Struggles for success

Youth work rituals in Amsterdam and Beirut

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ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam op gezag van de Rector Magnificus prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit op woensdag 1 november 2017, te 11:00 uur door Sebastian Emad Abdallah geboren te Amsterdam.

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Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragswetenschappen

FOREWORD

A little over ten years ago I published a short essay on similarities I noticed in behavior and experiences between young people in Amsterdam and Beirut (Abdallah, 2007). I had just returned from a Lebanon devastated by the Israeli defense forces. I happened to be there when the bombs fell, and like many other visitors (but of course also local citizens), I was stuck. Soon after, foreign states prepared emergency exits for their nationals, which for some embassies was quite a challenge, since many Lebanese have dual citizenships. I saw how French, British and Australian embassy-buildings became overcrowded and long lines of people twisted and turned out onto the streets. The Netherlands embassy personnel were less busy and could secure some places with vessels of the bigger evacuating parties. I was not sure yet if I wanted to make use of this privilege. On the one hand, it felt strange that I could just leave others behind in misery. I have Lebanese citizenship and had planned to spend the summer there, but when Lebanon did not suit me I had a way out. On the other hand, I expected people would think I was irresponsible if I stayed in danger.

Some locals had a different focus. They joined smaller or bigger NGOs that tended to the needs of people internally displaced by the bombing of their neighborhoods. This is when I made my decision to stay and volunteer with two small initiatives helping people who were sheltered in schools that were closed for the summer. Initially, the smaller NGOs brought food, water, and hygienic products. As the larger NGOs gained traction, they took on this responsibility since they were better equipped and funded for these purposes. The smaller initiatives became more focused on moral support. Every day we would come late in the afternoon and organize games and sports programs for children, tell stories, eat ice cream, drink coffee and just hang out. After some weeks it felt like people were happier to see us than the people who brought water and food. And these are not just the ramblings of a Westernized outsider. Both volunteers and the temporarily displaced uttered their appreciation to each other time and again. Some also tried to remain in contact after the war was over. Yet, it proved difficult to cross the invisible communal borders behind which different groups live large parts of their lives.

The chaotic context of artillery targeting civilian neighborhoods and the ensuing flights to safer harbors are of course in no sense comparable to any experiences of young people who grew up in Amsterdam. Yet, in the midst of those very dissimilar circumstances, I rediscovered something I had noticed

before, during my initial experiences in internet-cafes in Beirut in 2002-2004. Dynamics between teenagers, in sports situations, in hanging out, shooting the breeze and joking around were in Amsterdam and Beirut astoundingly comparable. In my role, supervising the activities, I noticed situations called out similar skill-sets in maintaining casual contact, offering moral support, and in restoring and keeping order when things (almost) got out of hand. I became even more convinced that the comparability of young people's experiences in these seemingly disparate contexts was worth investigating more thoroughly.

After some ten years of being active as a youth worker I transitioned to teaching Bachelor's students of Social and Cultural Education at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. Next to teaching I became an associate researcher for Youth Spot, which got me involved in researching different youth work programs throughout the city. This opened my eyes (more) to the valuable contributions youth workers were making but also to how little stakeholders were aware of these contributions, and how limited youth workers were in articulating the significance of their work (Abdallah, de Boer, & Bos, 2008; Abdallah, de Boer, Bos, Hamersma, & Spiers, 2007; Abdallah, de Boer, Sinke, Sonneveld, & Spiers, 2010; de Boer, Sonneveld, Abdallah, Heshmat Manesh, & Bos, 2009). If my training and experience as an Amsterdam youth worker had unknowingly equipped me to make a difference for young people in wartime Lebanon, this indicated there was still a lot to be learned about the added value of youth work.

This opportunity came when Stichting Innovatie Alliantie provided a four year grant when they approved our research proposal on "Talent development for at-risk youth." This was the start of a collaboration between universities, schools for vocational studies, and NGOs to learn about the dynamics of young people's lives and the contributions of youth work to their wellbeing and development. The formal start of this journey was 2010. Although the project has formally come to a close more than two years ago, the completion of this dissertation marks for me the real point of closure and the start of a new phase. A lot of good things have happened along the way, and I want to make room here for the people I would like to thank.

I start with my advisers. In total it has been a journey of eight years and I am much indebted for how much they have invested in me. The term *promotores*, commonly used in the Netherlands, is more adequate than advisers because they have done so much more than advise me. They have, each in different ways, through conversations and tirelessly scrutinizing my texts, contributed to the development and crystallization of crucial concepts and ideas of this dissertation. They have invested in my scholarly and professional formation process.

There is not enough opportunity here to elaborate on all the ways they have challenged and supported me. Instead, I will give examples, captured in quotes, of what has stood out for me. Jan Willem Duyvendak, always supportive, would

casually tell me about my text, "you make three points here" and would name them before discussing them with me. Meanwhile, I would still be in the process of adjusting to the idea that I made three points, where I thought I had made only one. Such instances added tremendously to developing insight into layers of meaning and depth, even in my own ideas and texts. Bowen Paulle has been, among other things, a true "coach looking over the shoulder" concerning methodic approaches as well as in developing clarity in idea-formation and writing-style. He was at times relentless in pushing my limits for what I could accomplish. Much of what he has taught me will still guide me in projects to come.

Paul Verweel was formally one of my advisers for most of the process. Unfortunately he had to retire in the last season for personal reasons. Nevertheless he has remained supportive and involved until the phase of completion. He has been consistently excited about my research and at crucial points has guarded the coherence of the dissertation as a whole. A nugget of his wisdom that helped me was that "ideas need to ripen." Simple as this seems, it has been so fruitful to leave ideas be for a while, to come back to them later. The result for me has been that some central ideas in this study have had time to grow and mature.

Marcel Spiers was the main "plotter" of the initial stages of my PhD-trajectory, supervising the early Youth Spot research projects in which I participated, connecting me with my future advisers, and initiating the application for the research grant that facilitated my project. Also in later stages I have benefitted greatly from exchanging ideas and reflective thought, and above all his warmth and friendship.

It has been a privilege to develop this study in the context of a team of people concerned with and motivated for the development and wellbeing of young people. Youth Spot has been the platform and institutional surroundings from which my project was possible. I thank Judith Metz, Mirte Hartland, Irma van Hoorik, Noor de Boer, Said Awad and Timon Raven.

Jolanda Sonneveld and Maike Kooijmans deserve special mention. I am so grateful for what we have developed over the years. It is special when like-mindedness and complementarity come together the way they have in our collaboration. A solid base for continuing, fruitful partnership and friendship.

This research arose from concerns within youth work practice. I want to give it back to the field and I hope practitioners will recognize it as an acknowledgement and tribute to their work. In particular I want to thank the following youth workers and community sports organizers for their input and participation: Adil Zioui, Dimitri Elstak, Jorn van Heesch, Jurriaan Otto, Khalit Bardoud, Lidewiet Driesen, Mariska van der Werf, Marit Vreeswijk, Matthijs Kaspers, Mohamed El Boulahfati, Mourad Ezzoubaa, Najim Baladi, Nanda van Praag, Redouan Daafi, Rinchemar Martina, Roel Overduin, and Youssef Elmourabet.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

"I'm writing a book about success"

Sebastian: I'm writing a book about what success means.
Joumana: Niiiiice!
Paul: Success? That's something big. Yeah, it's … pfff
J: In my opinion it's someone who reaches his goal.
S: What kind of goal then?
J: It can be anything.
P: No, not anything. Success is when someone, for example who studies, gets his degree, a job, gets married, a house, a car.
S: Ok. That's the big picture.
P: Yeah, but that's success.
S: But it can be many things. What someone sees as success can be success.
P: Yeah, but not just anything.
S: Why not?
J: When you bought a car, wasn't that a success?
P: Ah, That's not … anyone can buy a car.
S: But it can be small things. It could be going to the beach.
P: The beach?! There were twenty thousand people at the beach today! No, no, success is someone who works, studies, buys a house, takes care of himself/establishes himself [beyzabbet halo] …
J: It's someone who reaches his goal. But you can't succeed unless you put effort (ta'b) into it. For example, I went to university. I couldn't go to all the classes so I didn't know what they were about. So I had to put time into it. Sometimes I didn't sleep, or three hours only. I had to pass the test. I had to make it. You have to have determination. I can't sit back and let things happen to me. Whatever comes up against me, I'm gonna' make it. I could have said "Oh, my father died. Everything's against me." But no! I'm gonna' work and I'm gonna' pass!
P: Yeah [smiles, nods, a twinkle in his eye]. That's success.
J: I think you can't have success unless you have *hope*. Unless you have hope, you won't do anything.

This is part of a conversation I had with a brother and sister on their balcony in a working class neighborhood in Beirut with whom I have had contact for several years. We just came home from a trip to the beach. To find out how teenagers and adolescents perceive and experience success, I mainly spent a lot of time with young people in Amsterdam and Beirut. What follows is a sample of the perspective I want to develop.

Joumana's Interaction Rituals and Emotional Energy

It is interesting that Joumana was quick to agree with me. I suggested that success can be various things. She agreed. She gave the example of buying a car. For Paul this is not success in itself, only as part of an overall bigger picture. But, in the form, in the energies of the interaction there is a more important difference. Paul sat back in his chair smoking a cigarette. When I made my comment, he looked at me and in his response and tone he let me know that I had a tough task because success is "not just anything." Moreover, it was something that he did not have. Joumana's input came from a completely different angle. I had not finished my sentence and she called out "Niiiiice!" as she smiled and her eyes got wider. I was excited by her reaction but I did not even know if she knew what I meant. She did not check that either. She knew what it was about. About her. She obviously already had ideas about what success was and as she was speaking, she got energy from talking about success. She did not start a conversation about success. It was a monologue. A monologue in which she was immersed. Being successful despite the circumstances. Her life theme. Her older brother could not do much else than agree. It was not just that Joumana had the right arguments. At that moment she *embodied* success (cf. Bourdieu, 1980/1990). Her energy charged her words. There was no reasoning against the strength she exerted. All we could do was give her space.

We can determine energy levels by paying attention to speech rhythm, tone of voice, bodily movements, common moods, recurring topics of conversation, and how they speak about those topics (Collins, 1981, p. 1000; 2004, pp. 134-140). What strikes me about Joumana is that her energy levels are almost always high. She comes from a relatively poor family and has many reasons to give up (something that other family members have done) but she does not. Her attitude (her emotional state) determines what she accomplishes, how she sees her surroundings and probably even *how people in her surroundings see her*. At a state university where teachers are said to have no desire to teach, are corrupt, or prone to cronyism, she had wonderful learning experiences. Her degree has less social status than those of private universities, but she claims she has learned more than she could have at a private university. She worked her way into a reputable company and regularly supervises graduates of said private universities. Her success is not only socioeconomic. Her boyfriend (later fiancé) has a

well-paying job at a bank, but he is also socially and emotionally involved with his environment and his future family-in-law. She seems to have attracted someone with whom she can work on her goals but also multiply her energy.

How does her flame keep burning? She does not have many friends. Occasionally she meets up with some friends to have fun. To work herself up out of her situation it was probably better she did not have a group of friends to hang out with. With other young people (especially boys), life on the streets can rather quickly extinguish their flame. "The streets" are not in themselves "bad" for young people, but young people who want to make a breakthrough for themselves (in sports, in school, in increasing peace of mind), tend to lessen hanging out there, if not avoiding it altogether to advance their focus. Joumana was exemplary in managing priorities, activities, and with it, her *emotions* (Hochschild, 2003). Probably consciously as well as at times subconsciously, she veered toward settings that focused her and lifted her spirits. The university offered her such a setting. A place where people think in semesters and years. Where she met people with similar goals, desires, and daily patterns. People within defined *boundaries*, having the same *focus* and *mood* generating a rewarding energy, shared symbols, and a local solidarity and morality (Collins, 2004, p. 48). This is a successful interaction ritual, which, if repeated often enough, turns into a *chain*, whose influence can reach beyond the localized generation of its setting. In Joumana's case, the university provided a counterweight to her neighborhood and her home situation where as she claims there is "no culture of learning." After college she found it at her job and with her boyfriend. She radiates energy, makes it contagious and finds ways for making it endure. She is wrapped up in dynamics that make her not only survive but thrive, while living in a disadvantaged neighborhood.

She does not know where her strength comes from and says that she has always had it (more on this in Section 6.1). In any case, she has learned to see many steps in her life as successes. "You should have a goal and achieve it, no matter what." If each step is reaching a goal, then she had in her own eyes already achieved a lot, long before surrounding society acknowledged it. The ways she *framed* what she achieved were thus of great importance in her experiences (Hochschild, 2003, pp. 99-100).

This is the first brief empirical and theoretical insight into how one young woman, in a context of multiple disadvantages, found settings for rewarding interaction rituals that turned into chains, and gave her the energy, symbols, solidarity, and morality to rise above her circumstances. This study is an endeavor to analyze in more detail how such trajectories/developments work where young people go from feeling like victims to taking ownership of the course of their lives. A key to this analysis is developing the concept of experienced success.

The road to success

I did my MA in sociology in Beirut in 2002-2004, during the boom of internet-cafés. Young people hung out there for hours a day having fun, playing online games, meeting their friends, but also strangers online, improving (digital) skills, doing homework, and regularly there were young men looking for a possible foreign spouse online, through which they could leave the country in search for improved socioeconomic opportunities. Sometimes this worked.

As an Amsterdam youth worker, I was fascinated by what I saw. The atmosphere and activities in these cafés reminded me of youth centers in the Netherlands. I decided this phenomenon would be the research topic for my Master's thesis. I would have loved to do a comparison between Amsterdam youth centers and Beirut internet-cafés, but "retrospective" research was not an option because of methodological objections and flying back and forth was not possible.

Later, back in Amsterdam, I took up youth work again. We were invested in young people's lives through recreational and educational activity-programs. At the time, registration of numbers of participants was important as a source of legitimacy toward local government subsidizers. To youth workers this usually felt like an administrative task detached from and bearing no relation to the "actual" work. The significance of our efforts was about "other things." We could illustrate that significance through examples but we hardly had a shared occupational narrative clearly indicating how we made a difference or what was needed in "difficult" or "disadvantaged" neighborhoods. Especially in strategically positioning our work as meaningful toward outsiders, the message did not extend beyond a few general notions. There were few "hard" indicators of our success such as guiding participants (back) to school or to (part-time) jobs. This happened occasionally but not on a scale that it could be measured as "main output." Yet, young people loved participating in our programs and we knew we were doing important work. When it became clearer that I would get the opportunity to do longer term research through a PhD program, it was apparent to me that inadequately articulated significance of youth work would become an important theme.

It was also clear to me that this significance related to young people in disadvantaged circumstances trying to make something of their lives. Young people participating in youth work programs had constructive, positive, uplifting experiences. Something similar was the case for young people in internet-cafés, and the youth work-like contexts I found later in Beirut. This was how a focus on experiencing success budded.

If I could ascertain what was happening to young people in these seemingly dissimilar contexts, I could contribute to making explicit what young people in situations of adversity were looking for, and what it did for them when they found it. The main research questions leading this study therefore were:

> How do young people from disadvantaged neighborhoods in Amsterdam and Beirut get to experience success? How do these experiences alleviate their circumstances, and in some cases, eventually, elevate them from their circumstances? How do youth workers contribute to such experiences and processes?

To answer these questions, I have done ethnographic fieldwork in Amsterdam and Beirut, particularly in neighborhoods that were economically and symbolically at the bottom of society. I spent some ten years (2002-2012) studying and working in these neighborhoods, keeping diaries of my experiences, and conversations, writing up reports on developments. Since 2006 the research focus became more defined, and research activities increased, including interviews and prolonged participant observations.

I felt there was a dire need for knowledge of actual, up-close experiences of living, breathing young people. My Amsterdam youth work experiences and research in Beirut internet-cafés had already taught me that immersion in their contexts brought crucial *insider* knowledge of the details of young people's experiences, the detrimental dynamics to which they were exposed and in which they were caught up, but also the ways in which they sometimes managed to effectively deal with or overcame such dynamics. These were realities for which more distanced and detached forms of gathering information could hardly provide revealing insights.

Exacerbating the current state of an overwhelming bulk of knowledge production is that such data-collection often occurs based on preformed and defined categories so that new knowledge serves only to add to and confirm what we already think we know (Brubaker, 2004, 2008; Paulle & Kalir, 2013; Schinkel, 2008). And when research efforts veer outside these parameters they receive far less popular and media attention because they are accused of negating or shying away from "obvious realities." This seems the case for research on "ethnic minorities" such as "Palestinians" and "Syrians" in Lebanon, and "Moroccans" and "Surinamese" in the Netherlands. In Lebanon, a country with a "majority of minorities," the situation is possibly even more complicated. There, the categories Christian, Muslim, Shiite, Sunnite, Maronite, Orthodox, Druze, (as well as other "foreign" ethnicities) all have several connotations, depending on which other "group" or "groups" are producing the "group-talk." Something similar goes for research and policy in both countries on the "disadvantaged," "lower-class" or "underclass."

We realize too little that, far from having acquired knowledge by adding these facile adjectives, this dynamic actually *hinders* us from adequate knowledge. Governmental bureaus of statistics, university departments, and mass media

outlets seem generally "caught" in similar categories as "things" that are presumably "out there" instead of manmade processes (Elias, 1970/1978). They usually see the unanimity of such reality-productions as a confirmation that they are on the right track. The point here is to return to an awakened sociological imagination (Mills, 1959).

Also in this respect, an ethnographic approach has helped. Besides the importance of understanding experiences and the significance of youth workers, it has prompted me to search beyond some of the predefined categories. A confrontation and preoccupation with flesh, blood and soul in motion was an antidote against too naively trusting reified categories of ethnicity, class, and gender.

The prioritization of an ethnographic approach went hand in hand with a focus on unpacking the intricacies of interactional dynamics between young people among each other and with youth workers. There is hardly any added value of describing characteristics of young people if we treat these as static features that they own or that are inseparably part of them. Rather than asking how smart they are, I tried to see how they used their intelligence in different instances, sometimes to their advantage, other times to their detriment. And I tried to understand what happened in and around them that kept them from using it in the first place. More broadly, the ideological ideas behind my data-gathering and analyses were not to "prevent crime" or "de-radicalize." They were rather to discover what positively stimulating environments consisted of and how these entrained young people into patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions that stabilized them emotionally, focused them cognitively, and constructively engaged them in healthy and positive trajectories. It is then not a research of statics and essences but a study of *motion* and *direction*.

In my text I refer regularly to disadvantaged young people and circumstances of hardship and adversity. My use of such terms is not meant to contribute to the reification of some people's identities or situations. I had even started out referring to them as "disadvantaged" in quotes, since there were some who used their difficulties as a source of strength in their identity assertions ("I did all this even though the world was against me!"). I eventually deleted these quotation marks because it felt like too much of a risk to not take their disadvantages seriously, just because some managed to creatively spin them. We cannot negate that there are many young people who cannot pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. They may have potential, ambitions, a will and so on, but these are all heavily dependent on how they get played out or downplayed in their daily interactions. In other words, to the backgrounds of lives that are wrought with difficulties, the question is what gets *foregrounded*. Thus, advantages, disadvantages, experienced success, and the lack thereof are found in the flux and flow of bodies and minds meshing and "hashing it out."

Amsterdam and Beirut

This research stands in a tradition of articulating and elucidating what is happening to and between people who are structurally marginalized and experience disadvantages and hardship in socioeconomic and cultural respects (Bourdieu, 1993/1999; Harb, 2016a; de Jong, 2007; Kooijmans, 2016; Paulle, 2013; Wacquant, 2008, 2009). Although my focus is on what people manage to accomplish that contributes to stability, health, and advancement, I still do so with consideration for the circumstances in which they do so.

