This rough word count likely represents the readership's age demographics and supports the idea that the core of the audience is past their 20s and into their 30s, but not yet middle aged. The remaining two fitness sections offer a 30-day high-intensity interval training regimen to lose the last few pounds to reach a weight goal (ME2.112) and suggest doing triathlons, "the smart man's endurance event," instead of marathons because they are less likely to leave you with permanent joint damage and offer a training guide for biking and swimming (ME3.103). Again, the concern about injuries suggests an older demographic.

Sports, athleticism and physical health were relatively common topics for *Esquire* Middle East. By comparison, these topics were hardly present in the *American Esquire*. The western issues only feature one athlete, Yao Ming, in a "What I've Learned" interview (AM3.82), and just two other sports-centered articles. The first was a book review by Chuck Klosterman on a no-hitter baseball game in the 1950s, and the second was a 160-word endorsement of "icing the kicker" by staff writer, Chris Jones (AM1.38). The *American Esquire's* sports coverage seems to resonate more with the lofty intellectual, who has a casual interest in sports, than

the diehard fan.² Additionally, the American issues feature no equivalent to the fitness department in *Esquire* Middle East.

Why would *Esquire* Middle East focus so much on sports and general athleticism than the American *Esquire*? Perhaps because such a large segment of the American magazine industry is already dedicated to sports and fitness, *Esquire* assumes that the American MaHB would just gravitate more towards those prestigious and established titles for their sports coverage. This seems like an unlikely cause for the disparity. The Middle East, like all densely populated regions of the world, likely has several popular sports media outlets. Even within ITP Publishing, *Esquire* Middle East's publisher, there are English-language editions of *Men's Fitness*, *Middle East Golfer* and *Car Middle East*—two of the three sports discussed in the *Esquire* Middle East sample (“Consumer Magazines in Middle East, UAE, Dubai,” n.d.)

The explanation regarding the imbalance of fitness coverage seems less convoluted. The United States has higher rates of obesity than all of the nations within the circulation of *Esquire* Middle East (“The Global Cancer Atlas Online: Diet and Nutrition 2002,” n.d.). There simply seems to be less interest in fitness coverage. If Americans, including the American MaHB, are generally less concerned with fitness, why would *Esquire* dedicate a department to it every month?

² Baseball is America's least violent and most civilized professional sport, and, as Jones contends, football “kickers are thinkers”.

MaHB as a Single Actor

The Middle Eastern MaHB is like Dubai's record-breaking sky-impaling tower, the Burj Khalifa. He stands tall—very tall—and isolated. At one time, he was at the same level as everyone below. In certain instances, he may have begun growing a few flights up from ground level, but in most cases, he did not start at the top. This pick-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps ideal seems particularly American western-Protestant but is present in many of the Middle Eastern MaHB characters. It's also the first of many traditional masculine ideals present in the Middle Eastern MaHB.

Michael Caine, British film star and subject of a profile by Rachel Cooke (ME3.80-83) gives an account of his own rags-to-riches, self-made success story. He flips through a mental rolodex of friends and acquaintances he's made through the years like a roll call "at the School of International Fame:" Frank Sinatra, Cary Grant, Jack Lemmon, Gregory Peck, Liza Minnelli, Marlene Dietrich, etc. (ME3.80). He also reminisces about living in South London after World War II before his days of being an A-lister:

'...There's always been gangs in that part of London. The only place you couldn't walk on your own when I was a kid was Bankside. All along there. You never went near it unless there was a minimum of ten of you. You had the spivs, see. Their weapon was razor blades. They used to wear trilby hats, then they kept the blade in the peak. They'd take their hat off, and slash it across your face'... How did it make him feel, though, going back there [for the setting of his new movie, "Harry Brown"]? 'Lucky. But it also gives you a tremendous sense of guilt for those you've left behind, because you shouldn't have left them so far behind. Not that everyone's going to be a multi-millionaire movie star, but at least they can get a decent job, and make a decent living and lead a happy life. That's the minimum. But some of them never got the chance.' (ME3.82)

Caine's story exemplifies the fact that a man doesn't need to be born an A-lister to become a MaHB. But to become a featured MaHB, success is definitely a requirement. In the midst of a 36-member list of "Men We Admire" on ME1.67-68, the editors write that "men who inherit their fortunes don't necessarily impress us, but those who built their empires can teach us plenty" (ME1.68). They particularly commend Azim Premji and Lakshmi Mittal, business tycoons in software development and the steel industry, respectively, for taking "family businesses by the scruff of the neck and turn[ing] them into multibillion dollar enterprises" (ME1.68).

Another aspect of the single-actor concept is the lack of emotional reliance on family or spouse. However, the opposite is true with almost all of the prominent men profiled or featured in the American *Esquire*. (The American MaHB's role as father and husband will be discussed further in a subsequent section.)

Interestingly, the most notable display of spousal reliance and dependence comes in the profile of Robert Downey Jr., the cover story that both ME2 and AM1 share³. Downey Jr., unlike Caine, was born into movies as "the hyper-kinetic son of a maverick filmmaker who defined commercial success as a failure" (ME2.50). He became successful as a teen actor in the 80s, but his career became largely unstable and dwindled in the late 90s and early 2000s after several drug arrests and

³ It's worth noting that in the instances where a story has run in both EsqME and EsqUS, the story-texts have been identical besides the fingerprints of copy editors. There were stylistic changes between magazines and EsqME chose not to run curse words, but there were no observed efforts to significantly change the text.

attempts at rehab programs (ME2.50). The profile (ME2.48-54) focuses on how he has won it all back and once again captured success. It starts with this view from atop Downey's abode.

The back-deck view from the A-list is quiet and spectacular. That's the monstrous ivory Getty Center standing mid ground, and through the haze across the San Fernando Valley, the mountains.... Here the root beer is microbrewed; all the proceeds go to help shelter dogs. The water, an advanced hydration beverage patented for high levels of stabilized dissolved oxygen, is A-list too. Luncheon (sliced steak and salmon fillet) is currently being prepped by the chef, Louise, whose shortcake-and-cream dessert will be gluten-free. (ME2.50)

Downey's altitude separates him from the rest of Los Angeles and its struggling actors as much as his "stabilized distilled oxygen" beverage and steak-and-salmon lunch (ME2.50). The story continues somewhat similarly to the core of Caine's story except that another character begins to creep into the narrative and noticeably has an effect on Downey Jr.'s life. His wife, Susan Levin Downey, the "heavy-hitting producer and the heart that beats in Downey's chest right next to his," (ME2.51) helps plan his next career moves. "There's no understanding for me of the bigger picture in real time in a hands-on way without her. Because it was the perfect, perfect, perfect matching of personalities and gifts" (ME2.51). He mentions wanting to start a production company with her where she would produce and he, like his father, would direct. He even mentions wanting to start a family, "the ultimate artifact of our love. In a onesie" (ME2.54).

An influential spouse or family member has otherwise simply been absent in original *Esquire* Middle East content besides very few exceptions—a "What I've

Learned” with rock’n’roll guitarist Joe Parry (ME2.86) and some aspects of their article on Brad Pitt (ME1.66-67).

The single-actor tendencies of the Middle Eastern MaHB bear close resemblance to David and Brannon’s (1975) third masculine imperative: to be a sturdy oak—independent and self-reliant.

Appearance and Fashion

Esquire has concerned itself with contemporary fashion since its inception in 1933. It comes as no surprise that *Esquire* Middle East also budgets a portion of its editorial pages to style advice and covering the current trends in fashion. The three premier issues feature 64 pages of fashion feature-spreads, grooming and style advice, profiles on fashion designers and buying guides for clothing and accessories, not including the fashion-focused exclusive promotions or advertorials. Fifty-two of these pages were in the first two issues; the third featured a notable decline. On average, appearance and fashion content in the magazine represents 19.9% of overall editorial content, compared to 13.5% in the American *Esquire*, which totaled 40 pages.

Beyond the numbers, the content of these pages also show differences between the magazines. Readers of *Esquire* Middle East seem to be already interested in fashion and their appearance. They seek out the magazine for further advice and information on specific seasonal looks by major designers (“A Man for All Seasons,” ME2.88-95), fashion trends (“Quiet Is the New Loud,” ME1.126-133), and “Who You Should Be Wearing” (ME2.36).

Other articles include a guide for how to enjoy a facial (ME1.155), a profile of fashion designer Tom Ford (ME2.104-105), and a style guide for each decade of manhood, from the 20s, when the MaHB can be cheap and trendy on everything but shoes and suits, to the maturity of the 40s and 50s, when sticking to quality, built-to-last materials and classic shapes to match changing body types is recommended (ME1.53-55). *Esquire* Middle East even dips into women's fashion in the "Essentials" back-of-book section with a "For The Ladies" page featuring a pair of women's high heels and proclaiming that "the statement shoe is back" (ME1.160) and a "What To Buy To Please Your Lover" holiday gift-buying spread (ME2.98-99), suggesting a general interest in fashion outside of strictly menswear.

Acknowledging the drawbacks of a monthly publication schedule, style writer Allistair Mulhall offers a list of "The Five Best Men's Wear Blogs" (ME2.37) including The Satorialist, Homme Boy, Acquire, The Fashion Inquisitor and Male-Mode. This inclusion shows that the editors know their MaHB readers not only want more fashion news and advice, but they are also interested in actively seeking it away from the magazine.

On the contrary, the *American Esquire* seems to utilize its style and appearance sections mostly for pleas to its readership to dress up more often. For the magazine's New Year's-themed "Style" department, the editors suggest making a resolution just "to care a little more" about your appearance and the clothes you wear (AM3.37). Specifically, the section highlights ten categories to improve on: embracing the new, restock basics, upgrade weekend wear, buy a third pair of dress shoes, invest in a made-to-measure suit, look into the Saks Fifth Avenue, consider

buying a black watch, travel with more style, wear a tie when you don't have to and get seven fold ties (AM3.38-39). *Esquire* Middle East just picked three: lighten up your fabrics, get some exotic, art deco print ties and upgrade your white shirt to something with a little more flair to it, like zippers or detailed buttons (ME3.36).

Rather than trying to steer the American MaHB toward certain designers or seasonal trends, the style section tends to stick to basics, like what kind of attire is appropriate for the varying events of the winter holidays (AM2.91-92) and a what to look for when buying watches (AM1.57-64). They also include a 10-page fashion spread called "Gentlemen, May We Introduce You to the Shirt & Tie" (AM3.102-111). The feature starts, "A lot of us don't need to dress up for the office. Some of us just decide to" (AM3.102). They found eight guys who were relatively dressed down for work and dressed them up in outfits that are still work friendly but stylish. It's specifically this brand of you-can-do-it cheerleading that differentiates the style sections of the American and Middle Eastern *Esquire*. The Middle Eastern MaHB already knows he can do it, and likely does.

Characteristics outside of Kahn's archetype

Luxury

It is worth mentioning that Kahn, whom *Esquire* Middle East's MaHB seems to be so diligently fashioned after, is featured in the introductory letter from Lawrence (ME1.20), and only once elsewhere—in the "Men We Admire" list (ME1.67-69). The letter includes just one quotation from Kahn, a snippet from an interview Lawrence did with him a couple years earlier. "I was a great, successful

cricketer. I was married to someone who was also very rich and I could have had a very easy life... But the spiritual life tells you that there are nobler attributes to aim for” (ME1.20).

While I initially thought that this wealth-is-not-important ideal of Kahn’s might become a recurring theme with the Middle Eastern MaHB, it rarely appeared again. Perhaps this shouldn’t have seemed so surprising considering Lawrence’s response (part of which was referenced earlier), which quickly brought the conversation from a spiritual level back to a material world: “Fair enough answer, though it was nice to see that his quest for purity hadn’t stopped him from wearing a Savile Row suit or making sure his hair was suspiciously black for a man in his fifties. Oh, and he was wearing dark sunglasses throughout the interview. Indoors” (ME1.20). The mention of Kahn in the “Men We Admire” list has the same feel: “How Imran Kahn managed to carry off the whole playboy lifestyle/sensational sportsman thing so well in his younger days, and then turn his energies over to fight for his country is beyond us. We’ll settle for looking as good in a suit. At least for now...”

The only other prominent character to downplay the importance of wealth is Ben Sulayem, the character who is perhaps most similar to Kahn in any of the three issues of *Esquire* Middle East. Ben Sulayem says he sold the Hard Rock Café because of the stress that came with it.

Eventually you come to an age when you want to enjoy life... People would say, ‘You don’t want a tower on Sheikh Zayed Road?’ No, I don’t want a tower on Sheikh Zayed Road! It’s just me, I’m happy with what I have. We have a saying in Arabic: coffins have no pockets. You cannot take your money with you. (ME1.61)

Belittling the importance of money and wealth wasn't simply a topic briefly mentioned by the Middle Eastern MaHB icon. The opposite was true. Wealth and luxury were among the most prominent topics in *Esquire* Middle East.

