

**Problematizing the Passport: A Postcolonial Approach to Understanding the
Role of the Passport**

Sahar Al-Khulaidi
s2135124
s.r.e.al-khulaidi@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Master Thesis: International Relations – Culture and Politics
Dr. Karen Smith
Word count: 14,684
Date: June 6, 2021

Abstract

This research paper explored the passport through a postcolonial lens. An existing passport hierarchy motivated the questioning of the performative role that the passport plays in subordinating and marginalizing the Global South. It was found that through the process of “Othering,” the passport has played a role in consolidating colonial legacy. To investigate this, a Critical discourse analysis was conducted on the Egyptian film *Assal Eswed* (2010) to gain better understanding on the discourse around passports and how the Global South is made to feel inferior through it. The film was mapped into themes which display power relations rooted in colonial history. The findings are useful in understanding several key debates in International Relations such as, immigration, refugee crisis, power relations, and colonial legacy.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
1.1 The Puzzle.....	4
1.2 Significance of the Research	5
1.3 Research Design.....	7
1.4 Thesis Structure/ Chapter Outline.....	8
Chapter 2: History of the Passport.....	9
2.1 The Early Passport as a Diplomatic Correspondence	9
2.2 The Biometric Passport.....	11
Chapter 3 : Literature Review.....	13
3.1 Nationality and Citizenship.....	13
3.3 Constructing the “Other”	18
Chapter 4: Methodology	21
4.1 Popular Culture and Arab Cinema:.....	21
4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis	22
Chapter 5: Film Analysis.....	24
5.1 Background	24
5.2 Synopsis	26
5.3.1 <i>Said (Edward)</i>	28
5.3.2 <i>Uncle Hilal (Yousef Dauod):</i>	28
5.3.3 <i>Radi (Lotfy Labib):</i>	28
5.4 Findings	28
5.5 Theme Analysis.....	29
5.5.1 Civilized/ Uncivilized.....	29
5.5.2 Suspicion/Trustworthiness.....	32
5.5.3 Inferiority/Superiority	33
5.5.4 Subjects in the Law/to the Law	36
5.5.5 Construction of Knowledge and Truth	36
5.6 Postcolonialism.....	37
Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion	39
Appendices.....	42
Bibliography.....	43

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Puzzle

Upon entering the Henley index website, one is confronted with a blatant prejudice in the first sentence that reads “For some people, a passport is a portal to the world. For others, it is a barrier to the travel freedom they seek. Where do you lie on the spectrum of mobility?”¹ The Henley index ranks passports based on how many countries one is allowed to enter without, or with minimal, visa restrictions.² The passports granting “freedom” are generally from Western Nations and a few wealthy nations whereas, the passports that are “barriers” are primarily from Third world countries that are majorly Muslim, African, or poor. There is a clear divide between the Global North and the Global South in terms of the power of the passport.³ Is this a mere coincidence? Or is there a more rooted issue that this bifurcation is based on? What is shocking is how this passport hierarchy has become normalized. The passport is often viewed as an objective artifact, and the hierarchy it explicitly advocates as a matter of security and foreign policy.

Furthermore, mobility, which is in essence a natural human right, has become a monopoly of the State and accepted as such. The passport has managed to de-historize itself to a point that most people are unaware of its very recent history of genesis. Article 13 of the universal declaration on Human rights declares that “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”⁴ However, because nation states reserve the full autonomy to decide on who is allowed to enter their borders, citizens of countries with “worst passports” are in a semi state of quarantine. Unfortunately, the problem of the passport hierarchy is far worse than freedom of mobility; it has also become an overall system of hierarchy that affects people’s everyday lives. In International Relations, there are few artifacts and objects that have material agency. Of such,

¹ “The Henley Passport Index.” Henley & Partners. Accessed June 10, 2020. <https://www.henleypassportindex.com/passport>.

² The passport is an identifier of nationality. The two terms can be used interchangeably. More on the choice of using the passport in 3.3.

³ The Global South is used here to refer to regions in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Dados & Connell (2012) assert that the term has been used to denote regions outside North America and Europe that are generally low-income and “often politically or culturally marginalized.” The importance of this term is that it “marks a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference toward an emphasis on geopolitical relations of power.” However, the researcher is aware of the problematic use of the term and of using such binary oppositions.

⁴ The United Nations. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

the passport has become a powerful performative object in the global apartheid system. A formal definition of the passport constitutes that it is a:

“basic identity document accepted as valid for crossing international borders. Passports are generally considered to provide conclusive evidence of a person's citizenship. Passports are linked to the right of a state to provide diplomatic protection to the passport holder and to the right of nationals to enter their own country of nationality.”⁵

In practice, the passport has evolved beyond its static role and has become highly politicized, and thus the “experience”⁶ of the passport is not a neutral nor a practical one, and it is far from being “basic.” Aside from the apparent hierarchy in the mobility regime, the passport has evolved to encompass an array of values and political meanings. Like race, class, and gender, the passport denotes one’s status and value in everyday life aspects such as marriage and job opportunity, credibility, and even access to basic services. All over the world, the passport is an identifier of where one lies on the implicit caste system that is condoned by the international realm. It is the objective of this research to unpack the politicization of the passport beyond its assumed purpose as a travel document and unravel the core of such politicization. For these reasons, this research was deemed imperative to contextualize the power of the passport as a document and to make prevalent the injustices that occur due to the performativity of the passport. More specifically, this research is interested in the role of colonial history in dictating this passport regime. The research question that this paper aims to investigate is,

How does the passport, as a performative artifact, perpetuate colonial imperialism?

With sub question:

How do people from the Global South experience the passport in everyday life?

1.2 Significance of the Research

The everyday life experience of the passport by citizens of the Global South is a topic that has not been discussed at all in academic literature. The existing literature focuses on the discriminatory role of the passport only within the sphere of border crossing and security studies

⁵ Dauvergne, Catherine. "passport." In *The New Oxford Companion to Law*. : Oxford University Press, 2008. <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/view/10.1093/acref/9780199290543.001.0001/acref-9780199290543-e-1616>.

⁶ I use the word experience to emphasize that there are dynamics related to passports and that there is a variation in the consequences that people undergo based on the passport they hold.

in terms of race, class, and religion. Some studies that will be explored in the literature review point towards the prejudice and failure of the visa regime in keeping security and some investigate its relationship to colonial legacies. However, the passport acting as a hierarchal and discriminatory object in day-to-day life *within* borders is a topic that remains unstudied, and it is the interest of this research.

Furthermore, studying the passport as a political artifact has also never been done before. This research hypothesizes that the power of the passport is present in its physical manifestation as an object. It is not sufficient to be a national of a country. Holding the object itself is necessary for one to exercise these powers.⁷ The lack of literature on this topic is not surprising considering that these experiences are exclusive to the Global South, an area underrepresented in academic fields and especially in IR. The field of International Relations (IR) has been dominated by Western thought and perspective. Over the past decade, this has been a continuing criticism of the discipline. IR does not seem to reflect the voices, experiences, and knowledge of the global world but is rather ethnocentric or Eurocentric.⁸ The theories and narratives in IR have been accused of being far from third world realities. The reasons for the lack of knowledge coming from the third world are generally owed to IR's intellectual gatekeeping, amongst other issues. Nonetheless there is a lack of effort in exploring IR from a third world perspective. Several authors have advocated for the nuanced and complementary value of including third world scholarship to existing IR frameworks.

In an effort to include third world readings of IR into core scholarship, Arlene Tickner, in her article "Seeing IR differently: notes from the third world," suggested the incorporation of features that dominant IR theory fails to include. Of such features is what she calls "everyday life." Tickner argues that knowledge of the world is a product of everyday life experiences of individuals and groups. The intrusive nature of everyday life heavily influences the realities of people leading scholars to a different process of knowledge-building.⁹ The variety of experience of scholars in the Global South, which can be as extreme as witnessing war or more academically constraining such as lack of research funding or limited access to libraries, can shape their academic reflections differently from those experiencing more convenient life conditions. These reflections based on

⁷ More on this later.

⁸ Acharya, Amitav. "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds A New Agenda for International Studies." *International studies quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 647-659.

⁹ Tickner, Arlene. "Seeing IR differently: notes from the Third World." *Millennium* 32, no. 2 (2003), 307.

everyday life experiences can provide valuable insight and generate a discourse. This research recognizes the value of Tickner's findings and is attempting to build knowledge based on the everyday life experiences with the passport in the Global South—a reality that the Western world seems to be oblivious to.

1.3 Research Design

This research does not assume that marginalization is coincidental. The construction of the power relations occurs through discourse and appears in the most subtle forms as well as explicitly. The passport hierarchy was able to establish itself as a norm using language as well as practices over time that have become internalized. Thus, this study is qualitative in nature because it will aim to deconstruct the narratives associated with passports and aim to understand the discourse built around passports that allowed it to become the way it is known to us today. The study will use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to understand the existing power relations. CDA will be discussed further in the methodology chapter. The data collected will be from a film, *Assal Eswed* (2010), which exhibits this particular issue. Film can be seen as a medium for communicating the daily struggles and political issues of Arabs. It has been often used as a platform for resistance against social injustices. A critical discourse analysis of *Assal Eswed* will illuminate the ways through which the passport discriminates, and reveal how Arabs understand this power dynamic.

Because the film is the only source of data, this research is limited to exploring the ways through which the passport affects people's everyday lives. There are several other social practices and norms that the researcher can think of from personal experiences that are not mentioned in the paper because they are not exhibited in the film. Due to the length of this paper, only one method was used for collecting data. Using a single source of data might undermine the credibility of the research for being too general or not representative. Later studies could perhaps conduct interviews on political and bureaucratic discourses to gain more primary sources. Furthermore, while significant, debates on the visa regime, nationality, and citizenship are only briefly explored in the literature review as they are out of the scope of the paper. As relevant as they are, this study is solely dedicated to the social issues relating to the passport and its material manifestation in power relations. Finally, I recognize my own bias towards the issue, given that I hold a passport from a war-torn country and was forced to displace and seek asylum in the Netherlands. To address this,

I attempted to approach the issue as objectively as possible and follow systematic methods of analysis.