It has been mentioned that comparisons between "first world societies" and "the urban constellations of the dispossessed caught 'between war and city' in the countries of the global South" (Wacquant, 2008, p. 2) are becoming increasingly important. Not only to properly understand marginality, but also for how young people in tough urban circumstances develop coping practices. This project then provides an opportunity to make comparisons between two such differently organized societies.

Lebanon, with its differentiated religious confessional identities translated into political affiliations (Salibi, 1988), recent war history (Achcar & Warschawski, 2007; Khalaf, 2002), continuing political turbulence, economic instability (El Mufti, 2011; Vloeberghs, 2012, 2016) and predicaments (Hanf & Salam, 2003), provides an adequate sample of a "developing" country.

The Netherlands should then pose as a "first world country" in this comparative study. Because of the inherent ethnocentric flaws involved in such labeling, I tend to distance myself from it. From being "first world" there seems to be no place to go up, while the Netherlands still could learn a lot. In recent Dutch history, there have been increasing worries of intolerance toward "non-Western others," leading to heated political debates and sometimes violent clashes between groups in society. The recent credit crisis has caused a measure of economic instability with many people losing their jobs. And the difficulties political parties, chosen in the 2017 national elections, have had in forming a government are not unlike those of Lebanon.

Even so, the absence of war for over sixty years in the Netherlands, the general level of wealth and its distribution over society, and the relative safety of its citizens (not to forget its politicians) as compared to Lebanon, make the two counties sufficiently dissimilar for the purposes of tracking young people's paths of development and experiences of success.

The list of similarities is more considerable than stated until now. And this too adds to the richness of the comparison. Both are small countries compared to their larger neighbors. They depend on export of goods and services to those neighbors for their economy, and have therefore always been turned outward, keeping a close watch on international developments, looking for threats as well

as opportunities. Their coastal positions make them ideal as shipping hubs for international transport of all kinds of products. Their histories are marked by trade, and as often happens, strong inwardly turned values take a back seat to more pragmatic ethics, making business possible, attracting people, companies, and organizations. As a consequence, or parallel to this, many different groups with different backgrounds and traditions found refuge in these spaces of tolerance (or indifference) from oppression elsewhere. They both have histories of "pillarization" where several religious groups lived side by side, and developed parallel political, social, cultural, and educational institutions which created self-contained and largely self-reliant communities, dealing with each other with a mixture of tolerance, ambivalence, and suspicion.

An important finding of this study is that absolute differences on national levels in safety, wealth, and opportunities did not make for striking differences in young people's coping practices. Rather, the *relative* and *experienced* deprivation in both contexts was more important in how they felt about and dealt with their situations. The role of facilitators, youth workers in Amsterdam, and in Beirut a variety of social professionals and volunteers also showed striking similarities. Looking at the longer term, accumulating experiences of success also showed similar effects on young people being increasingly equipped to deal with their disadvantages. Personal and group experiences, the arousal of hope (without necessarily changing societal structures of opportunities) changed young people's perspectives, increased their feelings of belonging and being grounded, and allowed them to face their challenges in more persistent and more effective ways. My aim is to show the dynamics and mechanisms of these developments and their similarities. The case made here is not that context does not count. If anything, the previous relays that context, and especially the *experience* of it, is everything. The national and urban situations are totally different, but the relative positions young people took up in their daily routines, and their experiences in them, seemed similar. Learning that young people perceive and deal with disadvantages similarly across contexts underscores the pivotal role of experience when it comes to achieving success, and, in second instance, it helps us in discovering how to support them in their struggles.

Overview

I have built up this study in three parts. The first two chapters form an orientation. Chapter 1 is an empirical tour of settings and encounters in Amsterdam and Beirut to give the reader a grasp of the material as well as direction for analysis. I zoom in on who the young people are, what makes them socially vulnerable, and how this relates to their efforts and results when it comes to

experiencing success. Chapter 2 provides theoretical lenses through which I will give meaning to encounters, interactions, and developments of young people. Broadly speaking, there are three accents in youth research: youth as a transition to adulthood, youth agency and critical youth studies. Every strand has its own accents on what success could be for young people, and all give their own weight to experiential realities. I give an indication of how these strands are present in science, policies, and practices of institutions targeting youth in both Lebanon and the Netherlands. Then, I show how my chosen theoretical perspectives of interaction ritual chains, emotion-management, and embodied learning contribute to existing knowledge.

Then follow Chapters 3 through 7 which comprise the empirical heart. Chapter 3 focuses on a small kickboxing gym in the East of Amsterdam. It details how young people become wrapped up in the intensity of boundary-pushing work-outs that *boost* energy-levels and emphasizes the primacy of momentary successes. I give special attention to how the trainer employs his youth work skills in customizing the work-out to transform bodies and challenge minds. Chapter 4 is an account of a street-basketball practice in Beirut, as a practice in redirecting young people who threaten to succumb to debilitating dynamics of excluding social entrenchment and short-sighted materialism. Here, I highlight how young people feel a sense of belonging and increased emotional stability, that I together call *grounding*. In Chapter 5, I zoom in on two young men, each from one of the cities and follow how they navigate through different situations and build an impressive track record of increased success. Because of their increased determination and confidence they experience an *elevation* over their circumstances that helps them work on increased success. Chapter 6 is an assembly of four descriptive portraits of young women and their search for success. Each looks for and finds it in different ways. I endeavor to establish what we can learn about how their experiences and paths of development diverge and converge with those of their male peers. In Chapter 7, I end my empirical descriptions and analyses with young men who tend to experience more strain and stress than success. Here, I diversify the sample, so to speak, and show what happens when experiencing success does not occur or works insufficiently. I propose from the descriptions where angles for improvements in their lives could be.

Based on this empirical endeavor, I come to develop what experiences of success consist of in Chapter 8. I distill three main components that I introduced in Chapters 3 through five. The *boosting* component is especially a feeling of elation in the moment. The *elevating* component is a longer lasting feeling, combined with positive cognitive connections for the future. The *grounding* component is an experience of being socially connected as well as feeling increased emotional stability. These components, their presence and prominence, make it possible to typify different kinds of experiences. Chapter 9 is dedicated to an analysis of the

contributions of youth workers. The idea is that youth workers can initiate or contribute to different types of interaction rituals that make experiencing success possible or at least likely to occur for their participants. I also propose how youth workers can develop such proficiency.

In the conclusion, I attempt to succinctly answer how young people in disadvantaged circumstances experience success and how youth workers are able to be of significance for such experiences. I hope that the detailed accounts will give readers enough insights to acquaint themselves with people of flesh and blood. They are more than policy categories. I also hope that this study shows how youth workers are able to provide opportunities for young people to become more than the little that they or others too often think of them.

1 PLAYGROUNDS AND BATTLEGROUNDS

The Red Danger

The "Red Danger" is a crazy football game we organize in a small elementary school gym. It came about as follows. After an hour of "normal" football the attention span of the kids broke and they had had enough. At one point they were kicking the ball as hard as they could, at each other! We noticed it and tried to stop it, but every week they started shooting more at each other than aiming for the goal. After an hour we thought: we can do three things: 1) stop the activity, but then there's no more contact with them, 2) we keep on and keep saying that they cannot shoot at each other, 3) "We make do with what we have." This meant that we arranged the activity according to the new game that the kids played: big mats along the walls, so the ball can't bounce back as hard and a light ball. Both to limit the possible injuries. The ball was red, hence the name "Red Danger." The result: a popular game where we kept the participants, known in the neighborhood as "hard cases," inside and developed the relationship. We play along as well, kicking as hard as we can and we take a beating ourselves as well. Once I got hit by that ball so hard I thought I got a concussion. Even the next day I still had a head ache. We developed a bond where we got the "right" to reprimand them about their misconduct, even on the streets. When these kids misbehave [in the neighborhood], the police sometimes can't do anything with it. Then they ask us to go by. Then, we have a chat with them. First we have a laugh about who got a ball in the face last time. But then it ends with "Guys, you can't stay here hanging in the porch area." And they answer: "Okay man. We're out of here. We'll see you Thursday!"

The Red Danger took place in the West of Amsterdam under supervision of community sports professionals, with a youth work-minded approach.[1] Dutch youth work is hardly ever this controversial. Up into the 1990s and probably some of the first decade of this century, some youth centers were notorious as places where young people would smoke weed or hash, but that did not attract much attention as most people had no clue that youth centers existed, let alone what they were for. Without digressing into an in-depth analysis of the Red Danger, it shows several relevant dynamics.

Its participants were known by neighborhood residents, the police, several local civil servants, and social workers as "hard cases." Nobody knew how to effectively "deal" with them. The young people themselves were a group of friends consisting of either school drop-outs or only school-attenders as far as administrators were concerned (meaning they were not necessarily present in classes). They had hardly any structure or routines in their days. They did what they felt like and what they had the means for. None of them held steady jobs, so their possibilities were limited. They ended up sauntering through the neighborhood, a dull look in their eyes, sometimes interrupted by cracking a joke. Boredom could turn to delinquency, vandalizing public property just to break the monotony. Without getting into details, they were in a social position where neither the law, nor family, nor educators really had a handle on the situation or the means to punish or otherwise redirect these "unguided missiles." It was in this context of knowledge and pressing interests that the youth workers made their assessments and decided on a tentative way forward.

How is this relevant for a study on disadvantaged young people experiencing success? It is a case, be it a contentious one, on "where" young people in disadvantaged circumstances can be, socially, physically, geographically, and emotionally. From there youth workers try to get them to a better place. The road to get there is not always an obvious one. What is clear, however, is that there will be several steps between these young people's current situations to where they would experience something resembling positive accomplishments and constructive self-perceptions.

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1   The sociologist Samir Khalaf uses the imagery of playgrounds and battlegrounds to describe broad social, cultural, economic, and political tendencies in Lebanon. Up until the 1970s Lebanon was depicted as a playground of consumption and culture. It turned into a battleground with the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 (Khalaf, 2002). In the decades after the war (from 1990) he saw Lebanon transform from a battleground into a playground, only this time with some pathological excesses that according to him need correction and pacification (Khalaf, 2012). In my usage in this chapter, the image has different meanings. Playgrounds here are a symbol for places where young people come to meet and have fun. At the same time, public places have become for them contested. Young people, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, are seen by fellow residents and public professionals as nuisances, threats, and risks to themselves and others. Their presence is often problematized. This antagonism can turn playgrounds into battlegrounds.

This chapter is a tour of my field of study to give impressions of the hardship and adversity with which young people struggle, but also some of the openings they see to improve their lives. It is the first groundwork in building a perspective that could eventually be beneficial for people like participants of the Red Danger.

Section 1.1 opens with a short treatise on how success, especially as a subjective experience, has come to receive increased attention in recent times. I discuss several historical and social developments. Related to these findings, but also in opposition to them, I position my search for success in young people's lives, to which I accord an important normative dimension.

Section 1.2 delves into the neighborhood and peer-group contexts of the young people under study. The traditional sociological factors, such as those pertaining to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and culture, will get some attention because of their sensitizing capacities. The more revealing dimension, however, comes from a micro-perspective on young people's interactions: how do they do "being disadvantaged"? Dynamics in Emotional Energy (Collins, 2004) are important in exploring the answer to this question. This energy is pivotal to experiencing success, but as we shall see in Section 1.3, they are not the same. The case of a weekly football activity will show how torrents of Emotional Energy flood through the sports center, much to the detriment of the emotional stability of many participants involved. These include youth workers who try to steer these activities in directions they feel are beneficial for the participants.

In Section 1.4 I explain the role of youth workers in this study, as "proximate professionals" in the lives of young people. Other than understanding the experiences of young people, I aim in my research to provide insights into what youth workers can contribute to those experiences. I hope that in this chapter I will have set up some of the pivotal players and ideas, on which the following chapters can build.

1.1   Forceful eyes: Social and historical influences of success

The development of success as a (partly) subjective phenomenon, opposed or next to externally determined standardized criteria (such as educational degree, occupational status, and income), is fairly new. Up to well into the twentieth century, ideas about success seemed more straightforward and uniform. Even today, when we have so-called freedoms to shape our lives in a multitude of ways, there seem to be quite some constants in what most of us actually want and choose (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2004). Yet, the ways in which such choices and subsequent actions become configured have undergone significant changes. I want to sketch here some of the social and economic developments leading up to this new and in some ways more complex concept of success. I

hope to make clear that this new situation brings with it complications in attaining success and that it colors young people's struggles for success in particular ways. From this historical and social frame, I continue with what could be ways of becoming successful that improve young people's quality of life.[2]

Up until the 1950s and 1960s it was in Europe and North America fairly normal that people (especially men) after graduation found jobs at companies in which gave them security and other amenities, and to which they remained loyal until their retirement (Sennett, 2006). Increasing competition and ever changing social and cultural environments in which companies and organizations operated changed this. Companies wanted less bureaucracy, "flatter" organizations (less hierarchy) and to save costs wherever possible. Employees were to be deployable wherever needed instead of being tied to one location and set of tasks. Also, the number of necessary employees was no longer fixed. The stability and long-term relationships between employers and employees of previous decades had declined (cf. Green, 2013; Kuttner, 2004). The most important asset of employees became their flexibility and their willingness and ability to learn (Sennett, 2003, p. 80). Paid labor was no longer (or less) a given, it depended on employees continually making themselves *attractive* for their employers. The biggest and most promising compliment that (prospective) employees could receive in this situation was that they had *potential* (Sennett, 2003, pp. 77, 78). This brought people into constant development-oriented modes and geared toward a future where they could hopefully fulfill that potential. This development has only intensified in recent years after the financial recession. People have to prove themselves evermore to be worthy of jobs or even internships. The "best" still have relatively little to worry about. For the "rest" there are few assurances.

Concerning disadvantaged young people, there have been considerable efforts through government policy production in creating identities, categories, and standards of success (or rather failure) *for* them. "Western" states have in increasingly harsh terms categorized young people as risks and threats (Boutellier, 2011; Schuyt, 2009), through which experts, journalists, bureaucrats, managers, and elected officials influence both "public perception and state action" (Wacquant, 2009, pp. 30, 31). Wacquant (2009) sees the earlier mentioned deregulation of the labor market (or rather reregulation in favor of the affluent classes, [2008]) as a direct cause of social disorder. States in turn respond, not with consoling the unrest, but rather with severer penal measures. While such undermining of collective arrangements continues, it is competition and "unre-

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2   I do not mean to suggest that these broad developments *determine* young people's day to day encounters and experiences. They form a broad context that push to the fore certain ideas and, to an extent, compelling frameworks of experience that (in mediated forms) some young people are confronted with and react to, and others less so.

strained individual responsibility" (Wacquant, 2009, p. 5) that are celebrated. A perverted view of success, since it is formulated in terms that are abstracted from their social context and therefore imply great difficulty to maintain from circumstances of hardship.

In Lebanon, young people face their own strands of challenges. For young disadvantaged Lebanese, the experiences of their Western counterparts in struggling for financial and social security are sure to be recognizable. More than ever, it seems difficult for young people to establish themselves and attain minimal conditions to successfully advance to a next (adult) stage of life. Other than that, young people seem obstructed in acquiring positions from which to speak their concerns in recognized public forums, and their interests seem *a priori* abducted and redefined in larger political partisan debates, held by adults (Harb, 2016a, 2016c).

The idea of "(re)inventing" and "constructing" identities, particularly as being socially successful, happens thus not in a social vacuum but, it appears, in the midst of pressing economic and political forces. Yet, the preoccupation with such activities has increasingly permeated our consciousness (and most likely our subconscious), and different spheres of life, also among younger generations (Deeb & Harb, 2013; Gahre, 2011; Miles, 2000; Muggleton, 2000). The opportunities (and traps) of creating online "personas" has intensified, diversified, and further complicated such dynamics.

Success then went, generally speaking, from being self-evident to uncertain. From structured to deconstructed, and then up to the individual to reconstruct it. From anchored to uprooted. And, especially in recent decades, from limited to "boundless." The latter seems due mainly to the increase of enormous riches going toward a few who manage to manipulate monetary flows, and due to technologies and discourses of globalization, opening up all kinds of avenues with (false) promises for seemingly endless possibilities. In urban societies, where digital technologies connect people to ideas, information-flows, and people from all around the world, these promises appear to make any achievement more relative ("What is my success compared to that of so many others?"), and the standards more unattainable and absolute ("I can only call it success if it measures up to the highest global standards").

The sketch above pertains to broad social developments that did not affect disadvantaged people specifically. Yet, it is a social climate in which many givens became uncertain, unstable, but also renegotiable. It is such broad and general themes and developments that young people's struggles for success relate to in different ways. And it is to such backgrounds that young people growing up in hardship and adversity become inventive and learn to push through, like Joumana (see Introduction). Or they become bogged down and discouraged, like her brother Paul.

While opportunities seem to have increased, so have risks and problems. Some push and become more successful than was possible for previous generations. Some become so successful that they burn up. Some burn others along the way. Still others are left behind as the world "passes them by" (cf. Bourdieu, 1993/1999). For young people in disadvantaged circumstances, growing up in poverty, in educational depravity, in social detriment – what are their opportunities to experience success? How can that help them in ways that will alleviate their suffering? And, given the inhibitions, risks and temptations that permeate their daily lives, what experiences and trajectories can become available to them that suggest *healthy* and *wholesome* paths of development? Here, it is important to note that my research agenda takes a direction, a movement, which has normative implications.

I look for experiences that promote their wellbeing. Therefore, I include and even prioritize their subjective experiences, but not at any cost. In my research, I remained open to young people's experiences, stories, and convictions. Yet, in my analysis in hindsight, I observed differences in the quality of these experiences. Some brought them apparent senses of comfort and affirmation but had negative consequences that outlasted and overshadowed these feelings. Other activities and encounters seemed more definite in positively encouraging their wellbeing.

Hence, I looked for activities that made them feel good, but I tended in the analysis to differentiate between, on the one hand, boosts that helped them assert themselves positively and, on the other hand, "cheap thrills" that could be harmful to them or others. I looked for dynamics and trajectories that increased their motivation and helped them strive, but also for ways to manage their striving so that they did not "burn up" or ended up burning others. I looked for situations in which young people could feel accepted and connected, but especially in ways that encouraged their positive development, not at the cost of a negation of their individual values and identity, or isolation from important relationships or networks.

When I summarize my focus this way, it may seem that I have narrowed down too much what I "want" to find. Yet, there are valid reasons for this focus. One is that this focus developed over time, in conjunction with what I was slowly discovering among some young people. Those who increasingly felt that they had control over situations and the outcome of their course of development had "navigational skills" in knowing what to avoid and what to seek out that would further advance such feelings and capability. A concern for moral orientations within paths of developments was thus not so much an addition "from outside" but grew *in attunement* with the field of research.

Another reason is that I am not aiming to establish some kind of set of universal laws of success that could apply to all situations and people. I am looking

specifically at what kinds of success young people need who live in situations of enduring hardship, material poverty, social strain, and emotional duress. Of course there are all kinds of arguments to be made against my emphasis of attention. Why call some of their activities "cheap thrills"? Why not let them be free and go wild? Isn't that good for all of us every now and then? Why does their motivation and striving need tempering? Why be afraid of them burning themselves or others? Let them be creative and think outside conventional boxes. Why should they not connect with others at the cost of a loss with other networks? Maybe it's good for them to burn some bridges. These are all fairly valid questions, but especially as they pertain to drawing up a *general* framework of success. This would have to transcend socioeconomic status, lifestyles, preferences, and so on, and thus entail very broad outlines for which there would exist different kinds of applications.

However, within the endeavor of discerning paths of development for young people living in the circumstances that I am describing, these questions become less relevant. They can even be seen as arguments formulated from a luxury position. Many of the young people with whom I spoke, wanted more stability and conventional or "conservative" success. They wished their lives were at times more predictable. Therefore, my questions are geared toward what *these* young people seemed to need, and what experiences enhanced the navigational skills necessary to advance in a society that has not or minimally provided them such opportunities and environments.