Dubai, the largest circulation market for *Esquire* Middle East, is one of the most extravagant cities in the world. As mentioned in the literature review, it is perhaps most well known for its extroverted, material displays of wealth (The Burj Khalifa, Palm Islands, an indoor ski slope, refrigerated beaches, etc.). The content of *Esquire* Middle East and the Middle Eastern examples of the MaHB reflect the luxuriousness of the city. Articles include a "How To Do Your Festive Shopping In One Hour Flat" guide (ME2.102-103) that begins with getting a cup of "the world's most expensive coffee...made from coffee berries eaten by, and passed through the digestive tract of the Asian Palm Civet" (ME.102) that costs approximately 73 American dollars per cup. The magazine also highlights Quintessentially Dubai, a worldwide concierge service of A-list quality personal assistants, which, for the right price, tells you where to go to have fun, to be seen, where to eat, etc. It was made for the people who "have the means to do so," even in the wake of recession that descended upon Dubai (ME3.27).

This esthetic also carries into the profiles of *Esquire* Middle East runs. The featured men aren't just rich. Their luxury is the basis of their brand. Thomas Flohr is the subject of the January business profile (ME3.41-43) and founder of Vistajet, an A-list private jet charter company, or, as Flohr describes it, "a Four Seasons in the sky" (ME3.42). Chartering one of his luxury aircrafts—equipped with a \$15,000 cappuccino espresso machine—to fly 12 people one way from London to Dubai

would cost at least \$100,000, but “Flohr insists Vistajet clients are willing to pay top dollar for the right service” (ME3.42).

Also, consider the aforementioned fashion designer and film director Tom Ford. Mulhall profiled him for his high-end menswear line. He describes Ford as “the picture of refinement. He answers the door to his hotel suite dressed in his trademark black tuxedo and a white shirt so crisp you know he’ll only wear it once” (ME2.104). Mulhall focuses on Ford’s new fragrance line, but also adds, “even if you can’t afford his clothes, purchasing one of his perfumes ensures you are buying into a world that works in a way other brands don’t” (ME2.105). In both of these excerpts, Ford and his brand are depicted as so exclusive and with a level of luxury so high, it arguably reaches a level absurdity fit for kings and royalty, but one that the readership obviously wants a piece of.

Spotlighting high-end-for-high-end’s-sake products and lux-lust coverage of profile subjects is far less prevalent in the American *Esquire* content. Exceptions are present—price tags in the extravagant “fourth watch” selection of their guide to buying watches range from \$6,140 to \$57,800—though they are hardly representative. The Kennedy brothers, who claim the most luxurious background of any of the American MaHB subjects within the sample, acknowledge their wealth without bragging about it and even downplay their elitism, claiming they are little different from the common man:

I have no firsthand knowledge of the Depression. My family had one of the great fortunes of the world and it was worth more than ever then. We had bigger houses, more servants, we traveled more. About the only thing that I saw directly was when my father hired some extra gardeners just to give them a job so they could eat. I really did not

learn about the Depression until I read about it at Harvard. My experience was the war. I can tell you about that. (John F. Kennedy, 1960. AM3.69)

Sometimes people think that because you have money and position you are immune from the human experience. But I can feel as lonesome and lost as the next man when I turn the key in the door and go into an empty house that is usually full of kids and dogs. (Robert F. Kennedy, late 60s. AM3.69)

The representative differences between the luxury of the American and Middle Eastern MaHB is best exhibited in their dueling dining guides. On title and mission alone, the difference is apparent: the Middle Eastern “Esquire’s Guide to Fine Dining” compared to the American “Esquire’s Best New Restaurants.” The American *Esquire* stresses from the very beginning of its feature that the perception the best fine dining is changing in the United States from operating on reputation and legacy to rewarding taste and a worthy price point. The introduction asks, “Why drink prestige champagnes when there are so many wonderful new Italian *proseccos*, Spanish *cavas* and sparkling wines on the list?” (AM1.80), and contends that “the best chefs are concocting budget-conscious dishes using less-pricey ingredients... without lowering standards one bit” (AM1.80).

One example of a top chef catering to his clientele’s budget is Zack Bruell’s sautéed walleye with lobster quenelles and sauce Americaine from L’Albatros Brasserie and Bar in Cleveland. (AM1.83) Instead of using the traditional lobster with pike quenelles, he switches them. “By using lobster in the quenelles and making the pike the center of the plate, I can make it more affordable,” says Bruell (AM1.83).

The Middle Eastern MaHB, on the other hand, doesn't want to risk the possibility of spending his "only free night of the week being disappointed" (ME3.70), so he sticks with the sure bets of fine dining in the UAE⁴, "the date-proof, anniversary-suitable, impressive, inventive and near-guaranteed venues of an excellent dining experience." It's a description that can reasonably be understood as "pricey." Restaurant Director Etienne Haro talks about how the recession is hitting the restaurants. That now, "some customers who used to eat out five or six times a week now go twice, but they are looking for real quality when they do" (ME3.71).

It's a difference in mentality and approach. When tight for money, the American MaHB steps down from the traditionally prestigious and expensive experiences and makes do with the resources available. The Middle Eastern MaHB sticks with the high-standard luxury, but indulges less often.

Business

The Middle Eastern MaHB is a business man. From the onset of issue one it's been reflected in the business-tinged editorial focus and the subjects profiled. Both the Middle East and American editions of *Esquire* began introducing business and economics department features and essays in the "Man at His Best" front-of-book section. Offerings included localized essays about how, for the first time since the 1960s, the US lost its economic role as the top exporter to the Middle East (ME3.13), investing in Israeli pharmaceutical giant, Teva (AM2.56), and the fall of the US Dollar

⁴ 17 of the 20 restaurants are in Dubai, the remaining three in Abu Dhabi, further cementing that *Esquire* Middle East focuses most on readers in the UAE, particularly Dubai, first before the other nations and their cities.

(ME2.15 and AM2.56). However, *Esquire* Middle East's additional business articles suggest a readership with more than just a casual interest in business.

Unlike its American counterpart, *Esquire* Middle East includes a designated business section. In both the November and December issues, it consists of three components: "The Interview," "How To Succeed In...," and "Style." The January issue adds a fourth, "Travel."

"The Interview" is essentially a business profile of someone (all three are men) with a connection to the Middle East. The profiles talk about the businesses the subjects currently run, their future ventures, their average working day consists of and their "vital stats"—nationality, family, houses, education, fitness regimen, the cars they own, their favorite music, film, gadget, video games, authors, places to travel and restaurants. Each of these men have been mentioned previously in this analysis. The first, Mohammed Ben Sulayem is vice president of the FIA, the ATCUAE president and the official FIA representative for Middle East FIA events (ME1.59-61). Sulaiman Al-Fahim is a multi-venture businessman who made millions in Dubai real estate, was the brief owner of two English Premier football teams, works in philanthropy and is starting a football ownership company (ME2.41-43). And Thomas Flohr is the Swiss CEO of VistaJet, a plush luxury airline service for A-listers and rich people. VistaJet acquired Bombardier Skyjets International last year, which has offices in Dubai, and Flohr says that the Middle East is a key market for his company's growth (ME3.41-43).

"How To Succeed In..." is a quick guide of dos, don't and tips that discusses a new city each issue. The articles cover Kuwait City (ME1.62), Singapore (ME2.44),

and Mumbai (ME3.44), and go over roughly the same material in each issue (transportation, where to eat, night life, appropriate business etiquette and sites to see on days off), but localize the content. For instance, the guide advises that Singapore’s MTR underground is often faster and cheaper than taking a taxi, but the website www.gothere.sg should be deferred to for the best route and a rough cost estimate (ME2.44). For a meal in Mumbai to impress, the Olive Bar & Kitchen in the Bandra district of the city is a popular eatery among models, actors and cricket stars (ME3.44). For the best bet for nightlife in Kuwait City, it recommends, due to the strict anti-alcohol laws, heading to a local café, ordering a *shisha*—a water pipe often used to smoke flavored tobacco—and a cup of sugary tea (ME1.62). When in Singapore, always give business cards with two hands and the text facing up (ME2.44). And when in Mumbai, it suggests taking “a tour of the Dharavi slum (www.realitytoursandtravel.com) to see where locals live and work in the 15,000 single-room factories. It’s the biggest slum in Asia and a vast cottage industry” (ME3.44).

“Style” features typical style or fashion information for business-acceptable clothing. The section highlights individual accessories and items of clothing like a brown leather satchel by Brunello Cucinelli (ME3.46) or a USB flashdrive bracelet (ME2.45). They also include short service-journalism fashion tips like how to fold a pocket square (ME1.63) and four types of shirt cloths for every closet (ME2.45).

The fourth section, “Travel,” is found only in the January issue and features tutorials on how to get a flight upgrade, how to pack items like suit jackets, ties, sweaters, etc. It also showcases a few products the editors deem worth investing in

for flights: passive noise-canceling headphones, an all-purpose battery charger and a moisturizing skin gel.

Esquire Middle East's decision to include this business-centered monthly segment speaks to the interests and professional line of work of their MaHB reader. It also emphasizes the importance of being a businessman as a qualification for being a Middle Eastern MaHB. Running a successful business, as Ben Sulayem, Al-Fahim and Flohr have, seems to be reason enough to be considered among the other featured men in the magazine.

The Kennedy Legacy as the American *MaHB* Icon.

Though lacking a true endorsement as the model American MAHB, as Kahn received in ME1.20, the trio of John, Robert and Edward Kennedy, as depicted in the 10-page "What I've Learned" feature spread (AM3.66-75), encapsulate several key characteristics of the American MaHB.

"What I've Learned" articles are a recurring story format for *Esquire*. Each issue typically includes at least one, and every January, the magazine fills a large portion of its feature well with them. They take the form of Q-and-A-style profiles with only the "A's" presented, so the voice and perspective of the interviewer is largely absent.

The collection of strung-together quotes comes from an original interview with a living person. Editor-in-Chief David Granger notes that using a dead man, much less three for the subjects of the piece, is an extreme rarity for "What I've

Learned.”⁵ *Esquire’s* willingness to break this standard proposes an argument for the importance of the Kennedy dynasty and legacy to the American MAHB. To further this point, in his “This Way In” letter from the editor, Granger refers to the Kennedys as a “dynasty that has shaped and reflected modern America like no other” (AM3.10).

The quotes that the editors of the American *Esquire* selected to use in their portrait of the Kennedys were quarried from various bibliographies, memoirs, magazine articles, archival audio and video files, and personal papers. These reflections, which include both official and offhand comments, illustrate a distinct composite of the Kennedy legacy that Granger, himself, refers to as “more textured, candid and intimate than just the legacy of their more familiar public pronouncements, many of which are seared into our collective consciousness” (AM3.10).

The Kennedy-trio is, without question, a less perfect icon for the American MaHB than Kahn is for the Middle Eastern MaHB. While most of Kahn’s described traits are reflective of the *Esquire* Middle East MaHB, many of the Kennedys’ foremost character traits in the feature encapsulate the qualities that made them both successful leaders and enduring icons of American culture (toughness, work ethic, accountability, and a drive to aspire to greater things), but they are not particularly qualities specific to the American MaHB. The generation gap between the Kennedys and the current *Esquire* readership seems to contribute to the

⁵ One exception to this ‘living rule’ was Homer Simpson (AM3.10). Another, Elvis Presley was featured after *Esquire* was granted access to previously unpublished interview recordings with him (AM3.10).

disparity of how they exhibit masculine gender roles. However, some characteristics do permeate, specifically the importance placed on family life.

American MaHB as Family Man

The Middle Eastern MaHB is depicted as a distinctly singular man. This is not the case for his American counterpart. The American MaHB subjects are frequently mentioned with their families and distinguished in their roles as son, brother and especially father.

While each of the Kennedy brothers is famous and cover-worthy in his own right, the shared blood that linked their lives together is one of the strongest foci of the feature (AM3.66-75). The quotes selected often peer into the family relationships both before and after the assassinations of John F. Kennedy in November, 1963 and Robert F. Kennedy in June, 1968. They cover the kinship between the brothers themselves as well as the whole family. Edward Kennedy writes:

My brothers were my dearest friends. They were just human beings—and wanted to be treated that way—but they were extraordinary. I cared very deeply about them, loved them. I miss them. No day goes by when I don't. That gap will be with me for the rest of my life. No way to bridge that. (Edward Kennedy, 1985, AM3.67)

If I could have a meal with anybody, living or dead, who would it be with? My brothers who left too early. My sisters. My parents. I always associated the times when we were together—and there weren't that many times when we were all together—as the happiest times. (Edward Kennedy, 2007, AM3.97)

The feature also touches on the Kennedys' relationships as fathers within their own families. Again, two excerpts by Edward Kennedy:

Let your children know you love them... and have a good strong back.
(Edward Kennedy, 1985. AM3.74)

I remember my brother Jack at the Cape in 1961 just before he went to Paris to see de Gaulle and then to Vienna to see Khrushchev. Late in the afternoon we walked over together from his house to my father's house. There was a heavy fog coming in, and it was cool and getting dark. As we walked out across the lawn Caroline came out of my father's house crying. She came down off the porch and ran over to Jack. He sort of held her and talked to her with great tenderness. Just then the kitchen door opened up and someone called out, 'Mr. President, they want you on the White House phone—they say it's important.' And Jack said, "Caroline, I'll be back in just a moment. Let me take this phone call." Jack took the phone call and then we all went into the dining room together. As we sat down there was a silence at the table and I could feel that Dad for some reason was uneasy and edgy. And then he said, "Jack, I saw what happened outside. Caroline was in tears and came out. You had a call from the White House. I know there are lots of things on your mind about meeting with Khrushchev and your trip abroad. But let me tell you something: Nothing that will happen during your Presidency will be as important as how Caroline turns out. And don't forget it." (Edward M. Kennedy, 1973, AM3.74)

If the president, arguably the most important person in the United States, should regard his fatherly role as his most significant job, even during times of pending national crisis, then it's understood that the common MaHB should also consider it a matter of such importance. Of all the masculine family roles, the role of father is the most emphasized in the *American Esquire*. The articles that feature a MaHB in a fatherly role are not centered on honoring "dads of the year." Rather, the subjects' roles as fathers are simply presented as a large, defining aspect of their lives.

