Performing Masculinity during Mandate Lebanon in Marie al-Khazen's photographs

Yasmine Nachabe Taan*
Lebanese American University

Abstract:

Marie al-Khazen (1899-1983) is an amateur photographer who took most of her photographs in the 1920s and 1930s in and around Zgharta, a village in the North of Lebanon. In this paper, I will analyze how gender — a category used to express differences between male and female individuals depending on a combination of naturally endowed and chosen attributes, abilities, appearances, and expressive codes —is represented socially and culturally in a number of her photographs through complex conventions and significations. How and in what way men inhabit al-Khazen's photographs is the focus of this paper. These photographs were produced during a period that is often characterized as predominantly patriarchal. In most of the photographs selected for this paper, I will argue that, al-Khazen reflects this predominantly patriarchal ideology and will show how most of al-Khazen's photographs prescribe to meanings of masculinity as heroic.

While analyzing the photographs, I consider the following question: How do representations of masculinity differ from representations of femininity in al-Khazen's photographs? Her position being behind the camera puts her in control of the image provided to us today. In other words, she is not a neutral mediator, but, rather, manifests control through her choice of the subject matter, the moments that she wanted to be salient in her life, the light and shadow, the objects in the foreground

* Ph.D., Associate Professor, e-mail: ytaan@lau.edu.lb

and background setting, the subjects' positions within the space of the photograph and the ways in which these subjects perform their social relations to each other within a group. How do al-Khazen's photographic decisions shape our understanding of gender relations in her photographs?

I will examine the ways photographs disseminate ideas and meanings by generating discursive notions on gender. Gender is explored as a category used to express differences between male and female individuals depending on a combination of naturally endowed and chosen attributes and appearances. The paper offers a scrutinized study of the photographs and the different ways manhood or *rujuliyya,* particularly in the rural areas in Lebanon, was culturally represented through an amplified masculinity. From having a moustache, smoking a cigarette, sporting *tarabish* to holding rifles, a plethora of props and accoutrement appeared in the photos to denote signs of virility.

Keywords: post-colonial, gender, photography, middle east, Arab masculinity

Marie al-Khazen'in Fotoğraflarını Bozan Erkeklik

Yasmine Nachabe Taan*
Lebanese American University

Özet:

Marie al-Khazen (1899-1983), fotoğraflarının çoğunu 1920'li ve 30'lu yıllarda Kuzey Lübnan'ın bir kasabası olan Zgharta civarında çekmiş amatör bir fotoğrafçıdır. Bu çalışmada, toplumsal cinsiyetin al-Khazen'in fotoğraflarında çeşitli kompleks imgeler ve kurallar aracılığıyla sosyal ve kültürel olarak nasıl temsil edildiğini inceleyeceğim. al-Khazen' in fotoğraflarında erkeklerin nasıl ve ne şekillerde yer ettiğini göstermek çalışmanın temel odağını oluşturmaktadır. Bu fotoğraflar, ağırlıklı olarak ataerkil olan bir dönem boyunca üretilmiştir. Bu çalışma için seçilen fotoğrafların çoğunda, al-Khazen'in çoğunlukla ataerkil ideolojiyi yansıttığını tartışacak ve fotoğrafların çoğunun erkekliğin anlamını kahramanlıkla tanımladığını göstereceğim.

Fotoğrafları incelerken temel olarak şu soruyu göz önünde bulundurdum: "al-Khazen'in fotoğraflarında erkekliğin temsili kadınlığın temsilinden nasıl farklılaşıyor?" al-Khazen'in kamera ardındaki varlığı bugün bizlere ulaşan imgelerin kontrolünü ona veriyor. Başka bir deyişle, Khazen fotoğraflarında tarafsız bir aracı değil; aksine fotoğraftaki özneleri, kendi hayatında görünür olmasını istediği anları, ışığı ve gölgeleri, ön ve arka plandaki objeleri, öznenin fotoğraftaki konumunu ve bu öznelerin gruplar içinde birbirleri ile olan ilişkilerinin nasıl yansıtıldığını seçerek fotoğrafın ardındakş kontrolünü gözler önüne seriyor. Al-Khazen'in fotoğrafik kararları bizim onun fotoğraflarındaki