1.2   Doing good is a daily battle

Moral orientations

Aiman was fourteen years old and born in Amsterdam. His parents were from Berber Moroccan background and have been living in the Netherlands for twenty years up to this point. He was in his second year of secondary school, at the intermediate level (VMBO-t). After he would finish, he wanted to continue to the higher level (HAVO), so he would be eligible for a professional bachelor's (HBO) afterward. Once or twice a week he helped out at the local youth center in the homework club. He typed letters for the activity coordinator and designed flyers for activities. Aiman liked anything computer-related: text processing, graphic design, gaming, and web-browsing. He liked helping out at the youth center, making the flyers. "I wanna' get better at it, so they will always ask me to do it." Other than that, he enjoyed playing soccer at the local playground or the indoor sports center. Aiman had a younger brother of eight years old, an eighteen-year-old brother and a married sister of twenty-five years old. Aiman's father was away from home for work a lot. His mom took care of the children

and the household and did not speak Dutch. Aiman often translated incoming Dutch mail for her. He also took care of communication between her and school, his own and that of his younger brother. Aiman and his friends regularly talked about girls and going on dates. They chatted with them online at the youth center, asked them for their cell phone numbers and tried meeting them. Often they succeeded. They often talked like "stallions" among each other about having had sex with the girls. Most of the time this was not the case. Aiman had a Muslim background and believed in God. Every now and then he would start talking about prayer and what God approved or would not, concerning different issues in daily life: fighting, snitching, cussing. He was "guilty" of all such things but when it came down to it, he did not approve of them.

"I hate people who are criminals. They're not doing good. I want to do good. I want to finish school, do something with computers, that's my favorite hobby. You see those guys [other teenagers] riding around on their bicycle all day? They're not doing good, on the streets till eleven or twelve o'clock. They don't do homework, skipping school, what are they gonna' achieve. That's not how I wanna' be. That's why I don't hang out with them. If I do, I might become like them. Then I'll steal, do scores [*klusjes klaren*] for those older guys in the street here. What will my mother think? She'll get sad for sure, if the police call her: your son is here with us. That's why I just do my best, finish my homework, help out at the youth center, go to bed in time. Better this way."

It is impressive and at the same time tragic how the temptations of interactions on "the streets" seem to confront Aiman, and how he deals with them. His case shows us (at least) two things. Young people in any situation are born into and act within a moral context that is not entirely of their own making, even though they are forced to deal with it. In disadvantaged neighborhoods, or at least in this one, the spectrum of choices looks different from other places.

This daily reality exposes Aiman and his peers to temptations, choices, and situations that for many of them are too hard to cope with well. Some are led astray, others, like Aiman, feel estranged from what should have felt like a safe haven to grow up in. The confrontations with these temptations and choices, *and their frequency*, are a large part of what makes up their disadvantage. Many other young people in the same age group simply never or hardly meet with such temptations, and, by way of unawareness, "resist" these temptations.

Note that crime here, according to Aiman, is not the main issue but an element (probably a small one) of a larger reality. He mentions kids riding around on bikes. This is a familiar phenomenon in Amsterdam neighborhoods. In small groups, but often also alone, they slowly ride around. If they were walking it would be called "slenteren" which is something like sauntering or moseying. On their bikes they often go so slow that it is quite amazing how they keep their balance. They go around "aimlessly," waiting for something to happen or

see someone they know. Some kids on bikes (too large for their size) are in fact involved in courier chores for older street dealers or hustlers. But many of them are simply riding around. Aiman deems this part of the *inactivity* he sees around him, and this bothers him, almost as much as crime. Not doing homework, not doing anything *useful*. It is clear that Aiman and the peers he critically discusses are caught up in different rhythms. They each have their own focus and concerns. Aiman also invokes the bond with his mother as an external motivator for "doing good" (or at least not doing bad).

Aiman looks for success in Dutch society's mainstream institutions of education, community services, and labor. Paul's idea of success (see Introduction and Section 7.2) is also fairly mainstream Lebanese: "Someone who works, studies, buys a house, establishes himself." He acknowledges his sister Joumana has success because she graduated from university (whose story I will elaborate on in Section 6.1). It seems because he cannot have these things that he does not even feel at home in his own country. "They [rich people] can leave [the country] whenever they want. Not like me. I'm stuck here. Who's born here is stuck here [yilli khili' hon, 'ili' hon]. I don't have money. I'm twenty-eight years old, I make four hundred dollars a month. Can I buy a house? A car? No, that's why many young people wanna' leave. Not for money, but to have a future."

Some young people who are, or have been, active in crime, look back on a "wild period" and see restraint as important to long-term success. Jerry relates, "I don't get worked up anymore. I keep my cool. I've been through all of that. I've done time [in de bak gezeten]. […] When I saw the light, so to speak, was when I got caught. I was in prison for two years. That really gets to you. It wasn't even that bad really. If you look at everything [illegal] I've done. But now I have two kids. I can't have that happen to me anymore. No way. I gotta' be there for my kids."

Muhammad (in his early twenties) who worked out at Samir's gym (see Chapter 3) was talking to a young teen, while putting on sports gear, who told him about some neighborhood boys. The young kid was impressed by the boys' petty criminal activities. Muhammad dismissed it. "Those bums. All of them bums. When you steal, you should do it well. Don't get the crumbs. Then you're better off working. Then you have your salary at the end of the month. You don't do any time. Look, if you steal big, and you don't need to work for six months, okay. But yeah, what are you gonna' do afterward? Better to just work a job, then you don't have that stress of getting caught. In the end it's better to just work." Muhammad appeared here a bit more ambivalent than Jerry about whether or not crime pays off. Within one minute, I heard Muhammad ping-pong between the idea that crime pays off if you do it right and that you are better off not doing crime at all. I did not detect a strong moral conviction of crime being "wrong." His approach seemed more pragmatic: "whatever is going to work for

you." Muhammad was not really condemning the crimes, he was ridiculing them because the pay offs were not worth the risks (*"All of them bums"*). He seemed caught between showing his street-smarts, making a distinction between "real" and "fake" crime, and sending the kid a "correct" moral message that crime does not pay. Yet, Jerry also still had his ways of staying connected to the "old life": "I don't do that crazy stuff anymore. I've had it. But I do still give advice! [laughs] I have a lot of experience, so when guys wanna' know something, I help. And I plan it with them. I don't go with them. I don't go do it. It's just like you, teaching, ya' know. That feeling. And then, when it works, you feel… you know. Yeah, thanks to me. I did that." Here we do not see the "true repentance" we hope to get from punishing a criminal. Jerry made a cognitive decision to not take the risk of crime for his girlfriend's and children's sake. But when he was a criminal, he enjoyed the spoils and the lifestyle, and he still looks back on that fondly. And he derives satisfaction from being a "mastermind" behind current crimes.

Jerry and Muhammad's statements do provide two clarifications about being successful in crime. One is that there are risks involved that at some point are no longer affordable (at least for some). The combination with having a family is too much of a strain. Two is that to be successful they need to "score big" in order for the payoffs to be worth the risks. This brings a practical objection for the kind of crime disadvantaged young people get caught up in. Once again, it is important to note that most disadvantaged young people do *not* ever participate in crime. But the ones that do are usually often involved in street-crime, including theft, robbery, break-ins, vandalism, and small-time drug-dealing. These are crimes with high risks of jeopardizing their own safety and of getting arrested.

Yet, these are practical, even pragmatic, considerations. In terms of positive paths of development that do not harm themselves or others, crime seems a large compromise. I could make the case that Jerry learned a lot from having become quite a proficient criminal. I could have analyzed with him how his developed skills are adaptable or transposable to other spheres of life. And if Jerry was so inclined, this could be a fruitful endeavor. This study, however, is certainly not aimed at how young people can get away with murder and later make the most of it. It is firstly on how young people become wrapped up in positive and empowering social rituals (Collins, 2004) that enable and constrain them to constructive paths of development. Secondly, it is on young people's sense-making of activities and processes – how they deal with what has happened, what could still happen, which doors they tend to open and close on themselves, and how that changes over time (Hochschild, 2003).

I admit that my tendency is to get the issue of crime as a possible path to success "out of the way" at an early stage. While it may seem an exciting topic to unravel it is mainly an anthropological preoccupation with an Orientalist-

style (Said, 1978) approach of the "criminal mind."[3] There is hardly any proof of "criminal minds" working differently from those of other people (except in cases of pathologies that inhibit capacities for empathy and thus have no scruples inflicting or allowing harm on others). More likely, they are simply "minds" whose bodies are engaged and deployed in this world and attempt to make their ways as seems fit in the social configurations of the moment. The issue of disadvantaged young people is not whether they subscribe to broadly endorsed paths and destinations of success, or that they would regress to methods that endanger society. Far more pressing is what happens to the bulk of young people who feel they have no means, resources, or networks to obtain a modicum or first semblance of what they deem success. It is hardly ever a resort to criminal activity. In most cases, it is a regress into apathy and inactivity. This could result in literally doing nothing but hanging around on the couch, playing videogames and eating microwave dinners. Or it could be "obediently" going through the motions of everything that is expected of them without ever deriving any satisfaction from it or achieving anything they deem worthwhile. Far from posing a risk to society's safety and wellbeing, their surroundings *miss out* on what these young people could have been, if they had learned how to take *more* risks and if they experienced they had something *worth* taking those risks. Getting locked up in prison is a risk that some run, but there is a greater lock-up that far more young people suffer from.

Locked up in localities
Disadvantaged young people have different ways of dealing with dominant ideals. Research shows that most young people in the Netherlands believe they could become whatever they wanted as long as they worked hard, disadvantaged youth even more so than others (van den Bulk, 2011). My research is no different in that respect. All young people with whom I spoke, whether in the Netherlands or in Lebanon, no matter how unsuccessful they were, when I asked them about success, their answers involved having a goal, a plan, and working hard at it. Meritocratic ideals and discourses resonate strongly in "personal" opinions of those for whom it works as well as those for whom it absolutely does not.

Yet when I probed young people about their circumstances, if they were happy about what they had achieved, and to what extent they should work

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3   An approach identified by the scholar Edward Said as a predominantly Western endeavor of scientists, journalists, artists and others who either knowingly or subconsciously set out to understand and explain people from other cultures, mainly Arab and Muslim, as *essentially* different from their own. As a result, a host of literature, scientific works, news, and art has been produced that emphasize the "otherness" of non-Europeans, exoticizing them. Illustrative "determined" characteristics were (and are) a lack of capacity for rational thought, control of impulses and urges, and an overly developed sensuality.

harder to achieve more, their answers revealed insights. They argued that others had more and better resources than they so they would never really have a fair chance (for instance, Joumana in the Introduction and Section 6.1). For children of ethnic minorities, their appearance and exotic names set them back (Daniel and Farid in Chapter 5, Hicham in Section 7.3). At the same time, this did not relieve their conscience. They still felt pressure, guilt, and shame for their lack of achievements. Yet, this does not hold up indefinitely. Those who protractedly do not experience the connection between effort and merit, may keep paying it some lip service but eventually, and often bitterly, give up on it ever working for them, as Paul seems to have done (Section 7.2).

So far, I have shared some moments of reflection, confession, and longing. These are important disclosures of what takes place in young people's lives. However, it would be a mistake to take these moments as *essentially* conveying how they "really" feel, without taking into account what people say and do on a day to day basis. Striking one-off statements have to be placed back in a broader context of everyday life where going to work still gives a better chance of keeping the job than staying at home. To understand the everyday lives of the young people in question better, I will turn here, and throughout the empirical chapters, to everyday interactions. I aim to show how ways of speaking, and recurring themes display mindsets and emotional baselines, revealing coping practices of how disadvantaged young people manage expectations, success, failure, pressure, and injustice. It is in these daily encounters that they learn to live out, and maybe shift between, emotions and ideals.

In their daily interactions, jokes, complaints, and reenactments are ways that produce, confirm, and enforce dynamics and experiences of normal solidarity. As these interactions take on a life of their own, they feed and deplete young participants' emotional energy.

One way of achieving normal solidarity is through complaining. As Paul's quote above, complaints among young Lebanese are about lack of money, and possibilities for "people like them." The working poor, stuck in their neighborhoods, stuck in their country. Nowhere to go socioeconomically, and literally, nowhere to go, except when a "rich" uncle comes along. The complaints on socioeconomic limitations in Lebanon have not waned over the years. They have increased (cf. Abdallah, 2008), and together with the increasing political instability they have often turned more bitter. Complaining sets a tone and creates feelings about what is possible, and, since complaining is mostly negative, about what is *not* possible. This can influence the moment, but when a group often complains about the same topics on a regular basis, this energy can become a durable emotion of that group, and seriously influence experienced possibilities of its individuals (Collins, 1981).

A second way of conjuring up energy is joking. This could be about anything.

Jokes are often about people in the group. A common "hobby" is trying to make a fool of someone in the group, not necessarily from ill will, but rather just for the sake of laughing together. "Victims" will most often take their "revenge" sooner or later. Mostly, these jokes are not meant to have any serious effects on group members or their relationships. However, who jokes on whom and the extent of humiliation in the jokes does often reveal a pecking-order. Other jokes can be about minorities, the one to which the young people belong themselves, or another one.

During a neighborhood festivity in an Amsterdam West municipality, a mother and her daughter of about ten years old walk over to a boy and she warns him. The boy had made a wild move, and bumped against the girl who spilled her tang because of it. Omar (age 13), a friend of the reprimanded boy comes and stands next to him and laughs while he says:

> Again those fucking Moroccans, huh?! [*weer die kutmarokkanen, hè?!)*[4]
> Mother: Those are *your* words. I didn't say that.
> [Omar laughs about it while walking to his friends. They thought his remark was cool and they received him with laughter, a pad on the shoulder, and a hug.]

Mocking one's own group has the effect of mutual recognition and confirmation, and can be a way of "rising above" their lowly symbolic position, saying "we know who we are and how people see us, but we know how to deal with it."

> Hussein, an assistant sports instructor, is hanging out and having fun with some children between activities in the sports center at the benches by the side of the court. Most of the children are from Moroccan descent. "Do you guys know what the robot is?" The kids smile. Some nod. Hussein starts dancing, doing the famous robot moves, ending with his forearm dangling while keeping his upper-arm horizontal. "Ok. Ok. Now do you know what the *Moroccan* robot is?" The kids smile. Some stand up and move around like a robot. "No? No? You've never seen the *Moroccan* robot?" Hussein lies down on the ground on his side and pretends trying to walk, making his body scrape against the canvas. "That's the Moroccan robot. It doesn't work!" Everybody laughs.

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4   An utterance that became notorious in the Netherlands because of its racist use and because a local politician was caught using it. In street interactions it became an ironic "badge of honor" among young Moroccans for a while.

Next to confirming who they are as a group, these jokes have a way of keeping members in check, sending a message that they should not try to be more: "This is where you belong. Don't become arrogant and try to be something you're not." This was subtly achieved in a conversation I had in a Beirut suburb near Bourj Hammoud with two young men, both named Paul:

> Paul: We're used to the prices here [in the neighborhood]. We can't go to Hamra, Kaslik, Verdun. We have the same things here, only cheaper. But with brand you get quality. For instance, Adidas, made in China, but quality, costs $40. But a normal shirt made in China doesn't last 2 weeks.
> Sebastian: Come on. Lots of brand clothes go bad after a short while.
> P: No, they stay good longer. Also, you pay for the name.
> P 2: Yeah, but you immediately know.
> S: What do you mean? How?
> P: Coz an Armani shirt costs 250 thousand [LP]. If you see someone here in the neighborhood with it, you know for sure it's fake, bought in Bourj Hammoud [a neighborhood famous for its market with cheap items and knock-off brand products].
> S: Ah.
> P: A guy with a shirt like that should at least have a Porsche.
> P2: Porsche Hammoud![5]
> [Laughter]

This self-knowledge does not always have a self-defeating purpose. It can also have an effect of putting things in proper perspective to distance oneself from self-defeat. For some it is even a reminder of the battle they need to fight to become something else or something more (see an example of this in Section 4.3).

The complaints are revealing of constraints. The jokes seem in the moment to create some "space," room for participants to humorously reflect on their position. Yet, these too are indicative of holding people down rather than lifting them up. Another type of encounter might help make this point.

Haret Hreik is a southern suburb of Beirut where Hezbollah has its main offices in what is commonly called the "security square" (*murabbaʿ al- ʾamn*).

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5   Porsche Hammoud sounds like the neighborhood we were talking about: Bourj Hammoud. The joke was that we were talking about expensive durable goods that distinguish themselves from cheaper, worse quality knock-off products, bought in Bourj Hammoud. Combining the brand name of Porsche, one of the most expensive car brands and highest status symbols, with the name of a neighborhood known as "shabby" was a strikingly ironic combination, especially because of how similar Porsche and Bourj sound – as knock-off brands often sound like the original brands they imitate.

This is the place that the Israeli Defense Force hit hardest in 2006 during the July War with the aim of (literally) wiping Hezbollah (Party of God) off the map. It is also here that the party has worked hardest to rebuild since then. And with results, because the devastation of that summer is undetectable today. In fact, it has turned into the pride and joy of many inhabitants of the area. "This is the downtown of Dahieh," Imad tells me. Local residents gave it this name after Beirut's Downtown area which was formidably (and notoriously) rebuilt after the civil war. "This is where all the cafes are. The apartments here are like 300,000 dollars. For that money you can get a better place in Los Angeles. You'll have a nice house with a garden…" A motorcycle races by, making an exorbitant amount of noise, most likely from pinched exhaust pipes. "Yeah look. 300,000 and you get this." [laughs]. I respond, "In Jdeideh you have this too, it's the same." Imad replies, "Yeah, I know, there's a lot of nice cafes there." "No", I correct him, "I meant the racing with the motorcycles." Ahh, oh yeah, Imad mumbles absent-mindedly, "They're everywhere … I don't like these cafes. I like the small old Arguileh places." I have the idea I understand his "down-to-earth" preferences and add with a smile, "Yeah, these are for the people that have the 300,000 dollar apartments." "Yeah, right!" he yells. "See, I like this here. You can watch TV." It's a simple place that looks like a cafeteria. Tiles on the floor and on the walls. Plastic chairs and tables. A few flat-screen TV's hanging on the walls in different angles so people in different parts of the café can watch. We sit down at a table that has a remote for the TV on it.

As we shall see, Imad is a lot less stuck than Paul (compare Chapter 4 and Section 7.2). In fact, Imad is an expert at crossing boundaries. Yet our encounter and casual conversation were suggestive of the segmentation of the city, both ethnically and economically. He expresses his exasperation for the real estate prices of the neighborhood, and subtly connects them with cafés that are too fancy for him (admittedly aided by my comment). The other side of it is that this high status city sector also offers local residents a symbolic counterweight to other parts of the city (the "actual" Downtown). Khalaf refers to this dynamic as "the formation of separate, exclusive and self-sufficient spaces" (1993, p. 32) in which residents of one neighborhood do not or hardly make use of leisure and consumer amenities in areas deemed to belong to "other" groups, a trend that is still observable in current times (cf. Khalaf, 2012).

I concede that my use of being "locked up" is a symbolic one and young people are not literally trapped in their neighborhoods or other kinds of localities. Still, I hope that it is clear that people feel limited in different ways. The question is how these young people can "get out" of this. What are experiences and repetitive interactions they need that will conjure up the right energy (Collins, 2004)? What are trajectories, investments, and commitments that they can make, and how are they able to manage those, given their circumstances (Hochschild,

2003)? And to what mindsets and (embodied) dispositions will this eventually contribute (Bourdieu, 1980/1990)?

To ascertain this, I need to get closer at young people's behavior and how it occurs in which interactional contexts. Their "lived practices" contain strategies, considerations, emotions, and embodied interaction. Adolescents may devise plans, but, mainly they live their "journeys," which, in different group constellations and various interactions (with peers and others), take shapes and sometimes unexpected turns. These interactions are not (just) slow, rationally pondered moments. They are moments in which young people are swayed in enthusiasm, beaten down by dominance, or stretched out by hopelessness. Because of its complexity, the quest of young people should receive a place in its own right (Goffman, 1967). It is important to research how young people's *meanings* of success emerge through daily interactions (Collins, 2004).