For instance, Eric Loewen is featured in the “Best & Brightest” profiles in the December issue for his work as a nuclear engineer with sodium fast reactors, but all discussions of his professional work are preceded by an introduction of him as a family man: “The man who is going to save the world is an ordinary-looking man...a classic all-American *Homo suburbanus*” with a Ph.D (AM2.158). He used to foster children, 11 in all, he volunteers with a charity that teaches autistic children to surf, and he’s “a damn good father” (AM2.158). The story gives a glimpse into his tender, supportive relationship with his high-school son, Hans, a cross-country runner, by looking into the “racebook” Loewen made for them.

Team time trial, August 3, 2009, Monday. The word ‘Go’ was stated. The students took off, boys and girls. Kevin took the lead and you got behind him. Many thought, ‘Rookie mistake. Hans will fade,’ but Hans didn’t slow down. His shadow continued to haunt Kevin all the way around the three-lap course. You had a time of 19:05. This is amazing, Hans. So a quote and a question: ‘Effort and courage are not enough without purpose and direction.’ - JFK. Do you want to be number one this year and this season? If so, please contact Dad for secret training and coaching. -Dad (AM2.159)

Loewen’s fatherly role doesn’t come up much in the remainder of the story besides slight references to him being America’s “secret coach” on its nuclear future. Nuclear power is a divisive, polarizing issue that uses complicated physics and chemistry terms and laws that are difficult for the layman to understand. Dedicating the introduction of the story to building Loewen up as a “damn good father” appears to only benefit the story by letting the readers get to know him and trust him. Writer John H. Richardson does this by letting them in on an aspect of Loewen’s life they can understand and relate to, fatherhood.

Esquire expresses fatherhood in its natural range of sub-roles and emotions. Musician Sting still worries about his kids. “I thought when my kids got to twenty-one, that would be it, you know? They’d be out the door. We’d never have to worry about them again. But I have a 32-year old and I still worry about him like he’s a little boy” (AM3.98). Academy Award winning film director Peter Jackson talks about how his daughter teaches him things. “My 13-yr-old daughter makes films with her friends on the weekends. Then she edits them on iMovie, and I sit with her and ask her to teach me how to do it. I’m trying to learn” (AM3.93). Writer at large, Scott Raab writes about how he wanted to name his son something closer to their Old-Testament Jewish roots than his own name in order to more closely link him to their family’s past and heritage (AM2.42). *Esquire* health writer, Dr. Mehmet Oz touches on the father’s role in a child’s development when he unveils his plan to give his son a big red ball for Christmas, because you can’t play ball alone, you must play it outside and “playing is where kids learn all the things they need to succeed as grown-ups” (AM2.54).

However, this appearance of the family man does not always place him or the children in a traditional nuclear family. For instance, filmmaker Guy Richie is divorced from Madonna, with whom he has two sons, yet his relationship with his older son, Rocco, still appears traditional in the feature profile (AM1.122). The two watch a UFC fight together, then when he leaves, we again see the image of a caring, affectionate father.

Rocco kisses his dad on the lips unself-consciously... Outside, Ritchie stands on the street and watches him depart, eyebrows raised. ‘Look,’ he says, softly narrating the sight of his own son wobbling away on his

banana-seated bike. “Look at him!” he says, urgent in his reminder to himself. “Jump the curb. Jump the curb. Good boy.” (AM1.122)

Edward Kennedy is another example of the divorcee-yet-still-a-caring-father role. Besides his previously cited quotations, he said in 1985 with this, “My children have been the greatest source of joy and fun for me. Having them around is a continuous reawakening, a sensitizing of my emotions—like taking the calluses off my fingers” (AM1.74). The magazine’s inclusion of the divorcee father figure is likely reflective of the prevalent divorce rates in America and thus, also reflective of the American readership of *Esquire*.⁶

Also notable, despite being relatable only to the Kennedy story, are the ways in which the brothers, specifically Edward, are shown as being fathers to one another’s children after both John and Robert had been assassinated. Edward wrote this letter to Robert’s children five months after his death.

When I think of Bobby, I shall always see Cape Cod on a sunny day. The wind will be from the southwest and the whitecaps will be showing and the full tide will be sweeping through the gaps in the breakwater. It will be after lunch, and Bob will be stripped to the waist and he’ll say, ‘Come on, Joe, Kathleen, Bobby and David, Courtney, Kerry, come on Michael, and even you Chris and Max—call your mother and come for a sail.’ One of the children would say, ‘What about the baby?’ and the father would reply, ‘Douglas can come next year.’ They push off from the landing. The sails of the *Resolute* catch the wind, and the boat tips and there are squeals of laughter from the crew....The boat heads out into Nantucket Sound. The tide is gentle—the sand shifts—the sky is blue—the seagulls watch from above and the breeze is warm. And there will be happiness and love and we are together again. (E. M. Kennedy, November 1968)

⁶ According to 2008 National Vital Statistics Report on births, marriages, divorces, and deaths, the divorce rate in the United States is half that of the marriage rate, suggesting that half of all marriages end in divorce.

Though this letter lacks any overt fatherly advice, Edward's empathy and support for Robert's eleven children is suggested most strongly in his addressing the letter to them. Rory Kennedy, the youngest of the children, was born six months after the assassination, and many of the others were too young to have established lasting memories of their father. The letter offers a permanent portal to the father they hardly knew.

Comparatively, the role of the MaHB character as father is starkly missing from the *Esquire* Middle East text. In the scarce occurrences when the father-child image does appear, the interactions vary drastically in tone compared to the affectionate way the American MaHB speaks about his children. Ben Sulayem briefly mentions his children when he talks about his daily schedule. "I go home often for lunch—I look forward to having eating (sic) with my family, though I am a dictator with my children. I say to them 'You will wait for your father and I will wait for you and we will eat lunch together—nobody will eat alone'" (ME1.61). Rupert Murdoch's Q&A includes a quote about his children, but it's little more than a rundown of what they're doing professionally rather than giving much insight about his relationships with them, though he does mention still being very close to his son Lachlan, who moved to Australia after working alongside him. (ME1.93) He also offers this: "I was given a great opportunity in life, and I would like to give my children their opportunity. But if they screw up, or if they're not capable or not prepared to do the work, that's another matter" (ME1.93). Other instances include #79 in the "101 Rules for Men" list: "Your child is only thirty-eight per cent as cute as you think he is" (ME1.70) and commenting on Brad Pitt's "newfound family-oriented sensibility.

It takes a lot to go from no kids to having enough for a five-a-side team (with a sub) in a little over three years” (ME1.67).

The two remaining family-oriented moments in the trio of *Esquire* Middle East issues have a slightly more affectionate tone, but they are both brief, and, within the context of the entire sample size, they resonate as outliers. The first comes from Robert Downey Jr.’s profile, which, as previously mentioned, was published in both the Middle Eastern and American editions of *Esquire*. Downey talks about wanting to start a family with wife Susan Levin Downey. As mentioned earlier, he calls it, “the ultimate artifact of our love. In a onesie” (ME2.54). Referring to the child as an “artifact of... love” seems to be a more positive way to frame it than the image of Ben Sulayem’s dictatorship. The other outlier is from musician Joe Parry’s “What I’ve Learned.” “I watch my son play in a band. They’re doing it right, going with the flow and seeing how the music business works out. They’re keeping their day jobs for now. I’ve learned a lot from them—especially how to promote the music on things like MySpace and Twitter” (ME2.86). Here we see Parry in a roll similar to Peter Jackson’s daughter teaching him to make movies on iMovie. Both fathers have already been immensely successful in the field their children are now entering, but they allow the children to teach them about what they’re doing, showing support for their creative outlets along the way. But again, these two examples from *Esquire* Middle East, though more in line with the American *Esquire*’s MaHB-as-father image, are exceptions.

Even the American *Esquire*’s darkest feature stories tie in fatherly themes. Christian Longo, the subject of a 10-page feature story by Micheal Finkel, lives on

death row in the Oregon State Penetentiary for the murder of his wife and three children in 2001 (AM3.118-127)⁷. He used to run a successful construction company. But when the company began struggling, he continued to claim to everyone, including his family, that he was rolling in profits. “The one thing he could never do was admit to his wife that he was anything less than a success” (AM3.122). So, Longo began a spiral of counterfeiting checks, forging credit cards and faking proofs of identification in an attempt to maintain the façade. He was eventually forced to flee westward with his family in a stolen car from their home in Michigan. But the best job he could find paid \$7.40 an hour at a Starbucks in Oregon. He couldn’t support his family of five. He had backed himself into a corner of lies, debt and a level of embarrassment he could never deal with.

But you can’t keep running when you have three children. You can’t keep writing fake checks. You can’t earn any income when there are outstanding warrants for your arrest and you’re unable to pass a background check or even give out your Social Security number. And you can’t admit that you’ve been deceiving your wife for years, that in reality she’s married a loser and a liar and thief. That you can’t afford a tank of gas, let alone housing and diapers and clothing and food. You’re trapped. (AM3.122)

One day he reached a breaking point. He came home from work, strangled his wife and 2-year-old daughter, packed them into luggage and sunk them in the bay (AM120-127). Longo then returned to their condo, put his two remaining sleeping children in the van and tossed them, with rocks tied to their legs, off a nearby bridge.

⁷ Michael Finkel had previously written a book in 2005 about his relationship with Christian Longo, titled *True Story: Murder, Memior, Mea Culpa*. Longo had been using Finkel’s name as an alias while he was living as a fugitive in Mexico.

Longo's goal in life now, while on death row, is to change the type of lethal injection so that death row inmates can donate their organs through a program he named GAVE: Gifts of Anatomical Value from the Executed. He wrote "I am a death row inmate who wants to save lives, not right my wrongs—as this is unfortunately impossible—but to make a positive out of an otherwise horrible situation" (AM3.125).

Beyond being a well-conceived and meticulously written feature, this haunting story is particularly noteworthy for the way it deals with concepts of male and fatherly inadequacy. Longo was neither able to adequately provide for nor support his wife and family, nor come to terms with this inability. In some respects, though in a horrendously perverse way, being a good father to his family was the most important thing for him. It eventually drove him mad, mad enough to murder his family. Finkel says that he continues to ask himself why Longo wouldn't just abandon his family or kill himself, but he still can't reconcile an answer. Longo's story is riddled with logical enigmas (AM3.127). Finkel writes,

Longo insisted he loved his family, that he never wanted harm to come to them. To this day, he said, seeing violence toward children on TV makes him angry—"and then I remember, oh, yeah that's what I did." Even on the night he'd decided to murder his family, if he had come home from work and an intruder was there, trying to hurt his family, he said he would've tried to kill that intruder. (AM3.126)

The fatherly aspect of the story seems to best explain why it was featured in *Esquire* rather than another publication, but Longo should definitely not be misconstrued as a MaHB. While the crime is horrifying, his story resonates with the MaHB. Longo's fear and reality of a life stained by debt, failure, and embarrassment,

though he tried for years to desperately deny and hide it, is a real fear for fathers and heads of households. This fear likely felt even more tangible during the pits of America's recent recession, when this story was published.

Food and Cooking

In the American *Esquire*, the ability to cook and prepare food and drinks are skills that the MaHB strives to excel at. This claim is supported by the amount food-and-drinks-focused articles, recipes, chef profiles, and the way that restaurants are generally covered in the magazine.

Throughout the three American issues of the sample, there are 11 recipes featured (AM1.28,44, AM2.34,42,46,49,70, AM3.14). The dishes range from meatloaf (AM2.46) and latkes (AM2.42) to holiday appetizers (AM2.70) and cocktails (AM2.49). Occasionally, the recipes are interwoven with additional bits of advice covering topics outside of the actual preparation of food, like chef Thomas Keller's tip on how to impress a woman by cooking for her (AM2.34). He says to leave one thing to cook after she arrives, so she can be with you in the kitchen. "*Before she gets there, boil green beans for a few minutes and place them in a bowl of ice water. Then, as she sits with a glass of wine watching you work, mince a shallot and toss the beans and the shallot in a sauté pan with butter*" (AM2.34).