* Ph.D., Associate Professor, e-mail: ytaan@lau.edu.lb

toplumsal cinsiyet algımızı nasıl şekillendiriyor? Bu bağlamda, fotoğrafların toplumsal cinsiyete dair söylemsel kavramlar üreterek, düşünceleri ve anlamları yaydığı yolları inceleyeceğim. Toplumsal cinsiyet, erkek ve kadınlar arasındaki farklılıkları ifade etmek adına kullanılan; hem doğal olarak verilen hem de seçilen tutum ve görünüşlere bağlı olarak değişen bir kategori olarak ele alınmıştır. Bu makale, Al-Khazen'nin fotoğraflarının ve erkekliğin (*rujuliyya*) özellikle Lübnan'ın kırsal kesimindeki güçlendirilmiş tezahürleriyle sunulan kültürel temsillerinin ayrıntılı bir öncelemesini sunmaktadır. Fotoğraflarda erkek cinselliğini simgelemek adına, bıyık bırakmaktan, sigara içmeye, tüfek kullanmaktan ve *tarabish* yapmaya kadar pek çok ayrıntı yer almaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: postkolonyal, toplumsal cinsiyet, fotoğrafçılık, Orta Doğu, Arap erkekliği

Introduction

In this paper, I analyze how gender — a category used to express differences between male and female individuals depending on a combination of naturally endowed and chosen attributes, abilities, appearances, and expressive codes —is represented socially and culturally in a number of her photographs through complex conventions and significations. These photographs were produced during a period in which understandings of what it meant to be masculine or "a man" were deeply informed by a normative expression of patriarchal values. In most of the photographs selected for this paper, I argue that, al-Khazen reflects society's strongly patriarchal ideology and I show how most of al-Khazen's photographs portray masculinity as heroic. While analyzing the photographs, I consider the following question: How do representations of masculinity differ from representations of femininity in al-Khazen's photographs? Her position being behind the camera puts her in control of the image provided to us today. In other words, she is not a neutral mediator, but, rather, manifests control through her choice of the subject matter, the moments that she wanted to be salient in her life, the light and shadow, the objects in the foreground and background setting, the subjects' positions within the space of the photograph and the ways in which these subjects perform their social relations to each other within a group. How then might al-Khazen's photographic decisions shape our understanding of gender relations during mandate Lebanon? Here I examine how masculinity is constructed in al-Khazen's photographs in the ways they disseminate ideas and meanings by generating discursive notions on gender. Gender is explored as a category used to express differences between male and female individuals depending on a combination of naturally endowed and chosen attributes and appearances. The paper offers an analysis of the different ways manhood or *rujuliyya,* particularly in the rural areas in Lebanon, was culturally constructed through an amplified masculinity. From having a moustache, smoking a cigarette, and sporting a *tarbouche*,

to holding rifles, a plethora of props and accoutrements appeared in the photos to denote signs of virility.

Scholarship on photography that incorporates the study of masculinity in the Middle East is a rapidly expanding field. When I first began to explore gendered readings of al-Khazen's photographs, I sought to combine theoretical work in gender studies with theories of representation.[1] Studies of masculinity were primarily devoted to western men in art history, photography, anthropology and cultural studies.[2] As I did not want to simply resort to western models in exploring masculinity, I turned to writings about imagined masculinities in the Middle East.[3] It is by combining readings and research from these sources that I examine the photographs in which al-Khazen portrayed the masculine figure as the central figure, in line with the predominant patriarchal ideology which places particular male figures as central to the social hierarchy.

Marianne Hirsch has posed the question of power deployed and contested within a family's visual dynamics, in the context of photographic practices within families (1997). To contextualize al-Khazen's photographs, I first look into family photographs of the same period in which it is a recurring photographic convention to place men in central positions in portrait photographs. A recurring tradition in most family photographs show the patriarch of the family placed at the top of a triangular composition to emphasize his role as the head of the family. Following the convention of placing men in the highest point of the photograph that dates back to early practices of photography in the Ottoman Empire, the photographer is often in charge of organizing the subjects in hierarchical order determined by the subject's age, gender and social rank.[4] I then show how this convention appears in Marie al-Khazen's photographs of her brother and nephews as well as other men within the al-Khazen's family circle. The way boys are depicted as engaged and mobile with highlighted strength, intelligence and confidence is explored in the next part of this paper that discussed the photographic construction of masculinity of young boys. I then share examples of photographs in which a group of men are performing their

masculinity while exhibiting power by holding arms and rifles and posing heroically in the photos. I demonstrate how one of these photos was intercepted by al-Khazen's shadow as an attempt to infiltrate the masculine space by the woman photographer.

