

New Men for the New Nation

Examining youth development, sports and masculine ethics within the post-revolutionary Egyptian state bureaucracy

Project abstract

This anthropological research project examines how the Egyptian state mobilises sports to shape young men's ethics, politics and bodies. Taking Egypt's recent revolutionary transformation and the ensuing revalorisation of 'the Youth' as a point of departure, the research homes in on the revolutionary aftermath: an era marked by accelerated neoliberal restructuring and programmes of intervention, designed to appropriately mould the youth into 'new men for the new nation'.

The project will primarily be based on ethnographic fieldwork at a handful of Cairo's 'youth centres' (*marakiz al-shabab*): a nationwide network of state-run cultural, educational and sporting institutions. The fieldwork will be supplemented by archive material about the history of Egypt's youth centres and analyses of contemporary and historical media material about youth, health and sports in the state-owned magazine *Al-Shabab* (The Youth).

The project aims to answer the following question: what are the Egyptian government's policies and priorities vis-à-vis health, sport, youth and gender, and how have these changed over the last decade? How do policies translate into ethical codes of conduct, and how are they implemented on-the-ground, through sports activities among the youth? How do ethics link up with neoliberal ideals of transparency and professionalism? How do they shape masculine norms and performativity? And to what extent do young men accept or challenge the government's aims and ideals?

The research builds on and contributes to the anthropologies of the state, ethics, critical events and their aftermath, neoliberalism, bureaucracy, youth development, sport and masculinity.