Another portion of the food coverage focuses on informing the reader on a specific food style or origin, such as Russian Zakuski dishes (AM3.24), a drinking and historical guide to vodka (AM3.24), and the different regions of Scotch whiskey

(AM1.80). These types of stories that go beyond the actual preparation and consumption of the food and drink, show the MaHB's deeper interest in the food and beverage world, more than just learning simple cooking tricks to impress women.

On the contrary, the Middle Eastern MaHB seems not to cook or work in the kitchen. The three issues of *Esquire* Middle East include only one recipe—a fancy grilled cheese sandwich that was also used in the American *Esquire* (ME2.32, AM2.70). They also include one ingredient-type story. It focuses on the masquf, a fish eaten for centuries on the shores of Bagdad's River Tigris that now also appears in Dubai restaurants (ME1.42). When they list “The Best Delis In Town,” they recommend a few ingredients to pick up like Gourmet Station's air-dried lamb chorizo and vallecoppa lemon-infused extra virgin olive oil and Carluccio's sun-dried tomato and pomodoro and pesto al peperoncino, but they leave out any preparation instructions or recipes to use them in.⁸ (ME3.75)

The differences between how the Middle Eastern and American editions cover food and cooking also apply to the ways they write about chefs and restaurants. In the American *Esquire*, men who do excel at cooking are praised accordingly and are presented in a masculine way despite working in a traditionally feminine workplace—the kitchen (Min, 2010; Supski, 2006).

In the December issue, articles editor Ryan D'Agostino writes about the night he and his brother hosted a dinner party for Keller—“the greatest chef in the world”—and friends (AM2.102). As they were finishing up preparing the dishes, Keller arrives and immediately volunteers to help. D'Agostino depicts Keller as

⁸ 'In town' means 'in Dubai.'

powerful, in control and a large, dominant presence in the kitchen—highly masculine.

He’s probably six foot four and pivots around the kitchen with a quick, fidgety grace. His hair is fingered straight back, and his head swivels atop a mantislike frame, eyes target-locked on the countertop and stove—he sees everything at once. (AM2.102)

Keller bends his whole body in close over the pan. I’ve never seen anyone cook this way, interact with the food this way, and it’s a surprising thrill... (AM2.104)

He asks me if I want to start putting the hot scallops on plates, so I look for tongs... [Keller:] “Use your fingers, use your fingers, come on. Don’t be a girl.” Keller speaks with a cool authority, like an unusually laid-back football coach. I pick up the steaming scallops with the pads of my fingers, and right away I feel like a slightly better cook. (AM2.104)

Keller’s arm is an atom smasher. He’s stirring the mashed potatoes with a wooden spoon and I can barely see his arm, it’s whirling so fast. The potatoes, which I thought were already done, have become something otherpotatoly (sic). They’re starting to look like pudding. “God, I love this,” he says, breathing hard. “I could whip potatoes all day.” He goes for a solid five minutes, a long time at that intensity. (AM2.104)

Keller is introduced as a hulking omnipresent figure that envelops the pan he’s working over. “Don’t be a girl,” he says, suggesting that cooking like this, with Keller’s intensity, is ultimately masculine. He dominates the ingredients, manhandling the potatoes that D’Agostino had thought were already acceptably mashed and saying he could do it “all day.” Keller, with the help of D’Agostino’s descriptions, transforms cooking and food prep into intensely physical, athletic tasks.

Outside of the domestic kitchen, the American *Esquire* features 14 men from the restaurant business in the sample. Thirteen of them come from November’s

annual “Best New Restaurants” feature. Admittedly, this may not be representative of how often the magazine features chefs—10 in three issues. But regardless, it is relevant to look at the different ways that the two magazines cover the restaurant industry.

In the *American Esquire*, the restaurant endorsements focus on the chefs and the menu items they’ve created. Many of the articles even begin with introducing the chefs in the opening sentence. “The Bazaar is chef José Andrés’s masterpiece” (AM1.80). “Australian chef Shaun Hergatt’s dishes have always been show pieces” (AM1.83). “Paul Liebrandt made his name creating eccentric dishes—eel with chocolate sauce, anyone?—that led some to praise him as an innovator and others to dismiss him as a prankster” (AM1.88). “It becomes very clear very quickly when a chef is having a ball, and John Sedlar is having a ball” (AM1.92). “‘My house didn’t smell like other kids’ houses,’ says Michael Chiarello, chef-owner of Bottega, who was raised in northern California” (AM1.92). “Eat a few dishes prepared by *Esquire* chef of the year Barton Seaver, 30, and you’ll feel good about living on Earth: aged country ham, a perfect chicken potpie with rosemary-flecked biscuits, sweet-potato fritters with honey mustard” (AM1.95). By beginning each of these restaurant reviews by spotlighting the chef, the chefs are framed as the most important part of the restaurant.

There is some representation from the business side of the food and restaurant business, such as restaurateur Danny Meyer from New York’s Union Square Café (AM1.82), Steve Wynn, who is owner/manager at Society Café Encore in Las Vegas and has built up the city’s gastro reputation (AM1.84), and Patrick

Martins, a porkmonger who connects farmers of rare pig breeds to interested restaurants (AM2.150). However, the majority of the food coverage focuses on those working in the kitchen. The success of the restaurant is pinned largely on their shoulders and quality of food. This kind of attention and praise for the chef legitimizes the value and respectability of their profession.

Comparatively, *Esquire* Middle East's "Guide to Fine Dining" focuses far less on the chef or his or her specific handiwork (ME3.69-78). Only a few of the twenty restaurant endorsements feature chefs in the opening sentence. Most are buried deep within the review, if mentioned at all—9 of the 20 don't mention any chef. Instead, the reviews more frequently concentrate on the restaurant's décor, location, service, food and food genre.

Even in the review for the *Esquire* Middle East's "Restaurant of the Year," The Rivington Grill in Dubai, the food fails to capture the spotlight. No particular dishes nor chef specialties are recommended or explained, though chefs Chris Lester and Kelly Jackson are at least mentioned (ME3.70). The following passage is as close as readers get to understanding what the restaurant is actually like:

While some non-Brits may wonder how the largest empire in the world was built on a diet of such irreverently-named delicacies as faggots and mushy peas, bubble and squeak and spotted dick, the rest of us worldly gourmets can get stuck in with lashings of HP sauce. But it isn't just the seasonal British food that keeps us coming back for seconds—the atmosphere is refreshingly unstuffy, the setting is impressive and the suave-yet-affable maitre d' and his team ensure that the service is second to none. And although the décor is suitably understated, scrawls of twisted neon adorn the walls with quirky statements like "I love to boo hoo!" (ME3.70)

Again, there doesn't seem to be any clear designation that those "irreverently-named delicacies" are even on the menu at The Rivington Grill. If they are, the endorsement fails to give any specific characteristics of the dishes that make them worth garnering the award of Restaurant of the Year.

The two chefs that *Esquire* Middle East feature full articles on, Marco Pierre White (ME1.110) and Nobu Matsuhisa (ME3.25), seem to focus on aspects other than their culinary artistry or daily work in the kitchen. White became known outside the foodie world for starring as a TV personality on cooking shows like *Hell's Kitchen* and *Chopping Block*. In his "What I've Learned" piece, they feature his opinions on the state of contemporary fine dining, food TV shows and how the restaurant world has changed since he entered it, but only list a few of his insights into the actual process and art of cooking⁹. The Marco Pierre White Steakhouse & Grill is subsequently featured in the *Guide to Fine Dining*, though the review suggests that he doesn't actually work in the kitchen there, or much of anywhere else: "Marco Pierre White may spend more time hunting game than cooking it these days, but his empire continues to grow apace—especially in the UAE" (ME3.73). White seems to be featured for his celebrity, not for his cooking.

Chef Nobu, the Japanese new wave chef, is cast more as an inventor than a chef (ME3.25). The article, "Churning Japanese" focuses on the prominence of Nobu-imitator eateries that have popped up around the world since his concept restaurant opened in New York in 1993. It names four restaurants in Dubai that "stood out as

⁹ The bottom of the article mentions that his The Marco Pierre White Steakhouse & Grill also "just opened at Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, Abu Dhabi" (ME1.110), providing a newsworthy angle for why White is featured in the "What I've Learned."

the pretenders to Nobu's contemporary Japanese crown. And while they all offered little twists and variations on the original, it was pretty obvious where the inspiration had come from" (ME3.25). Writer, James Brennan discusses how other restaurants are using replicas of his "legendary black cod with miso recipe," but he frames it as more of an invention, with references and jokes about filing lawsuits, than a food dish (ME3.25). The differences between how the American and Middle Eastern *Esquires* talk about the restaurants and chefs support the idea that only in rare cases—like when he is a television star or an inventor—can a man be truly "at his best" in a kitchen.

In fact, there generally seems to be a lack of respect for the restaurant business as a profession in *Esquire* Middle East compared to other businesses featured in the magazine. The "Guide to Fine Dining" includes a "Five Ways To Make Restaurants Better" list—assumedly for restaurant owners and wait staffs to pore over. Though it reads like a forum to air grievances about bad personal experiences with restaurants, the idea that the magazine editors know what is best for the restaurant, better than the restaurant owner and without necessarily any experience in the restaurant industry, seems pompous. The tone of the list also gives the impression that restaurant workers, especially members of the wait staff, are general pests, rude and like street panhandlers in uniform, trying to weasel as much money out of the diners as possible.

1. Offer Local Water First. And if someone asks for local water, don't say "yes sir" and bring him a bottle of something Italian and imported that costs Dhs28. We know you want to make as much money as possible, but squeezing more cash out of diners via something as basic as this marks you out as someone with no faith in your food...

2. We Like Polite. We like the fact that you want us to enjoy ourselves... But if you keep asking us every two minutes if everything is okay, topping up our glass (that is already two-thirds full) and suffocating us with your fussing, like an overbearing parent on a child's first day at school, then we won't have a good time...

3. Let The Food Speak For Itself. Look in a top restaurant's menu and you will see the name of the dish and below, a list of what it contains, with a little description of how it's prepared. That's all we want. What you won't see are desparate little sells trying to convince us about your "delicious meats," "tasty cuts" or "outstanding desserts." The more you try to sell it, the less we believe you...

4. Don't Put The Service Charge Automatically On The Bill. We pay for the food at the price stated on the menu, which should include all Government taxes. But the service charge is a discretionary tip that diners can leave for the serving staff. Automatically adding it implies that everyone will always be happy with the service every time...

5. Don't Pull A Face If We Don't Eat The Amuse Bouche. To give us something as a taster while we wait for the main course is a lovely gesture. But when you give a shot glass of goo and lobster bits to someone who doesn't like lobster (and isn't a huge fan of goo either), don't start questioning us as to why we didn't touch it... (ME3.74)

The American and Middle Eastern MaHB seem to simply differ in dining expectations. Whereas the American MaHB goes to the restaurant in hopes of being able to experience and appreciate the menu items as an art enthusiast would in a gallery or museum, the Middle Eastern MaHB views a meal out as more of a service he is paying for—the restaurant should be eager to win him over.

So, the American *Esquire* has more food-focused content, recipes, and chef recognitions in their dining guides than the Middle Eastern magazine. These incongruencies suggest differences in gender roles and expectations as they relate to food and cooking. The kitchen is not a place for a Middle

Eastern MaHB. They do not cook. If they did, the content of the magazine would reflect their interest in it. The gender and, perhaps, socio-economic roles governing use of the kitchen as a creative, work and leisure space seem more narrowly defined and abided in *Esquire* Middle East's world than in the kitchens of their American counterparts. Keller exemplifies this contrast (AM2.34, 102-106). D'Agostino's depiction of him affirms that the American MaHB is not just accepted in the kitchen behind the knife and stove, he is king. Keller proposes cooking as a masculine trait, one that a woman finds desirable. Thus, kitchen work becomes masculine. The spatula-wielding MaHB is providing and creating. This may also suggest that women in the American MaHB's world find men, who are unwilling to be confined by traditional gender roles and rules, desirable.

The American MaHB Struggles to Reaffirm His Masculinity

It admittedly seems strange to suggest that the archetype male for the longest-running American men's magazine struggles with his masculinity. But perhaps it isn't so bizarre if *Esquire* is simply reflecting the inner-conflicts of its own readership. The American MaHB's self-perception of masculine ideals seems closely tied to some traditional roles of a manliness and fatherhood: providing shelter, safety and maintaining a sexual gravitas. Feelings of inadequacy are often divulged and discussed in the texts using self-deprecating humor, as contributing editor and Hollywood director and producer Barry Sonnenfeld does in his article "The Digital

Man Hits The Shed,” where he tests “the newest gadgets for your workbench” (AM1.44).

With one exception, my experience with power tools has been limited to the Magic Bullet blender I bought from that oddly convincing infomercial. (You should taste my smoothies.) After I whined to the grips (the manly men who build things on movie sets) about how much I wanted a chain saw, they bought me a Makita cordless drill. They knew if they got me a chainsaw, at the very least I’d maim myself and they’d be out of a job. Still, I was thrilled. All I really wanted was to feel manly, and the Makita did the trick. (ME1.44)

This thirst to “feel manly” is perhaps a reflection of traditionally manly traits handiness and being capable of construction becoming less important skills for the MaHB in the modern and increasingly digital world of *Esquire’s* American readership¹⁰. Instead, we see Sonnenfeld use smaller kitchen machinery in lieu of heavy-duty power tools, further reinforcing the American MaHB’s role in the kitchen.