1.4 Thesis Structure/ Chapter Outline

The second chapter of this study will investigate a detailed history of the passport. This was deemed important because it reveals how the passport has evolved from a document into an active agent of identity politics to serve different interests. The passport has de-historicized and positioned itself as a naturally occurring norm. Positioning it within a historical timeline and understanding the reasons behind its creation and evolution takes away some of its agency by denying its self-proclaimed inherent necessity. This will be followed by a literature review in Chapter 3 regarding the few sources that mention the role of the passport beyond a travel document. It will also include a brief summary of how the passport has been studied thus far (only within the sphere of mobility). Furthermore, the chapter will also include a summary of the theoretical literature that is crucial for the critical discourse analysis. Chapter 4 will discuss the methodology used and elaborate on the significance of film as a source of data for this particular study. Chapter 5 will be the bulk of this research and will contain the film analysis and a theme mapping that displays the different ways the passport affects people's lives. Finally, chapter 6 will include a discussion and a conclusion.

Chapter 2: History of the Passport

The history of the passport is a severely understudied topic with only a handful of works that were dedicated to it. Upon discussions with colleagues and friends, the researcher found that many people do not even question the purpose of the passport nor can they imagine a time when passports did not exist even though it only became an international requirement during WWI. The passport appearing as a normal and inherent part of the social and political reality is what allows it to have significant power. Thus, it was deemed imperative to position the passport within a historical timeline and trace its evolution to the form that it holds today as well as its possible future form. Understanding its history is crucial for deconstructing its discourse and the meanings attached to it.

2.1 The Early Passport as a Diplomatic Correspondence

The early versions of passports were letters issued by an authority or in the name of an authority that granted safe passage of its holder. The first use dates back to the 11th century in Spain by what was known as *guidaticum*.¹⁰ Later on, developments in the 16th century dictated the use of a “passport letter” of the same purpose. In the mid nineteenth century, some countries such as France and Belgium required that travelers possessed such documents. Italy and Turkey required upon entry a “visa” which held the same concept as the passport at the time. The passport was not an identification of the person nor showing loyalty to a sovereign. It was mostly issued for single use with a request that the traveler’s safety is granted. Therefore, anyone possessing an acceptable reference was able to get one. In fact, it was decoupled from sovereign association to the extent that many Britons who found that the process of acquiring a British passport was inconvenient obtained French or Belgian ones instead. Anyone could request a passport from a consulate without being a national of the country. Nonetheless, the concept of the passport was perceived by many as tedious bureaucracy (despite its ease of issuance), as well as wounding to a man’s dignity considering its existence was suggestive that there is doubt on the individual’s bona-fides.¹¹ What is important to note is that until WWI, the passport was not a guarantor of a person’s identity, nor citizenship. It was merely a correspondence between officials. The letter was written from one official to another and contained very little information about the traveler themselves. This

¹⁰ O'Byrne, Darren J. "On passports and border controls." *Annals of Tourism Research* 28, no. 2 (2001), 400.

¹¹ Lloyd, Martin. *The passport*. Phoenix Mill et al.: Sutton Publishing, 2003, 5.

changed during World War I. An aura of general suspicion, “of constant vigilance against military espionage and of food rationing” dictated active citizenship.¹² It became pejorative for states to distinguish citizens from non-citizens and thereby establishing themselves as nation-states.¹³ Thus, in 1915 it was made mandatory within the “major” countries that anyone who wishes to travel abroad must be bearing a passport. Generally, it was expected that the “passport regime” would be a temporary ordeal and would be abolished once peace was established; all travel restrictions would once again be alleviated. However, despite efforts and promises from governments for its abolishment, it only became stricter.

In 1920, the League of Nations held an international conference in Paris regarding “Passports & Customs Formalities and Through Tickets.” The League was aware that there was no return to pre-war travel conditions and thus proceeded on to ratify a uniformed form of the passport, and to simplify formalities of visas and passport acquirement.¹⁴ The passed legislation on the form of a passport states that it should be:

“a 32-page document in which the first 4 pages serve Introduction 19 the purpose of identification and the last 28 provide space for visa stamps. The document had to be in two languages (the sample is in French and Spanish) and required such information as profession, date, ... signature”¹⁵

This is still the general form used today, although not all nation-states follow the requirements strictly. For instance, the physical description and signature are not provided in several nations. Furthermore, it was suggested that refugees or people who were exiled would be issued a special certificate called the “Nansen passport,” named after the High commissioner Dr. Nansen who proposed it. This document would allow its holder to travel to the intended country, given they acquire a visa. Furthermore, the holder is not required to return to the country that issued the Nansen passport.¹⁶

The Paris conference on the regulation of the passport cemented its role and presence in the international world. After 1920, the passport became the only legitimate document for international travel. Furthermore, the passport officially became a signifier of one’s citizenship.

¹² Reale, Egidio. "The Passport Question." *Foreign Aff.* 9 (1930): 506.

¹³ Torpey, John C. *The invention of the passport: Surveillance, citizenship and the state*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

¹⁴ Reale, Egidio. "The Passport Question," 506.

¹⁵ Chalk, Bridge. *Modernism and mobility: the passport and cosmopolitan experience*. Springer, 2014, 18.

¹⁶ Reale, Egidio. "The Passport Question," 507-508.

Besides being an identity document, it retained its original function as a diplomatic correspondence. The passport essentially entails that a sovereign recognizes this individual and has given them permission to travel abroad. Furthermore, it asks foreign powers to allow this traveler to travel safely and freely. In fact, a similar statement indicating this correspondence is still present on most passports today. The modern function of the passport that ties it to Nationality (and in most cases citizenship) implies three features. The first is that the sovereign has the responsibility to protect the traveler. In practice, it is not clear how this would be carried out. Secondly, the passport is an identification document, and having been issued by sovereign authority, attests that the holder poses no danger or threat to foreign countries. Thirdly, repatriation of the passport holder is expected, given the allegiance the individual holds to their sovereign. The linking of the passport with both nationality and citizenship tremendously changed the relationship between the individual and the State. Firstly, coupling the passport with nationality generated a different meaning of the concept. Nationality gained a material manifestation through being represented by the passport. The passport enabled the nation-state to draw its boundaries and decide who is a member. It was no longer an association of one's birthplace, but rather a recognition from the state of an individual as a national. Thus, the birth of the passport granted the state full authority to provide or deprive one of their nationality and/or citizenship.

2.2 The Biometric Passport

Much of the modern history of the passport and political debate on its conception has been focused on how to verify the authenticity of the passport and its origin, rather than its connection with the person's identity. Multiple measurements have been put in place, such as special stamps, paper type, etc. Passport theft and identity theft have become capital punishments in several countries, however, that did not mitigate the problem. Furthermore, as the world evolves into passport free zones,¹⁷ the surveilling and archiving function became more and more hard to achieve. Thus in 2005, the International Civil Aviation Organization approved a new standard for the international passport that is known as the biometric passport. A circuit chip integrated in the passport, containing biometric measure of its holder including facial recognition and fingerprint,

¹⁷ There are currently 5 zones where passports are not required for inter-travel.

makes it machine readable.¹⁸ The biometric passport handed over the responsibility of verifying identity from man to machine. This switch cements the ties of men to their passports. It relates a person irrevocably to their travel document.¹⁹

¹⁸ Hausken, Liv. "The Archival Promise of the Biometric Passport." *Memory in Motion: Archives, Technology, and the Social* (2017), 260.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 261.

Chapter 3 : Literature Review

As mentioned in the introduction, there is a severe lack of literature available on the passports in all academic disciplines. It is generally regarded under the umbrella of documents, identity documents and travel documents which is a topic that is viewed as administrative and rarely as political or social. The discriminatory role of the passport is only studied when studying the visa regime and border studies, which even then, has little to do with the passport itself as an object and more about international relations between countries and issues of security and foreign policy, which is outside the interest and scope of this study. Thus, it was left out of this literature review with a few exceptions that included some critical research. The following literature review contains a summary of the very few works that studied the passport critically and socially. The shortness of this review is an indicator of how neglected this topic is in academic disciplines. One of the authors mentioned, Mark Salter, had lived and taught in Cairo for a while and therefore was exposed to the harsh reality of the passport and was motivated to write about it. But even Salter does not allude to the daily-lived experiences of passport holders. Therefore, concluding that to the best of my knowledge, no one has ever written about this topic in academia. It was only found in people's personal blogs and fiction books (not used in this research).

3.1 Nationality and Citizenship

When one is asked about the passport, one immediately associates it with nationality and citizenship. It is a travel document, but it is also the only physical identifier of one's nationality, internationally speaking. It is for this reason that the passport holds so much power within the international realm. Beyond being a travel document, it is irrevocably tied to one's nationality and sometimes citizenship.²⁰ While the two terms are intertwined and often used interchangeably, they hold slightly different meanings. Nationality, more than a legal bond between a person and a state, is a membership to a nation-state. It refers to the "condition and privileges derived from a passport (i.e. the right to return, the right to claim diplomatic protection from the state in foreign countries, the right to transmit nationality through *ius sanguinis*)"²¹ Whereas citizenship is more concerned

²⁰ In some Latin American countries, having the nationality and the passport does not automatically give you citizen rights.

²¹ Belton, Kristy A. "Muddy waters: citizenship and the right to vote in the Commonwealth Caribbean migratory context." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 57, no. 1 (2019): 93-122.

with political life, duties and rights within a state. Citizenship has been argued to be a fluid and elastic concept. A good example of this is the term cultural citizenship. Renato Rosaldo refers to the term cultural citizenship as a “deliberate oxymoron” because citizenship in the legal term is something you either acquire or you do not, and all citizens are to be treated equally and have equal access to opportunity.²² However, that is not normally the case as one speaks of “second-class citizens.”²³ Citizenship is both a legal and a cultural institution. While one can acquire citizenship through legal documents, the cultural belonging of citizenship is deeply hierarchal and conditional. This is not a foreign concept given the different minority struggles that are demonstrated all over the world. In the USA for instance, simply having the American citizenship does not make you American. Latino or Arab Americans do not often pass the cultural criteria of citizenship in the cultural sense. The terms for inclusion are vague and often relying on shifting standards. Waleed Mahdi, capitalized on this concept in his book *Arab Americans in Film* to explain the different layers that constitute citizenship. Mahdi explores how America promotes “the right to be different while still needing to adhere to the nation’s narrative of Americanness.”²⁴

The anthropologist Aihwa Ong defines cultural citizenship as a “dual process of self-making and being made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society.”²⁵ This definition of citizenship entails it is socio-constructive in nature. Ong elaborates that citizenship is shaped through European imperialism. She points out that encounters during the colonial era between the colonizers and the colonized created the view that the white-black hierarchies are directly correlated with levels of civilization: “These historically specific ideologies, Western European in origin, order human groupings distinguished by real and alleged biological features into status hierarchies that become the bases of various forms of discrimination and exclusion in Western democracies.”²⁶ However, nowadays the marginalization is justified through using the discourse of culture difference rather than racial difference. Ong denies that culture and race are exclusive but are deeply intertwined within roots of colonial history. Ong concludes that both the

²² Rosaldo, Renato. "Cultural citizenship and educational democracy." *Cultural anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994), 402.