Structures of proximate opportunities

How young people will look for these "ways out" depends for a good deal on what they encounter in their direct environments. Some of them literally spend most of their time in their own neighborhoods of residence. Then it is highly likely that they find their outlet, constructive or detrimental, in whatever happens to present itself in that locality. Samir's gym in Amsterdam (Chapter 3), StreetBall, and YoungSport in Beirut (Chapter 4) are (in this analysis) positive examples of such local settings. Such opportunities according to Wacquant can be deemed "a potential escape route" that "acquires its full social meaning only in regard of the structuring of life chances offered – or denied – by the local system of instruments of social reproduction and mobility. Namely, the public schools, the deskilled labor market, and the activities and networks that make up the predatory economy of the street" (2004, pp. 17-18). Such phrasing reminds us that different localities are differentially composed in terms of available opportunities, distractions, and obstructions, which impose themselves on people's perceptions (Deeb & Harb, 2013; de Jong, 2007; Makhoul, Abi Ghanem, & Ghanem, 2003; Paulle, 2013; de Winter, 2006)

As stated, people are not literally locked up in these localities and perceptions. Part of this study consists therefore of following people in how they relate to the availability of opportunities in their neighborhoods and beyond them.

"Doing good" and experiencing success then are found in young people's daily encounters and perceived struggles, and in localities that could be their neighborhoods, but also more network-oriented settings outside their neighborhoods. These localities in turn make up a broader structure of likely available opportunities. A question is to what extent disadvantaged young people obtain or are afforded opportunities outside these likely opportunities. How are they able or enabled to expand their world and experiences?

1.3   Destructive emotional energy

> A game is the most highly staged of all conflicts; the conflict form itself has been chosen because of the drama it produces. Rules have been formulated and reformulated to channel the action in particular pathways; these conscious choices are usually made to promote more dramatic action in the game (Collins, 2008, p. 283).

Two guys in a duel over mastering the ball. Bruno pushes Khalid. Khalid falls down and gets up. He walks over to Bruno and pushes him.

> Khalid: What the fuck was that good for?! I'll fuck you up!
> Bruno: Shut up man. It wasn't on purpose.
> Others came in between to prevent a fight. We take them in opposite direction of the field
> Sebastian: Are you cool?
> B: Yeah man. Everything is fine.
> B walks in Khalid's direction.
> S: Hey, come on. Don't start again.
> B: No man. I'm not gonna' do anything.
> B: Hey. You wanted to fuck me up. Do it now then!
> Others try to come between them. Bruno doesn't allow it.
> B: No, no. [standing right in front of Khalid], bring it!
> K [mutters, looking down]: no man …[inaudible]
> B: Shut up then and play!
> B gives me a quick glance, telling me "there, that's settled."

Every Monday evening it's on. In what the municipal sports department calls the "winter season" (October – April), young men from about fifteen to twenty-five years of age flock to the local sports center for about an hour and a half of indoor football (*zaalvoetbal*). They anticipate this activity with excitement, some calling each other during the week and inviting good players from across town to make teams. They come to play hard, win (every win keeps them on the field for another game), and in the process vent a lot of bottled up energy. On quiet evenings, two to three teams will play, and busy evenings will count as much as sixty participants, each team anxiously waiting to play.

From around 9PM more and more teenagers and adolescents come into the center to get ready. Many bring sports clothes and indoor shoes, others don't. The center has two main courts, dressing rooms, a fitness work out space, a

multi-purpose room for activities such as yoga and dance classes for smaller groups (up to twenty participants), and a cafeteria. Monday evening is busy with different groups using the facilities: a youth basketball club on the other main court, kickboxing sessions in the multi-purpose room, women coming to yoga class and men pumping iron. Youth workers (usually two, never less) are there from 9.15PM to sign up teams of five players each. First to sign up are first to play. 9.30PM the whistle blows for the start of the first game. Youth workers referee. The games are high speed and high intensity, lasting eight to twelve minutes, depending on the number of teams signed up. People coming to watch, or walking by, are always impressed by the players' speed, agility, and technique in the game. It's not a game just anyone can keep up with. Contrary to football on the field, indoor football has a strict no-touching policy. But these Monday night games have become a mixture of field and indoor football, where they push, grab, pull, and occasionally do other things to each other that "should not be allowed." There is no real outspoken agreement or consensus as to what they allow. Everyone pushes and uses their hands a little bit, but when this becomes "too much" the player at the disadvantage will yell in indignation to the referee that the other is breaking the rules. "There's no touching in indoor football!" referring to the official rules, to which they never adhere. This mixture of official rules, to which everyone pays lip service, and practical logic of what has become "their game" makes it hard or nearly impossible to referee. Stopping the game at every foul would frustrate everyone because that would kill the flow of the game. Not penalizing enough results in frustration and eventually aggression because "there is no justice." Players use the referee (often a youth worker) as a means to their ends, venting frustration over decisions, lack of decisions, cheating when he's not looking. It is the normal football stuff you can see anywhere at any level, also, and especially, at the professional level, but *with a vengeance*. I supervised this activity for about two years and every week colleagues and I felt it was like going to the frontlines of a war. Not just because of the game, but what could come from it: fights between players, cursing and hysterically shouting at the referee youth worker for not calling it right, and occasionally physical aggression toward the youth workers.

Emotional Energy contests
Why get so worked up over a game? What is going on? Part of it comes from an inherent logic of the game. Another part comes from the energy the participants bring to the game, generate in the game, and the stakes in which they are invested. The inherent logic is that of most football games and to an extent most sports games. It is the logic of "I will get you." "Play consists of a contest of skill and effort, but most importantly in moment-by-moment challenges as to who will become emotionally dominant. It is a struggle over emotional energy" (Col-

lins, 2008, p. 285). To pass an opponent, to outsmart them, to score, to win, is to "get them." The game is in the first place about winning (emotional energy), not about playing fair. They can play fair so long as it does not conflict with winning. Breaking the rules is not just a necessary evil, it becomes a *good* to advance your team. "Getting them" then also becomes making the opponent trip to stop them, pulling them down, and giving them an elbow. And if the referee didn't notice, you "*really* got them." The opponent will also feel *really* gotten. The immediate reaction will be to "get them back." The logic here is to get them back in a similar way and to a similar degree compared to how they got you. Players who got "gotten back" will complain about the rules being broken, but also expected it to happen. This dynamic of "getting them" and "getting them back" can result in a back and forth of increasing intensity and severity, until a player can't take it anymore. The "getting them back" becomes too unreasonable, too disproportionate a reaction to its "getting them" antecedent. The dramatic buildup has reached its peak. We are now no longer in the game, we're at war.

"Logic" here does not mean rationally thought through or planned actions. It is the logic of the game *in situ*. The almost *automatically* unfolding of sequences of events that results from *bodies* moving in mutually *entrained* fashion within the *boundaries* of the playfield. According to Collins there are three kinds of emotional dynamics that make up the background for sports violence: "collective effervescence in buildups of dramatic tension in the audience; the degree of emotional resonance within a team; EE [Emotional Energy] contests between opponents" (2008, p. 285). What went on between Bruno and Khalid (see above) was a clear case of an EE contest. Khalid went through the motions of calling Bruno out, but when Bruno, a short Caribbean guy who clearly works out a lot, called his bluff, the matter was settled and the collective energy died down, Bruno emerging as dominant. In other cases, fighting breaks out. Others come to stop them, but, depending on the severity of the "unreasonable reaction" they will allow a few blows to take place as retribution. This too can spiral out of control: the retribution is too severe and others don't just get involved to break them up, they join the fight. This is no choreographed fighting dance. It is a big mess of punches, elbows, and kicks, lasting for no more than a few seconds. In the end, there is always a majority to break them up. But it's not over. It's very hard for a game, or even the whole activity, to resume after such a clash. A lot of time and effort goes to making sure the two most involved don't seek each other out again. The penalty for fighting is expulsion from the sports center, at least for the evening, maybe longer. But there is no sense in sending both out right away, since they would continue the fight outside. Youth workers try to keep them away from each other, try to talk sense into them, usually aided by some of their friends. The atmosphere remains grim. Sometimes the fighters calm down, but almost never do they resolve on the same evening. With the risk of this aggres-

sion, "getting them" and "getting them back" remains an inextricable aspect of the game.

Built up energy and the loss of control

The other part is the energy the players bring to the game *from elsewhere*. They generate energy in interaction, but they also build up stocks of energy throughout different interactions, which they bring to new interactions. This is how Interaction Rituals become Chains (Collins, 2004). On Monday evening, the participants have built up energy long before they arrive at the Sports Center. The anticipation of the game, being out to win, knowing most of the other players, and what they will bring to the game, all adds to a buildup of energy. The *focus* and *mood* are largely set, characterizing the *mutual entrainment* of bodily interaction (Collins, 2004, p. 48). The players themselves also mention their daily lives have input into the game: "You know you have to take shit from your boss. At school your teachers are nagging at your head. When you come here, you wanna' vent. You wanna' kick that ball. You wanna' kick ass!" This energy unloads and increases at the sound of the first whistle. The question becomes: how do this activity, its dynamics, and its energy relate to experiencing success? The players get temporary bursts of energy from being dominant in the game. Having a good team and winning regularly on a weekly basis may even translate into a form of street credit they can resort to in their daily interactions in other settings such as the neighborhood playground or street corner. They may develop a mindset or transfer tactics for being able to socially dominate a situation which is something many successful people learn to do to get ahead in different situations. Some think that this Monday Night Mayhem is what keeps some of these young people from a life of crime. A civil servant manager for sports programs in Amsterdam West explained it this way: "Because of Monday Evening, Hicham can be the "king" of the Sports Center. That's where he can be the weirdo and everyone accepts it. Everyone knows, "Oh boy, here he comes again." They know he's nuts, but they also like it. He can be the boss. He can show off." The activity provides a venue of *belonging*. This is an important theme I will turn to throughout this study. This activity can, however, have very different impacts on different participants, and even have different impacts at various times on *the same* participants.

Farid was a young man from the neighborhood. A little older than most (23), and had experience and was educated in sports instruction and supervision. He agreed to referee a tournament on Monday evening. One of the teams was a man short and Farid decided to play along. No one minded, even though technically there was a clash of interests. It was more important for all to keep the games going. After a while Farid and one of his opponents got caught up in the dynamics of "getting you" and "getting you back." This got out of hand and they threat-

ened to fight. We kept them apart and reasoned with Farid, asking him why he lost his cool while he was supposed to contribute to a good atmosphere and behavior of participants. At the moment he did not really respond, and blamed it on the other guy. Later he reflected: "You know, you shouldn't ask me to do this kind of stuff anymore. When I play with these guys, I can't be professional. They suck me into my old role. That guy, when he starts with me like that, I can't take it. I have to bash his face in. Put me in any other neighborhood and I'll be fine. I can handle anyone and anything. But here, with these motherfuckers, I just can't. They're bloodsuckers."

Reclaiming control by reframing

It is the energy of the game, "getting them" and "getting them back," the venting of frustration of the past week, that brings out the worst in the best of guys. This is not the case for everyone. Some come to have fun and that is pretty much all they get out of it. But the situated morality of becoming dominant by almost any means necessary, the entrained solidarity with their team's emotional resonance, the aggression of the energy, of which they at some point feel they have no control, is what leads some to reflect on what will be *right* for them in the long run, as Hicham did: "Can I also do something else in a totally different neighborhood? Maybe fitness-training with older people, for example. Staying in my own neighborhood is no good. I can do Monday Night [Football] also, if you want. But then I'm with the guys I already know. It's the same song every time. "Hey it's Hicham. Yeyy!" And then they start acting stupid, you know. And when they get like that, before I know it, I'm in it again too. Everyone knows me here. They're gonna' think, "Yeyy, that's Hicham, we can do anything with him around." You know? I'd like to get away from that group. If I can just work in a new neighborhood, where they don't know me. Then it's like, better. Then I can start over. They don't know how I used to be."

Becoming energized in these situations, and experiencing success are not the same, and the relation between the two is complex. It will be necessary to dissect this relation. In Chapters 3 and 4, I describe the importance of momentary experiences, analyzing what happens to young people in the heat of the moment. In subsequent chapters, I draw more conclusions about what happens to young people when certain types of experiences accumulate, and what these amount to in the long run. There, Farid and Hicham's sense making in hindsight comes into play. Hochschild argues they do this according to feeling rules: "acts of assessment" through which people apply "standards to feeling" (1983, pp. 250-251).

Hochschild's feeling rules give insight into how young people make sense of what happens, where they feel they ultimately belong, and what ideas of success they fit into. The latter has everything to do with *framing rules*, which are "the rules according to which we ascribe definitions or meanings to situations"

(Hochschild, 1979, p. 566). Young people's sense making before an event or in hindsight do not guarantee us an adequate account of what actually occurs "in the heat of the moment," nor how they feel during those moments. But framing rules can provide them a navigational tool to understand why their feeling rules change from one moment to the next, and how they create possibilities to attune their feeling with their conscience. When Hicham and Farid distanced themselves from their old ways, old friends, and old situations, they placed it in a frame ("being with the neighborhood guys brings out the worst in me"). They know they should not give into their peers' reckless behavior; they *feel* that it is wrong, but when the moment sways them, it no longer feels wrong, although they might in the moment, or soon after, know that it ought to feel wrong – and eventually it does. By framing "hanging out with the guys" as "off limits" for themselves, they maintain a congruence between what they feel and what they think they should feel. We conclude from this section that experiencing success concerns specific types of Emotional Energy (not just any energy), and that young people can accumulate this energy by using specific feeling and framing rules to navigate to the right situations.

1.4   Youth work

This study originated from within youth work concerns. In the descriptions and analyses, youth workers figure as some of the main "proximate professionals"[6] in young people's lives. I was interested in what their contribution was to young people in adverse circumstances. As I noted in the Introduction, if it appeared (at least in Amsterdam, at that point in time) not to be the "hard" mobility indicators of improved education and labor positions, then what could it be?

Since youth work does not meet the classical criteria for professions and has a more open character, I would like to direct attention to what I saw were youth workers in Amsterdam and Beirut. They did not all have social work degrees (youth work degrees do not exist in either country), nor were all of them formally employed as youth workers. The involved youth workers were the following. Samir in Amsterdam (Chapter 3) was employed as a youth worker at an NGO. He attained his Bachelor's degree in social work during my field research. Imad in Beirut (Chapter 4) had several jobs during my field work period, including the voluntary position of managing director for the NGO StreetBall. He

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6   A term that acquired some standing in the Netherlands (the Dutch term is *nabije professionals*) through a publication on the need for network- and community-oriented social professionals who were visible, present, and knowledgeable on current developments and issues (van Vliet, Duyvendak, Boonstra, & Plemper, 2004).

tried to acquire funding for the activities so that he could pay his employees and himself. Sometimes this worked and other times it did not. He has a Bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems and a Master's degree in Sports Management and Marketing. Khalil and Hala, also in Beirut (Chapter 4), both had daytime jobs and degrees in business administration. They worked with young people in their free time and at their own cost. Imane in Amsterdam was employed with an NGO that did community work. Her job title was team-leader and she had a degree in business administration, next to several certificates in social and cultural competence. Dr. Abboud in Beirut (Sections 5.1 and 5.2) was employed as director of an NGO supporting young law offenders and was also a priest. He had a PhD in sociology. In some of the descriptions I show up myself as a youth worker (Sections 1.3 and 7.2). I had been employed by an NGO in community work as a youth worker and later by a municipal governmental department of sport and recreation as community sports worker. I have degrees in cultural and social education, sociology and Arabic studies.

I noticed that all of them were immersed and invested in young people's lives, mainly people who faced tough challenges in multiple areas of life. All of them had visibly "real and deep" relationships with their participants. Both youth workers and young people attested of the quality and importance of these relationships. The youth workers tended to have a developmental perspective on their participants' situations. They looked for ways their lives could improve and for ways that the young people in question could become initiators and owners of such change. They tended to confirm and encourage young people in initiatives they took. They often had a "wait and see" approach and did not stop their participants in advance. Other than that, they did challenge behavior and ideas and at times corrected young people if they thought they were doing something wrong.

These observations correspond fairly well with international descriptions of youth work and youth development agents (Coussée, Williamson, & Verschelden, 2014; Delgado, 2002). There are of course additions we could make to the provisional list I have provided above. Also, there is discussion on how exactly each task or responsibility should be executed, and even if professional youth work is helpful for the empowerment of disadvantaged young people. However, it is not my aim here to review the range of youth work discussions and deduce from it a stance that would be suitable for me or my analysis. Rather, my aim is to extract from empirical observations what youth workers were doing and how this contributed to young people experiencing success. After I have made this analysis, I will be better able, but will also leave it op to others, to determine how my findings fit with existing ideas and contributions of youth work.

Next to situations where youth workers are involved, I have sought out young people who were not necessarily in contact with, or supported by such pro-

fessionals. I did this to observe how such trajectories would compare. Also, I deemed it relevant to show how young people attempted, struggled, succeeded, and failed, on what they saw were "their own terms" or at times what they felt was a lonely plight. Insights into what young people try "on their own"[7] can help in knowing how youth workers could proactively come alongside them as support.

Because I have focused on what helps young people experience success, the descriptions and analyses in the empirical chapters, and the overall analysis in Chapters 8 and 9 are generally positive descriptions of youth workers. This does not mean that youth workers' input was always positive or stimulating for young people. Also, youth workers were not always able to be of great significance for their participants. I do not negate that youth workers' contributions can also be adverse to young people's development and experiences. I have simply not given that a great deal of attention because my focus was on dissecting what happened when things "worked." I will however, in the closing arguments give this some consideration.

Discussion: The study area of experiencing success

In this chapter I have attempted to lay out some pivotal empirical and conceptual themes with which to examine experiences of success. Studying experience means privileging the subjective. This does not mean a description of whatever young people think success is. Their personal experiences and perceptions are important; if we want to know how young people from disadvantaged circumstances "make it," we need to find out what it is exactly they are "making." With people like Paul and Joumana from Beirut (Introduction) and Aiman from Amsterdam (Section 1.2) their ambitions are fairly straightforward adaptations to the institutions of their societies. Their actual trajectories in succeeding or failing to adapt are then of subsequent interest (Sections 6.1 and 7.2).

Muhammad's and especially Jerry's situations are more complicated (Section 1.2). They pay lip service to "doing good" in mainstream society, but where do they get their actual kicks? Jerry made a cognitive decision to stay out of trouble, but still enjoys being indirectly involved in criminal activities. He is sincere when he compares it to a teacher imparting wisdom to his pupils.

A sociologist, a youth worker, his father, could all tell Jerry that crime does not pay, or that it means a life of risks that he cannot afford. He even seems to know that himself. But this does not take away the fact that his *high energy interactions*, the rituals in which he is an *energy leader* (Collins, 2004), come

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7   I put such terms in quotation marks because people hardly ever accomplish anything alone. Yet young people could feel it to be so.

from being (indirectly) involved in crime. At the time I spoke with him, he was a cook in a hotel kitchen, having a hard time with his boss. The lives of guys like Jerry could change if society magically stopped stigmatizing ex-detainees or if well-paying jobs became massively available to people without credentials. More realistically and more empirically founded, Jerry needs alternative positive energy interactions to the ones of his criminal past. When investigators look for the source of a criminal operation, the guiding principle is usually "follow the money." If we want to know where guys like Jerry will look for success, follow the energy. This does not mean we should call that success. But, just like the situation of the Red Danger participants, we have to understand where they are, to get an idea of how they could get to a better place.