Feelings of masculine inadequacy become a recurring theme with the American MaHB. It’s the paramount conflict within Fitz, the protagonist in “Insurrection,” the winning submission to the *Esquire* Fiction contest and written by JR Walsh (AM1.70-77). The story starts with a young Fitz. He snags Beebs, a beautiful woman, marries her in secret, and they live together.

Look at Fitz: younger, thinner, clean-shaven... There he was, in bed with Beebs and not pulling the sheets up and over the gut of the future, not worrying about one mound of belly flesh deemphasizing another mound of action flesh. And just look at Beebs. Look longer. She makes a man want to cancel all his magazine subscriptions, invest in a better camera, burn every sheet and blanket in the house and sell all her power suits so that no one in the world ever goes to work again. (AM1.72)

¹⁰ Sonnenfeld’s usual subjects of review and discussion are cameras, mp3 players, GPS navigators and other gadgets of the digital world.

But as they age, he becomes fat, “a desk-job balloonier... nearly twice her weight” (AM1.73) and a gradual victim of cubicle culture. He spends his days working long hours at his job, promoting powdered food products on the Internet. His libido and health plummet, he balds, and he worries that Beebs will leave him but doesn’t do anything to halt her from sliding. He simply becomes an increasingly more ill-functioning, pathetic character.

Fitz is an ironic (in the literary sense of the word) masculine character until the end of story when he finally redeems his ability to protect Beebs, a quality he worries about not possessing, even at the onset of their relationship. He kills a crow that got into the house and had scared Beebs into the bathroom.

The fact that Fitz is a fictional character seems especially significant and makes it even easier to generalize aspects of his character as real concerns for the American MaHB readership. We must assume that Walsh’s story, like Finkel’s story about Longo, was chosen by the editors because, besides being well-written, it brought up themes of emasculation, inadequacy, a fear of losing your wife and the person you once were, etc., that they thought would resonate with the MaHB.

The theme of emasculation also carries over into the MaHB’s interactions with women—even the one they peg as “The Sexiest Woman Alive,” Kate Beckinsale (AM1.100-106). The profile, written by fiction editor and writer-at-large Tom Chiarella, narrates an at-times overt battle between he and Beckinsale about whether Chiarella can hold his masculinity intact at their lunch date. The story begins with him meeting her at a “girly” café:

One of those places where women meet other women, to talk forever, to eat salads and split entrees, where the sweaters are stretchy, the jewelry outsized, the purses massive and sexless, where fruity tea is served in ceramic pots (AM1.102).

He briefly tries to set a sexy scene for the reader once they head to the private, second floor of the café.

She drops the sweater from her shoulders with a shrug. She's wearing hot pants, a trim white blouse over a tank top, black boots with heels. If there is a difference between femininity and sexiness, this may be it. She is sexy, boot to temple... On her finger: skull ring. Huge. This rose-gold skull staring from the crook of her knuckle... Cool. And definitely not sexless. (AM1.102-103)

But the mood and physical descriptions of Beckinsale quickly vanish from the text. He tries to look natural eating a frisee salad, and they get to talking about their mutual adoration for Freddie Mercury, the 70s queer icon and lead singer of Queen, whom Chiarella admits "a fairly unadulterated, semi-sexual affection for" (AM1.104). He says "the effect of this restaurant—the twist of the wicker, the paroxysm of houseplants—is making [him] act strangely like a girl, while Kate Beckinsale acts like she's got a set" (AM1.104).

Interestingly, Chiarella is well aware of the emasculation process going on. He notes its progression at several moments in their interaction, like the example above, when he says he's acting like a girl and she, like a dominant male figure with "a set." The actions he defines as feminine and "girly" continue when their lunch orders arrive:

We offer each other bites the way women do...I do take a spear of her asparagus. It's quite good. But as I'm eating it, it occurs to be that I'm giving in to the momentum of the venue, that I may have left my testicles in my hotel room in Mayfair. So I let myself take a long glance

at Kate as she talks more about her friendships as a young woman.
(AM1.105)

He struggles to maintain a masculine edge and traditional masculine role, taking breaks to remind himself of what and how a traditionally masculine man should be thinking and acting in this situation. But ultimately, it's a losing battle.

Beckinsale notices that he has a bit of gray in his eyebrow. She offers to take care of it for him with a "woman's trade secret:" a Sharpie marker (AM1.106).

Chiarella writes, "The tinny revival of *Steel Magnolias* parades onward, and I feel increasingly like Zoey Deschanel, always the girl's best girlfriend. Even so, I can't help but blurt out, 'What about my beard? It's so gray. Can you help me with that?'" (AM1.106).

The scene continues as Beckinsale climbs up close to him and works on the eyebrow while striking an overtly sexual pose despite their girlfriends-type rapport: "knee to crotch, her breath on my face, her massive palm hinged on my cheekbone, a pose suggesting a lap dance by a dental hygienist" (AM1.106). This moment appears to be a possible pivot point in the interaction. Chiarella is presented an opportunity to effectively win back his masculinity, if by doing nothing more than just reveling in the moment. After all, the 'Sexiest Woman Alive' is perched sensually on top of him, her face close enough that he can feel her breath on his cheek. She asks what he is doing afterwards.

A sexual proposition? Unlikely, though it could be interpreted that way, and even if it were just a literary device, it builds sexual tension in the story. Chiarella's response, however, kills any sexual mood that may have been present. "I sigh and tell her that I have to buy a present for my boss's baby while I'm overseas. The

girliest of errands” (AM1.106). She asks to come a long. Here’s Chiarella again, acknowledging and conceding his emasculation:

I give up the fight. Sometimes you have to surrender to the place you’re in... I could use an extra pair of eyes, I tell her. I’d be pleased if she came along. And since we both noticed the cutest little baby store on that very block, we decided there’s no rush. There is comfort in lingering. We order tea. Chamomile for Kate. Himalayan pear for me. We talk forever. It’s delightful. (AM1.106)

This is the end of the story. Chiarella succumbs to the general feminine gender-mood of the café, where—as he explained in the story’s opening—women meet other women to talk forever, eat salads, split entrees and drink fruity teas as he and Beckinsale have done. Though the profile obviously focuses on Beckinsale, the end becomes equally about Chiarella’s inability to maintain a masculine image. This was a profile of the “Sexiest Woman Alive,” a woman who was selected because of her ability to elicit arousal and keep testosterone levels running high, not make the men around her revert to feminine behaviors. Yet, this is precisely what occurs.

The American MaHB can certainly look at women and talk about their looks. *Esquire* does so with “Thirty-Six Other Women We Love” besides Beckinsale: three beautiful, joke-telling women, a whole slough of new slang words for the female anatomy, and others (“Funny Joke From a Beautiful Woman,” AM1.42; “More Women We Love,” AM1.114-117; “Human Anatomy,” AM1.126; “Funny Joke From a Beautiful Woman” AM2.52; “Funny Joke From a Beautiful Woman,” AM3.20; “The Sixth Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show Airs At 10:00 p.m. EST on CBS,” AM2.39). But when it comes down to actually pursuing women sexually, the MaHB is sheepish and insecure.

Consider the questions addressing these insecurities and the admitted lack of knowledge about women posed in the each issue's sex department Q&A. Specifically, the questions cover: what you can do to make up for having a small penis, how effective the pull-out method is, and why your girlfriend can't have an orgasm during sex (AM1.30), how much she is telling her friends about your sex life, making up a better how-I-met-your-mother story than explaining you met online, and how the menstrual cycle affects a woman's behavior (AM2.60), whether legendary Kiss bassist, Gene Simmons, really could have had sex with the estimated 4,600 women, how you can have sex in the car and whether there are possible legal risks, and whether having a homosexual dream means you are gay (AM3.30). These questions may have been used because they were the most interesting or funny, but it is still up to the editorial staff to select the content that they think their MaHB readership is interested in. So, the questions should be reflective of MaHB concerns.

Esquire Middle East, on the other hand, does not include a sex Q&A. This suggests two possible explanations: The first, and potentially more intriguing one for this research, is that the Middle Eastern MaHB wouldn't ask these questions because he is already confident in his masculinity and bedroom performance. The second, a more pragmatic explanation, is that they were not allowed by law to feature the department because it is too risqué or graphic for the media standards.

The sexually sheepish American MaHB seems to be a character of the present generation, and less the past. Writer-at-large Tom Junod penned an essay about how he found out his father was a different man away from home, not just by the slang words he used, "cusimundo" and "sibbin colata," which meant "loose women," but

also that he had maintained an extramarital relationship with a mistress in Florida (AM1.129). As another example, John Kennedy was a well-known womanizer. The

“What I’ve Learned” on the Kennedy trio documents a few instances:

I have just had an escapade. Got a fuck and a suck in a Mexican hoar-house (sic) for 65 cents, so I am feeling very fit and clean. They say that one guy in four years has gotten away without just the juiciest load of claps. (JFK, letter for friend Lem Billings, May 1936, AM3.70)
Just got back today from the South. It was great down there—the weather was about the best I’ve ever seen. An aw full (sic) lot of people were there—three girls to every man—so I did better than usual... (JKF, letter to his father, 1940. AM3.70)
I suppose if I win, my poon days are over. (JFK, fall 1960. AM3.70)

Comparatively, the Middle Eastern MaHB seems to generally carry much more self confidence than his American counterpart and falls in line with more traditional attributes of western masculinity from past generations, like the Kennedys’ or Junod’s father’s.

As previously mentioned, the Middle Eastern MaHB is most often featured solo, without a female companion of any sort, so it is difficult to analyze the his direct interactions with women. However, there are a couple “Women” columns written by an anonymous “Miss X” in the November and January issues that seem to best define his swagger with women as well as some other defining aspects of the Middle Eastern MaHB’s masculine ideal (ME1.40; ME3.22).

Miss X begins with an open question, “What maketh the man?” (ME1.40) She answers with the obvious, “a Y chromosome, that extra appendage and a truckload of testosterone,” then lists a number attributes that she refers to as clichés: “a man is he who opens doors, collects the bill (even carries off the bank note-laced handshake) and carries puppies out of burning buildings. Topless. He hunts; doesn’t

look out of place behind the wheel of a beastly 4X4 and occasionally whiffs a bit, purely because he's been out building, fixing things or maybe fightin'," (ME1.40). Clichés, perhaps, but they support that the ideals of the Middle Eastern MaHB are closely tied to stereotypical American-masculine characters, like the cowboy, Superman and Mr. Universe.

Miss X then calls man's ability to self-identify or define what manhood and masculinity are into question. She says a man's understanding would inevitably be biased and distorted. "The truth is women have different ideas about what qualifies as masculinity" (ME1.40). She gives the following example,

You might think being able to bed any woman you like, Colin Farrell—or should we say Gerard Butler—style, makes a man the real McCoy. Almost. To women, a real man is one who has that special glint in his eye once he gets to a certain age (some say it's twenty-seven; others thirty-two — whichever, witnessing the transition is fascinating) that says "my dirty dog days are over, I'm ready to settle, I won't divulge details about the past; suffice it to say I've learned from my experiences." Case in point, Brad Pitt. (ME1.40)

This excerpt elicits several concessions about the lifespan of the Middle Eastern MaHB's masculinity, specifically the sexual aspect of it. The first is that he, regardless of whether it makes him a man or not, has a "dirty dog days" stage, where he views his proclivity in bed as an indicator of masculinity. The second is that he eventually emerges from this stage with a desire to settle down. The third interesting aspect of that excerpt is her use of Brad Pitt as an example. He is already featured and endorsed for setting "a fine example when it comes to the art of being a man" (ME1.64). In addition to receiving praise for becoming a critically-acclaimed actor, family guy, and keeping his cool, they claim Pitt represented:

...that dark, venal part of the psyche of pretty much all men when he left Jennifer Aniston for Angelina Jolie. Some would suggest that it was at this point when Brad stopped being the pin-up for the ladies. Whereas once he was the standard bearer for the happy-ever-after-marriage ideal, he took an abrupt left turn and ended up in a temptuous, impulsive, and—we're guessing—slightly insane relationship. (ME1.66-67)

Though Pitt did eventually settle down into family life by way of 11 adoptions in three years, it seems that leaving the dirty dog days behind is less glorified if acknowledged at all when a man is judging another man's masculinity.

Miss X includes a few other defining traits that further link the Middle Eastern MaHB to the rough-around-the-edges western masculine ideal, namely:

A real man is no goody-goody. Far from it. As well as perhaps smoking cheap cigarettes on the side (Obama-style), a man is someone who wouldn't hesitate for a second before sizing up anyone who dared insult him or his lady. Am I condoning violence? Yes I damned well am—although only in extreme circumstances, when a terrifying verbal dressing-down or arm wrestle won't suffice. (AM1.40)

But, Miss X contends that all of these aforementioned traits are secondary to understanding the "essence" of what defines masculinity. Rather, "the number one quality that defines a man is the way he handles women" (ME1.40). An anecdote follows about a teacher friend of Miss X's in her late thirties who starts seeing—again with the cowboy-masculine theme—a Texas man.