Staging Patriarchs in Photographs

The beginning of the twentieth century in the Middle East and North Africa was an era of *embourgeoisement* and especially the solidification of the bourgeois family (Sheehi, 2016, p. 103). Photography was a valuable tool for shaping and sustaining an image of family solidarity (Hirsch, 1997, p. 9). In plate no. 1, dated 1898, Salim Mansur Abu Izzeddin and his wife Lutfiyah are holding hands; the primacy of the patriarch is indicated by his position in the photo with his *tarbouche* vertically stretching his length in order to appear large and tall, occupying as much space in the photograph as possible while looking down at the viewer/ photographer. Another example, plate no. 2, most probably from the same period, portrays two women sitting below two men in a living room setting, the upper rank seems to reinforce the superiority of the two men standing or laying in an upward position confidently waiting for the photographer to capture this moment. Plate no. 3 depicts a family celebrating their youngest child's baptism in Palestine in 1928. This photograph appears to have been taken at the studio where the same convention of placing men at the top or highest point in the photograph was widely followed.

According to Michael Lesy (1980) in his analysis of social relationships in photography,

> [w]hen the camera is raised to the eye of a friend, a lover, or a parent, it becomes the symbol of a judgment, attention and insight even more intense and scrutinizing than that which ordinarily characterizes such intimate relationships. Its presence transforms the people it beholds into actors, standing in sets, posing with symbolic props, the whole

> scene, a private allegory of love, defined by the edge of an imaginary proscenium stage (p. xv).

This insight provides us with useful resources for the analysis of family portraiture. Family portraits often represent family pride and loyalty, prosperity and orderly succession. Each of the family members relates to the other members by his/her position, pose and body gesture. The father or patriarch is facing the camera occupying a central position in the photograph with the rest of the family members sitting below him as if under his authority and protection. Often the younger male members who will later come after him are equally emphasized in the photograph by being positioned in the middle of the photograph as in plate no. 5. Traditionally, fathers, husbands and brothers stood for authority. Human relations were largely determined by one's relative rank or status within the household as well as by gender hierarchies (Joseph, 1993, p. 473).

All men in plates no. 1-2-3-4 are sporting moustaches. Each moustache is trimmed in a different way. In a book on Arab masculinity, Hassan Daoud, a contemporary Lebanese novelist, focuses on the moustache as an essential component of masculinity (2006, p. 274). He explores the various meanings of the moustache in relation to virility. He refers to the moustache, sarcastically, as the "wings of manhood," to express its importance in the representation of manhood or *rujuliyya* in turn-of-the-century Mount Lebanon villages in particular (p. 274). According to Daoud, the moustache's shape, length, direction and thickness are meant to represent a man's level of honor and authority. For example, when stretched from ear to ear and pointed upward or downward, "[t]he moustache determines a man's personality, social rank and age," claims Daoud (p. 274). The most striking moustaches in the photographs are that of the men in plates 1 and 2. What distinguishes their moustaches from the others is how firmly the hair at the ends would maintain its upward twirl. The moustache seems as if it was coated with a sticky substance that holds it in place. The custom of twisting moustaches, according to Daoud, dates back to the days when Lebanon was under Ottoman rule. It carried connotations and associations of the Turkish authority's attitude, symbolizing the

harshness and stubbornness of the oppressor. In pictorial representations, the moustache pointing downward, as in a number of Naji al-Ali's famous caricatures, can be understood as a symbol of a people's defeat; when it goes upward it signifies courage, victory and pride.[5] "A moustache for a man is like forearm muscles, a man raises and tenses his moustache to exhibit his strength" explains Daoud (p. 278). Another accouterment that enhances masculinity is the *tarbouche*, worn by the man in the first photograph. For men in general during this period, the headdress asserted their authority over the rest of the family and their estate while inscribing them as the educated, cultivated, knowledgeable member of the family.

Again, this time in a rural setting, the central figure in plate no. 4 is the male figure situated at the highest point in the photograph. In plate no. 4, taken by al-Khazen in around 1920s and 1930s Zgharta, the man holding an *arak* bottle in one hand and his headgear in the other has the confidence of the patriarch.[6] He has removed his *tarbouche* in a gesture of greeting directed at the photographer. His moustache and his *tarbouche* are traditional signs of virility while his western attire reflects his social status. His position, higher than the other men in the photograph, metaphorically implies his higher position in society. The same applies to a younger boy, shaykh Salim, Marie al-Khazen's nephew, in plate no. 5, another of the woman photographer's captured moments, yet this one seems like a carefully staged scene. Shaykh (plural: shuyukh) is an honorific title in the Arabic language. The title is commonly used to designate the front man of a tribe or feudal family who inherited this title from his father. Most of the al-Khazen men who appear in Marie al-Khazen's photographs are Maronite shuyukh, or leading family members, who controlled areas that ranged from one village to entire districts under the Ottoman era.[7] A shaykh's main task was to collect the taxes from the sharecroppers or peasants in their areas as well as keeping the peace locally (Khater, 2001, p. 23). From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, they played an important role in the political life of Mount Lebanon. They were often the mediators between the Ottoman rulers and their districts or villages (Gilsenan, 1996, p. 92). In this frame,

most of the objects, the furniture as well as the two girls in the image revolve around the central male figure. The three children appear as if they were instructed, for the sake of the photograph, to lean their head on their hand in forming a triangular shape around the young male figure, positioning his head at the top. Men, in general, pose in certain formulaic ways that reflect and affirm patriarchy. Following this convention, al-Khazen asserts this ideology while nurturing patriarchy in her nephew at an early stage of his upbringing through her photograph.