²³ Ibid, 403.

²⁴ Mahdi, Waleed F. *Arab Americans in Film: From Hollywood and Egyptian Stereotypes to Self-Representation*. Syracuse University Press, 2020, 26

²⁵ Ong, Aihwa, Virginia R. Dominguez, Jonathan Friedman, Nina Glick Schiller, Verena Stolcke, David YH Wu, and Hu Ying. "Cultural citizenship as subject-making: immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States [and comments and reply]." *Current anthropology* 37, no. 5 (1996), 737.

²⁶ Ibid, 738

state and its subject need to allow for a named space of belonging to a citizenship, but that it is contested because of an existing hegemonic form. This concept of cultural citizenship serves to show that citizenship is not neutral. It has become a term that embodies an array of meanings of what it means to be American, or Egyptian, etc. And these definitions are rooted within colonial ideologies of hierarchies. Because citizenship is a concept that is more of concern within the borders of a state, it has been discussed vastly in academia. On the other hand, nationality, which is relevant between borders, has always been presumed to be a neutral concept or a legal matter. I argue that nationality is just as informed by colonial history and holds the same cultural-racial hierarchies as citizenship. Furthermore, using the term nationality often insinuates voluntary membership or belonging to a country. Although passport and nationality can be used interchangeably, this research chose to use the passport to eliminate the belonging meaning attached to nationality while also giving it a physical characteristic. In several instances, people are nationals of countries they have never even visited, nor associate with, nor wish to be associated with. The only link between them and such nations is a passport document, giving the artifact itself a performative role and agency.

3.2 The Passport Beyond an Indicator of Nationality and Citizenship

Border crossing is an experience that is dominated by a mood of anxiety. At the biological filter (the border), every traveler experiences this anxiety even for a moment. Mobility, which should be a right, is instead viewed as “deviant, as abnormal, as requiring explanation.”²⁷ This is the question that Mark B. Salter aimed to contextualize in his article “When the Exception Becomes the Rule.” Salter explains the performativity of the borders through using Giorgio Agamben’s theory of exception. The state of exception is “essentially a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger.”²⁸ In the state of exception, a sovereign is able to suspend or apply the law due to an emergency or a crisis, entailing that there is “no difference between law and force, ... individuals are subject to the law but not subjects in the law.”²⁹ In short, the state reserves the sole power to decide on who to include and exclude.

²⁷ Salter, Mark B. "When the exception becomes the rule: borders, sovereignty, and citizenship." *Citizenship studies* 12, no. 4 (2008), 373.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 365.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 367.

Agamben argues that the War on Terror has made the state of exception the dominant paradigm in contemporary politics. Salter's thesis is that the border is a permanent state of exception. At the border, the admission of a citizen into a country is completely at the discretion of the sovereign representative. The individual demanding to cross the border bears the burden of proof of their identity and their risk profile - a profile that only the state agent can authorize its validity. To prove this, an individual must be willing to provide all sorts of personal information, however, the personal suspicions and "experiences" of the administrative officer are satisfactory grounds to deny the entry.³⁰ This irreducible power to ban indicates that the individual is not a subject in the law but subject to the law—putting them in a state of exception. They can only ask entry, but they have no right of entry. No international law grants an individual the right to entry into a foreign country—it is simply a monopoly of state. At the border, everyone's bona fides are in question. the neurosis and anxiety about travelers is a common experience to all travelers, however, Etienne Balibar was accurate in stating that the borders are "polysemic" in the sense that they are experienced differently by people from different classes.³¹ It is apparent that there is bifurcation between how the "kinetic elite" experience the border examination compared to the rest. The kinetic elite might experience this anxiety temporarily but then experience a pleasure of having passed the "truth machine". Investigating the list of countries that have visa obligations to enter the Schengen Area makes apparent the criteria of the non-kinetic elite— there is an apparent colonial mapping of citizens banned from free travel into the Schengen Area. In his research, Maarten Den Heijer asserts that the countries under visa obligations follow a racial, religious and classist line as all African countries as well as all Asian countries with the exception of Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Taiwan, Timor-Leste, The United Arab Emirates and Israel. Aside from the aforementioned exceptions, all Muslim-majority countries are also under visa obligation.³² This is sufficient to hypothesize that there is a link between colonial history and the current visa regime. In his book, *Rights of Passage*, Mark Salter traces the colonial assumptions of travel during the nineteenth century. By tracing the history of passports issued either for Westerners, who were more likely to be government officials, or wealthy tourists, in opposition to the types of passports issued for colonial subjects, Salter concluded that the passport system during

³⁰ Ibid, 368.

³¹ Balibar, Étienne. "What is a Border?." *Politics and the other scene* (2002): 75-86.

³² den Heijer, Maarten. "Visas and Non-discrimination." *European Journal of Migration and Law* 20, no. 4 (2018): 481.

the colonial period divided the world into two zones— A safe zone that was in Europe, and a dangerous zone that is the region outside Europe. He states that “the passport did not act as a guarantor of security of the space but rather described the space as safe or dangerous.”³³ Other authors have described this distinction by claiming the passport has two subtle functions which are “ the project of territorial expansion, and the project of territorial exclusion.”³⁴ This remains the dominant distinction today.

Furthermore, an investigation of the visa application indicates an active alienation of citizens from the Global South. The visa application starts with the assumption that the person is a threat of national security and/or is an economic liability to the Western country in question. The entire visa application is a process through which the applicant needs to prove otherwise. While questions of income and practical aspects of stay are easy to verify, the question of psychological factors for travel and return are entirely ambiguous and difficult to adjudicate, thereby, reinforcing the discretion of the sovereign power to admit or exile, making it not grounded on fact but solely on the power to decide. Using nationality as a precursor to which individuals should be exiled, the actual rejection is on grounds of race, class, and religion. Further evidence of this discrimination is the profiling of individuals of color at airports regardless of the passport they hold.³⁵

In conclusion, due to the fact that there is no existing law providing the right to cross borders, coupled with the understanding of the colonial history that dictates the selection criteria of entry, this research concluded that the passport as a physical artifact is not sufficient in explaining the discrimination occurring at borders. The state does not need to justify any criteria of banning border crossing. The recent travel ban in the United States of America by the Trump administration is a clear evidence of this.³⁶ This literature review is helpful because it shows that there is unfounded prejudice on passports when crossing borders, proving that it is not an objective document. This in turn, alludes to the fact that it perhaps exists elsewhere and affects other aspects of people’s lives—the question of interest to this paper.

³³ Salter, Mark B. *Rights of Passage : The Passport in International Relations*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.

³⁴ O'Byrne, Darren J. "On passports and border controls." *Annals of Tourism Research* 28, no. 2 (2001): 399-416.

³⁵ There are several studies around racial profiling at the border. For an example see Pratt, A., & Thompson, S. K. (2008). Chivalry, 'race' and discretion at the Canadian border. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 48(5), 620-640.

³⁶ Pierce, Sarah, and Doris Meissner. "Trump executive order on refugees and travel ban: A brief review." *Migration Policy Institute* (2017).

3.3 Constructing the “Other”

This research begins with the simple Constructivist idea that “treats identity as an empirical question to be theorized within a historical context.”³⁷ Constructivist theory states that the social world did not naturally occur but was rather constructed through ideas. The construction of identities serves particular interests. Moreover, this research hypothesizes that the identity constructed around passport has roots in colonial underpinnings because “the marginalization of the formerly colonized world cannot be understood as some kind of oversight and/or accident in history.”³⁸ Thus, an investigation on the literature available on existing power-relations in postcolonialism was deemed necessary. The “post” in postcolonialism does not indicate that colonialism is a finished project or a time after the physical and militarily colonialism era but rather that postcolonialism indicates that the world “has been decisively shaped by colonialism” and the aim is to understand the existing ramifications of colonialism.³⁹ Put eloquently by Leela Gandhi: “Postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath.”⁴⁰ It uncovers the ways through which colonialism has been internalized as the norm and its history forgotten. Of the most pinnacle objectives of postcolonialism is to understand how “the Other” is constructed in order to confirm Western superiority. Edward Said has referred to the process through which Western discourse constructs the identity of “the Other” in order to establish itself as the hegemon as *Orientalism*.⁴¹ The “Orient” is used to describe non-Western societies, cultures, and civilizations. Said argues that through binary opposition representing the Orient as the antithesis of the West, the West is able to understand itself. Thus, the West assuming that these differences are ontological in nature and portraying itself as inherently “rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion” only enables it to identify the Other as barbaric, irrational, threatening, and backwards.⁴² Said argues that such biases and construction of the other has seeped its way through art, culture, literature and other cultural domains. Creating knowledge about the Other in such a way does not only justify the

³⁷ Hopf, Ted. "The promise of constructivism in international relations theory." *International security* 23, no. 1 (1998), 175.

³⁸ Darby, Phillip, ed. *Postcolonizing the International: Working to Change the Way We Are*. University of Hawaii Press, 2017, 20

³⁹ Seth, Sanjay, ed. *Postcolonial theory and international relations: A critical introduction*. Routledge, 2013, 1

⁴⁰ Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. Columbia University Press, 2019, 4

⁴¹ Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London [etc.]: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

⁴² Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, 45.