The aim of this study is to find out how young people evolve from the experience of being victims of circumstances to the experience of exerting a decisive influence over the course of their lives. Experiencing success functions akin to Emotional Energy in interaction ritual chains (Collins, 2004). This means that it has a local and temporary effect, and the accumulation of experiences over time produces more durable emotional states and longer lasting effects.

My agenda is, or has gradually become, to look for experiences that are empowering and have a positive impact for them, excluding harm for others. Section 1.3 shows there are detrimental types of energy that can empower (or enable) at the moment, while the loss of control accompanying it usually feels wrong in hindsight. The concept of emotion-management provides insights and tools for how young people deal with having conjured up, or having been caught up in different energy-flows. They frame situations to understand them, and they apply rules to their feelings to process and evaluate experiences (Hochschild, 2003).

After this empirical and conceptual sketch, we can delve deeper. I will start in the next chapter with a conceptual exploration to provide some sharp lenses through which to understand what I have found among young people and youth workers in Amsterdam and Beirut. Partly, I will follow the energy, but since that could lead me anywhere, my moral guidelines will be positive boosts, a striving that is healthy and benevolent to themselves and others, and a connectedness with others that promotes important relationships. Perhaps Joumana summarized it better: "I think you can't have success unless you have *hope*. Unless you have hope, you won't do anything."

2 PERSPECTIVES ON EXPERIENCING SUCCESS

I aim to understand how young people in disadvantaged circumstances manage to experience success and what that does for them. In this chapter I would like to place my choices and framing in a broader context, to show how my contribution relates to different research and youth work practices regarding young people experiencing success and development. This chapter is not a complete or encyclopedic overview of literature. I have tried to review only some of the major relevant strands of thinking and researching, and by way of example (relevant to my research contexts and themes) highlighted some proponents of these strands.

The study of young people has a long history and it has had different "homes." In the past century it has been appropriated by developmental psychology, cultural studies, and some elements of sociology and anthropology. In recent decades youth studies, especially as an offshoot of cultural studies, has become a discipline in its own right, with a proliferation of youth study centers, scholars, research output, journals, and conferences. In the Netherlands and Lebanon this discipline has not been strongly developed. Yet, since this discipline has internationally become the most important home of research and development with regard to young people, it is helpful to start with some of the dominant frames and concepts that emanate from this study field. This is the content of Section 2.1. The dominant frames are firstly "youth as transitional stage," secondly a focus on youth agency, and thirdly, critical youth studies. In each frame, success and the possible experiences of it receive varying attention and explanations. This provides an academic context for advances in the study of young people in the Netherlands and Lebanon, provided in Section 2.2. The study of youth has developed differently in these countries than the United Kingdom and North America. Therefore, I elaborate some on the contexts in which academic endeavors seemed to be shaped. Hopefully this will be instructive in understanding the respective developments.

In the second half of the chapter I propose which specific theoretical sources I employ to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. These are, firstly, Interactions Ritual Chains and Emotion management (Section 2.3). Secondly, throughout my empirical investigations I explore how the themes of embodiment and ingrained skills (can) have their place in those perspectives. These are

the topics of Section 2.4. In what follows, I briefly account for the choices in the subsequent sections.

Prelude: On sociologies of success and emotions

I have depended little on sociological studies of success. These tend to focus on education, occupation, and income as parameters, and probably rightly so since these aspects heavily influence how we feel about our possibilities and how "well" we are doing in life and society. Yet, there are many people who are well educated, have jobs that offer them many opportunities and good salaries, but they would not qualify themselves as successful. Partly, this can be due to practices of relative comparison; people tend to focus not on what they have achieved, but more on how that relates to achievements of whom they deem their "peers." For another part people who are successful in socioeconomic respect can feel creatively constrained or otherwise unhappy about their job-situation. This indicates that education, occupation, and income are limited as "measures" of success. Especially since a common assumption is that success and happiness are, or should be, related.

Of course the young people whom I followed in their daily lives hardly encountered problems of limited happiness in the midst of their success. Their source of unhappiness appeared rather their lack of success, which made me more attentive to this connection. I presumed that a lack of positive feelings and emotions was important in how determined they would be in following their ambitions, or in *having* ambitions in the first place. However, such ambitions, or aspirations, do not exist inside a person as a sealed off reality. Rather, they sprout, or deteriorate, in relation with their social and cultural environments. What people come to desire and aspire is then heavily socially influenced (cf. Appadurai, 2004). Hence I developed a tentative awareness of the interconnectedness of emotions, experiences, aspirations, and success.

There is a vast amount of literature on experiences, the role of emotions in them, and how these relate to people improving their lives. It is impossible to perform a "comprehensive" study to deduce what the most "appropriate" sources would be in helping me understand my findings. I admit then that there is some randomness to how I "ended up" with the selected academic lenses, though I do not consider my choice as *mainly* arbitrary. The process was very much an iterative one in which I increasingly found "fitting" connections between theories and empirical findings.

My research subject concerns young people who are and feel disadvantaged, and manage to experience success that initially alleviates the "heaviness" of their circumstances, and eventually experience an "elevation" over those circum-

stances. Many of them have done so with the help of youth workers or other supportive adults in their surroundings and social networks. This suggests that a lot of what took place pertained to the immediate micro-situations of lived inter-actions between people. Therefore, I needed a perspective that was attentive to the experiential as well as the interactional. Randall Collins' work on interaction ritual chains does that by zooming in on people's cognitive focus, a common mood, shared rhythms of speech and action, and how people become ritually caught up in interactions that make them feel, for better or for worse, that they are a part of something greater, from which they will not, and often *cannot*, soon withdraw. The ethnographer Bowen Paulle (2013) was the first in help-ing me see how these dynamics connected to disadvantaged and overwhelmed young people in everyday school situations. It was a small leap to transpose this perspective to young people hanging out on street corners, to sports situations on playgrounds and in gyms, and other interactional settings in Amsterdam and Beirut. Speech, motions, emotions, and bodies bounced off each other in more and less secluded spaces keeping participants enthralled and captivated in moments of togetherness. More than a theory, Collins' work provides a set of methodological tools to tease out and dissect what happens between young people and what that brings about.

Secondly, Hochschild's perspective might be as much a method for me as it is for the people I study. Emotion-management helps people make sense of the moments that captivate them. Is this what they want to be a part of, how do they feel about that, and how do they want to feel about it? Hochschild's discovery that this is what people, consciously or not, ask themselves, has made me ask myself and young people questions along these lines: how does what they do relate to be successful? How does it not? Will anything change? Considering their current circumstances, will they change their ideas about success? Or do they attempt to change how they feel about their ideas? What does that do for them? Hochschild's approach is instructive in seeing young people's search for success as a quest, in which they contemplate what paths to take and where they would like to end up.

Thirdly, Bourdieu's work on consolidated dispositions and incorporated, embodied habits, culture turned second nature, provides a perspective on out-comes of being durably exposed to series of interaction rituals. Young people are known to be more open, flexible, and malleable than later in life. It is there-fore appropriate that I privilege the aforementioned perspectives, emphasizing variations in behavior, prioritizing dynamics of face-to-face encounters to clarify people's conduct, and to counter ideas of a "fixed nature," a "reified self." At the same time, there is amalgamation over time and people develop inclinations, tendencies, likelihoods of responses, ingrained patterns of behavior. While I am wary of seeing every response as a tendency or every action as a pattern,

Bourdieu's language of "habitus" helps me in describing what it means when young people have acquired success and to different extents have *embodied* and become success, tacitly recognizable for both the people in question as well as their observers.

Finally, Sennett's work helps both as a "go-between" for Collins' analysis of instances and Bourdieu's accumulative conditioning (1979/1984, p. 170), and as a support particularly for elucidating the contribution and input of professional adults in young people's lives.

Sennett's recent work places high importance on the ritualized nature of interactions (Sennett, 2012, p. 90). He distinguishes several interactional forms ranging between competition and cooperation. Interaction rituals can, through social subtleties, in these different encounters have a *tempering* and civilizing effect. Of specific interest is Sennet's focus on relationships between people in community development, counseling and coaching positions and their clients (2003, pp. 101-204; 2012, pp. 50-55, 222-223). He displays a sensitivity to a wide range of relevant themes, such as shame, dependency, autonomy, compassion, and bureaucracy. In that, Sennett shows that the workers' most important contributions lie in *indirection*, working with resistance, deferring "quick fixes", and the use of "minimum force" (2008, pp. 214-238; 2012, pp. 22-24, 211, 223). He also sees cooperation as a craft, requiring skills that many people overlook and that we as a society have lost (2012, p. 6). Because of how he thematizes the relationship between workers in the social domain and clients or communities, and because of the way he centralizes the ritualized aspects of the interaction, I make use of his insights where I deem helpful.

In the second half of this chapter, I delve deeper into these perspectives and relate them to one another. Before I do so, I review the broader field of youth studies in which I hope to position my contribution.

2.1   Youth Studies: Transition, agency, critical concerns

Transition: Fragility and deviance in development
In the development of social and psychological research disciplines, studying young people has made headway in two manners. One is that of developmental psychology. In keeping with the modern idea of children and young people needing an allocated time and space, both to be protected from and grow into spheres of adult life, this discipline has made dominant the idea of youthfulness as a transition through different stages, the last of which is adulthood (Erikson, 1959, 1968; Erikson & Erikson, 1997). Erikson's model includes there being psychosocial crises in everyday life stage because of opposing forces present in young people's surroundings. The central challenge of adolescents for instance is

that of identity development. A problem they encounter is that of "role confusion" which postpones commitment to an identity and to appropriating responsibilities. This life stage is then meant to experiment and discover possibilities concerning the central challenge and problem. The central virtue that they develop is *fidelity*, being able to take on complex responsibilities and becoming dependable. Adolescents can enter the next stage of development (young adulthood) with more or less fidelity, depending on how they negotiate and resolve the challenge of identity development. Experiencing success in this model is then transitioning from one stage to the next. In the case of adolescents, with more of the virtue of a strong identity than the problem of (extended) role confusion. Other than that, a focus on general conditions for wellbeing receives central focus, namely education, occupation, and income.

A second way in which studying the young has merited recognition is when this development did not occur as expected and incurs socially sanctioned consequences. Traditionally, such research initiatives aim to explain "deviance." Why have these people become different from what we had wanted them to be? Why are they "dysfunctional"? Some have done this by comparing their research subjects with quite overt standards of what is "normal" or "expected" (A. K. Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957). Others have attempted to develop more "insider" perspectives of the people they had come to study (Whyte, 1943/1955). An important break with the normative functionalist view of deviance is the development of labeling theory (Becker, 1963/1973) which pays attention to who it is that determines deviance and the ways they are able to achieve this. Within the perspectives of deviance, experiencing success would be for young people either to find ways (back) into mainstream acceptance of functionality or to find ways of being "successful deviants." The latter would put them at odds with mainstream institutions that tend to insist on conformity. In the case of crime, harsher sanctions and punishment come into play.

Today, both sets of traditions have representatives in the scholarly world. Psychological developmental studies have consolidated their "stages of life" perspective with the help of biology, giving ever more detailed accounts of how hormones and neurological processes and realities impinge on young people's emotions, choices, behavior, and ultimately opportunities (Jolliffe, Farrington, Piquero, Loeber, & Hill, 2017; Muuss & Porton, 1999; Steinberg, 2017). The study of deviance has had, remarkably for a supposed "postmodern" era, a tremendous proliferation through risk studies, criminal studies and the medicalization of all kinds of social phenomena (Piquero, Farrington, & Blumstein, 2007; Rutter, Giller, & Hagell, 2007). Here again, the prominence and attractiveness of a biological component to the perspectives is extraordinary. Also, there are scholars who choose to emphasize the experience from within, rather than centralizing the comparison with a mainstream set of values, and have the aim

of a benign and understanding perspective, which they combine with critical-structural insights of the young delinquents' social and economic environment (Fraser, 2013, 2015; Halsey & Deegan, 2015; Shammas & Sandberg, 2016).

Researchers in these traditions do not usually self-identify as youth study scholars, nor do the latter commonly see the former as direct colleagues. The field of youth studies formed more as a reaction to research traditions of transition and deviance. Nevertheless, their influence is noticeable as youth studies also builds on previous insights.

Youth agency and its celebration

Over time critique advanced on transition-based research which was seen too much an outsider and adult view of what young people were. "Youth" was seen too much as something temporary and mainly in the service of impending adulthood. Youth studies emerged as an attempt at recognition of young people's enduring contribution to culture and society, and as young people having cultures of their own (Furlong, 2009). These were not waiting to reach a next stage. They were also not given their due by comparing them to adult cultures. This was correspondingly the critique on studies of deviance; they carried too much a norm from which the deviance was described. Youth Studies were to describe young people as here to stay, not as temporary beings becoming something else, their (sub)cultures as ways of living and not alternatives to (real) living.

An important premise was to step away from the idea of young people being vulnerable, dangerous, or rebellious – characteristics that are dominant in the transitions-based and deviance-oriented traditions. Young people had strengths, initiative, and potential and these needed to be emphasized. Young persons were to be recognized more as acting agents instead of victims of circumstances. With that, researching subjectivity and experience in their own right became a priority (Epstein, 1998; Miles, 2000; Muggleton, 2000). In-depth, up-close, and (thus) ethnographic research started to multiply.

From this agenda, we could postulate that success is in the eyes of the beholder. What young people like doing, what they spend their time and efforts on, what satisfies them, must be their version of success. Research and analysis here should remain true to these subjective experiences. This premise yielded numerous publications on pop culture, consumption, and being young in spaces relatively autonomous from adults. In this perspective, understanding from within is the greatest value that youth studies can add to science. The aims and results of my research project have a lot in common with the interests of this agency-focused youth studies program, although my concerns go beyond this, since I aim to understand and distinguish how young people harm and help themselves.

Critical youth studies: Ritual resistance

An impetus that started an important research tradition within youth studies was the establishment of the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), established in 1964, especially with the publication of a series of papers under the title *Resistance through rituals* (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). Focusing on youth subcultures within Britain's working-classes, they sought to foreground the meanings, styles, and experiences, while at the same time relating these micro-level phenomena to broader social, political, and economic institutions and processes (P. Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1979/2002; Willis, 1977).

This was a break with much of the earlier social science approaches where studying young people yielded explanations in terms of "generational gaps" and integration issues that needed solving (Eisenstadt, 1956; Parsons, 1954). Other than that, through their ethnographic approach, the British subculture researchers were able to ascertain how increased precariousness in wage labor, the estrangement of the educational system, and weakening family ties played out locally. Such detailed accounts of lived experiences showed how families within and across different neighborhoods followed different trajectories, some "upward", some "downward" in economic stability. This complicated the somewhat simplified story suggested by earlier mentioned research, emphasizing a post-war economic affluence and political consensus prevailing across all "layers of society."

The CCCS research approach had a strong Marxist agenda, emphasizing the influence of class and relations of production. The one leg they stood on was their macroscopic perspective on power relations and how these impinged on young people's lives and their subcultural responses. The other leg, however, was inspired by Howard Becker's *Outsiders* (1963/1973) and revealed the influence of labelers in "achieving deviance." This implied an interactionist perspective, thematizing "tight boundaries, distinctive shapes, which have cohered around particular activities, focal concerns and territorial spaces" (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson, & Roberts, 1976, p. 14. See also p. 47). It is this combination of Marxist political and social engagement and ethnographic attention for interactions and experiences that is both CCCS research's strength and weakness.

There seems to be some tension in the CCCS' position with regard to social and cultural rituals. P. Cohen's (1972) notion, on which the CCCS builds and improves its analysis, is that young people develop youth subcultures in which they "magically" solve contradictions of their socioeconomic realities. The CCCS poses subcultures to have "imaginary relations" toward their socioeconomic realities that temporarily relieve them of those realities. Examples are the "mods" dressing up and skinheads' hyper-adherence to "lower-class style." The point for the CCCS is that this does not *change* reality. "There is no 'sub-cultural career' for the working-class lad, no 'solution' in the sub-cultural milieu, for problems

posed by the key structuring experiences of the class" (Clarke et al., 1976, p. 47). Ideology and reality are different planes on which people operate.

On the other hand, ideology is to the CCCS *both* a real and imaginary lived relation (Clarke et al., 1976, p. 48). They had a sharp and keen eye for the lived actualities of the teenagers they studied. They prioritized this as an explicit part of their research agenda. Their ethnographies reveal their appreciation and admiration for their subjects' "imaginary relations" and when they describe them, they do so as "realities," stressing they are not simply "ideological." These relations and activities

> *win space* for the young: cultural space in the neighbourhood and insti-
> tutions, real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street or
> street-corner […] They develop specific rhythms of interchange, structured
> relations between members: younger to older, experienced to novice, stylish
> to square. They explore "focal concerns" central to the inner life of the group:
> things always "done" or "never done", a set of social rituals which underpin
> their collective identity and define them as "group" instead of a mere col-
> lection of individuals. They adopt and adapt material objects – goods and
> possessions – and reorganize them into distinctive "styles" which express
> the collectivity of their being-as-a-group. These concerns, activities, relation-
> ships, materials become embodied in rituals of relationship and occasion and
> movement (Clarke et al., 1976, pp. 45, 47).

Yet, because of their commitment to class-analysis, they always come back to assessing the extent to which these experiences are "real" in terms of how much they are able to change class relations. When they go beyond specific youth sub-cultures to the overarching class culture, they see more possibilities for negotiation, resistance, and struggle with regard to changing "real" circumstances. They also distance themselves from the strict Marxist notion that a complete societal overhaul is the only way to improve living conditions.

> We must also recognize that a developed and organised revolution-
> ary working-class consciousness is only *one*, among many such possible
> responses, and a very special ruptural one at that. It has been misleading
> to try to measure the whole spectrum of strategies in the class in terms of
> this one ascribed form of consciousness, and to define everything else as a
> token of incorporation. This is to impose an abstract scheme on to a concrete
> historical reality. We must try to understand, instead, how, under what condi-
> tions, the class has been able to use its material and cultural 'raw materials' to
> construct a whole *range* of responses (Clarke et al., 1976, p. 45).

While they see how local actions, responses, and negotiations can win space and modify class relations, they do not accord such potential to social rituals. A student of the CCCS, later to become one of the most influential scholars on subculture, Dick Hebdige (1979/2002), came to accord more weight to symbolic aspects and style in social interactions, as it provides the material to "construct identities which will confer on them 'relative autonomy' within a social order" (During, 1999, p. 441).

These "range of responses" and "relative autonomy" provide leads to investigate young people's experiences beyond class-based and structure-focused analyses. The idea is to, in the first instance, delve into young people's experiences and what those mean for them, in the moment itself, but also cumulatively over time. In second instance, the analysis should lead to insights about the significance of experiences to broader networks and patterns. To achieve this it is necessary to employ a concept of social rituals that does not see cultural resistance as "merely" ritualistic in the face of "real" relations of production, but accords ritual interactions "a subject matter in their own right" (Goffman, 1967, p. 2), with real implications for life and social structure (Collins, 1998). I will come to this in Section 2.3 after a review of research advancement in the two countries under study.

2.2   Lebanese and Dutch youth research

North American and British schools and publications concerning youth research have heavily influenced and inspired local research initiatives in both the Netherlands and Lebanon. Therefore, it is helpful to consider how themes of development, deviancy, agency, and critical approaches have received attention, and where possibly other themes have become more dominant in framing issues concerning youth. My aim here again is not to provide a total or encyclopedic overview. I will rather limit myself to some characteristic research initiatives pertaining to young people's struggles and experienced successes.

The Netherlands: A welfare state and its productions of policy and consensus
Since the Second World War, the development of a Dutch welfare state meant a heavy involvement of policy bureaucrats and an increased body of social professionals with everyday social life of citizens. This was an acceleration and intensification of pre-war developments in which the poor and marginalized were the objects of educative, integrative, and ultimately civilizing initiatives. From early on, there was an understood need for research that could feed the production of relevant policies.