"I'm from an environment that honors and celebrates procreative masculinity… The father in our culture is called "Abu" followed by the name of his eldest son, and the eldest son is named after his grandfather," contends Rashid al-Daif in his *Dear Mr. Kawabata* (Al-Daif, 1999, p. 60). These naming customs are not the case for young girls whose mothers are not named after them; rather mothers and grandmothers carry the names of their eldest sons, too. For example, shaykh Salim's mother, following this tradition, is called Umm Salim that is the "mother of Salim." In her ethnographic study of Lebanese family relations, Suad Joseph makes a strong argument for the centrality of kinship or brother/sister relationships in defining gender roles (1993). Joseph suggests that Arab brothers and sisters are caught up in a relationship of love and nurturance on the one hand and power and violence on the other, in a manner that reproduces Arab patriarchy (p. 471). Patriarchy also finds its expression in family photographs through the women's public display of affection such as in plate no. 10 where Umm Salim is proudly holding her son with fulfillment and admiration. Women's roles in society, as seen in photographs of this period, are even more exaggerated in relation to male figures — husbands, sons, and brothers. Motherhood, especially of male children, is congratulated and praised, and this can also be seen in the confident look of the woman proudly holding her son who is sporting a baby's dress traditionally worn by both infant boys and girls during their baptism ceremony. She is looking confidently into the viewfinder as if she consciously wants to be depicted in the photograph, proud of her relationship to her husband and her three sons.

Young Boys Becoming Men in Photographs

A significant number of Marie al-Khazen's photographs capture young boys. In her photographs we see the following: a boy on a donkey (plate no. 6), a boy riding a car (plate no. 7) a boy playing with his toys (plate no. 13), a baby boy held by his mother (plate no. 10), a boy in the center flanked by two girls (plate no. 5), a naked boy sitting on a table in the al-Khazen salon (plate no. 8), and a father raising his son above his shoulders (plate no. 9). What is common to all these photographs is the centrality of the young male figure within their frame.

How do we explain the little shaykh posing proudly naked in the center of a table placed in the middle of the house's living room in 1920s Zgharta (plate 9)? If it were a girl, would Marie al-Khazen have taken the photograph in the same way? Would she have stripped the little girl of her clothes and placed her in the middle of a tall table to take her picture? Would a girl be sitting as comfortably as the little boy is while sharing her nudity with us? Al-Khazen took many photographs of her nephews. However, although she had both nephews and nieces, she did not take any photographs portraying her nieces in the center of the photograph, or proudly sitting in the center of a table. To give birth to a girl was not an event to be celebrated in this time and place as it is expressed in Najla's letter addressed to Linda, at around the same time that Marie al-Khazen was taking her photographs.[8] Towards the end of her letter, Najla reveals her preference in wanting to have a boy child. Despite her admitting that this attitude is "backward," as she puts it in the letter, "like peasants," she admits to not being able to transcend her preference for boys.

In centralizing the male child's subjectivity, al-Khazen reflects a range of gendered relations which were widespread in the rest of the Ottoman Empire and beyond at the time. In the al-Khazen's house, men were away a great deal of time; they were busy gathering taxes and solving village disputes. It was not unusual for women to celebrate a

young boy's physical masculinity and to spoil him by acceding to his demands. As long as the boy was alone with his mother and aunts, he could play at being the uncontested master of the house (Kandiyoti, 1994, p. 206). The different attitudes of the mother and the father towards their son are seen in the above photographs, particularly in their expression of affection. In plate no. 9, the father holds his son as high as he can, symbolically expressing his pride; in contrast, the mother, in plate no. 10, holds her son lovingly and protectively as close to her body as she can. Patriarchy finds its expression in how the father positions his son, his successor, in a manner that reproduces Arab patriarchy, at the highest point in the frame of the photograph to highlight his importance and metaphorically imply his elevated position in society.

A further reading of this image might suggest that it is a woman's construction of the young boy's masculinity, allowing us to gain insight into the subject's experience as a boy becoming a man, as set by the context and the family's behavior around him. The boy's identity is being constructed from his childhood experiences, as seen in the way he is positioned and portrayed within the space of the photograph–in his pose and pride in his nakedness. Thus, this photograph is not only about a child, but suggests the young boy's experience of his future "male-ness" through his attitude of sitting naked and proud before the photographer's gaze. Al-Khazen's photograph inscribes Arab masculinity, as understood during the Ottoman era, into the image of the young al-Khazen boy.