Western colonization but deems it as a responsibility. It has set the stage for the West to “modernize” the Non-West and “rescue” them from themselves. For this reason, Said’s work has been viewed as directing attention to “the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings and, concomitantly, to the consolidation of colonial hegemony.”⁴³ Said established his work upon Michel Foucault’s notion of power and knowledge.⁴⁴ Foucault’s idea of power and knowledge is detrimental to understanding Orientalism. His studies led him to conclude that knowledge is not neutral or objective but is rather influenced by power and is therefore powerful. For Foucault, the objectives of knowledge and the objectives of power cannot be separated.⁴⁵ He explored the ways through which power endowed by knowledge produces identities in the form of discourse. This dialectic relationship between power and knowledge is what informed Said’s Orientalism: “knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world.”⁴⁶ It is the aim of postcolonialism to explore the ways through which an inferior and subordinate identity has been imposed on the Non-West and how it has been internalized by both the oppressor and the oppressed.

Of the most well-known authors who has used the concept of Othering systematically is Gayatri Spivak. In Spivak’s version, Orientalism is purely about viewing the other as inferior and symbolically degrading them and building an identity that is subordinate. In “The Rani of Sirmur” Spivak analyzed “the fabrications of representations in historical reality.”⁴⁷ This has set the stage for others to conduct a similar systematic analysis that ultimately guided many postcolonial studies. Several other prominent authors such as Homi Bhabha,⁴⁸ and Frantz Fanon⁴⁹ have developed the field of postcolonialism and explored the power relations that exist through Othering.

The subordination of the colonized consolidates itself through internalized orientalism whereby the Global South mirrors the orientalism posed by the Global North. The Global South maintains the status quo of colonial politics that sustain the West as the hegemon through discourse

⁴³ Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. Columbia University Press, 2019, 65

⁴⁴ Foucault, Michel. "The history of sexuality: An introduction, volume I." *Trans. Robert Hurley*. New York: Vintage 95 (1990).

⁴⁵ Foucault, Michel. *Power/knowledge*. Routledge, 2020.

⁴⁶ Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, 38.

⁴⁷ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The Rani of Sirmur: An essay in reading the archives." *History and theory* 24, no. 3 (1985), 271.

⁴⁸ Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London [etc.]: Routledge, 1994.

⁴⁹ Fanon, Frantz. *Black skin, white masks*. Grove press, 2008.

by self-Orientalizing. It has assimilated and adopted Western knowledge of the orient and applied it systemically within, thereby, maintaining the imperial legacy of colonization. This concept was first used by Heng and Devan in 1992. Another term used to describe how the Global South stereotypes the West is *Occidentalism*. The definition of the term is still debated in Academia. Robbert Woltering described a balanced typology of Occidentalism that categorizes this portrayal into five categories: ‘Benign West’, ‘Malign West’, ‘Weak West’, ‘Appropriated West’, and ‘True West.’⁵⁰ The first three are relevant for this research. Woltering describes the first two images Arabs have of the West (especially in Egypt) as a West that is admired: “They are both a picture of a towering entity, be it a great ideal to aspire to, or a formidable enemy. The third Occidentalism, known as the ‘Weak West’, counters this notion of Western supremacy.”⁵¹ Woltering succeeded in showing the complex views that Arabs have of the West and how it oscillates between admiration for its technology and democracy and condemnation for its “immoral culture and mindless materialism.”⁵² Nevertheless, the internalized Orientalism is most pronounced in the concept known all over the Arab World as ‘The Foreigner Complex’, also known as the ‘Khawaja Complex’ in Egypt whereby foreigners are often treated better than the natives due to felt sense of inferiority.⁵³

⁵⁰ Woltering, Robbert. "Occidentalisms in the Arab world: ideology and images of the West in the Egyptian media." *Library of modern Middle East studies* 96 (2011).

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 81-85

⁵² Kubeisy, Sumaya, and Bradley C. Freeman. "Bridging or Widening the Gap? Narrative Discourses of the West and Westerners in Jordan's My American Neighbor Television Program." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 7, no. 4 (December 2020): 431–45.

⁵³ *Ibid*.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Popular Culture and Arab Cinema:

This research will utilize the Egyptian Movie *Assal Eswed* of 2010 as an interpretative framework for how the passport plays a role in the daily lives of people. Popular culture in IR has taken a recent turn of significance. In the past, popular culture was viewed as unworthy of scholarly research, or even as “low” politics.⁵⁴ Fortunately, however, it has been recently recognized as a site where “power ideologies and identities are constituted, produced and/or materialized.”⁵⁵ The significance of popular culture stems from the fact that we “are all immersed in these discourses in our daily lives; they constitute our everyday common sense.”⁵⁶ Analyzing these domains will help us understand what has been accepted as “common sense” or “normal.” These internalized ideas cannot be divorced from International Relations. Mediums of popular culture give us clues on the present discourses and the emotions and sentiments of the general public regarding an array of social and political issues. Furthermore, popular culture should not be viewed as merely a reflection of the present political discourses but also as constituting them. This means that popular culture does not only inform us of the discourse but also takes an active role in the formation of this discourse and reinforcing it. For this reason, popular culture has been viewed as an invaluable tool to the way we do IR.

Moreover, the new Arab cinema must be contextualized in order to understand its role as a medium of the daily life experience of Arabs and the political mood at the time of its production. New Arab cinema in particular, has evolved in motive since its initial conception beyond the purpose of entertainment. It has become the anti-colonial voice that amplifies the public’s need for national self-determination and the struggle for cultural and social renewal.⁵⁷ New Arab cinema - as postcolonial cinema- has used film as “an in-depth analysis of the current state of powerlessness that continues to deprive Arabs from the ability to defend themselves against colonial designs.”⁵⁸ Moreover, in an effort to cater to a wider audience in the Arab region, topics of urgent relevance

⁵⁴ Weldes, Jutta, and Christina Rowley. "So, how does popular culture relate to world politics?." *Popular Culture and World Politics. Theories, Methods, Pedagogies* (2015).

⁵⁵ Grayson, Kyle, Matt Davies, and Simon Philpott. "Pop goes IR? Researching the popular culture—world politics continuum." *Politics* 29, no. 3 (2009): 155-163.

⁵⁶ Weldes, 19

⁵⁷ Khoury, Malek. "Origins and patterns in the discourse of new Arab cinema." *Arab studies quarterly* (2005): 1-20.

⁵⁸ Khoury, Malek. "Origins and patterns in the discourse of new Arab cinema," 7.

have been a priority, such as the Palestine question and issues of gender and sexual liberation amongst many others. It has focused its attention on political issues that are of concern to the region and its relationship with the rest of the world making it an interesting site of building new IR knowledge. Based on this understanding of popular culture and International Relations, and the anti-colonial character of new Arab cinema, this research justifies the use of film as an appropriate tool in understanding the current discourse about passports.

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

The method to be employed is a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to CDA, discourse can be defined as a “form of social practice which both *constitutes* the social world and is *constituted* by other social practices.”⁵⁹ Therefore, discourse is not just written text. This gives it a discursive element that separates it from other methods and theories. Furthermore, CDA is different from other discourse analyses in the way that it claims that discursive practices “contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups.” And it goes further than that to analyze how these practices “play in furthering the interests of particular social groups.”⁶⁰ Thus, its main objective is to reveal how certain social practices constitute and maintain the unequal relations of power. It is therefore, committed to social change and is not politically objective. CDA enables us to see discourse as reproducing and changing knowledge, identities and power relations. In this sense, CDA offers both a theoretical and methodological framework.⁶¹ CDA starts with the basic philosophical premise of the social construction of the world and language in particular. Social constructionism rejects any knowledge as objective truth but rather views it as a product of “historically situated interchanges among people.”⁶² The theoretical aspect of CDA is the premise that our knowledge, identities and social relations are all product of discourse. The methodological aspect informs us of way to analyze these constructions.

CDA is concerned with how ideology is naturalized by discourse through appearing as “common sense.” Fairclough argues that ideologies are most powerful when they are least visible

⁵⁹ Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Sage, 61

⁶⁰ Ibid, 63

⁶¹ Ibid, 3

⁶² Ibid, 5

and present themselves in discourse in implicit manners. They serve to legitimize existing power relations and hierarchies. CDA aims to investigate the type of power relationships that “typically goes unquestioned because it is firmly based in conventional wisdom; its contestable status is simply one of the taken-for-granted, self-evident truths or background assumptions of our everyday talk in which it is constantly instantiated.”⁶³ The discourse of the passport is motivated by ideological factors that retain the status of those who are in power over the oppressed. Van Dijk provides methods to analyze ideology in discourse that enables us to understand these representations of groups.⁶⁴ According to him ideological discourse often uses the following strategy:

- Emphasize what is good about us
- De-emphasize what is bad about us
- Emphasize what is bad about them
- De-emphasize is good about them ⁶⁵

This framework will be useful in conducting a CDA of the film *Assal Eswed*.⁶⁶ The researcher viewed the film a total of 4 times in its entirety and the selected scenes for analysis were viewed multiple times. After the first viewing, certain themes were identifiable and built upon in later viewings. The method used is narrative analysis along with codifying audiovisuals. “A narrative analysis looks at a range of elements but is chiefly interested in ‘the ways in which people make and use stories to interpret the world, and their place within it’.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Holmes, Janet. "Power and discourse at work: is gender relevant?." In *Feminist critical discourse analysis*, pp. 31-60. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005, 32

⁶⁴ Van Dijk, Teun A. "Discourse and ideology." *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* 379 (2011): 407.

⁶⁵ Abdel Meguid, Rania. "Orientalism Goes to the Movies: A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Dictator." *Cairo Studies in English* 2020, no. 1 (2021), 139.

⁶⁶ Marie, Khaled. dir. *Assal Eswed*. Brothers United for Cinema, 2010. <https://www.netflix.com/title/81254733>

⁶⁷ Lawler, Steph. "Narrative in social research." *Qualitative research in action* (2002,) 242, quoted in, Kubeisy, Sumaya, and Bradley C. Freeman. "Bridging or Widening the Gap? Narrative Discourses of the West and Westerners in Jordan's My American Neighbor Television Program."

Chapter 5: Film Analysis

5.1 Background

The Egyptian film industry has been the most established and prolific filmmaking industry in the Arab world. Egypt has been producing films since 1909 and since then, it has constituted nearly three-quarters of the films the in Arab world. Its extensive background and investment in film making allowed it to acquire the widest audience and become the most popular in the Arab world, even dubbing it as “Hollywood of the East.”⁶⁸ Egyptian cinema has long been characterized as being postcolonial in the way that it challenges hegemonic representations of “Arabness” as well as challenging hegemonic forms of power. For this research an Egyptian film was selected as a source of data with keeping its political agenda in mind.