When the cowboy (imagine him in hat and studded boots) dared to show up late for their rendezvous because he'd bumped into an old friend en route, teach' had a hissy fit. His response? He told her to shut the heck up, reminding her that he was under no obligation to be there at all. Teach' was duly put in her place and the date went well, with Texan Cowboy presumably wearing a quietly satisfied smile across his chiseled chops throughout the evening. (AM1.40)

By the American MaHB masculine standard, this example sets a rather lurid precedent for how to interact with women. The word choice alone, “the way he handles women,” suggests a sexually dominant male as desirable and ideal. On the contrary, the woman is eager to speak up when unrestrained but seems most content when quiet and verbally “put in her place.” The sexually dominant masculine ideal reappears in two “Women We Love” profiles, the first in Christina Hendricks’, “the flame-haired supremely curvaceous Jessica Rabbit secretary of your wildest dreams” (ME1.106), and the second in Elizabeth Banks’, “a real guy’s girl” who is introduced by the “big, purple, nasty-looking” bruises dotting her back, later explained to originate from an alternative medicine procedure called “cupping” (ME3.86). This sexually dominant ideal seems to coalesce with the general theme of the Middle Eastern MaHB being someone on his own, separate from others (in business as well). Whereas the American MaHB might use the word “partner” to describe a significant other, which would suggest an equality and mutualism between them, there is no evidence of such level standing between the Middle Eastern MaHB and his significant other. He is clearly the dominant character in the relationship.

In her January article, “New Woman, New You?” (ME3.22), Miss X gives reason for why the MaHB should keep a level of dominance in the relationship: women are conniving and want to morph a man’s desires into their own, thus making him less masculine. Being in the position of control would assumedly help minimize this. She gives this explanation:

Women are weird. What can I say? We’re complicated. But men without a spine are not, and that’s why those who transform

themselves just to please their girlfriends are generally considered a bit desperate and pathetic... One boy-mate of mine went from being the local house party don... to spending his weekends stirring homemade soup with an inane grin on his face. Another was the soul of the pub pews before promptly vanishing into Ikea to buy crockery and extra coat hangers. (ME3.22)

She continues, letting the MaHB know that it is not the man's fault that this happens. Rather, the woman "ought to be able to pick the good 'uns from the outset, like they do with fruit in the supermarket" (ME3.22). While there is perhaps some hyperbole going on here, a couple points can be inferred. The first is that women wish to domesticate men. The second is that this domestication is analogous to emasculation. Both of the "spineless" men given as examples are described doing domestic tasks, buying household supplies and cooking (decidedly not a masculine activity for the Middle Eastern MaHB, as discussed previously). We can infer that Miss X considers these domestic tasks feminine and ones that only women should be good at, like picking out fruit in the supermarket. And though this particular research is not focusing on what a woman's role is in *Esquire*, it appears here to suggest that her role is a domestic one.

The page also features three MaHB examples of "men who won't change," Jack Nicholson, George Clooney and Han Solo—the roguish character from Star Wars—and three spineless "men who changed," Michael Douglas, Ashton Kutcher and Tiger Woods. Each of the men with spines share a history of serial dating, general bachelor status and reputation of being a "man's man." For instance, Clooney is described as "a man who would rather be up until 5 a.m. in a casino shooting craps with beautiful babes, than getting up at 5 a.m. to wipe crap off a

baby” (ME3.22). Other the other side, Tiger Woods finds himself on the “men who changed” list for being “on an indefinite break from being the greatest golfer of all time to sort out his ‘issues’. [He] will now be remembered for his wife chasing him with a club. Shame” (ME.22). The blurb makes no mention of Woods’s repeatedly cheating on his wife. This reaffirms the importance of sexual proclivity while obviously downplaying the harm or subjective wrongness of extramarital affairs, as Junod’s father did (AM1.129). Relationships with women are depicted as having only secondary significance to the Middle Eastern MaHB’s own endeavors and life. Even Kahn’s life-quest for purity and political change supports this with his “decision”—as it is described—to leave Goldsmith because his country needed him to pursue a political career (ME1.20).

Chapter V

Conclusion

How do the masculinities exhibited in *Esquire* Middle East and American *Esquire* magazines measure up to historical masculine archetypes of the men's magazine genre's recent past? Clumsily. Neither the American nor Middle Eastern MaHB perfectly fall in line with the popular new man and new lad masculinities of decades past. However, such frames of reference give insight into where these new masculinities are coming from.

The Middle Eastern MaHB combines aspects of both aforementioned masculinities. He shares the new man's particular concern with physical appearance and role as an avid consumer (and businessman), while his value of dominance over women, lack of interest in fatherhood and pursuit to enjoy life to the fullest by indulging in the material world's most luxurious offerings—found mostly in Dubai—relate more closely to the post-feminist new lad.¹¹ He seems best described as a variant of the new lad: cross-cultural, less in pursuit of beer—for obvious cultural and geographic reasons—and more concerned with material and physical appearance.

The American MaHB, however, seems ill fit by either of these masculine archetypes. While he certainly envelops aspects of the new man, such as his commitment to fatherhood, respect for women in relationships and being

¹¹ The connection to the 'new lad' masculinity may be a reflection of the editorial staff being from Britain, where the new lad was born and prospered most in men's magazines

emotionally aware, others seem disingenuous, like the narcissistic outlook and placing such high significance on appearance. Characteristics of the new lad seem even more alien. So what does describe the American MaHB, and what has caused him to change?

Kimmel (1987) writes that in the waning years of the 20th Century, men were confused by what it meant to be a “real man.” Their masculinity was “in crisis.”¹²

American men [were] increasingly bumping up against the limits of traditional concepts of masculinity, attempting to push beyond the rigid roles prescriptions that constrain male behavior and prevent men from more fully expressing intimacy and vulnerability, becoming more devoted and loving fathers, more sensitive lovers, and more compassionate friends to both women and other men. (p. 121)

The MaHB, as we see him in the American *Esquire*, seems to reflect the man who endured this “bumping” and who is now settling into a more fluid realm of gender definitions beyond the traditional. He isn’t completely sure-footed yet—if history is any indicator, that is still a decade or two away—and he still longs, as Sonnenfeld does (AM1.44), for certain especially manly traits of the traditional definition, but he has begun to settle into being a more compassionate and sensitive father and lover.

The Middle Eastern MaHB, meanwhile, seems not to have been similarly challenged, or if he has, he’s taken a separate path forward. He resembles the Marlboro Man, exhibiting much of the “supermale” ethos of David and Brannon’s (1975) four American masculine imperatives but with cross-cultural appeal and

¹² Kimmel (1987) also explains that this is neither the first nor last time that masculinity has been ‘in crisis.’ He shows that these moments of crisis have occurred for as long as masculinity has been an acknowledged category of gender.

international impact. My inclination is that he self-identifies with the lone cowboy figure. As the media guide suggests, he is likely an expatriate, far from family—which is one possibility for why the father role is absent—lacking deep roots and probably only in the UAE (or one of the other five circulation-receiving nations) until business takes him elsewhere.

The contemporary MaHB from both the Middle Eastern and American *Esquire* seems particularly reverent of the past, of the great men who came before them (the Kennedys, Kahn, etc.,) and of classic style. The differences between them could partially be a reflection of the changing gender ideals within their national and regional societies.

The modern American MaHB may be posed with the same conflict that confronted masculinity in the late 19th century: men can be “men” only if women remain “women” (Izenberg 2000, p. 11, as cited in Dunphy, 2002, p 6). However, women in America are not remaining “women.” They continue to make substantial gains in the national workforce. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, women accounted for 46.7% of the workforce in 2009 and 51.4% of managerial, professional and related positions (“Statistical Overview of Women in the Workplace,” 2010, March 10). Especially within the context of the Great Recession, households are increasingly relying on women to be breadwinners as more men are losing their jobs than women¹³ (Allen, 2010). A family with a more career-focused mother demands a more family-focused father. In such a role, the MaHB would

¹³ According to Thompson (2010) cites that 80% of job losses in the past two years were among men and that males unemployment rate has reached 10.5% while the women’s is only at 8%

likely need to be comfortable cooking for the family and doing other traditionally feminine, domestic tasks. Because concepts of manliness and fatherhood have been traditionally linked to the father's role as family financial provider, the MaHB may doubt and struggle to reaffirm his own masculinity because he doesn't know how else to define it now that he cannot provide. Without being anchored in his own masculinity, the MaHB's self-doubt and lack of confidence affect his interactions with women, rendering him passively gendered in face-to-face meetings, as Chiarella was (AM1.100-106), while still participating in voyeuristic masculine behaviors, like looking at pictures of sexed-up women in a magazine, when alone.

But the Middle Eastern region offers a different scenario. While the number of female workers is on the rise, women in the UAE comprise just 14% of the national work force¹⁴ ("Working women contribute US\$3.4bn to the UAE's economy," 2007, Dec. 14). Of that percentage, less than 2% of women hold high-ranking executive positions, and 20% hold administration positions. So the business world, which has been identified in this study as the MaHB's world, is largely a man's world, dominated by men. Without women actively competing against men for job openings in the workplace—an arena for Kimmel's (1998) "Bumping"—the Middle Eastern MaHB's masculinity has gone largely unchallenged, thus largely unchanged from traditional aspects of masculinity .

¹⁴ Stats were given for women working in the UAE because, as previously suggested, the UAE represents the largest focus and readership of *Esquire* Middle East. It should also be noted that the UAE has a male population that is twice as large as its female population according to the UAE Ministry of Planning ("Women's work force ratio low UAE," 2003, May 19).

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

While I am satisfied with the integrity and thoroughness of this study, there are admittedly aspects that leave room for future improvements and research.

One particularly notable limitation of the study is the relatively small sample size. While being founded in the notion that the first three issues of *Esquire* Middle East would be intentionally dogmatic (and they appear to be), this notion perhaps errantly assumes how well the editors were attuned to their readership. As we are now upon the one-year anniversary of the magazine's launch, it would be interesting to analyze if and how the magazine has changed from the product launched a year ago. While the number of available issues when this research began necessitated the limitations of the *Esquire* Middle East sample, the American *Esquire* sample, as previously mentioned, was taken from the midst of a 78-year history of issues. A more thorough and rigorous study of the same research questions and intent could be completed by comparing a full year of issues of both the American and Middle Eastern issues.

My account of the *Esquire* texts would be incomplete without acknowledging, as Benwell (2004) does in his discussion of masculinities in men's magazines, the possibility that the observed and extracted MaHB masculine ideals may be haphazard and unrepresentative of the magazines' readerships—not just unintentional, but accidental. Although I do not subscribe to this explanation, magazines, while often maintaining some continuity and coherence from issue to issue, are naturally a heterogeneous medium, with multiple authors and subject to contradictions.

Throughout the course of my own research, other tangential research topics have come to mind. I think that it would be particularly interesting to approach the same topic as I have with this study—how the MaHB differs between the flagship magazine and international edition—but to study the visual aspects of the magazine: photos, illustrations, etc., that depict the MaHB and note how the representations differ on a macro level. Instances where the same subject is featured in both magazines but the photo differ, could yield an especially analysis.

This study ignores the practical truths and influences of the magazine publishing industry. Specifically, some editorial choices are made to drive ad sales to the magazine. The textual sample of this study is ill fit for speculating on which articles were chosen for their ad value. However, a case study structured around newsroom observation could give insight into which aspects of the magazine, particularly within the style and dining sections, were geared more towards attracting advertisers.

Though it would likely be an arduous endeavor, a decade-by-decade documentation of the fluctuations and evolutions in *Esquire's* MaHB masculine ideal, as portrayed in the magazine texts, would be fascinating. There have been similar studies that look into visual representations—mostly analyzing advertisements—but I was unable to find any evidence of a text-based approach.

Appendix A

Upon completing this study, I reached out of David Granger and Jeremy Lawrence, editors-in-chief of the American Esquire and Esquire Middle East, respectively. I was curious to get their perspectives on my research their insight into a few remaining questions I had.

Email Correspondence with David Granger

My Questions

The first piece of editorial content in the genesis issue of Esquire Middle East is a letter from Editor-in-Chief Jeremy Lawrence. It singles out Imran Kahn as a perfect example of the Middle Eastern MaHB. Lawrence describes Kahn by highlighting certain characteristics of his that resonate throughout my sample as key themes with the Middle Eastern MaHB, namely 1.) the importance of cross-cultural appeal, 2.) physical and athletic prowess, 3.) the image of the MaHB as a single actor, unrestrained or reliant on a family or female partner, and 4.) possessing a noteworthy concern with appearance and image. The span of American Esquire issues lacked the designation of an equally clearly stated and representative MaHB icon as Esquire Middle East's I. Kahn (funny how convenient that homophone-pun is), though I thought the Kennedy trio came closest. If you had to identify one man, a fictional character or real person, that encapsulated the contemporary American MaHB, who would it be? Why?