All of this is contrasted with plate no. 16 which depicts gender properties differently. In this photograph, al-Khazen portrays particular masculine expectations for the young upper class boy. These would include chivalry and compassion as vital ingredients of the upper class's paternalistic logic. The young boy sits in front of a piano, as a sign of the cultivated and 'civilized' environment, yet, from all the toys that surround him, he holds a rifle. The rifle as an essential accouterment projects the young Zghartawi's expectations to become a courageous fighter. In rural areas in the North of Lebanon in particular, masculine

culture is wrapped up in blood feuds and vengeance. Attributes of masculinity, or the meaning of "being a man" is linked to being an *abaday* or a strongly built man in Arabic. [9]The value of vengeance is emphasized as a means of protecting a man's masculinity. Embracing masculinity in rural areas in particular, is much more important than "being a man," according to al-Daif (1998, p. 39). Masculine men are short tempered, aggressive and violent. The slightest disrespect or provocation may result in what appear to be disproportionate consequences. In plate no. 13, the little boy, surrounded by toys, is given a rifle to hold as a prop for the photograph in order to symbolize what he will grow up to fulfill.

The Pursuit of Heroic Masculinity

Two contrasting personalities construct the masculine figure in the plates no. 14 and 15. In plate no. 14, shaykh Khazen, he photographer's brother, is disguised as the devil, a symbol for what is bad and undesirable. He stands in a frontal position facing the camera; two pointed horns are projected from his head, his face is covered with white fake facial hair and in his hand he holds a long hammer. Traditionally the devil stands for evil, but in this photograph the figure does not convey the frightening meanings of the devil. It seems as if the subject and the photographer are amusing themselves in constructing different personalities through the production of images. In plate no. 15, the same shaykh Khazen al-Khazen appears disguised as a priest. The priest is expected to provide sound counsel and moral guidance to his co-religionists and faith community. The al-Khazen household was situated in a predominately Maronite environment and thus often visited by priests to give its residents their benediction. However, the priest in this photo could not refrain from laughing, drawing attention to the fact that the subject was not indeed a priest but rather acting out the role. In the first example here, the masculine figure represents evil and in the second, goodness. Both photographs capture shaykh Khazen acting in an inappropriate manner that is not in accordance with the traditional masculine social and cultural

expectations of a shaykh. Regardless of the purpose of this activity, what is interesting to us is that Marie al-Khazen and her brother were amusing themselves experimenting with a camera by producing images in which masculinity is depicted in ways other than those which emphasize men's power and virility. They were producing a masculinity that went beyond the conventional man-as-bread-winner and head of family (plates no. 1-2-3). Putting conventions aside and exploring new a representation of masculinity, al-Khazen, instead of portraying shaykh Khazen as the patriarch–as the protector of the house, the *batal* or the *abaday*–alternatively portrays him as a devil in one photograph and as a priest in the other.

Another kind of masculinity is exemplified in al-Khazen's photographs in other cases; it is not only as a marker of gender tension but also of social rank. If we compare the pose and the dress worn by bourgeois men and peasant warriors this becomes clear. In plate no. 16, a young man who is a peasant and protector of the house poses holding a rifle, wearing his war munitions and a traditional *serwal.* In plate no. 17, a man sporting a European three-piece-suit, along with a bowler hat, typical attire of the 1920s Parisian, stands in a three quarter position next to a young boy also wearing a European style coat. Both pictures seem to be taken in front of the al-Khazen house. Plate no. 16 represents a traditional man. The sense of his masculinity is intensified by exaggerating his image as a fighter, a hunter or the protector of the house. Men were frequently photographed with pistols, rifles and swords during this period of instability and upheavals. These were used as props to assert *rujuliyya,* or manhood as physical strength, in the photographs. According to John Ibson, men resisted new notions of modernity as urbanization projects because these notions would restrain their masculinity as they experienced it (2002, p. 66). However, Engin Cizgen observes that the Sultanate, looking to European royalty, started wearing imported styles of attire in order to project an image of themselves as modern as well as distinct from the lower class. She contends, "[f]or the first time in the six hundred year history of the Empire the traditional costume of the Sultanate underwent a change. In place of the caftan and