The film *Assal Eswed*, was written by Khaled Diab and directed by Khaled Marie. It was produced in 2010 by Brothers United and was a blockbuster in Egypt. It was the year’s highest grossing film.⁶⁹ The film title *Assal Eswed* translates to “molasses” or, “black honey” which signifies the bittersweetness that Egyptians feel towards Egypt. The film was considered highly controversial, and the title had to be changed three times with one of the previous titles being “Gawaz Safar Masri” which translates to “An Egyptian passport.”⁷⁰ The plot revolves around an Egyptian man named Masri Sayed al-Arabi (Ahmed Helmy) who moved to America 20 years ago and obtained the American nationality. Masri then goes to Egypt to photograph it for an exhibition. The movie traces his experience in Egypt as an Egyptian-American and the different circumstances he encounters when he is treated as an Egyptian versus when he is treated as an American. The whole movie revolves around the role of the passport in everyday life.

The protagonist’s name, that translates to “Egyptian the Arab,” is an intended pun resembling the contradiction of Masri’s nationalistic sentiments despite his foreignness in his own country and the alienation he will be facing. Furthermore, the pun of the name is supposed to indicate that Masri is just the average Egyptian and thus, his story is a story of the average Egyptian. The role

⁶⁸ Mahdi, 15.

⁶⁹ Fahim, J. (2010, June 11). *The sour taste of Helmy’s “Black Honey”*. Daily News Egypt. <https://dailynewsegypt.com/2010/06/11/the-sour-taste-of-helmys-qblack-honeyq/>.

⁷⁰ Al Jazeera. (2010, July 7). “*مصر أخبار | الجزيرة نت. عسل أسود*” فيلم ينتقد واقع مصر”. <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/cultureandart/2010/7/7/%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%84-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AF-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1>.

of Masri is played by Ahmed Helmy who is a celebrated actor in the genre of comedy. Helmy has been viewed as “bold” for using film to discuss strong philosophical and social issues despite government censorship. He is known for partaking in films that use “third generation comedy;” a type of film that uses comedy and satire as a medium to communicate and criticize social phenomena.⁷¹ The film can be viewed as a project of reform and in line with the role played by New Arab cinema discussed in the literature review.⁷² Justifying the use of comedy to criticize a serious issue, the writer of the film Khaled Diab states that “the message of the film is hard to digest. Comedy here is used like water that is needed to swallow a pill.”⁷³ The film has been recognized by critics for being true to the reality of Egyptians in terms of needing an American passport to be able to obtain rights within Egypt and in terms of the favoritism of a foreign passport.⁷⁴ The plot follows Masri’s experience with the passport by creating three paradigms: Masri with an American passport, Masri with an Egyptian passport, and Masri with no passport at all.

Figure 1. The timeline of the film based on the passport.⁷⁵



Through this juxtaposition, the film is aiming to highlight the social issues regarding the passport and the identity built upon it. The significance of this film in highlighting the issue of the passport is that it utilizes the passport in its physical form as an identifier of Masri’s state. Technically, Masri always possesses both the American and Egyptian nationalities, however,

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Omar El-Mohandes, “Egyptian Entertainment Industry Feels the Pinch of Neo-Realism in 2011,” Egyptian entertainment industry feels the pinch of neo-realism in 2011 | Caravan, December 11, 2011, <https://academic.aucegypt.edu/caravan/story/egyptian-entertainment-industry-feels-pinch-neo-realism-2011>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Reesh, Mohammad Ali Abo. "Analysis for Selected Comedy Films in Egyptian Cinema." Master's thesis, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU)-Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi (DAÜ), 2015, 86.

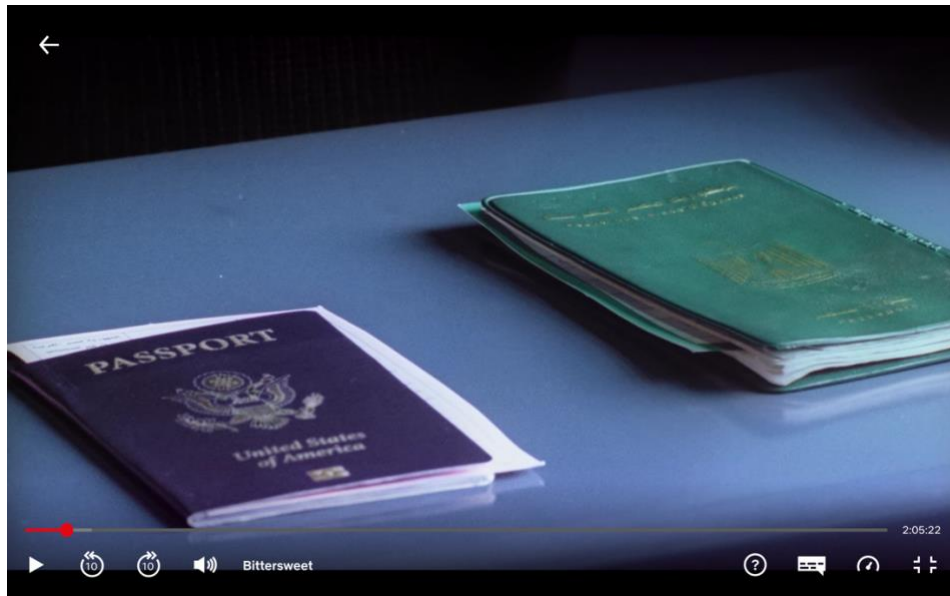
because the passport is the only identifier of nationality, without the physical object in hand, “nationality” is obsolete. Masri needs to show the physical object at every encounter, even non bureaucratic interactions. This materialistic aspect of the passport is a crucial point for this study and justifies the selection of this film in particular.

Furthermore, whereas the superiority of the West over the rest is often portrayed in film by introducing Western characters, this film intentionally chose an Arab character with a Western passport to highlight how the passport operates as a precursor for one’s character. This factor makes it ideal for studying the passport; it excludes other factors of hierarchy such as race, religion, or status and showcases how the passport as the only variable of judgement is a powerful tool. The film can be viewed as a critique of the postcolonial role of the passport as an agent for discrimination and favoritism. It attempts to show the many different ways in which a passport is linked with presumptions about someone’s character beyond being an objective identification and travel document. Furthermore, it can be seen as a critique of the self-Orientalism that occurs within Egypt and the internalized colonial attitudes in relation to the passport.

5.2 Synopsis

The film postulates its thesis in the first five minutes when Masri is engaging in a conversation with a stranger sitting next to him on an airplane from the US to Egypt. The man questions Masri’s decision to leave his American passport behind and travel with his Egyptian one. Masri ridicules the idea and says: “Why would I, and be treated like a foreigner in my own country?” the other man being more aware of the privileges accorded to foreigners and Egyptians with a foreign passport, laughs mockingly and says “Yeah, right.” This scene is intended as a premonition of what is coming. It is a comical and counterintuitive idea to want to be treated as a foreigner in one’s own land. This scene is accompanied by music that is fairytale-like, signifying Masri’s naivety towards the power relations and discourse of the passport. Upon landing, a close up shot shows the man’s American passport next to Masri’s Egyptian one at the immigration desk.

Figure 2. the juxtaposition of passports



(6:30)

This shot further emphasizes the thesis of the film by juxtaposing the two passports. It entails that the film will demonstrate the differences in the experiences ensued by the respective passports. As a first example, the American passport is stamped and greeted, and the man is allowed to pass through immigration. Masri, on the other hand, was treated with suspicion and made to wait. A series of events following the immigration desk such as subjection to extra bureaucratic procedure, cancellation of his hotel reservation, a low standard of services, and finally a humiliating experience in prison inform Masri why he should have brought his American passport. At that point Masri requests his American passport by post and remains in his hotel room until it arrives. He then goes out and exercises the power and privilege of the “Magical passport.”⁷⁶ That is until he loses it in an anti-US protest and then he is left with no passport. Masri then finds his old house and reconnects with his childhood friend Said (Edward) and stays with his family going through a process of finding his Egyptian identity and a rejection of a superior view of the West. Although at first shocked and disenchanted with Egypt and the way Egyptians are treated in their country, in the end of the movie he learns to see the good aspects of living in Egypt and decides to remain there.

⁷⁶ *ibid*

5.3 Characters

Although Masri is the main character and protagonist of the film, other characters are built in a way to frame the juxtaposition of their experiences to Masri. In the instances where Masri made remarks about other characters, it was deemed by the researcher as an indicator of America's view on Egyptians and the Egyptian passport.

5.3.1 *Said (Edward)*

Said is Masri's childhood friend and neighbor and can be seen as the antithesis of Masri. The film builds Said's character as an example of what Masri's life could have been if Masri never went to America and acquired the American passport. Said is still living with his mother (a normal condition in the Middle East). He is unemployed, insecure, and is unable to approach the woman he wants to marry. Said explains how he was rejected for an American visa three times and Masri blames it on his lack of civilization (because he was urinating in the street, he did not deserve to receive a US tourist visa).

5.3.2 *Uncle Hilal (Yousef Dauod):*

Hilal can be viewed as the anti-colonial voice in the film that rejects all ideas of Westernization as being superior. He is a resistant force to the urge that many Egyptians have towards immigration and the American dream. He attempts to make Masri see the value in being Egyptian and living in Egypt.

5.3.3 *Radi (Lotfy Labib):*

Radi is portrayed as the average Egyptian who struggles to make a living and is only doing so through the extortion, scamming and conning of foreigners. Radi praises the foreign passport, and he is therefore understood as a symbol of the internalized colonialism that reinforces the hierarchy of the West.

5.4 Findings

The following table was made to summarize the overall feeling and mood following Masri's journey, as well as the portrayal of other Egyptian characters. This was based on analyzing and codifying audiovisuals such as color pallet, repeated keywords signifying emotions and facial gestures. Further analysis of the narrative is divided into themes following this table.

Table 1. the passport as a signifier.