Gender and masculinity scholars have written about how, at different moments in the history, contemporary norms of American masculinity have been 'in crisis,' a time of awkward transition between the waning years of an old standard and the normalizing of a new representation. Popular examples in the men's magazine world include the emergence of the 'new man' and 'new lad' masculinities of the 80s and 90s. Do you feel like the MaHB is in crisis? Is he confident in his masculinity? What defining characteristics would you attribute to the contemporary MaHB masculinity?

Men's magazines traditionally toe the line between being cultural texts and cultural phenomena. They craft and produce representations of masculinity while also acting as a forum for gender norms to be circulated, negotiated and contested. Do you feel like Esquire's 'Man at His Best' is more of a reflection of your readership's masculine ideals and values or a promotion of ideals and values that you and your editorial staff deem exemplary?

Granger's Response:

In response to your questions:

I'm not sure that we (I and my editorial staff) spend as much time as you imagine thinking about masculinity. We are men, many of us, and we enjoy being men and conveying our enjoyment of it is an important part of what we do at Esquire. We go way beyond that, too, to write about and confront things topics and

events that interest or compel us and that seem timely and important to the cultural conversation.

If I had to identify a man who embodies man at his best at this time, I guess it would be a cross between George Clooney, Robert Downey, Jr and our President. Clooney because he seems to glide easily and confidently through his life, enjoying himself while finding the time to stand for something and to attempt to make a positive impact on the world. Downey because every man needs to be a little irresponsible, even as he succeeds. And President Obama because he exudes calm and competence in the face of crushing pressure.

2. There's always a crisis. I'm not sure the crisis ever actually changes the nature of the American man, if there is such a thing. Right now, there appears to be a budding crisis among young men and boys who are failing at education and early success. As the American education system reoriented itself over the last four decades or so to meet the needs of girls and young women, boys and young men have been disenfranchised from education at an accelerating rate. More and more, boys fail to go to college at a time when the economic demands of our culture demands a highly-skilled workforce. How this will play out is completely unpredictable. It may become a crisis or there may be a larger cultural shift that makes it seem unimportant. But as to what the defining characteristics of contemporary men are, I would say that we long for competence, skills. As we do less hard work, we want to work hard. We want to be good at things. Esquire doesn't represent every American man. There are a great many American men who don't read, don't think much, don't aspire. We appeal to what I call the "high-normal

American man” and for that man there is no particular crisis in confidence. There is doubt, yes—men are always fueled and motivated by self-doubt—but there is no shortage of confidence that the future will be better than the present.

3. I don’t know. As I said above, we enjoy being men and we try to convey that enjoyment. We reflect what we see happening in the culture.

(D. Granger, personal communication, October 25, 2010)

Transcription of Jeremy Lawrence Interview

BH: I just wanted to first say thanks for agreeing to talk to me for a little bit. I just have a handful of questions to run through with you about what I found in my research and further questions that I feel like I needed to clear up to bridge the culture gap.

JL: So what was it you did?

BH: I focused on identifying and analyzing the masculine ideals of the Man at His Best (MaHB) in the initial three issues of *Esquire* Middle East from November 2009 to January 2010 and the analogous, corresponding issues of the American *Esquire*.

JL: Did you get any copies of the magazine?

BH: Yeah, I got each of the first three issues.

JL: Oh cool. How did you get a hold of them?

BH: I talked to Luis Veronese, one of the international editors in the New York office and he went ahead and sent them to me.

JL: Cool, cool. And which issues were they?

BH: Well, the first three—

JL: Oh so, Brad Pitt, uh, Robert Downey Jr. and Barack.

BH: That's right. I will say, that I did enjoy the magazines, so good job on that.

JL: Cool. Thank you.

BH: I was wondering, how you describe the Middle Easter MaHB if you had to?

JL: Well, I tried to describe it in the editor's letter in the first issue.

BH: That's what I thought.

JL: Yeah, so that's basically it. And I don't know about the first two or three—well actually, the first one, you had a in the first one an interview with the rally driver Sheik Mohammed Ben Sulayem. One of the reasons we chose to use a lot of photos—let me get the issue in front of me. You see him in a really smart blazer and jeans—very sort of western—but in the next page you've got him in his dish-dash, showing off his watch he's busted out. But you see him there and he looks completely at home in that. So it's the idea—well it's not the idea—it's the reality that these people are very international. If you talk to a Lebanese guy here, they'll speak French, English and Arabic all in the same sentence. And these Emiratis like Ben Sulayem will have gone to probably university in the UK and get his masters in the States. So, you're talking about very internationally minded people. So, that's why we chose him, and that's why I wrote the editors letter the way I did in the first issue.

BH: I saw in your media kit that like 70% of the UAE, but also a good portion of the readership that you're targeting—this sort of international influence—are [coughs], excuse me—people who are expats. Do you think that ties into this?

JL: Yeah, I mean its probably more 85% of the UAE is expatriate. So yeah, by default, 85% of your readership is expat—but not expat as in western. I mean I know we're all in an English accent on the immediate team, just of the editorial team. But no, I don't mean just western expats. 70% of those expats are Asian. But for us to look at that target market, the Lebanese influence is quite strong here. And they're the segment we're going after. Lebanese are very, very style conscious.

The ones that have got good jobs *do* splash the cash around. It's a little bit of a cliché out here, but it's true that if you go to a fashion event, an art event, but fashion especially, there's a lot of—the Lebanese thing is quite strong because the Lebanese are the most natural—Lebanon was always the gulf's—it was called the Paris of the Middle East before the ship bombed it out in the civil war. But it still is, and if you go there it's very, very—you can feel the French influence there. They still learn to speak French—not the whole country, but a segment of it, the more well-to-do ones there. You can really get that European influence, but it's also very Arabic. We've actually done a sale there now as well in Beirut.

BH: Oh, ok.

JL: Yeah, so I'd say the Lebanese expatriate thing is quite a big part of where we're at. I wouldn't be able to tell you about reader breakdown because we don't have that information, but certainly within the terms of the people we're dealing with in the fashion industry, that's true. And so the later issues we have quite a few sort of—in business style we have quite a few Lebanese people in there.

BH: Well I saw that that was also one of the first three “destination” places you guys did in my sample. I remember, actually, you talking about how you can go on those tours just off the coast of Beirut to see those ships that were sunk.

JL: Oh, right.

BH: You guys use this whole MaHB tagline. Is there a difference between the MaHB and the readership of *Esquire*, or are they one in the same?

JL: I'm sorry, could you say that again?

BH: You use the slogan, MaHB, often. Is there a difference between the MaHB and the target audience or is the MaHB the target audience?

JL: Uh, yeah it is. But what the Middle East MaHB is compared to the American MaHB ideal is probably different. Which again goes back to the same thing I was just saying before—it's a loose definition anyway, you know? If you look at an *Esquire* US photo shoot, sometimes I love the ones that are quite rugged with the guy, quite square-jawed, well-dressed but kind of, I don't know, "let's chop wood and hunt," that kind of thing. It's different for us. I wouldn't imagine that of the *Esquire* MaHB in the Middle East. What it would be is probably someone more—the *Esquire* man in the Middle East would be someone who is, like I say, he is probably cross-cultural. He's probably living in different countries. He probably speaks different languages. He's probably in business. He probably doesn't go hunting and fishing on the weekend. It's different, but it's always going to be hard to say because it's always going to be a sweeping generalization, isn't it really?

BH: Right.

JL: But what he definitely is—he's targeting people who are cross-cultural, live and work in different countries, because we all do here. We're all from somewhere else here, and even the ones who are from here also live in other countries. Like the educator Emiratis will always stay in some place abroad, so even they're not just from here. You know?

BH: As I went through and made tabs on what attributes I felt especially defined the Middle Eastern MaHB, I came up with four that at least related to Imran Kahn.

And some of them you've already named. One was cross-cultural appeal and success. Another, physical prowess and fitness. I felt like there were more—at least compared to the American *Esquire*—you guys cover sport much more often and also much more fitness stuff than the American version. Is there a reason that you guys do that?

JL: No, not really, that's probably because I'm slightly more interested in sport than David Granger is.

BH: I wondered if it related just because the American sports media is so saturated with reputable sports magazines and fitness magazines. Is there an equivalent to that in your market for English-language magazines?

JL: Yeah, there are sports magazines. We've got Men's Fitness here I think Men's Health is launching. So there are those magazines. It's nothing to do with anything commercial, I think it's quite simply because I'm reasonably interested in sport and actually we haven't been doing it lately, just for one reason or another. It's something we've done more in the first three issues and haven't done—and again there isn't really any reason why there hasn't been. It just hasn't been because, you know, we're just been doing other things. So yeah, there's no—*Esquire* doesn't tend to do, in the US, much sport. *Esquire* UK does a bit more. I don't know why *Esquire* US doesn't. All I can think is that probably because David Granger doesn't have that type of thing on his radar. I might be wrong there. I mean, they might have a good reason for not doing it. We haven't got a—you know? There's no grand plan behind that is what I'm saying.

BH: Ok. Ok.

JL: Well actually, actually, no. Let me backtrack that a bit because I'm—as we're talking I'm realizing what my thinking was when we started and I did think that a men's magazine—MaHB—without aspects of sport is kind of not really there. Because with most successful men, sport or exercise is part of their to-do list. You know?

BH: Well I found that a lot of the men you featured early on related to that as well. Imran Kahn was a big cricket star. Sir Jackie Stewart was a race driver, and—excuse the mispronunciation—Ben Sulayem was a big driver as well. And even Al-Fahim was owner of the EPL teams. So even he has a connection.

JL: Well yeah, I guess kind of it's a coincidence that they were all in the first three, but I would say that in this region, sport is very popular. In terms of—and there are probably more coming up because companies like Etihad sponsor Man City, the richest—I don't know if you follow soccer at all—

BH: Yeah, I do actually

JL: They're bankrolled by millions and millions. Emirates got the Arsenal stadium. Sports sponsorships are a very big deal out here. Qatar might be trying to go for the 2020 pick for World Cup. So, sport, as a commercial project, is quite big in this part of the world. So, just from that perspective it's something that will crop up from time to time because there will be interesting stories around it, you know? There are several different angles that the region is going for to capture. Abu Dhabi's got the cultural aspect. Dubai and Abu Dhabi were both going very aggressively after a sports sponsorship, and they're very successfully doing that. Like I say, Qatar is thinking about the World Cup. Dubai was thinking about the

Olympic games, but probably isn't now because it hasn't got any money. But sport is very important in the region so yeah, that is going to crop up in the magazine from time to time.

BH: One of the other things I came across was this idea of the MaHB as a "single actor." He doesn't particularly seem to rely on either a family or romantic partner per se, and his success is largely self-made. You talk about how on the business side of things in the "Men We Admire" section, which I believe was in the first issue—

JL: Oh, yeah.

BH: You mention that you have much more respect for businessmen who take a family business and craft it into an empire and a lot of the men you feature are people who have made their own success through business endeavors, but also the presence of family and also significant others seems lacking in comparison to the American *Esquire*.

JL: Umm. Over here just because it's just newer, certainly the Gulf and now Lebanon after bouncing back after a civil war, things are just a lot more new. So people who are successful are more likely to be entrepreneurs rather than of some wealthy dynastic clan. And this place because of the expansion via the oil bubble in the last few years has brought up a lot more entrepreneurs. There's a lot more cash around, and there's a lot more scope. It's like the new gold rush or how it was. So yes, in that respect, that's why you write about those people a lot. In terms of the families it's probably because, there's more interest and scrutiny of people in the public spotlight in the West. Here's there's more privacy afforded

to people, so it's not really as relevant. There's just a lot more attention paid to people's wives and people's mistresses and people's kids and people's dogs and whatever else. Here it's more private.

BH: Ok, yeah.

JL: You might like an actor, but it's not important who his wife is because *she* is not important. And if you think about it, if an actor is admired it's because he is an actor. His family is irrelevant to it. But it's just part of the whole tabloid culture, and there isn't a tabloid culture over here.

BH: It's interesting that you bring up the actor thing, because I feel like one of the only large features that did do that was the profile on Robert Downey Jr., in which the story mentions his wife, who is also a Hollywood producer, and it also goes into that he's thinking about starting a family with her and making a child, which I think he calls "the ultimate artifact of our love" or something like that. And I didn't see many instances of children being brought up in the stories, but that was definitely one of them.

JL: Well that was one that came from the States.

BH: Right. Right.

JL: 75% to 85% is our own coverage and certainly the A-list stars we tend to take coverage from the US because they have access to it. So yeah, that's one of their features so that's why. If we were to—Mohammad Ben Sulayem, that racing driver, it would be inappropriate to ask him so many questions about his wife and his kids

BH: Right. Ok.

JL: It's just more of a private culture in that respect.

BH: Interesting. And the fourth thing that I noticed in comparison to the American MaHB, is that you guys seem to have more of an interest in appearance and fashion. Is that because your region is simply more fashionable?