the shalvar, the Sultan, looking to the models of European royalty, began to wear striped trousers and jackets with epaulets. The turban was replaced by the red fez" (1987, p. 14). This change among the Ottoman authorities' attire was also seen in the different countries under the Ottoman Empire as early as the end of the nineteenth century. The change of attire is not only an expression of class differences but also an affirmation of the urbanized subject or *tamaddun*. This change of costume later, during the first decades of the twentieth century, occurred in a period of rapid change in the region in which the population underwent a massive expansion with the growth of transport and communications, public services like schooling and health care, new entertainment venues like cinemas and parks, and the publishing of newspapers and magazines (Thompson, 2000, p. 174). Zeina Arida, the managing director of the Arab Image Foundation, observed that the subjects in most of the first two decades of the twentieth century photographs in the archive of the foundation, rather than being portrayed next to religious sites dressed up in Bedouin clothes, aspired to be depicted next to railways and cars.[10] She further explains, "Where Europeans nostalgically fastened on a vanishing world of tradition, Arab photographers were determined to show their present while tracing the lines of the future, as if they were willing modernity into being by the force of their gaze" (Shatz, 2003).

The urban looking man in plate no. 17 displays confidence and pride in sporting Western attire. He seems to accept a diminished sense of power in the modernizing society of the 1920s, whereas in plate no. 16, the man resists notions of modernity that come at the expense of being divested of his masculinity as strong and physically powerful. As the cities and machines of a modernizing Lebanon became even more significant in society and culture, men in some photographs seem more interested in escaping it, whereas other men appear to aspire to look modern.

How did men affirm their masculinity as *batal* and *abaday* in al-Khazen's photographs?[11] It is what Douglas Holt et al. in "Man of Action Heroes: The Pursuit of Heroic Masculinity in Everyday Consumption,"

terms the ideology of heroic masculinity that is when male figures construct themselves in dramatic fashion as man-of-action heroes. This exaggerated heroic masculinity is exemplified in the plates no. 11 and 12. From this perspective, it is with this mythologized *batal,* and *abaday* along with other historically masculine icons like Antar that masculinity is idealized in al-Khazen's male group photographs (Frangieh, 2005).[12] Rather than highlighting virtues of the bread-winners and head of families such as in photos discussed earlier – of domesticated cosmopolitan bourgeois family, that articulated their masculinity in their dress pose and position towards their female counterparts (plates no. 1-2-3 – here it is the adventurous hunters posing as heroic risk takers who are displaying their physical prowess and various acts of bravery as signs of their masculinity).

Similarly, plate no. 11 captures a large group of men, possibly heading off to a hunting trip or a battle, and most of them are armed with rifles and swords. They are posing in ways suggestive of a shared manhood. The second young man standing on the right holds a cigarette in his hand. The older one is lying ostentatiously on his rifle, on his right, sticking a cigarette in his mouth. Smoking was conventionally associated exclusively with men, and rifles were visible tokens for male subjects in countless photographs of the beginning of the twentieth century (Ibson, 2002, p. 68). A number of them hold both a rifle and a pistol. Their rifles and pistols are pointed upward as if they are ready to pull the trigger as a sign to start the battle. They all look into the viewfinder as if they are warning the photographer or the viewer not to get closer to the scene. They are posing in pride exhibiting their victory of a successful hunting trip or as if they won a battle. However, plate no. 12, reveals a more theatrical scene for which it seems that the photographer had previously planned a dramatic scenario. Imitating hunting trips in studio photographs was quite common at the turn of the century (Ibson, p. 69). In the middle of what looks like a dry, sandy, deserted area surrounded by mountains, a group of eight men with a donkey and a camel, most of them dressed in *serwal*s, are acting out a fight.[13] The *batal*, the highest one in the center of the group, is holding a gun sideways, looking down

at the man below him. The latter, the man holding the rifle, points his rifle at the former in a position to shoot, his back turned to the spectator. Another man is holding a stick as if he is about to smash it on the floor. The four other men are looking straight into the camera as if they were given orders to do so. On the left, extended towards the open legs of the man holding the rifle in action, al-Khazen's shadow extends to reach out to the group. The eight men, the donkey and the camel's eyes are all dazzled by the sun while waiting for al-Khazen's finger to push the button of her Eastman camera box. They are all caught in a moment of stillness, before being released by the photographer. The men who appear in this photograph not only have been directed to strike theatrical poses but they have been also directed to make symbolic gestures whose meanings are to be deciphered as widening gender roles. At times, they make gestures of their own free will; at other times the photographer directs their actions. Her decisions about the theme of the scene, the distance, point of view and angles slice the world apart.