	Image of Self	Image by Others
Egyptian Passport/ No Passport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecure • Unworthy • Afraid • Marginalized • Subordinate • Unprotected • Subject to the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspicious • Uncivilized • Inferior • Unworthy • Irrational • Immoral • Poor • Backwards
American Passport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident • Worthy • Secure • Superior • Protected • Privileged • Subject within the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust-worthy • Civilized • Superior • Rational • Moral • Rich • Modern

5.5 Theme Analysis

5.5.1 Civilized/ Uncivilized

The film depicts how the stereotypical construction of the Other as the antithesis of the West also applies to the passport. In Egypt, persons with Western passports, regardless of their country of origin, are viewed as civilized and therefore superior. The first theme of civilized/uncivilized is perhaps the most overarching theme in the film. The film depicts several scenes where Egyptians are painted as uncivilized in comparison to Masri's acquired civilization due to his American passport. The film also shows the self-Orientalism that is present in Egypt today by showing Egyptians themselves perpetuating this ideology upon themselves.

5.5.1.1 *Western Mimicry*

Masri being an American is portrayed as being more civilized through his mimicry of Western attributes such as fashion, language, and liberal values. This is first suggested by Masri's overall attire that is depicted as modern and "fashionable." He is presented with long hair, accessories, and tattoos. His "Western look," indicating he is a foreign national, provides him access to privileges of a Westerner such as a positive presumption on his character. This is implied in the scene where he rents a car. Upon meeting the officer at the desk, Masri requests renting a car in English. The officer initially agrees with no hesitation until he finds out Masri is in fact Egyptian at which point he asks him to sign a contract. The officer then justifies this action by stating that he assumed he was a foreigner because of his hair and attire and therefore did not ask him to sign a contract.⁷⁷ Simply looking Western, which is supposedly meant to entail that one is more civilized, is not sufficient. The supposed civilization can only be verified by the physical object itself (the passport). The writer is mocking the normalization of the attribution of characteristics and assessment of a person's credibility based on their passport. The officer did not feel the need to justify why he is asking Masri to sign the contract upon finding out he is Egyptian, but rather he justifies why he did not initially do that.

The idea of him being modern is further enhanced by both his "fluent" use of the English language and his poor Arabic speaking skills. The power relations induced by languages is a recurring theme throughout the film. For instance, Masri's poor Arabic allows Radi the taxi driver to deduce that Masri is eligible for his "only foreigners, no Egyptians" policy.⁷⁸ His skill in the Arabic language is directly correlated with his foreignness. Speaking Arabic fluently is a sign of being less civilized which suggests a self-deprecating attitude induced by viewing one's culture as inferior. Furthermore, Masri's liberal values are represented in his ideas of modesty in the scenes where he "innocently" walks around in his underwear in front of Said's sister, as well as, when he opens the door for the hotel clerk with his robe open. In another scene, Masri is seen using cutlery

⁷⁷ Looking like a Westerner does not guarantee favoritism, but it is an initial indicator that this person might be a Westerner and therefore deserves the favoritism. However, the privileges only apply upon proving a Western nationality. Simply looking or acting like it is not enough. This scene is an exhibition of this complicated and implicit requirement of possessing a Western nationality.

⁷⁸ Radi claims to have only foreigners, no Egyptians policy because of his feeling that Egyptians are poor and Foreigners are wealthy, therefore, they are a better source of income. This view often leads to poor services offered to Egyptians in Egypt and higher quality service reserved to foreigners.

and needing to be taught how to use his hands to eat. Masri, representing the West, is viewed as more civilized for using cutlery in opposition to the Barbaric East.

5.5.1.2 *Progressive and Backwards*

The West understands itself through describing the Other. One of the common ways of describing the Other in order to establish power relations is through creating the ancient/ new dichotomy. The East is seen as an ancient place unable to evolve and modernize out of its “barbarianism.” This dichotomy is presented in the film when Masri visits the pyramids and decides to take a horse ride. Masri is seen talking to the horse as if it is a car indicating that his modernity once more lies in his lifestyle of industrialization and his lack of awareness to “ancient” modes of transportation. Furthermore, in the first scene where Masri was on the airplane, he was seen holding a newspaper that was very old and ink was leaking off onto his hands. This was symbolic for the “backwardness” that Egypt remains stuck in, and the stagnation of the country.

Furthermore, the film attempts to exhibit the ways in which the West labels the East as backwards in terms of behavior and that it rejects their visa applications based on this categorization.

“ Said: Is it true that only trashy people’s applications are rejected?

Masri: No, there are no trashy people Said. America doesn’t think that way.

It’s merely a pretext that rejected people use

Said: I’ve been rejected three times already”

Said is seen urinating in the street

“Masri: It’s because you are trashy, Said. How could you do that on the street?

Said: Excuse me. But I had to go and there are no public restrooms.

Masri: It’s a pretext trashy people like you use.” (1:05:35- 1:05:59)

This scene contains several layers for analysis. On the one hand, it shows Masri’s Americanness that legitimates the visa procedure by claiming it is entirely objective. He tells Said that America is not discriminatory because “it does not think this way.” It does not view Egyptians as “trashy” but rather has valid reasons for rejecting them. On the other hand, when Said is seen urinating in public, Masri justifies America’s rejection of Egyptians on the grounds that they are “trashy” because Said’s actions do indicate that he is backwards and indeed should not be welcomed in America. Masri’s “shocked” reaction is supposed to resemble the American attitude

towards Egypt: they do not wish to be discriminatory but are given reasons to believe they should. On the other hand, Said justifies his action by explaining how his limited options have caused him to resort to this action but that it should not be a judgement of his character. The East constantly being painted as backward because it does not adhere to Western modes of conduct even in the simplest manner reinforces the power relations between the East and the West.

5.5.2 Suspicion/Trustworthiness

5.5.2.1 Moral Accountability

The domination of the colonizer is enhanced by introducing the colonized as intrinsically morally decayed and lacking a value system. The discrimination based on passports is often with the pretext of the suggested moral compass of a person based on the passport they possess. This is starkly resembled in the visa regime as discussed in the literature review. A person's risk assessment for border crossing and an indicator of their intentions is based solely on their nationality. This idea is evidently mocked throughout the film by portraying Masri as a morally sound person, as well as a law-abiding citizen. For instance, Masri was shocked at Radi's act of littering bottles and contested it. Another example is Masri insisting to adhere to the law even when others will not do so by refusing to commit bribery. Masri being an American, has inherited Western values such as, recycling, and adhering to the law in opposition to the other characters who are portrayed as morally decayed for practicing bribery and urinating in public. Even children practice extortion as a sign of the inherent moral abnormality. Another example is the aforementioned scene at the immigration desk (see 5.2 synopsis), upon showing his Egyptian passport, Masri was immediately deemed suspicious with the officer questioning whether his laptop bag was stolen from the airplane. The mere possession of the Egyptian passport suggested to the officer that this person is of questionable morals and is not trustworthy. Masri is made to wait several hours at the airport before he is finally released. It was followed by a series of events where he was burdened with the proof of his morality and the validity of his words and promises. Another example is when Masri wanted to rent a car (see 5.5.1.1 Mimicry). Upon seeing the passport, the officer was skeptical of the man's intentions of returning the car and his treatment of it, and he was therefore made to sign a contract. In a hyperbolic sarcastic scene, as Masri was walking out of the hotel, a police dog started barking at him suggesting his suspiciousness. Masri in reaction produced his American passport from his pocket and pointed it at the dog which then stopped barking. The sarcasm suggesting that even a dog is not suspicious of a person with the

“right” passport, mocking the futility of the passport in determining how much of a threat a person is.

5.5.2.2 *Suspicion for Purpose of Travel*

The passport being an indicator of threatening persons to security within the visa regime is as ridiculous an idea as a dog dropping a risk assessment upon seeing a passport. Although the film focused on the significance of the passport within borders, it did not fail to represent its dynamic within border crossing. Masri being an American, is oblivious to the demands of crossing borders and the cumbersome process of applying for a visa that Egyptians must go through. Innocently, he goes to the American embassy with his Egyptian passport carrying nothing but his passport and his words, whose credibility he assumes no one would question. He encounters a man who is practicing his prepared speech for the question of intent of return. This scene is iconic because it resembles the frivolity of the visa application in identifying a person’s intention of travel. The man informs Masri of the required personal documents he needed for applying, amongst them is an income statement, and a bank statement which he confesses he was able to produce by borrowing money for a few months and then returning it upon applying. When the man informs Masri that he must also prove his intent of return, Masri naively asks “is there a paper for that one too?” He then tells Masri about the speech he was erratically practicing that he will use to prove his intent of return: “I’ll never let go of Egypt. I don’t know why...Egypt loves me as well. I must go back one day. Egypt is great” (1:31:15- 1:32:35). The speech sarcastically suggests that there is no way of proving the psychological factor of attachment to one’s land. The man attempts to invoke emotion in describing his attachment to Egypt although he realizes that ultimately only the officer can authenticate the validity and credibility of his speech. When Masri’s turn comes, he provides no papers for his claim for a visa and is immediately rejected. Shocked and angered by the questioning of his credibility, he portrays the privilege of the West of not having the burden of proof of one’s bona fides nor the invasion of privacy.

5.5.3 Inferiority/Superiority

5.5.3.1 *The Foreigner’s Complex*

A very prominent theme in the film is inferiority/superiority. Upon realizing the grim reality of possessing an Egyptian passport following a series of humiliating events, Masri decides to not leave his hotel room until his American passport arrives by post. This time realizing the

power of his American passport, it is made very visible how he rises from inferiority to superiority. In a symbolic scene, he kisses his American passports and discards his Egyptian passport by slingshooting it outside his balcony and shouts “Adios amigo” (31:00), representing his deep-felt resentment towards the passport and all it represents. He is portrayed as being empowered by the presence of the American passport; he becomes more confident, more demanding, more acknowledging of his wants and rights. He realizes the inferiority caused by being an Egyptian in Egypt. This can be seen as an example of the Khawaja complex mentioned in the literature review. The concept of treating Westerners better than the natives of the country in the Arab world because of a feeling of inferiority. This concept can be extended to the passports and can be seen as a ramification of postcolonialism. In fact, a song was written for the film to allude to this particular feeling of inferiority. In the one-minute song (41:19- 42:19) The lyrics strongly and emotionally describes the phenomenon of one’s homeland “patting on the back of foreigners and giving the wooden face to its own citizens.”⁷⁹ The entire film alludes to this concept in relation to the passport. the Khawaja complex is the self-Orientalism and internalized colonialism practiced in Egypt. The passport is only one form of it, albeit a very prominent one.