JL: I do think there is a clique here that are very, very interested in that. And that kind of goes to the Lebanese thing again. Not just the Lebanese, I must say, but yeah, there is an interest obviously in—because there is money here—the stylish places, the hotels, the clubs, the restaurants, blah, blah, blah. That's kind of a booming market really. I'm not really focused on if it's really more or less than the US, it just reflects what's here without really comparing it to anywhere else.

BH: One of the other differences that I saw was the difference in actually the number of recipes that were in the two. It seems like the Middle Eastern MaHB doesn't work in the kitchen. There were 11 recipes in the American *Esquire* and one in yours and also it relates to some of the stories as well. The American *Esquire* had a couple where they talked about cooking or they had several chefs on; in the best restaurants thing, their feature tended to focus more on the chef. Whereas your guys' tended to focus more on the décor and service and food and food genre. Does the MaHB in the Middle East work in the kitchen at all?

JL: Not particularly. I would say, out here, that eating out is more the course than eating in. So from that respect, the restaurant thing is very big, which is probably why also it's interesting to stick in some recipes. So if you are going to eat in, here's how you do it. So yeah, I would say that in general there is more of a culture for that here.

BH: Well do you think—

JL: Just to clarify, people work a lot longer hours here than in the West. I mean, people complain about how the American hours are a lot longer than European hours, but Middle Eastern hours are a lot longer than anyone's. (Laughter) You know, people work—they work very hard here. Because the people come—oh, it's a lifestyle choice, but it's a career choice for getting ahead. People come here with a plan, whatever that plan is, and a lot of that involves hard work.

BH: Do you feel like the cooking and restaurant industry is an equally respectable profession in the UAE, than say, business.

JL: Is an equal what? Sorry.

BH: Is equally respectable as a profession. It seems that the way that restaurants were reviewed was interesting—more critical per se than the American. You list that “Five Ways to Make Restaurants Better” list.

JL: Um—So in what ways—sorry. So—

BH: Well, what I noticed was that you feature less chefs when you do the reviews, and more on the actual restaurant.

JL: Yeah, that's because any licensed restaurant is part of a hotel. So although you've got something like Eifle or Ver where you've got it opened by chefs, otherwise it's a restaurant set up by a hotel rather than an individual. So the individual isn't important. That's just how it is in a hotel. Nobody gives about the food and beverage manager at a hotel, you know? It's not like someone had a dream to open a little, you know, Italian eatery in New York. This is a big corporate idea, so who cares about the people behind it?

BH: Oh ok. Have you continued with the “Women” column by Miss X?

JL: Yeah, on and off. We’ve done a few. I’m just trying to think of which ones were in there—oh yeah, “New Woman, New You.” Uh yeah, now and again.

BH: Is she a real person?

JL: Uh, yes. Well her name is not “Miss X.”

BH: Well I didn’t know if it was actually the editors writing them or if it was—

JL: Oh yes, it was by a female.

BH: Would you like to keep her identity still secret?

JL: Um—there’s a reason for it, but it’s not interesting, the reason for it. Um yeah, there’s no big reason for that. So yeah you’ll just have to write this pseudonym. So yeah, we do that. It’s slightly harder to do a female column here than elsewhere because the reason why you would normally have a female column in a men’s magazine is to find would be to find out what the hell they think about sex or something. So, we do those less often because if you take sex out of the equation it leaves you with a lot less to talk about, to be blunt, because if you look at a female column that say *Esquire* UK runs—

BH: Well, I noticed that you don’t have a sex Q&A—

JL: No, well we can’t.

BH: Are there any other topics that you can’t go into?

JL: Yeah, well it’s called cultural sensitivities. You have to adapt which might seem—I don’t know, it’s really second nature. I’ve been in the UAE for years. Yeah, we have to be very careful about religion, politics in this region. Um, we can’t talk about it. We have to be careful how we do it. Um—Sex. Yeah, just think

1950s Britain or something. (Laughs) And it sounds like it's a lot, but it's just different standards. You can't really compare it to the West, you know, the Arab culture. You don't criticize people in public. Loss of face is a huge thing. Yes, I guess on the one hand, this is potentially maybe because it's a one-party rulership or whatever. There's also—take the system of government out of the equation—it's still an Arabic thing that you don't—loss of face is very important, so you don't criticize directly. So we talk about other countries. We've done quite an interesting piece about Iran this month about what happened to the people of the green revolution. And you know, we talk about what we want, but it's not going to conclude with us saying that we think that Iran is a pariah state that treats its people like scum, blah-dy blah-dy blah. You're just relaying the story about what happened. We've also got a story about kids playing heavy metal in Saudi, and they all got arrested and stuff. Again, we're not going to say, "And therefore this shows that the government is really bad." You know we're just telling the story. We're not here to piss off or parachute into there own views. You're just trying to sort of write some interesting things and tell interesting stories. So yeah, there are a lot of cultural sensitivities, but it's easy to notice if you're coming from the outside—most of them not all of them.

BH: Right, yeah. One of the interesting things—if I could pull out one from the Miss X columns was—as I was trying to figure out what defined the Middle Eastern MaHB, she offered up that "the number-one quality that defines a man is the way that he handles women." Do you think that represents your magazine's view, or is that just her editorializing on her own?"

JL: Yeah, I mean that's her—Um—yeah, that's her opinion of it. It obviously goes without saying that the Middle Eastern MaHB, wherever he is from, is someone who is—you know? Women play a big part in society, and that might be different in other cultures in this region, but there are more internationally minded ones who are a lot more open minded and internationally minded in those respects, you know?

BH: In regards to women?

JL: Right, in regards to women and the idea of women working and all those things, which is not a universally held opinion in countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. But a guy who is reading it in Saudi—our kind of reader—will probably have a lot more liberal views on women. I'm not saying that they'd be the same as western views, but he would do.

BH: Has circulation changed? I know that originally when it launched, Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi were receiving issues, but they were just the comp issues for the VIP men and certain selected men.

JL: Yeah you can't—distribution in Saudi is a different—you can't have any pictures of women with any flesh in it at all. So yeah, comp issues aren't the goal, but you can't have anything on sale.

BH: Ok.

JL: I mean I'm just looking through the "Women We Love." You know, there's no way you could have those pictures in Saudi. So you would have to take out—we could probably make *most* of this magazine and sell it, but you couldn't have any women in it, at least in these clothes. You couldn't have any of this skin showing.

BH: Did it ever expand to Kuwait or Jordan?

JL: Out of the states, it's still the same, as far as I know. But we are on sale in Beirut now.

BH: Ok, as of this month, you said?

JL: I think, as of October. I think it was.

BH: Do you have any indicator of how well the magazine is doing in its market?

JL: Uh, not really yet. I believe it's doing fairly well. I mean, copies down stairs—I mean, you don't sell hundreds of thousands magazines here in this market. The newsstand element of the magazine business here is not a significant factor. So yeah, it's different in that respect. But, I wouldn't have precise sales figures. But yeah, it's a different beast than what it would be in the West.

BH: One of my concerns with this study was that by taking such a deep look at three issues of your magazine, I was worried that I would miss some changes and evolutions within the magazine that still happened within the first year, but after those first three issues. Do you think the magazine has changed after the first three issues?

JL: Oh, well it's developing, yeah. I can send you some copies since then, if you want.

BH: Oh that'd be great.

JL: Yeah if you email me your address I can send you through what I've got. We've got the next four or five issues still. But yeah, it has. We managed to nail it pretty well on the first couple in terms of the overall tone, but we're trying to get more real men from this region. You know, get the faces in there that we're talking about in the style section, business style. We have a profile that just profiles a

guy who's just standing there in his work wear, and what he's wearing and where he gets it and so on. So we're trying to get a few more faces in the region in the style section and the business style section. So you can actually physically see—and it would have made your job easier—you can actually see what the *Esquire* man is.

BH: And it seems, if I may say, that the Middle Eastern MaHB is most definitely a businessman. You guys have that business section that's not featured in the American *Esquire*. There's no equivalent. And so many of the people who do feature, seem to be businessmen. Is that correct?

JL: Um, yeah. That's a bigger portion of society than it would be in America or at least the other sectors are much smaller. The arts, music, they are significant but not to the extent that they are in the US, for example. So yeah, business is obviously a very big part of how this place operates.

BH: And I guess one of my last questions—

JL: Sorry I—the UK, they don't do it now but they used to have a nice business section, which I always liked, so we basically pinched their idea for their business section. I like their business profiles. They do a business profile is exactly the same way as they do with the working day and vital stats and stuff. "How To Succeed In..." was our idea. We still do that. Which we pick a country or—I'm just looking at Mumbai. We did Mumbai. You know, you don't need to know how to succeed in Philadelphia because Philadelphia, in terms of business, is pretty much the same as Miami or—you know what I mean? It's a far more

homogenous culture. Whereas in this region, they're wildy—there's a lot of differences.

BH: Yeah, I thought that section was particularly interesting, the "How To Succeed In..." section. It related to the business culture and international culture.

JL: Yeah exactly, it's very different to do business in Beirut than it is in Mumbai. So, we thought that it was a good idea. If we get bored with doing it, we'll drop it, but so far, you know, the places—If you draw a circle, like any place within an eight-hour flight—that covers Africa. It covers Asia. It covers Europe. You know, it's a big place. So we've got a "How To Succeed In..." Djibouti coming up. We've got a "How To Succeed In" uh, somewhere in Iraq, maybe Baghdad. Mumbai. You know, you'll get into the Stans—you know, the Russian, ex-Soviet countries. So it's a diverse—Kazakhstan. We did Kazakhstan. You don't need to do that in the US. You need to do that the same way we do.

BH: No. It's not nearly as international of a readership, I don't think.

JL: Yeah.

BH: So I guess maybe one of my last questions here is, at least within the academic realm, people talk about how men's magazines toe the line between being a forum for discussing new masculinities and how people perform it, and also a place for magazines to promote. And I guess, do you think that you reflect more of the culture within your readership or do you try to promote certain aspects that you deem to be characteristics of the Middle Eastern MaHB?

JL: Umm, so do I think we reflect or promote it? Is that what you're saying?

BH: Yeah.

JL: Yeah, I would say that it's just reflecting it really. I had an idea of what the Middle Eastern MaHB is, like I say, from the outset. It probably helped—probably got me the job rather than other people who applied, because we had to write the first editor's letter. And the editor's letter for the first issues is basically what I wrote for my job application, among other things I had to write, but it was "This is the Middle Eastern man." You had to be very careful that it wasn't "This is me asserting something as an English ex-pat," you know? It had to be "This is what this magazine that's new is for." So yeah, I would say from that perspective, from the editors' letter on issue one, that was what we were saying. "This is who we thing the *Esquire* Middle East man is." You couldn't have done that if you would have come in from elsewhere and didn't know the region, but I've been in the region on and off since 1998, so I already knew what the market was, you know? It wouldn't take you long to figure it out, but you certainly wouldn't know from issue one if that hadn't been the case.

BH: Interesting. Jeremy, thanks for taking the time to talk to me. Is there anything else you think I should know about your magazine or the experience that you've had in this first year? You're coming up on your one-year anniversary now.

JL: Um no, you know its all gone pretty—of course we are looking to develop and innovate all the time, but I do think that we were lucky enough that we came together with a good team. It came together quite smoothly and everyone—well most of us—have been here for a while. The company is an established company. It's the biggest publishing company in the Middle East. Again it wasn't some set-up that was parachuted in from somewhere else. It's been in the region for 20

years nearly. I don't think it would have worked if you just said, "Oh, there's advertising revenues to be had in the Middle East, let's go over there and get some of it." It had to be set up by people within the region.

BH: Are talking about specifically using ITP as the publisher or are you talking about—

JL: Well both really. You couldn't have been—say—if Hearst or any company would have thought, "let's go and open an office there and set up a magazine," I don't think that would have worked, you know? You've got to be already in Dubai, with publishers here, with people who are already here who can reflect what goes on here. But it's a very international place. It's not rocket science. It's a very international place, the UAE, for starters. And I mean you already got a look around—you go into a smart restaurant and look at the people around you, you know? Go to an art gallery. Go to a show or wherever. You'll see the kind of people, you'll just have to—you look at that, and it's quite obvious to me. It's quite obvious who you'd be aiming at. And there's a thread that binds you all together, which is internationally minded people who are at ease across different cultures. So yeah, that's it basically, in a nutshell.

BH: Do you feel like you aim at residents of the UAE first before the other countries that are getting circulation? It seems like you focus on the UAE much more than other countries.

JL: I mean yeah, we try to promote the idea that it could be written in another country than this, but the reality is we are based in Dubai, and we all live in Dubai. So it's obvious you're going to have more of a flavor of that.

BH: Right

JL: But—We try not to—but obviously, it's going to be biased toward that. Like that restaurant guide we did was all restaurants that were, just for various reasons, in the UAE, but next time, it will be restaurants—we will have Qatar in there. We will definitely have Beirut in there. It will have Oman in there. So it takes time to broaden out your reach. But yeah, definitely the idea is to broaden out reach as much as possible, you know? It's *Esquire* Middle East.

BH: Very interesting. Well, Jeremy thanks again for your time.

JL: Yeah no worries.

(J. Lawrence, personal communication, October 27, 2010)

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