The concept of "youth as transitional phase" fits well in this general context. As elsewhere, post-war societies with increasing urbanization and technology were "new" realities that needed reorientation. The idea of "youth" was put in service of positive change and continuation. Transition as well as deviance studies served to research, understand, monitor, and predict young people's position and behavior. This was part of larger concerted efforts to control and steer, but also benignly create circumstances for the sound development of young people, next to other parts of society that needed "extra attention."

As was the case in other countries, government ministries took the initiative to assign grants to research institutes to find answers for the perceived post-war moral chaos, especially among young people (Janssen, 1994; Meijers & Du Bois-Reymond, 1987). These assignments yielded more (Instituut voor sociaal onderzoek van het Nederlandse volk, 1952) or less (Hoogveld Instituut, 1953) moralistic reports on just how far the younger generation had ventured to the edge of the cliff, or over (alarmist alliterations and metaphors abounded). The confluence of political and scholarly concerns is in these examples overtly present. The depiction of young people turned out to be somewhat distorted as society turned out to eventually adapt to and accept young people's changed social behavior (Janssen, 1994, p. 78; Meijers & Du Bois-Reymond, 1987, p. 37). Nevertheless, this was the start of a growing tradition of government subsidized foundations of advisory bodies which gradually adopted increasingly scientific approaches to produce knowledge relevant to current public policy issues.

In this paradigm prevailing ideas of success pertain to being well-adapted to society and meeting mainstream criteria of fitting in, which can vary slightly or heavily across time and space. Ideals for employment, marriage, and having children underwent big changes, especially related to being successful (Swierstra & Tonkens, 2008), although there are indications that they remain fundamentals, be it in altering guises (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2004).

Youth-as-transition (van der Aa, 2011; Boschma & Groen, 2006; Crone, 2008; Ince, van Yperen, & Valkenstijn, 2013) and youth-as-deviance have always remained a dominant frame of Dutch youth research (Beke & Schoenmakers, 2013; Daalder & Essers, 2003; Ferwerda, Wijk, & Appelman, 2017; Junger-Tas & Kruissink, 1990; van Leeuwen, Slot, & Uiterwijk, 2001; van der Pligt & Koomen, 2009; Tonry & Bijleveld, 2007; Werdmölder, 2005), even when popular culture, media, and political bodies adopted increasingly progressive and alternative ideas. This can be the result of there not being research institutes or departments

dedicated to a youth research agenda.[8] Youth research is mostly incorporated in other departments of sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and criminology. Usually, research themes depend on interests of individual professors or PhD students. And since the biggest "project" in the Netherlands is "running the welfare state" it is not surprising that successful transition of youth and containment of their deviance are recurring subjects of investigation.

After the 1990s empirically based studies increased which brought more attention to young people's agency. The commitment to empirical field research had different origins. An important impetus seemed to be the September 11th attacks in the United States in 2001 and the responses this evoked among different young people in the Netherlands. This perhaps brought on an urgency among researchers to find out what was "really" going on. Other than that, there seemed to be a growing appreciation and commitment to empirical fieldwork to counter broad and sweeping statements about young people that obscured more than they explained (van den Bulk, 2011; Hermes, Naber, & Dieleman, 2007; Verweel & Wolterbeek, 2011). This research foregrounded subjectivities and lived experiences of the young people and tried to show how young people developed several practices with regard to conflict, controversy, identity, friendship, and the like (Korf, Yesilgöz, Nabben, & Wouters, 2007; Nabben, Yesilgöz, & Ham, 2006). Some of these studies emphasize young people as cogent, competent, and creative. They explicitly respond to a tradition that views young people too much as victims of social and cultural structures. It is then not derogatory to call these publications "celebrations of agency" since their writers at times truly pose them as such.

Success here is best summarized as being "in the eyes of the beholder." There is an emphasis on giving respondents room and even encouraging them to construct their own narratives, which can be variable, contingent, malleable, and also contradictory. An important attribute does seem to be that everyone *has* such a narrative.

Then there are studies that pay (more) attention to the interplay between young people's agency and their contexts, revealing structural inequalities and

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8   An exception may be the Utrecht University's Youth Studies Master program at the department of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The bulk of its professors' publications are correlation studies on health, risks, and/or wellbeing.

Noteable other initiatives outside universities are 1) Hogeschool InHolland which has a research program (*lectoraat*) "Life-worlds of youth." This is a university of applied sciences that has as its mission to make know-ledge applicable for professionals and accessible for broad audiences. 2) YouthSpot, at Hogeschool van Amsterdam, also a university of applied sciences, is a research program for youth work. 3) The Netherlands Youth Institute (*Nederlands Jeugd Instituut, NJi*) researches mainly institutions and professionals working with young people, not the young people themselves. 4) Verweij-Jonker Institute, which has programs for researching youth and youth work related institutions.

injustices (van Daalen, 2010; Hadioui, 2010, 2011; de Jong, 2007; Kooijmans, 2016; Paulle, 2013). Next to that, there are critical discourse analyses, attempting responses on a meta-level to prevailing popular and academic discrepancies (Paulle & Kalir, 2013; Schinkel, 2008), but they do not constitute a clear movement and have not managed to gain momentum.

Success is here not as easy to grasp as in the youth-as-transition or agency-focused studies. A first step seems to be for young people to become aware of impeding structures, although writers usually aim at bringing awareness to adults. This makes sense, since it is typically adults who read the scholars' work. Subsequently, success would entail to overcome the scrutinized structures of inequality, either by changing them to better ones or by erecting alternate ones opposing the establishment. Especially in the Netherlands, the first is sooner implied, the latter in exceptional cases.

Studying youth and deviance has in the United States since the 1960s (Becker, 1963/1973; see Hall & Jefferson, 1976, p. 5) taken an important reflective turn on who it is that is labeling the "deviant" and how they achieve such labeling. In the United Kingdom the CCCS was an important force in developing an alternative to "establishment-based research" (Brake, 1980, p. 60). Remarkably, in the Netherlands it is only in the last ten years that an alternative framework has come to gain ground and it is still nowhere near tipping the scales. Perhaps the frame of *jointly* "making the welfare state work" is decisive in imbuing political, professional, and academic labor with misleading common-sense notions of static, reified characteristics of young people that "make" them behave certain, mainly "deviant," ways.

Lebanon: Expanding research of mixed strands
In Lebanon, social science research and cultural studies, and with them youth studies, are less developed. Also here, there is no youth studies department or an explicit youth research agenda. Occasional projects with external (international) grants give impetuses to committed and rigorous research and analysis. Concerning youth, there is, however, a wide variety of research in English and French that includes "analysis based on economics, psychology, health, sociology, anthropology and politics. As expected, sources in different languages seldom cite each other. Even within the same language, there is compartmentalization within each discipline, and scholars in one discipline are often unaware of findings in another" (Harb, 2016a, p. 10). Evolving research initiatives show a picture that differs a bit from Europe and North America. Life-stage, agency, and critical approaches have multiple examples of more overlap than elsewhere. Academic work has also waxed and waned through different periods of strife, such as the civil war (1975-1991), periods of enduring insecurities from the civil war until Israel's withdrawal from the South (1991-2000), tumultuous disor-

der caused by assassinations, demonstrations, and government alterations and impasses (2004-2011, but also to the present), regional instability and tragedy, pertaining to the Syrian civil war (2011 to the present), and influence exerted by actors on geopolitical levels.

There is quite some effort by health studies and public policy scholars in obtaining survey data, also among the most disadvantaged young people in the city, related to a wide range of topics among them drug-use, smoking, suicide, distrust, and happiness (Afifi, Yeretzian, Rouhana, Nehlawi, & Mack, 2010; Ayyash-Abdo, 2010; Khawaja, Abdulrahim, Soweid, & Karam, 2006; Mahfoud, Afifi, Haddad, & DeJong, 2011; Moghnie & Kazarian, 2012; Zein & Ammar, 2011). Sometimes this is supplemented with in-depth interviews and observations. This research fits best in the approach internationally known as youth-as-life-stage, although they do not always explicitly take this stance, and they show other traits as well, as I will show underneath. The ways this relates to success are indirectly, through the overarching theme of wellbeing. Health, risks, depression, and suicide are correlated with individual characteristics (among them education-levels, occupation, and income), group traits, and social conditions. The contribution of this research is mainly to establish to what extent young people run risks, and have opinions and/or attitudes that jeopardize their wellbeing. At times they show how environments contain impediments to young people improving their situation.

I tend to categorize these research efforts differently from their Dutch counterparts. In the Netherlands they seem to be part of a political and cultural "establishment" fulfilling a monitor and control function displaying how minorities and the poor do not "measure up" in state appointed measuring apparatuses. A "left" arm of government that has increasingly come to oblige the "right" (cf. Bourdieu, 1998; Wacquant, 2009).[9] In Lebanon, however, governmental departments and ministries hardly, if ever, fund these research endeavors. Broad survey-based insights uncover and expose structural shortcomings and injustices, to which government agencies are complicit. These are in political and ideological rhetoric often hidden, denied, or downplayed. Whereas in the Netherlands, survey-research often seems an ideological aide showing that experts are "on top of things," even when they are not, in Lebanon the effect appears to be a tool for public criticism, at least among those who inform themselves. I have not (yet) detected how such findings have been used to inspire change in the public or political realms, but its possibilities have at least improved, and there are indications that these connections exist (Gahre, 2011; Harb, 2016b).

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9   Bourdieu, and later Wacquant, used the metaphor of the left arm of nation states as the sectors charged with care and wellbeing of citizens, while the right arm represented the punitive and corrective apparatus.

Agency-focused research of different strands has increased in recent decades. It has always been a focus of anthropologists, some of them not deterred by war, or in-between war periods (Joseph, 1977, 1978, 1986, 1994, 2005, 2011, 2012). Later, appreciation for qualitative methods (which lend themselves in particular for describing and understanding agency) grew in other disciplines and researchers started delving into several everyday topics, among them leisure, sports, and consumption (Deeb & Harb, 2007, 2012; Fregonese, 2012; Gahre, 2011; Kegels, 2007; Larkin, 2010). Some of them tended especially to foreground young people's tastes, initiatives, and perspectives. If we can link such research to experiencing success, it would be by decoupling (as agency-focused research often does) formal parameters of education, occupation, and income from lived experiences and lived out routines. The added value of such endeavors is first and foremost to emphasize what preoccupies young people, without necessarily scrutinizing implications for their own or others' wellbeing. In other publications that made room for youth agency such confrontations do occur (Afifi, Makhoul, El Hajj, & Nakkash, 2011; Deeb & Harb, 2013; Joseph, 2005, 2011; Kobeissi, Nakkash, Ghantous, Abou Saad, & Nasser, 2011; Makhoul et al., 2003; Yassin, 2012). If I were to relate such analyses to experiencing success, it would be a connection of subjective experiences to more intersubjective or even objective conditions, which is where I aim to situate my research and analyses.

Conclusions for my contributions

Both in the Netherlands and Lebanon, throughout each of the three strands of research, the idea of experiencing success is tacitly and implicitly present in different publications. In youth-as-life-stage research it is most explicit but mainly as "objective" success "measured" with parameters of education, occupation, income, and sometimes broader indications of wellbeing. My intention is to elicit and explicate subjective experiences related to success and connect them firstly to direct interactions, and secondarily (or eventually), to improvements in emotional constellations, patterns of action, and social position.

My contribution to existing research is then attentiveness to dynamics of group rituals, and in them the intricacies of interactions. More than a lot of existing scholarly work of youth, I emphasize how the local and temporary are of major influence and impact for people's choices, actions, and behavior. I combine this concern for the temporary with consideration for temporally unfolding trajectories or paths of development. Although moments are pivotal, if their contribution in no way extends beyond those moments, there is no lasting success.

This approach is an attempt at departure from a dominant perspective of people's actions, ideas, and emotions as static and reified "objects" that they "have." This is a problem apparent from frequent depictions of young people as "deviant" who would need to adapt to mainstream norms of success and measure up

to set parameters (Delgado, 2002). There are many young people who already do so and do not feel successful. Therefore, this reasoning contains a flaw that we should not impose on those who choose, or are forced to, deviate from it.

There is, however, a comparable problem in portraying young people as "inherently" positive, initiators of change, and at the forefront of innovation (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015) . This carries in it the same trap of reification of traits that young people simply "are" or "have." I intend in my analyses to highlight that young people "are" not much, but that they *become* all kinds of things in ranges of instances. Additionally, I hope to show that some, over time, increasingly can become what they hope to be.

Furthermore, I aim to provide insights into adult and professional influences in these dynamics and processes. The approach suggests that they are an integral "part of the mix." This veers away from a distanced interventionist methodology. Youth workers are *in* the interaction rituals, they are exposed, close-up, and part of the mess. Youth workers do tend to have specific input and value that adds to and changes the mix. It is, however, one of many influences. Varying success for them comes from the ways they are aware of the dynamics of interaction rituals and their possible places and influences in them.

2.3   Interaction ritual chains and emotion management

I combine perspectives that assist me in conceptually capturing as much as possible what I have seen taking place in young people's struggles, defeats, and victories. The challenge is to employ concepts and reproduce the relatedness of those concepts in ways that adequately order and thematize my findings. I am inclined to call this a reproduction because other students of social life before me have already produced the relations on which I build and elaborate.

I have come to choose perspectives that thematize feelings, emotions and experience as they relate to interactional dynamics. More specifically, I rely mainly on the sociological perspectives of Randall Collins (1975, 1981, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2008; 2015) and Arlie Russell Hochschild (1979, 1983, 2003, 2012, 2016; 1989). These two perspectives in some ways complement each other and in others contradict one another or emphasize different phenomena. I will elaborate in the coming two sections how I aim to combine these perspectives. Other than that, I will add insights from other sources where I found this would lead to further or richer understanding. Although I borrow from existing work, the reconstruction of relationships between concepts and the meanings this will generate, become my responsibility. I will do my best to do this in service of advanced understanding of young people in disadvantaged circumstances experiencing success and improving the quality of their lives.

The reality of rituals

Collins' (2004) perspective of interaction rituals goes beyond the "imaginary" (Clarke et al., 1976) and beyond ritualism as resignation (Merton, 1957, p. 149). The commonly understood aspects of rituals (reciting formulas, singing, making prescribed gestures, and wearing traditional costumes) are merely superficial aspects helping people focus. All such aspects have their place implicitly in daily life's *natural rituals* as well (Collins, 1998, p. 22).

According to Collins, positive interactions with others generate emotional energy that people experience as rewarding. It involves excitement, achievements, and enthusiasm that produce initiative. People are constantly in search for such rewards, but not everyone has access to the same interaction rituals. When young people do have access, the position they acquire in the interaction ritual is essential to how they build up stocks of emotional energy and the extent to which they can experience success, both in their own circles and in wider society. A crucial contribution of youth workers is that they facilitate settings where young people can gain experiences that provide new positive energy and new opportunities.

Interaction Rituals according to Collins are parts of series. The term is originally Goffman's (1967), who analyzed interactions as performative accomplishments. It means we can see interactions as "performances" in plays (cf. Goffman, 1959), in which we look to gain, but also stand to lose, respect. This respect can be grand, such as receiving applause after a speech. But much more often it is hardly noticeable, like a nod to confirm a comment. All the small gestures in interactions confirm or deny their success.

The ritualized nature of interactions can be noticed from their predictable, routine-like actions and the meaning that people derive from them. Participants know (approximately) what will happen and what is expected of them. Their responses do not take much effort, they flow "naturally." The responses to each other's behavior are so obvious that people regard them as "natural." In spite of this natural flow, the responses are learned behavior that only conjure meaning when the people involved interpret them in the correct manner. This brings us to the generation of meaning. A successful ritual confirms participants in their roles in a larger whole. The ritual helps them to not think (too much) about why they are doing something. They can trust that the interaction is "correct" because they follow well-established rituals.

Collins theorized Interaction Ritual Chains as processes with potentially lasting social effects. In his analysis, interaction rituals have *situated* ingredients and outcomes. The ingredients consist of bodies (being in each other's presence), boundaries (a separation of the activity from the outside world), focus (the group directs their attention to something) and mood (having feelings and experiences in common). The results of a successful ritual are: emotional energy

(positive feelings of self-confidence that prompt initiative), symbols (codes and signs with special meanings to group members), solidarity (a sense of mutual loyalty) and morality (ideas and feelings about what is right and wrong for the group). For my research I adopt this as a main perspective in understanding how young people look for meaning and success, and how interaction rituals can give meaning to youth work.

Collins' ritual ingredients and outcomes compare well with the CCCS' conceptualization of subcultural rituals, "which have reasonably tight boundaries, distinctive shapes, which have cohered around particular activities, focal concerns and territorial spaces" (Clarke et al., 1976, p. 14). Collins takes the possibilities of micro-interactions explicitly beyond their localities, in ways that the CCCS only do implicitly or with great reservation (Clarke et al., 1976, pp. 40-44). Collins makes the bold claim that the macro is no more than the aggregate of many micro-encounters and dynamics (Collins, 1981; 1998, pp. 21, 28). Structure is simply the repetition of patterns. They only remain structures in so far as people keep repeating the patterns that reinforce their idea of permanence. This is an interesting idea when thinking of possibilities for young people who seem to have very little opportunities. While rituals structure local encounters (1998, p. 22), thus providing possibilities and limitations for the people involved, it is the encounters that structure society (1998, p. 24).

This perspective provides tools to analyze the "anatomy" of experiences. The emotional attraction is an important explanation in how people come to do what they do. The premise is that people are poor rational actors. They do not choose what is best for them according to calculations of risks and rewards. They are much more driven by what is emotionally fulfilling (Collins, 1993). Previous fulfillment increases the likelihood that they will look for it in the same or similar ways. They look for ways to recreate those moments, making use of previously built up energy and these become chains (1998, pp. 22-23). Emotional Energy is

> the kind of strength that comes from participating successfully in an interaction ritual. It is a continuum, ranging from a high end of confidence, enthusiasm, good self-feelings; through a middle range of lesser emotional intensity; on down to a low end of depression, lack of initiative, and negative self-feelings. […] Emotional energy is the most important kind of emotion for its effects on IR chains. It fluctuates depending on recent social experience: intense ritual participation elevates emotional energy, rejection from ritual membership lowers it (1998, p. 29).

In this study, I will attempt to describe experiencing success as a specific type of Emotional Energy. As I will show, they are not exactly the same, because Emo-

tional Energy is in some ways broader than the kind of experiences of success I focus on. Collins (2008) and others (Paulle, 2013) have shown how the rise in EE can be connected to violent encounters. These can have devastating consequences for some or all participants involved. While in the moment people can have a feeling of being successful, the "full experience" of success as I aim to develop it, entails something that lasts beyond the momentary and sets young people up for trajectories of increased self-control and positive, constructive developmental routs that support their safety, wellbeing and livelihood.

Sense-making through emotion-management

This brings with it a tension between subjectively experienced success and broader moral orientations in their networks and dominant ideas of what is "good" and "right." Criminals, for instance, can feel they are doing well, especially if they experience control, self-efficacy, and can materially provide for themselves and their dependents. At the same time, they may have to hide what they do from many people, which limits the ways in which they can share their successes and experiences. On the other hand, hiding sources of livelihood and being part of an elite, sharing a criminal focus and mood within a limited bounded circle of participants may indeed *increase* Emotional Energy levels and solidarity, and strengthen moral convictions. Resolving experienced contradictions is an important aspect contributing to whether people will "stay the course" on their trajectories.