5.5.3.2 *Hierarchy*

In another scene, upon the possession of the American passport Masri asks Radi to only refer to him as Mr. Masri as a sign of superiority. This is in opposition to when Masri had the Egyptian passport and was requested to refer to Radi as Mr. Radi. A clear sign of the hierarchy entailed by language. Radi’s treatment to Masri is completely different while he is in possession of the American passport. The extent of superiority that one feels is exhibited when Masri screams at an anti-US protest: “I am an American and my passport protects me and I am untouchable, [...] I can stomp on anyone” (36:55) When attacked for his claims, Masri retracts what he said and attempts to convince the protestors that he is actually Egyptian but only holds the American passport. This scene depicts how the passport is directly linked with identity and, in different contexts, the passport holds different connotations regarding a person’s personality and identity. The relevance of this scene is to show the shifting and fragile identity that is attached to the passport and the overwhelming judgement that is inevitably attached to it.

⁷⁹ Translation made by the researcher

5.5.3.3 Class

A common stereotype within the Middle East attached to Western passport holders is that they are economically well off and do not struggle financially. This can be linked to the history of the colonial era when the colonizer was prosperous and the colonized were not. This categorization still applies today where the West is viewed as an advanced, almost utopian space where economic struggle is a non-existent phenomenon in the imagination of the previously colonized. Whereas anyone with a non-Western passport is economically poor and must prove otherwise. This colonial classification of poor vs. rich is a reality that can be observed in the current visa regime. Nationals from non-Western countries are presumed to be poor and must always prove that their financial situation allows them to travel. This class system caused by colonization has been imported into the passport discourse. A person's passport is an indicator of their class. Masri is depicted as being financially unchallenged despite his profession as a photographer. Throughout the film, he is stereotyped as being wealthy by other Egyptians. For instance, Radi extorts him heavily upon finding out he is also American. However, the film only shows him to be financially unchallenged when he is in possession of the American passport: he always has cash on hand and spends it lavishly. When he loses his American passport, he also loses all his money and just like Said, he takes some pocket money from Said's mother. When he later on retrieves his American Passport, he has enough money to spend and even hands an envelope full of money to Said's mother. Where was his money all along? It was an intentional decision of the director to show Masri as being economically poor when he does not have his American passport at hand. Masri's class is directly correlated with his passport, indicating that the passport is also a precursor to one's class.

In an exaggerated scene after Masri loses both his passports, a woman that was handing out food to the poor calls on Masri, who is visibly poor-looking, to hand him out meat.

“Masri: I am not poor

Woman: then what are you?

Masri: I am Masri (Egyptian)

Woman: then you are poor

Masri: no, my name is Masri, okay? I am American

Woman: then why are you such a mess?” (45:07 – 46:44)

The writer is making a clear reference to how being Egyptian means being poor and being American means being not poor. This is a view of Egyptians not exclusive to the West but also internally.

5.5.4 Subjects in the Law/to the Law

Part of extending the imperialist agenda of Western hegemony is deciding who to include and exclude from the law. The film alludes to how the passport has become an active agent in the process of selection. In general, all non-Western passport holders are considered subjects in the law. In a scene where Masri is taking touristic photos of the city, he is suspected of being a spy by police officers. They first ask him about his nationality. When Masri confirms he is Egyptian, naively expecting that he is therefore accorded the rights of a national, he is instead treated with violence and imprisoned. While being beaten up in prison, Masri screams “what happened to human rights.” After being released, Masri confronts the officer for deleting his pictures by affirming that he is an Egyptian citizen and has rights. The officer then responds that he reserves full authority to reprimand anyone he is suspicious of. Masri accepts the officer’s threat and leaves having lost the battle. This scene can be juxtaposed to when Masri possessed the American passport and demanded his and Radi’s rights very confidently. When Masri’s demand of rights was questioned by authority, he wittingly asks: “Must I be Egyptian and something to get my rights?” (35:12). The concept being weaved here is the idea that under the subordinate nationalities, a person is in a permanent state of exception as they are subject to the law but not subjects in it. The hierarchy of the passports ensures that a person with an inferior passport remains within the state of exception and can be easily sacrificed. The colonial origins and agendas of this discourse is seen to be internalized within Egypt and apply the same superior/inferior scale created by the West.

5.5.5 Construction of Knowledge and Truth

In an interesting interaction Masri approaches a hotel receptionist and tells him he wants a room. The receptionist asks him where he is from, and when Masri says he is Egyptian, the receptionist claims there are no rooms while looking at his screen of a solitaire game. Masri realizing that he is not offered a room because he is Egyptian begs: “no no please I will do anything.

I can be Japanese if you want, okay? Look I am Japanese” and pulls his eyes. The receptionist tells him there is nothing except a \$2000 room which Masri defeatedly accepts. In a challenge of power, Masri comes back with his American passport to the same receptionist and asks to check out:

Receptionist: Did something upset you, sir?

Masri: I’m free, sir. A Japanese man who wants to leave

Receptionist: Yes sir, but you are not Japanese, you are Egyptian, sir

Masri flashes his American passport at the receptionist

receptionist: You are American, sir

Masri: No, I am Japanese

Receptionist: American, sir

Masri pushes American passport forward

Masri: Japanese or not?

Receptionist: Japanese, sir. Japanese (31:41- 32:06)

Empowered by his passport, Masri feels entitled not only to rights, but also to truths and facts. He feels entitled to alter any truths while audaciously showing the counterproof. The receptionist, upon seeing the American passport, was willing to contend to whatever truth Masri claims. After this, Masri leaves the hotel and tells the two security officers outside the building that he is an American passport holder and that the man over there (Radi) is a thief. With no questions asked or doubts about his claims, the officers proceed to arrest Radi. The irony is represented in the fact that Masri only needed to display his American passport in order for whatever he claims next to be credible. This is symbolic for power as the monopoly of the construction of knowledge. Foucault’s power-knowledge theory that was discussed in the literature review is applicable here. The film very clearly alludes to the idea that the hegemon is able to establish what reality is and is not by monopolizing the production of knowledge. The West’s power is sustained in the presumed credibility of the knowledge it produces.

5.6 Postcolonialism

The postcolonial aspect present in the movie that rejects Western Imperialism is most amplified through the character of Hilal. When Masri tells Hilal that his father wanted to spend his last days in Egypt before he dies, Hilal agitatedly responds: “Those people are strange, they emigrate, waste

their lives abroad and at the end of the day, they say: I want to go home and be buried there. As if this country is a big cemetery” (1:09) This response is meant to criticize Egyptians who glorify the West and only see Egypt as a place good enough to die in. He questions the internal conflict that Arabs feel between loving their homeland and yet refusing to live in it and accept the way it is. Furthermore, towards the end, when Masri complains about being Egyptian and having to live in Egypt, Hilal delivers a speech that strongly rejects the idea that the West is better and more advanced or that Egypt is a total failure and that no one is happy living here.⁸⁰ He highlights that they are simply differences in cultures, and each have their own advantages and disadvantages. Although his is meant to be an anti-colonial voice, it is done poorly because he is also utilizing the same strategy which emphasizes the good about “us.” And emphasize the bad about “them.” While de-emphasizing the bad about “us” and de-emphasizing the good about “them.” It still relies on a binary opposition that is quite simplistic. Waleed Mahdi critiques the efforts of Egyptian cinema by explaining how *Assal Eswed* along with other several Egyptian movies “utilize a binary portrayal framework that compels [American-Egyptian] characters to identify either as American or Egyptian, denigrating the former and celebrating the latter. These binaries help solidify Egyptian critiques of what is perceived as America’s corrupting materialism, interventionist foreign policy and alienating culture.”⁸¹ Masri’s turn towards Egyptian culture in the way he dresses, behaves and finally his appreciation of Egyptian values and the decision to remain there can be understood as a rejection of Western imperialism and hegemony. However, he will live in Egypt as an American citizen with his American passport, accepting this power hierarchy ensued by nationality.

⁸⁰ See appendix 1 for extract of the speech

⁸¹ Mahdi, Waleed F. *Arab Americans in Film: From Hollywood and Egyptian Stereotypes to Self-Representation*, 68

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

The film highlights how the passport, in day-to-day life, perpetuates the “Othering” of the Global South by labeling them as subordinate by nationality. It has revealed the many ways through which the passport creates binary oppositions of the West being rational, modern, progressive, morally correct and the non-West as being the exact opposite: irrational, backwards, uncivilized, and morally corrupt. It has criticized the self-Orientalizing that occurs when Egyptians view themselves as inferior simply for being Egyptian. The reality that the film exhibits is a reality that many Arabs are familiar with. The fact that the passport hierarchy puts the Global North at the top and the Global South at the bottom cannot be seen as a mere coincidence. The history of the passport as discussed in the research proves that it is rather a legacy of the colonial era. Nationality, manifested through the passport, is yet another pretext used to justify this subordination. The events of 9/11 help reinforce the rhetoric that the passport hierarchy exists for security measures. However, if it was simply a matter of security and foreign policy then the passport would not be an agent of power even within borders in the ways that this research has shown. Besides race, class, and gender, the passport is becoming an agent of discrimination of great impact. Awareness about the colonial legacy and discrimination when it comes to race, class and gender are ongoing topics that have relatively improved with time. In contrast, passport discrimination continues to rise and strengthen itself by the day. Its power lies in the fact that it remains disguised as such. It is de-historicized and its power agenda is completely overlooked. In today’s world that is hyper-conscious of all forms of social injustice, how does a sentence like the Henley’s passport index introduction pass uncensored?