Intercepting the Masculine Space

The people pictured seem to have been well rehearsed, know their parts, and enjoy them. Each one of them has been given a task in order to participate in the construction of this predominantly masculine space framed by the photographer. The subjects of the photograph were likely given orders to act out their masculinity. Masculinity, in this case, is understood as a display of power, rivalry and heroism. Combats, conflicts and fights were challenging occasions for men in which they might display their physical power in front of the camera. For the sake of the photograph, al-Khazen has carefully designed the setting, instructed her models, the al-Khazen *shuraka,* to act as if they were having a fight.[14] All accoutrements revealing virility are present in the photograph: the moustache, the *tarbouche*, the *serwal,* guns and rifles. The men in the photograph find being photographed as heroes reflective of their own aspirations. They seem to do the job by executing al-Khazen's orders as to how to enact their battle very enthusiastically.

Physical strength is the quality underscored in the portrayal of rural masculinity in al-Khazen's photograph, yet what strikes us most is her shadow extended in the space of the frame as if to join the heroic moment celebrating the battle's victory. Al-Khazen's decision to place her shadow and insist on her presence within a predominantly masculine space is not a random or innocent choice. This notion that conventional family photographs can make space for resistance or revisions of social roles and positions offers an interesting avenue for looking into al-Khazen's visible intention to insert her shadow in this photograph. Drawing once again from Hirsch's work, "family photographs operate between the junction of public myth and personal unconscious" (1997, p. 14). This interpretation places al-Khazen in an open dialogue with masculinity. Rather than just being at the end of the triangular space behind the camera, she steps into her photo through her shadow to impose herself as an interlocutor. We can read her insertion of herself into the photograph as an opportunity to voice her discontent about the patriarchal order and to attempt to prick the normative space by extending her shadow within this frame as an intruder as if taking part in the act and sharing the bravery and other male privileged virtues that are, for al-Khazen, not necessarily, exclusive to male subjects.

Conclusion

To conclude, looking at photographs in which young and older men are positioned at the center of the frame, displaying their strength, nudity, pointed moustaches, *tarbouche*s and other props that exaggerate their social status to rising above the humanity in exhibiting courage, determination and confidence makes us realize not only how constructed masculinity is but also that there seems to be little difference between posing and being. Convention, with all its trappings, is just another kind of performance. Yet the *punctum* in the photographs is al-Khazen's shadow in plate no. 12 when she places her shadow in between the hunter's legs, to attest to something beyond the binary. She seems to provide an alternative account in reading masculinity and

femininity in her photograph. The shadow can be read as a female subject's aspiration to take part in masculine acts while blurring the line between what men and women are expected to act within the normative social structure. As an interlocutor, she voices her aspiration to take part in this gender performance by resisting normative femininity and reconstructing it differently. She expresses her interest in sharing the attributes that are associated, in most if not all of the photos discussed in this paper, exclusively with men. She conveys her will to take part in ventures that appear to be restricted to men in the photographs and does this through a mixture of representing and challenging binaristic and conventional gender roles.

Plate no. 1 *(photo Selim Abu Izzeddin from Faysal Abu Izzeddin collettion)*

Plate 2 *(photo anonymous from Aimée Kettaneh collection)*

Plate 3 *(photo Garabed Krikorian from Mamdouh Bisharat collection)*

Plate 4 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 5 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 6 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 7 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 8 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 9 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 10 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 11 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 12 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 13 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 14 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 15 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 16 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

Plate 17 *(photo Marie El-Khazen from Mohsen Yammine collection)*

[1] For theoretical references in gender studies see Rita Felski (1995), Griselda Pollock (1999) 229-246, and (1988), Andrea Cornwall et al. (1994), Antoinette Burton (2005), Toni Ballantyne et al (2005).
For theoretical references on representation see John Berger (1973), Victor Burgin (Ed.), *(*1982), and John Tagg, *(*1988).

[2] For literature on western models of masculinity see Carol Duncan (1982), John Ibson (2002), Andrea Cornwall et al. (1994) and Douglas B. Holt et al. (2004).

[3] For literature on masculinity in the Middle East and North Africa, see Deniz Kandiyoti (1994), Micheal Gilsenan (1996), Sherifa Zuhur (1998), Rashid al-Daif (1998 and 1999), Hasan Daoud (2006), May Ghoussoub (2006), Samira Aghacy *(*2009), and Wilson C. Jacob *(*2011).

[4] The research on Ottoman Empire photography includes Engin Cizgen (1987), Michelle L. Woodward (2003), Wendy Shaw (2009), Stephen Sheehi (2016) and Ali Behdad (2016).

[5] Naji al-Ali is a Palestinian cartoonist.

[6] *Arak* is a local alcoholic drink based on absinthe.

[7] For more on the Maronite shuyukh, see Akram F. Khater (2001) and more on the al-Khazen shuyukh in Van Leeuwen, R. (1994).