This tension and the ability to resolve contradictions is not only an issue for criminals. In a broader sense, young people who move between different groups encounter differences in energy-flows. What gives them energy in one group can be an energy-drain in another group. Politically speaking, we can argue that to limit success to what is allowed within existing structures is an unfair emphasis on conformism. In terms of the CCCS and their proponents (Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015) there should be room to "win space" and even for a structural overhaul. This could mean sometimes operating outside current acceptable or dominant frames of morality. The question becomes how young people are able to deal with participating in groups with dissimilar social rituals and disparate moral orientations. Collins' Interaction Ritual Chains reveal how young people get caught up in moments of energy that sway them on levels beneath the cognitive and conscious faculties. In addition to this perspective, we need an understanding of what happens between these moments. In researching the emotional life of success, I need tools that help me get at the more conscious coping practices of young people. How do they think about and anticipate the upcoming "heat of the moment"? How do they feel about it in hindsight and to what extent are they able to explain to themselves and to others what happened? Young people on their way up out of misery reflect, ponder, make sense, and

come to conclusions. They come up with ideas of which situations are beneficial for them. They examine whether the "heat of the moment" is somewhere they want to be. Hochschild calls this reflecting on, interpreting, and reworking of feelings *emotion-management* or "emotion work," meaning the effort people put into producing emotional states in themselves and others.

> Hochschild learned that the struggle to maintain a difference between feeling and feigning led to a strain for the people in occupations calling for emotional labor, a strain that she labeled "emotive dissonance." She states, "We try to reduce this strain by changing what we feel or by changing what we feign" (Wallace & Wolf, 2006).

The context of the interactions Hochschild researched is often that of women in their work environment. In the case of emotion-management in the workplace, Hochschild distinguished emotional *labor* from the emotion-work we do in private settings. We do this emotion work according to *feeling rules*, which are "guidelines for the assessment of fits and misfits between feeling and situation" (Hochschild, 1979, p. 566). Hochschild concludes the existence of feeling rules by inference.

> People assess their feelings as if they were applying standards to feeling. These acts of assessment are secondary reactions to feeling. From secondary reactions to feeling we may postulate the existence of rules. The concept of a feeling rule makes sense of stable patterns into which many acts of assessment fit. An assessment, then, can be taken as an "application" of a more general rule. Using fragments of data on assessment, we may begin to piece together parts of a more general set of rules that guide deep acting, a set that is socially variable and historically changing […] Feeling rules, like rules of behavior, delineate zones. Within a given zone we sense permission to be free or worry, guilt, or shame. Each zoning ordinance describes a boundary – a floor and a ceiling with room for motion and play between the two […] The act of assessing feeling may occur nearly simultaneously with the feeling. For example, we may feel angry and know we have no right to feel angry at nearly the same time. We may *focus* more fully on self-disapproval after the fact, but we *sense* it peripherally *while* the anger is rising (1983, pp. 250-251).

This gives us tools to think about what young people feel is appropriate in which situations. If we can discover their "zones of permission," we can know what they feel as well as what they think they are *supposed* to feel. Some feel at ease

on their street corners with the kind of talk and topics that are common to that setting. They will feel that it is right and will also think that this is how they are supposed to feel. Others, who have been socialized differently, or who are currently being resocialized in other settings, may feel right or wrong about the vibe, but they will most likely (increasingly) think that they are *supposed* to feel wrong about it. These differences provide a valuable addition to Collins' unconscious adaptations in how young people's behavior amongst each other will play out and how inclined they will be to persevere in the core of a certain group, or gradually drift off to its periphery. "Different social groups probably have special ways in which they recognize feeling rules and have rule reminders, and the rules themselves probably vary from group to group" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 57). It is important to note that Hochschild does not assert that people are rule-followers; she sees them as actors who *tell themselves* that there are rules. Mostly people go through daily life non-reflectively. It is the disruptions of the taken-for-granted flow of events that make them think about their feelings. This thinking in itself has the ability to transform how people feel. She gives the example of a mother asking a girl if she is crying because she is angry. While she was not angry, the suggestion prompted the girl to decide that she was angry. The question was an exterior intervention that redirected how she thought about how she felt, and eventually it redirected how she felt. She related how she should feel about the situation to how she understood or interpreted the situation. This has everything to do with *framing rules*, which are "the rules according to which we ascribe definitions or meanings to situations" (Hochschild, 1979, p. 566). When people are able to align feelings and interpretations about a given situation they successfully manage their emotions. This is what Hochschild calls *deep acting*, when we no longer feign but rather what started out as surface acting has become real to us.

Emotion-management gives insight into how young people make sense of what happens, where they feel they belong, and into which ideas of success they fit. Framing rules are of vital importance if we realize that being caught up in an interaction ritual, the entrainment of a common focus and mood, can, if sometimes only temporarily, *change feeling rules*. As suggested in Section 1.3, in reference to Farid and Hicham, young people tacitly use framing rules to make sense of what happened to them in situations, especially occasions that feel like disruptions. What they think they ought to do, provides them with navigation, to avoid situations that would sway them in emotions that later feel wrong or that they think are wrong (because they have framed them as such).

Hochschild's theory tries to address the complexity of human emotion and draws from biology, psychology and social interactionism. Interactionists tend to disregard the inner processes of emotions and focuses on how meaning between people is generated. Goffman, from whom Hochschild borrows heavily

for her theory, she sees as a strict behaviorist. Collins is less so but she has still been critical of him for his simplistic elicitation-expression model of emotion (1983, p. 208). Her added value is that she thematizes "a prior notion of a self with a developed inner life" (1983, p. 216). Hochschild attempts to include "body and soul" in emotional dynamics and development.

"Emotion […] is our experience of the body ready for an imaginary action. Since the body readies itself for action in physiological ways, emotion involves biological processes. Thus when we manage an emotion, we are partly managing a bodily preparation for a consciously or unconsciously anticipated deed. This is why emotion work is *work*"(1983, p. 220).

With the themes of embodiment, development, and continuity I have arrived at the last theoretical perspective relevant to understanding experiences of success in the lives of disadvantaged young people. Namely, what it is that they come to be and own as a result of participation in numerous interaction rituals.

2.4   Embodied and ingrained

While Collins (2004) generally has interactionist commitments, he demonstrates knowledge of different other fields, among them the biology of emotions, physical expression of feeling, psychological processes, and conversation analysis. He emphasizes different theoretical positions, depending on his analytical agenda. Importantly, while he is critical of habitus-based analyses, he has since long subscribed to a notion of cultural capital (1981, 1998), in which there is a clear carrying over of "material" from one instance to the next, and the idea of a continuous self is not alien.

Depending on his subject matter he makes room for individual development as a theme. When studying intellectuals he writes on "life trajectories as interaction ritual chains," maintaining the dynamism of interactions, but at the same time making room for continuity. "As individuals move through the grid of encounters, they generate their own histories of ritual participation. We may call this an *interaction ritual chain*. Each person acquires a personal repertoire of symbols loaded with membership significance" (Collins, 1998, p. 29).

Collins does not negate that learning takes place. He assumes learning and recognizes skill development and proficiency (2004, pp. 351-352). He simply does not make an explicit research topic of what takes place inside a learning person. He rather reveals the social circumstances that make it attractive for people to learn. He takes for granted that they become proficient at some point (or that they do not). Then he focuses on what being proficient does for people in social interactions. His attention goes out to how participants *feel* while developing. Or more accurately, what we can *observe* taking place emotionally,

and how they can use what they have learned in social contexts to boost their emotional energy levels. If it is then a question of thematic focus and attention, I turn to other sources to supplement attention to this developmental process of what individuals *become*.

Bourdieu claims that repetitive actions such as practicing a skill, an art or a sport, obtain a "life of their own." They imprint structures of perceptions and actions into bodies and minds.

> Social disciplines take the form of temporal disciplines and the whole social order imposes itself at the deepest level of the bodily dispositions through a particular way of regulating the use of time, the temporal distribution of collective and individual activities and the appropriate rhythm with which to perform them (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 75).

Actions (and interactions) are at some point not just enactments in instances, but become durable dispositions for action. Bourdieu goes so far as to claim that they *become* the person.

> "What is 'learned by the body' is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is." […] It "implies total investment and deep emotional identification." […] "all the actions performed in a structured space and time are immediately qualified symbolically and function as structural exercises through which practical mastery of the fundamental schemes is constituted" (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, pp. 73, 75).

Repetition and preoccupation, some would say obsession, seem vital for such development, proficiency, and mastery to occur (cf. Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Flyvbjerg, 2001).

Perhaps Sennett's (2012) take on social rituals is a way forward for incorporating the dynamics of interactions as well as the development of individuals. According to him main ingredients of rituals are *repetition, transformation, and dramatic expression* (Sennett, 2012, pp. 90-92). The repetition of actions and movements advances participants' concentration and cultivates ingrained patterns. Repetition implies predictability, a pattern of experience. Secondly, rituals transform mundane objects into special symbols. Thirdly, through dramatic expression participants are ceremonially invested and pay great attention to performing the ritual correctly.

It is easy to see the overlap with Collins' approach of interaction rituals. Yet, Sennett more explicitly asserts that social rituals produce lasting results. *Ingrain-*

ing skills, knowledge, and attitudes through endless repetition and cognitive preoccupation are *workshop rituals* producing proficiency.

When people cooperate successfully, but also when social work professionals do their work well, he sees several subtleties at work. He speaks of indirection (not confronting a problem directly but circling it, taking indirect approaches), the use of minimum force (not "trying too hard" but promoting a gentle touch that elicits from others responses so that people eventually work on something together) (Sennett, 2012, pp. 221-227), working *with* resistance and ambiguity instead of trying to quash it (Sennett, 2008, pp. 214-238; 2012, pp. 208-212). These are traits that proficient practitioners display and they have acquired them through rituals of skill-development (Sennett, 2012, p. 202). Such insights are relevant not only for understanding young people's development but specifically for the contributions of youth workers in the process.

We can see then the rituals as a route to habitus-formation, and maybe the rituals, particularly the successful ones, *are* the habitus.

> To control the moment, and especially the tempo, of practices, is to inscribe durably in the body, in the form of the rhythm of actions or words, a whole relationship to time, which is experienced as part of the person (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 76).

For the purposes of the research at hand it becomes crucial to not assume extremes of the theoretical perspectives I invoke. In Collins' case this could be to see overly dynamized interactions in which participants are freed or constrained to act as the moment (and its energy-flows) allow. In Bourdieu's frame it could be to impose sturdily developed dispositions on people or social constellations where in fact people are swayed more easily by the dynamics at hand. I hope rather that these different perspectives will make me sensitive to adequately understand what I encounter.

Within and between these encounters the reflection on feelings and experiences seems to be a creative process. "[T]he act of management is inseparable from the experience that is managed; it is in part the *creation* of that emerging experience. Just as knowing affects what is known, so managing affects what is 'there' to be managed" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 206). This insight could be hopeful for disadvantaged people, as it seems to be human to re-make ourselves in our own eyes. Instead of calling this an "imaginary relation" to reality, we could see this as a normal process of creating new realities. According to Collins, if countless people would start doing this, it can at the aggregate level change social structures at large.

3   BODILY BOOSTS AND MENTAL MOODS

3.1   The world shrinking into a moment

It's on. Neither "*Brick*" (Zakariya's nickname) nor Khalid are pulling any punches. I have not seen it this extreme before and I am a bit scared. Will this end OK? As they circle each other looking for an opening these twenty-somethings of around 1.75-1.80 meters suddenly seem two meters tall. I can't tell their adrenaline apart from mine. The air in the room is thick with it.[10] They breathe heavily through their noses as they bite down on their mouth guards. Both of them have a deadbolt stare in their eyes, gazing at one another, determined, hungry for an opportunity. Brick steps in and lands a blow on Khalid. It's not clear to me whether Brick hit him on the cheek or if Khalid blocked the blow with his gloves. Brick moves in again. This time a combination. Left, right, hook. Again, Khalid has his gloves up, but Brick might have gotten through with that left hook. "That's right Brick! But finish it off with a low-kick!" Samir yells. Looking increasingly self-assured, Brick starts off with another left, but Khalid quickly counters with a straight right that catches Brick right on the chin, followed immediately by a low kick to Brick's left upper leg. "Oowww" some kids on the side of the mat cheer. Brick falls back a little but manages to maintain his balance. This time Khalid moves in for a series of punches, using his length and longer arms as an advantage over his opponent. Brick moves in, clinches Khalid around the neck and yanks him across the room while holding on to him. He tries to get in a knee on Khalid's chest but is blocked. Khalid holds Brick's head tightly and they move across the room, each trying to get the upper hand. Samir studies them intently, but is nonetheless visibly excited as his two pupils are physically and psychologically locked into each other. He gestures with his hands for kids along the side to move out of Brick and Khalid's way as they come dangerously close. Samir protects the session from being interrupted. Each manages to get in a few more blows and kicks, one more painful than the other.

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10   I use what I feel here as one of my observational senses, next to what I see, hear, smell, and touch, following among others Hochschild's (1983, pp. 219-222) idea of feeling as a signifier of understanding the world. Though this has limitations and can be flawed because of its subjectivity, it is not more so than the more commonly (or more consciously) relied upon senses of eyesight and hearing.

Finally, we hear the only thing that Samir would allow to stop this onslaught: the buzzer. "Well done guys," Samir says in a monotonous voice and pats one of them on the shoulder as they walk by, heavily panting, and take some of the gear off to sweat it out. Samir must have noticed some of the amazement and dismay on my face, as he said: "Khalid really needs this, coz he's gonna' be in the ring in two months."

Contusions, bruised ribs, blisters, sore muscles, headaches, ripped tissue, fatigue. These are some of the injuries and harm I have incurred while working out in Samir's gym just east of Amsterdam's center. Yet I would not categorize any of my training as coming remotely close to the intensity of Brick and Khalid's sparring session. In Lebanon, where I also frequented a couple of gyms during my field research, martial arts are not that popular. As a participant in a Beirut gym explained after a workout, "It doesn't get much attention. These championships are not on TV. Not many people would watch them. It's not like volleyball, basketball, football. We're the only ones practicing this." Despite the modest popularity, I learned about how some participants underwent at least as interesting and impressive transformations working out in these gyms, as the ones in Amsterdam I will focus on here.

In the Netherlands, while of course not as popular as football, kickboxing is both more popular and infamous than in Lebanon (Elling & Wisse, 2010). Among Martial Artists the world over, the "Dutch School" of kickboxing is renowned for its effectiveness. Across Amsterdam, and throughout the country, young people, mainly young *men* but certainly also women, congregate in smaller and bigger – sometimes literally underground – gyms, multiple times per week to sacrifice body and lifestyle for this "violent sport." They partake in some of the most intense and feared athletic rituals commonly known. This also comprises the arena of my first in-depth investigation of how disadvantaged young people look for and find success.

In the two rounds of two minutes that Brick and Khalid bumped heads, their world shrunk into a microcosm. The mat was their world. The opponent was the only co-inhabitant. Of course this might appear to be somewhat of an exaggeration, as Samir's voice was present, and the eyes of their peers-turned-into-spectators pierced their atmosphere. Yet it seems that these more distant others were – at least for a good deal of the time – more "orbiting" Brick and Khalid's world than *in* it. Another way of putting it is that there were at least two sets of dynamics unfolding in the gym. One is that of Brick and Khalid in the center intensely locked into each other, blocking out a lot of the other input. The fighters were because of their mutual entrainment probably minimally capable of any conscious dealing with "outside" input. A good indication of this assertion is the difficulty with which fighters, especially novices, implement their train-

ers' feedback *on the spot* during a sparring session or a match. The proximity of fighters' bodies and the intensity of focus "crowd out" the input at even a few meters distance away, let alone the "outside world" or other moments in time. The peripheral input attempting to interject, or become part of that interaction does not always come to fruition. Fighters, who are able to allow their trainers' input into the ongoing physical interaction and actually implement the instructions, are commended for their "double focus." These have the potential to go far.

A second set of dynamics pertains to that of the interplay between trainer, spectators and the two fighters. While the fighters in the heat of the moment do not always intentionally or very consciously respond to spectators' involvement, it is there nonetheless, a lot of it feeding into their energy and focus. A clear marker in the scene above is when peers cheered "Oowww" to Khalid's low-kick which prompted him to quickly follow up his offensive. The cheers jumpstarted Khalid's momentum. While spectators are well aware they are literally and symbolically at the periphery of the ritual, with the sparring twosome at the center, they play an important role in augmenting the already existing mood with their cheers and focus. This overt responsive interplay, we can see as an expression of what is there in less high levels "underneath the surface" all along: a common mood of intense anticipation of the next move, with every punch and kick heightening that mood.

Within these high intensity social and athletic rituals it is the dynamic of the "world shrinking," of the rest of life becoming less important and significant, of the current moment becoming everything, that I want to examine. Both in its own right and in terms of what such moments can do for young athletes over shorter and longer spans of time. I examine the intricacies of interaction rituals, their chains, and in which cases these (could) contribute to habitus-formation.

3.2   Training mutual entrainment

In the gym, Samir worked his way up from student to master. He is respected in the gym and in the neighborhood as someone who makes a difference. Those who work out in the gym receive a high standard of training that involves a lot of individual attention. During my most intense research involvement in 2011-2012, his students won almost all their matches, even against kids from highly acclaimed kickboxing schools across the country. Besides helping develop athletic skills, Samir is strongly focused on the personal and social development of his members. He was a "kid from the streets" and wants to make a difference for young people who come from comparable backgrounds. But zooming out to understand the broader context is for later. Now, it is appropriate to first zoom in again on the details, this time a more regular training session.

I arrive around 7 p.m. The children aged six to thirteen years old are still training. Some of the boys from the older group are just coming in. Others are already changing. I change into my sports clothes and we step onto the mat in time to start the 7.30PM workout. The wall is covered in slogans: giving up is not an option – train hard, fight easy – one good turn deserves another – tears of joy are made of sweat.

"This is good for if you have sore muscles. Do you still have sore muscles?" Samir asks me while rubbing a balsam on his legs that Thai fighters use. "No, not really," I reply. "It warms your muscles up. Want some? Go ahead," Samir continues. "OK." I rub it on my legs and arms. I gradually feel my muscles start to glow. I do some exercises to warm up, watching what the people around me are doing in the meantime. Some are sparring a bit. They're joking around; one smacks the other on the head, they chase each other around the room. Samir is sparring with his brother. His brother is wearing a karate uniform. He clearly has the upper hand. Sharp jabs. He talks calmly with Samir as they spar, giving him instructions. Other boys are sparring around them.

Samir calls for attention, "Boys, get yourselves warmed up a bit. We'll start in ten minutes. I'm sure more boys will be coming, so we can start together. Sebas, get a jump rope." We eventually find a jump rope. I'm surprised how quickly I warm up from rope jumping. "OK, everyone find a spot." Samir's voice sounds calm yet stern. I ask if I need gloves, as most of the others had already put gloves on, or taped their hands. Not yet. We line up to bow in. Feet together, arms beside our bodies. The trainer says "Yoy" … "sensei" and the trainer and students bow to each other. A couple of boys are joking around, laughing tapping each other's heads and running away. "OK, everyone get a shield pad and find a part- ner," Samir continues in the same monotonous voice. He more or less decides who trains with whom. I help him bring shield pads from the storage room into the dojo.

Samir instructs: "Fifty low kicks. Fifty with the right leg, fifty with the left. Then high kicks, fifty on each leg." After two hundred kicks, I am shattered. I cannot lift my hands anymore (and they should stay up to block possible incom- ing punches or kicks). I feel my stomach turning. For the first time, I understand that you really can throw up from intense training. I stretch a bit, twist my back. I'm not really listening to the instructions for the next exercise. I look at the bench. I delay sitting down at first, and then give in and take a seat.

"You alright?" Samir asks. "No strength left, man," I reply. "Totally normal" he responds. "Just find your own pace. I'll get you some Dr. Pepper for the sugar." He leaves the room and comes back with a glass. I walk over to intercept him. "I'll drink it in the kitchen so the others won't get jealous." "You're right," Samir laughs. I have a drink and recover my strength. The others are paired off and whaling away in a boxing exercise. Samir demonstrated a couple exercises

that they have to take turns doing with each other. I apologize to my partner, who I had abandoned. Samir's brother is working with him. "No problem," he says. I watch how Samir corrects some boys in their exercises, which lets me get back into the rhythm of the class. I copy his exercises, without a partner. I feel like the corner jab I'm doing lacks strength. I remember from taekwondo lessons that a jab doesn't really have an impact until you throw your hip into it. I check with Samir. "Yes, that's right; I didn't mention that. You have to turn your foot with the movement. Try it." He holds his hand up and has me hit it. In the end, I manage to get in a couple of good jabs. "You feel that strength?!" It works; if you do it right and turn your hip into it, it really is a powerful jab. It feels good. "You must have been paying attention just then." That comment feels good too. I keep going on my own.