The passport hierarchy as presented in this research could help produce new IR knowledge to a variety of topics. Of most importance is immigration. The recent increase of immigrants from the Global South to Europe is a heated debate in governments and within the public. Those who oppose immigration have a variety of claims that immigrants’ motive is economic advantage amongst others. Based on the findings of this research and the researchers personal experience, it is arguable that the main reason people immigrate from the Global South to Europe is to climb up the hierarchal ladder of passports that affects every aspect of their lives. While one can hardly change their race, class or gender the passport is a disadvantage that one can reverse through the process of naturalization. Naturalization offers people the chance to change the course of their

lives and move from the bottom of a social hierarchy to the absolute top.⁸² It is a common table discussion in households to consider the potential of naturalizing and acquiring a Western passport and then returning to one's homeland. In fact, the pursuit of the passport has become an integrated part of culture in the Middle East to the extent that many practices pursuing the passport have arisen. For example, Birth tourism is a well-known phenomenon in America whereby pregnant women travel as tourists to America only to give birth there and return with a baby that has an American passport.

Another example is Passport brides. In several Arab countries, girls with Western passports receive a high number of marriage proposals and a significantly higher dowry because of the passport. All the aforementioned practices could prove to be an interesting topic of research. Future studies could further elaborate on the dynamics of the passport hierarchy and its heavy implications on people's lives. Perhaps the greatest prejudice of the passport is that it has enabled the quarantining of a people to be condoned internationally. When war breaks out in a country, the international world imposes strict visa restrictions on its nationals or installs a permanent ban. This was recently witnessed in Yemen and Syria, which are only two examples amongst many others. Yemenis and Syrians are not able to leave their war-torn areas because of the passports they hold. Upon the breaking out of the war, most countries changed their visa requirements of these nationals, leading to the death of thousands who would have otherwise fled, and those who did flee were forced to resort to inhumane ways of escape. Moreover, the rise of the power of the passport that divides the world so unjustly will only continue to rise with the increase of the biometric passport. Nation-states continues to strengthen their monopoly over movement of the individual and combined with an existing postcolonial framework that is unjust and binary, it will only further enable the subordination of the Global South through the passport. It has also been argued that the rise of Covid-19 virus and the need for a corona passport will further enhance the divide between the Global South and the Global North as many poor nations will not be able to fully vaccinate its population.

In conclusion, understanding the colonial history through which the passport was generated is a topic that deserves much attention within academia and IR. Looking at these experiences from the Global South as this research has done, it is conclusive that the passport has exceeded its role

⁸² In most European countries, a person has the right to request naturalization in 5-10 years upon fulfilling some conditions

as a travel document. This research paper has explored the problem of the passport through looking at film as a voice of the suffering with the Global South. It has explored the passport as a modern-day medium of Western imperialism and hegemony that continues to suppress the previously colonized. Active citizenship through the passport has made the marginalization of a people easier to execute through using the rhetoric of security and state sovereignty. In the Global South, self-Orientalizing causes people to push the passport beyond its role and into private life affecting marriage, job, and well-being opportunities. Access to all services, from medical to recreational, is reliant on the passport. Normatively speaking, society cannot turn a blind eye to the suppressing/privileging quality of the passport any longer.

Appendices

Appendix 1. extract of Hilal's speech (Marie, 2010)

“We have the concept of thanking God. If I were to look at things the way you do, I would find many things wrong. If you were to look closely at the terrible situation that you're talking about, you would also find good things. But this requires someone with feelings. Someone with emotions. Someone who feels for a great mother like Om Said. A patient woman. A woman who embraces her son, gives him even though he is over 30 years old, until he finds a job. Feel for someone like Monsef. Life has dealt him a bad hand. It has crushed him and made him suffer. But he's patient and consistent. His faith never shaken. Maybe ... Maybe as you say, there are many beautiful things in America. But that's feasible. We might get there someday. However, we have things that are so hard to reach. Or else I would have been sitting now with someone with feelings. Someone with emotions” (1:36-1:37)

Bibliography

- “The Henley Passport Index.” Henley & Partners. Accessed June 10, 2020.
<https://www.henleypassportindex.com/passport>.
- Abdel Meguid, Rania. "Orientalism Goes to the Movies: A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Dictator." *Cairo Studies in English* 2020, no. 1 (2021), 139.
- Acharya, Amitav. "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds A New Agenda for International Studies." *International studies quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 647-659.
- Al Jazeera. (2010, July 7). "مصر أخبار | الجزيرة نت. غسل إسود" فيلم ينتقد واقع مصر".
<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/cultureandart/2010/7/7/%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%84-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%85-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AF-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1>.
- Balibar, Étienne. "What is a Border?." *Politics and the other scene* (2002): 75-86.
- Belton, Kristy A. "Muddy waters: citizenship and the right to vote in the Commonwealth Caribbean migratory context." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 57, no. 1 (2019): 93-122.
- Brabandt, Heike, and Steffen Mau. "Liberal cosmopolitanism and cross-border mobility: The case of visa policies." *Global Society* 27, no. 1 (2013): 53-72.
- Chalk, Bridge. *Modernism and mobility: the passport and cosmopolitan experience*. Springer, 2014.
- Dados, Nour, and Raewyn Connell. "The Global South." *Contexts* 11, no. 1 (February 2012): 12–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504212436479>.
- Darby, Phillip, ed. *Postcolonizing the International: Working to Change the Way We Are*. University of hawaii Press, 2017.
- Dauvergne, Catherine. "passport." In *The New Oxford Companion to Law*. : Oxford University Press, 2008.
- den Heijer, Maarten. "Visas and Non-discrimination." *European Journal of Migration and Law* 20, no. 4 (2018): 470-489.
- El-Mohandes, Omar. "Egyptian Entertainment Industry Feels the Pinch of Neo-Realism in 2011." Egyptian entertainment industry feels the pinch of neo-realism in 2011 | Caravan, December 11, 2011. <https://academic.aucegypt.edu/caravan/story/egyptian-entertainment-industry-feels-pinch-neo-realism-2011>.

- Fahim, J. (2010, June 11). *The sour taste of Helmy's "Black Honey"*. Daily News Egypt. <https://dailynewsegypt.com/2010/06/11/the-sour-taste-of-helmys-qblack-honeyq/>.
- Foucault, Michel. "The history of sexuality: An introduction, volume I." *Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage 95* (1990).
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/knowledge*. Routledge, 2020.
- Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. Columbia University Press, 2019.
- Grayson, Kyle, Matt Davies, and Simon Philpott. "Pop goes IR? Researching the popular culture—world politics continuum." *Politics* 29, no. 3 (2009): 155-163.
- Hall, Tom, Amanda Coffey, and Howard Williamson. "Self, space and place: youth identities and citizenship." *British journal of sociology of education* 20, no. 4 (1999): 501-513.
- Hausken, Liv. "The Archival Promise of the Biometric Passport." In *Memory in Motion: Archives, Technology and the Social*, edited by Blom Ina, Lundemo Trond, and Røssaak Eivind, 257-84. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1jd94f0.14.
- Hausken, Liv. "The Archival Promise of the Biometric Passport." *Memory in Motion: Archives, Technology, and the Social* (2017): 257-284.
- Holmes, Janet. "Power and discourse at work: is gender relevant?." In *Feminist critical discourse analysis*, pp. 31-60. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005.
- Holmes, Janet. "Power and discourse at work: is gender relevant?." In *Feminist critical discourse analysis*, pp. 31-60. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2005, 32
- Hopf, Ted. "The promise of constructivism in international relations theory." *International security* 23, no. 1 (1998): 171-200.
- Hopf, Ted. "The promise of constructivism in international relations theory." *International security* 23, no. 1 (1998), 175.
- Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Sage
- Khoury, Malek. "Origins and patterns in the discourse of new Arab cinema." *Arab studies quarterly* (2005): 1-20.
- Kubeisy, Sumaya, and Bradley C. Freeman. "Bridging or Widening the Gap? Narrative Discourses of the West and Westerners in Jordan's My American Neighbor Television Program." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 7, no. 4 (December 2020): 431-45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347798920939840>.
- Kumar, Amitava. *Passport photos*. Univ of California Press, 2000.

- Lawler, Steph. "Narrative in social research." *Qualitative research in action* (2002): 242-258.
- Lloyd, Martin. *The passport*. Phoenix Mill et al.: Sutton Publishing, 2003.
- Mahdi, Waleed F. *Arab Americans in Film: From Hollywood and Egyptian Stereotypes to Self-Representation*. Syracuse University Press, 2020.
- Marie, Khaled. dir. *Assal Eswed*. Brothers United for Cinema, 2010.
<https://www.netflix.com/title/81254733>
- O'Byrne, Darren J. "On passports and border controls." *Annals of Tourism Research* 28, no. 2 (2001): 399-416.
- Ong, Aihwa, Virginia R. Dominguez, Jonathan Friedman, Nina Glick Schiller, Verena Stolcke, David YH Wu, and Hu Ying. "Cultural citizenship as subject-making: immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States [and comments and reply]." *Current anthropology* 37, no. 5 (1996): 737-762.
- Pierce, Sarah, and Doris Meissner. "Trump executive order on refugees and travel ban: A brief review." *Migration Policy Institute* (2017).
- Reale, Egidio. "The Passport Question." *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 3 (1931): 506-09.
- Reesh, Mohammad Ali Abo. "Analysis for Selected Comedy Films in Egyptian Cinema." Master's thesis, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU)-Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi (DAÜ), 2015.
- Robertson, Craig. *The Passport in America : The History of a Document*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Rosaldo, Renato. "Cultural citizenship and educational democracy." *Cultural anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 402-411.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London [etc.]: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Salter, Mark B. "The global visa regime and the political technologies of the international self: Borders, bodies, biopolitics." *Alternatives* 31, no. 2 (2006): 167-189.
- Salter, Mark B. *Rights of Passage : The Passport in International Relations*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.
- Seth, Sanjay, ed. *Postcolonial theory and international relations: A critical introduction*. Routledge, 2013.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "The Rani of Sirmur: An essay in reading the archives." *History and theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247-272.

The United Nations. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Tickner, Arlene. "Seeing IR differently: notes from the Third World." *Millennium* 32, no. 2 (2003): 295-324.

Torpey, John C. *The invention of the passport: Surveillance, citizenship and the state*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Van Dijk, Teun A. "Discourse and ideology." *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* 379 (2011): 407.

Weldes, Jutta, and Christina Rowley. "So, how does popular culture relate to world politics?." *Popular Culture and World Politics. Theories, Methods, Pedagogies* (2015).

Woltering, Robbert. "Occidentalisms in the Arab world: ideology and images of the West in the Egyptian media." *Library of modern Middle East studies* 96 (2011).