[8] Both Linda and Najla must be close friends of the Torbey family (Marie's family from her mother's side) and the al-Khazen family.

[9] For more on the masculine figure in Lebanese rural societies see Michael Gilsenan (1996).

[10] The Arab Image Foundation is a non-profit organization established in Beirut in 1997. Its mission is to collect, preserve and study photographs from the Middle East, North Africa and the Arab diaspora.

[11] The Arabic term *batal* can be used as a courtesy title for the leader.

[12] Antarah ibn Shaddad, a 6th-century pre-Islamic Arab warrior and poet, known for his heroic deeds and bravery.

[13] *Serwals* are traditional baggy trousers usually worn by peasants.

[14] The term *shuraka* in Arabic means the sharecroppers.

Work Cited:

Aghacy, S. (2009). *Masculine Identity in the Fiction of the Arab East since 1967.* Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Al-Daif, R. (1998). *Learning English.* Beirut: Dar al-Nahar.

---------- (1999). *Dear Mr. Kawabata,* trans. Starkey, P. London: Quartet.

Behdad, A. (2016). *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography of the Middle East.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Berger, J. (1973). *Ways of Seeing.* New York, N.Y.: Viking Press.

Burgin, V. Ed. (1982). *Thinking Photography*. London: Macmillan.

Burton, A. M. (2005) *Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernities.* London: Routledge.

Cizgen, E. (1987). *Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1919.* Istanbul: Haset Kitabevi A. S.

Cornwall, A. et al. (1994). *Dislocating Masculinity: comparative Ethnographies.*London and New York: Routledge.

Daoud, H. (2006). Those Two Heavy Wings of Manhood: on moustaches. In Ghoussoub, M. et al. (Eds.), *Imagined Masculinities: male identity and culture in the modern Middle East* (pp. 273-282). London: Saqi.

Duncan, C. (1982). Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth Century Vanguard Painting. In Broude, N. et al. (Eds.), *Feminism and Art History: questioning the litany* (pp. 293-313). New York: Harper & Row.

Felski, R. (1995). *The Gender of Modernity.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Frangieh, B. K. (2005) *Anthology of Arabic Literature, Culture, and Thought from Pre-Islamic Times to the Present.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ghoussoub, M. et al. Eds. (2006). *Imagined Masculinities: male identity and culture in the modern Middle East*. London: Saqi.

Gilsenan, M. (1996). *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: violence and narrative in an Arab society.* London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

Hirsch, M. (1997). *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Holt, D. B., et al. (2004). Man-of-Action Heroes: The Pursuit of Heroic Masculinity in Everyday Consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(2), 425–440.

Ibson, J. (2002). *Picturing Men: a Century of male relationships in everyday American photography.* Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press.

Jacob, W.C. (2011). *Working out Egypt: effendi masculinity and subject formation in colonial modernity, 1870–1940.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Joseph, S. (1993). Gender and Relationality among Arab families in Lebanon. *Feminist Studies,* 19(3), 465-486.

Kandiyoti, D. (1994). The Paradoxes of Masculinity: some thoughts on segregated Societies. In Cornwall, A. et al. (Eds.), *Dislocating Masculinity: comparative ethnographies* (pp. 185-200). New York: Routledge.

Khater, A. F. (2001). *Inventing home: emigration, gender, and the middle class in Lebanon, 1870-1920*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lesy, M. (1980). *Time Frames: The Meaning of Family Pictures.* New York, N.Y.: Pantheon.

Pollock, G. (1999). Missing Women: rethinking early thoughts on images of women. In Squiers, C. (Ed.), *Over Exposed: essays on contemporary photography* (pp. 202-220). New York: The New Press.

Pollock, G. (1988). *Vision & Difference: femininity, feminism and the histories of art.* London: Routledge.

Shatz, A. (2003). 50,000 closer looks at Arabs, *The New York Times.* March 16, 2003, from

https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/16/arts/art-architecture-50000-closer- looks-at-arabs.html

Shaw, W. (2009). Ottoman Photography of the Late Nineteenth Century: an 'innocent' modernism? *History of Photography,* 33(1), 80-93.

Sheehi, S. (2016). *The Arab imago: A social history of portrait photography, 1860 1910*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Tagg, J. (1988). *The Burden of Representation: essays on photographies and histories.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Thompson, E. (2000). *Colonial Citizens: republican rights, paternal privilege, and gender in French Syria and Lebanon.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Van Leeuwen, R. (1994). *Notables and Clergy in Mount Lebanon: the Khazin sheikhs and the Maronite church, 1736-1840*. Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill.

Woodward, M. L. (2003). Between Orientalist Clichés and Images of Modernization. *History of Photography,* 27(4), 363-374.