The other boys move on to sparring at some point. I watch. The intention is to put those exercises into practice in a "real" match. There are rules: no hits to the face if you're not wearing your mouth guard. I can tell that sparring is pretty intense; there's more kicking and hitting than last time (although they're wearing shin guards now). But I get the impression they're holding back a bit. And more importantly: the atmosphere is friendly. In the paired-off fights, the duos are focused on each other and on correctly applying techniques. After a sparring session, they nod to each other, smile, and give each other a fist-bump with their glove. The two competition fighters who were sparring hardest also switch immediately into a different "mode." They relax right away and everything's fine. Samir says proudly "See, they are fighting. But it's all controlled."

This fragment is instructive and quite representative of countless training sessions, both in time (a session like most any other at Samir's gym) and space (a workout like so many others taking place across Amsterdam and the Netherlands). In what follows, I will attempt to provide further understanding of what went on this particular evening. I will focus on the session itself but will at some points also draw from other workout experiences to shed light on this type of activity.

First there's entering the building and the tacit familiarization of oneself (anew) with the atmosphere, letting the impressions of the setting work in on the senses, nodding to people, easing into the situation. The rest of the day fades into the background. Then changing clothes, putting the hand wraps tight around our wrists and palms, braces our hands and arms for the punches we will give. Next come gloves and shin guards and, in the case of a session that starts out with sparring, also the mouth guard. Gearing up is gearing one's body toward the upcoming activity and the mind starts to focus its anticipation, narrowing down its scope. The "shrinking of the world" is already taking place. This intensifies greatly as we start working out. After being well into the session, pretty

much the only thing existing for me was my body, my pain, my exhaustion, and my struggle to come back into the rhythm.

Other than the physical experience, the world of the gym consists of fellow participants, our trainer, and occasionally some friends, family members or injured boxers chatting with each other and watching from the sidelines. I know (from participation, observation and from conversations with participants) that my physical and social experience is not unique and that others go through similar processes. Or maybe better yet, we go through the same process together, through a synchronization of movements. "This is above all what rituals do: by shaping assembly, boundaries to the outside, the physical arrangement of the place, by choreographing actions and directing attention to common targets, the ritual focuses everyone's attention on the same thing and makes each one aware that they are doing so" (Collins, 2004, p. 76).

In the fragment above, the warming up had a somewhat "scattered" character, everyone doing it their own way, up to point of the formal bowing. Usually, this part of the session is a joint activity and the synchronization builds up here. Doing the same exercises, hearing and obeying the same yelled instructions, the focus and mood become aligned among group members. Anything else is crowded out. With everyone doing the same thing, what gradually seeps in is *wanting* the same thing. As movements and focus align, so do motivation and situated solidarity. Participants "become caught up in each other's motions and emotions" (Collins, 2004, p. 76).

This synchrony and alignment of movement and motivation among participants, contributes greatly to experienced in-situ solidarity, but mainly serves one central purpose: pushing limits. Of course the ultimate aim is to become a good fighter, but that is comparable to a dot on the horizon that pupils will "someday" reach. The only way that today can contribute to that journey is by discovering, pushing, and eventually expanding physical and psychological limits. Feeling pain and exhaustion are then not cautionary signs to take it easier on oneself or to maybe skip the next work out for recovery. They are rather markers that one is on the right track. Success comes from breaking through barriers of current exhaustion and moving into a future expansion of longer lasting breath and endurance.

What are the pushing forces in the moment of being confronted by limits? Surely, among them could be to get an inner monologue going, saying to oneself, "This is good, it's all part of the process. Just push through. Later on it will be worth it." But much more than inner voices insisting that participants persevere, it seems the *outer* voices have a determining influence. A lot of the regular workout consists of practicing in pairs. Whether it is practicing combinations of punches and kicks while the other holds the pads, or whether it is endurance exercises of push-ups and sit-ups, Samir makes it a point that they cheer each

other on and drive each other to do more. "I team them up in twos for the work-out. Then they advance more than they would alone. I tell them they need to encourage each other. How often do these guys have to encourage someone [in settings other than this one]? Or how often do these guys get encouragements? That's something this place brings them. You see that they advance more than if they would train alone. When you actually feel like quitting and someone yells "come on, you can do it! Give me two more [push-ups]!" then you go on. And they learn from that that they can do more than they thought."

While receiving a compliment from a buddy feels good, especially after performing feats of endurance, the exhilaration is highest when commenda-tions come from Samir himself. He is known as a "tough teacher" (*een harde leermeester*). He will not dish out undeserved compliments. Participants know that he is "straight" with them and will "tell it like it is." "You're not in shape! You're never gonna' last three rounds if this is the way you work out! "I wanna' see more!" This brutal honesty has a double benefit. It lets participants know exactly where they stand and it pushes them to do more. In some cases it could also make a participant give up but usually these admonishments have a boost-ing effect.

The second upside of this honesty is that when Samir compliments a par-ticipant during the workout, whether it pertains to applied technique or endur-ance, the compliment hits home all the harder. In his demeanor, Samir does not display a lot of emotion. He gives compliments in a monotonous voice, quite matter-of-factly. But the minor compliment he gave me for paying attention on punching meant the world to me at that moment. The temptation to give up was massive, but a partner cheering you on and a trainer giving small signs of approval are great motivators. In my case, I did kind of quit – but not before feeling "completely" depleted (as far as I know) – and Samir did give me a short reprieve. This was, however, not to "let me off the hook", he was sooner rerouting me off course for a bit, with the only aim of getting me right back on track – into the grind.

Becoming a kickboxer, especially a good one, entails a long and arduous pro-cess. Yet a process is an abstracted idea. It does the apprentice hardly any good to think in such terms. It can easily veer him or her off track. "It's a long process, so it's ok if I skip workout a few times." In Samir's experience that is the begin-ning of the end. "When you don't come once, it makes it easier to not show up the time after that. And then you feel discouraged because it's been a while, so you stay away longer. Before you know it, you've gone months without training."

Working out is about making a difference *today*. Success is completing a workout here and now. It is in the moment that participants complete an exer-cise, throw the punch just right, and that their trainer notices and confirms this. In a shrunken world, success lies in what participants can do *now*. In that

moment, there is no socioeconomic disadvantage, no educational gap, and no ethnic bias. There is only giving your all and getting it right.

3.3   Ritual chains and sustained solidarity

A kickboxing work out is about the "magic *in* the moment" when all else falls away. Yet, the power of the moment is also in what it can contribute residually beyond them. Today's training session forms a link in a chain "up the mountain." Today's investment is a feat, but it will be so much greater if one keeps at it in regular work outs in ensuing weeks and months. Discontinuing that chain is like taking a stroll up the foot of a mountain and then returning to basecamp thinking to do the rest another day. The effort spent climbing the first leg of the trip will have to be done again before moving into the next leg of the journey.

What goes for endurance similarly applies to technique. Participants can only learn technique in actual time and space. The localized ritual is the only setting for acquainting oneself with the details of a technique, just as real momentary bodily effort is the only way to acquire what we over time can call stamina. Technical mastery is the result of intense study of details and repeated exercise. An example of technical acquainting is Samir instructing me on the use of my torso in throwing a punch. Over time fighters "forget" such techniques. That is, the movements are not in the forefront of their minds, but have rather become part of a tacit repertoire that the body draws upon when the situation calls for it. This makes it possible to ingrain ever longer combinations and successions of punches and kicks. The more advanced pupils practice series of attacks and counters that dizzy and dazzle observing novices at speeds that can be at times disheartening. "Will I ever get there?" Left, right, left-hook, right uppercut, straight right, low-kick, block, counter low-kick, straight right, left, right, etc. There is a way to get there, but not magically, it is the investment in endless repetition.

Samir: "I spent incredibly many hours mastering it, because I didn't have a kickboxing instructor. … I watched [DVDs of] Americans, Thai boxers, Frenchmen and looked at the details every time. Are they turning their foot inward, leading the kick with their shin? How are they blocking, what styles of blocking are there? You don't learn all the details, though. But you practice all those techniques yourself and just see which is best … then you know which combinations flow." Samir's attention to detail is strongly reminiscent of Chambliss' study on competitive swimming showing that athletes need to devote themselves to technique, discipline, and attitude. As far as improvement and development are concerned, "not only are the little things important; in some ways, the little things are the only things" (Chambliss, 1989, p. 81). Samir's training classes are about

the little things. Every blow, every kick, every move comes with detailed descriptions. Comparisons or metaphors are often involved: "Throw that punch like you're pulling on a rope." "Block that hook as if you're combing your hair."

Despite the mundanity of such repetition, participants are immensely attracted to growing as fighters. New members start out with the idea that they "aren't all that bad." Then comes the realization that it is far more difficult than they initially thought. From that point on, they make slow progress and reach the point that allows them entry into the ring. This mirrors Wacquant's contention that to "find and keep one's place in the pugilistic universe, one must indeed know and always take account of one's physical and moral limits, not let one's aspirations 'take off' unrealistically, not seek to rise higher and faster than is reasonable, on pain of squandering one's energy, risking getting demolished by far superior opponents, and exposing oneself to losing face" (2004, p. 111). The journey of a novice to a first match takes three to six months for those who are fully committed: group training three times a week and independent training and practice (almost) every day.

To keep this up, something has to linger beyond the moment and carry over into the next one. Collins asserts that it is symbols that can sustain solidarity (2004, p. 81), as summaries and reminders of previous interactions that generated energy. So what are the relevant symbols in the interaction rituals at the gym? What are the participants' recognition points for solidarity, energy and morality? Symbols exist here in several ways. We will start with symbols that are physically quite far removed from the gym and end close to home. First, there are the great athletes of the sport. Examples during my period of research included Badr Hari, Remy Bonjasky and Mohamed Khamal. In the older generation, there are the "living legends" Peter Aerts, Ernesto Hoost, and Rob Kaman. Members are normally focused on and inspired by these people's performances in the ring. Controversial issues like "bad boy" Badr, being the suspect of crimes, are generally of secondary interest to the students. They are hardly ever seen as symbols that contribute to the evocation of emotional energy that strengthens the interaction rituals in the gym. It is more common that non-athletes focus on superstars' (mis)behavior outside the ring.

Closer to the students' immediate surroundings, the trainer and fellow participants have major symbolic significance. Training in a gym where young people are sparring, preparing for and winning matches, Samir himself and his reputation, achievements, skills, and detailed knowledge: this has symbolic strength that generates energy among the participants. A student's match has a strong energy-generating effect due to the shared focus and mood of an audience. The regular training sessions and interactions generate energy at a lower level, but the effects last longer. Collins writes: "The symbols of personal identities and reputations are the small change of social relationships … generally of

lesser momentary intensity than audience symbols but used so frequently and in self-reinforcing networks so as to permeate their participants sense of reality" (2004, p. 87).

As is often the case, group solidarity and morality are wrapped in one another, so I will treat them here in conjunction. Kickboxing is a sport in which fighters perform individually, normally culminating in a fight in the ring. Yet, the road leading to that match is one of intense interaction with the trainer and other students. They keep each other entrained. In different exercises and in sparring sessions, pupils (and spectators) help each other find reserves of energy that they had not realized they still had. Besides keeping each other going, they also keep each other in line, inquiring about absence ("Where were you, man?"), or lack of effort ("Hey, what was that today? I'm not used to seeing that from you!"). Such remarks are encouraging because participants feel taken up by the group, but they are also reprimanding, generally spurring participants on to extra effort, by training more on their own time or making more of an effort in the group sessions. This the "controlling quality" (Collins, 2004, p. 109) of the group, pressuring members into the rituals that honor the groups' symbols.

Achievement in this setting demands a sense of solidarity that extends beyond showing up for training sessions. Conversations before and after the work out often pertain to lifestyle: What is a good diet and what is not? Should I quit smoking? What about drinking alcohol? What exercises would be best for me to do to get fitter? There are various types of fitness; how do you train each type? These are the practical aspects of how kickboxing becomes a way of life. The training sessions in the gym and the matches are the primary settings and moments where energy is generated. The morality that kickboxers need pertains to knowing their place in the group according to the degree to which they have mastered the sport, maintaining control of mind and body, slowly and honorably working their way up, following the instructions and recommendations of their trainer (see also Wacquant, 1992; Wacquant, 2004). The gym is the ritual setting establishing this morality.

Experiencing success occurs then in successfully completing the central interaction rituals in the gym, such as full participation during the training, a controlled but effective sparring session, but also fighting a match, and encouraging a fellow student during a match. The nature of these experiences can be ambivalent. Frequently, it is not the training session itself that gives students a sense of satisfaction, but the moment under the showers or as they head out the door when they talk to each other for a moment: "Good workout." Winning a match may be accompanied by severe bruises and headaches. At that point in time, the physical discomfort may make it difficult to feel like a winner. A day later, back in the gym, showered with encouragements and compliments by fellow students and the trainer, the feeling is much stronger. Success has a strong

social or *interactional* component. I position the experiences of success both in the group and *in time*. It is all about what someone experiences in the moment, but also what participants can take along with them from that moment and carry over into the next one. Together, these moments form a chain that facilitates sustainable states of poise, self-control, endurance, and determination.

Samir achieves results with the young people in his gym that many other authorities are no longer able to manage. School, youth work and police are more than pleased with his input in the neighborhood. Wacquant (2004, p. 17) calls the boxing gym in Chicago where he did his research "an island of order and virtue" in comparison to the ghetto around it. Gym membership offers an escape route from gang life and street crime. The adversity that young people face in Amsterdam is relatively minor compared to Chicago. Even so, the apathy toward "mainstream achievement" and educational progress, produced on many street corners, poses a real threat to the prospects for a large group of young people (Hadioui, 2011; de Winter, 2006). Like the Stoneland Boys Club in Chicago, Samir's gym in Amsterdam has "a relation of symbiotic opposition to the ghetto in which it is situated, and from which it both draws its sustenance and protects its members" (Wacquant, 1992, p. 225). The kids "from the streets" with their tough demeanors are attracted to the gym. At the same time, the logic prevailing in that gym differs from regular "street" interactions. There is simply no room for "not giving a shit," making up excuses and undermining authority. Any signs of such behavior are rapidly squelched by the group and by the trainer. A shared focus puts the participants on a completely different track: "Pugilistic pedagogy is thus inseparably a pedagogy of humility and honor whose goal is to inculcate in each the sense of limits (which is also a sense of the group and of one's place in the group)" (Wacquant, 2004, p. 111). The mechanism of this inculcation is the interaction rituals generating *entrainment*: "To get into shared rhythm, caught up in each other's motions and emotions; and to signal and confirm a common focus of attention and thus a state of intersubjectivity" (Collins, 2004, p. 64).

3.4   Samir's relevance, expertise and investment

Over the years I have formed impressions of Samir that I cannot all fit into the box of an interactional explanation. I want to take a step back here and sum up these impressions because they can add understanding to how Samir makes a difference in young people's lives.

Samir has eyes that are at once soft and piercing. His build is short and stocky. His demeanor is modest and kind. In the gym his chin goes up a little bit and makes his voice wave across our heads. He becomes stern and relentless

during workouts but always remains closely involved in what we do and how we do it. There is never a moment that we perceive him as negative or cruel. He is somehow at the center of our attention, but we never get the idea that it is about him. For Samir, it is about becoming better athletes and everything he does in the gym is in service of that. A serving attitude is what stands out, even as he is giving orders. Outside the gym, when his authority is less self-evident, he carries himself as an athlete. A lot of the time he wears sports gear and has "that walk and look in his eyes" that many athletes have. We could say he strides rather than walks, and his glance pierces with determination, no faint or dreamy stares here.

We could of course wonder whether I would see Samir the same if he would not have these intense rituals three to four times a week. Are these the fuel that energize his walk and his gaze throughout the rest of his schedule? Would his shoulders start to sag, his gaze dissolve without it? At times, in school for instance, his modesty turned into shyness or even shame when he felt he failed. Or when he could not see a way to finish his studies, he got frustrated and irritated with people around him, although he visibly put effort into controlling that irritation, not venting it unchecked. These moments seemed to me exceptions to his overall determined posture and positive attitude. At the time of writing, Samir's gym was actually indefinitely closed down and he is unsure if and when he would start training people again. The combination of a demanding youth work job, his family life, and the gym seemed to have gotten the best of him. He is thoroughly disappointed about not training his pupils and it has affected his overall motivation. Still, he asserts being a martial artist and a trainer as part of his identity, and his comportment conveys the Samir that I described above.

In so far as the attraction for participants to the gym depends on Samir – and I think that to a large extent it does, I summarize it as follows: it is his combination of a background and familiarity with "life on the streets" making him relevant in the experience of his participants, his mastery of martial arts making him physically and psychologically impressive to them, and the extent of his care for and investment in the young people in the neighborhood. In a few words, relevance, expertise, and care (or investment).

Of course these are somewhat abstracted descriptions. In making an actual difference, they do not exist as abstractions but as actions and interactions. There is not necessarily a conflict between my relatively situation-transcending impressions of Samir and how his input comes into effect "on the ground" in concrete interaction rituals. Yet, there is a case to be made that Samir's added value to many of those rituals is not "built from the ground up" as extreme interactionists would have it. It is his tireless past investments and his enduring commitment that have made him what he is today. As he moves into a ritual, these built up resources *weigh in* and contribute that much more to the collective

effervescence of the group. However, what makes Samir an "energy-leader" (Collins, 2004, p. 108) is more than his energy; it is his determination and abilities to use his resources to pre-shape the ritual even before it takes place. There is no guarantee that the interaction will unfold as preconceived, but given his position (how theoretically subject to fluctuation this might be), his emotion energy levels and cultural capital, odds are Samir will rock it once again.

Emotional Energy and Cultural Capital
In what follows, I will look into Samir's added value a little closer to gain perspective on how Samir has developed and is developing his relevance, expertise, and care, in his relationship to young people in his neighborhood. I start with an illustration.

> Burak and his friend (both twelve years old) aren't listening to Yazid, the assistant trainer. They talk to Samir about it, with me present.
> Burak: 'He's whining about us. Saying this and that about us, but he doesn't know anything about us.'
> Sebastian: 'But that's not it. Because if Samir said that, you wouldn't talk back to him.'
> B: 'No, but Samir wouldn't say that!'
> Samir: 'Why don't you just listen to him? You listen to me, don't you?'
> B: 'He should just talk normally. He says things that aren't right. If he acts normal, we'll behave too.'
> Sebastian: 'If Yazid says that you're supposed to do something, the right answer is: "Yes, sensei."'
> Samir: 'Yes, exactly. That's all we were allowed to say when we were young. We really wouldn't have been able to try what you're trying here.'
> B: 'Yes, but he's not sensei. Samir is sensei.'

This conversation lifts a tip of the veil on the difference between Samir and Yazid. The boys say that Yazid whines. Samir does not. Yazid says things to them that Samir would not. And last of all, Samir is sensei. Yazid is not. To understand the problematic dynamics between Yazid and the boys, we can partly build on the boys' input, and for another part we need to go beyond it.

First the "whining." I have seen Yazid on multiple occasions working with the younger pupils (under fourteen). Some of the kids over ten love to kid around and chat during workout. Yazid's response to this is often the same. In the beginning he tells them to be quiet and work hard. After a while, his pitch goes up and he prolongs his vowels. "Why won't you listen to meeee?!" in a tone (starting at a high pitch and along the sentence slightly lowering, especially at the word "me")

of exasperation and helplessness. In terms of position-taking in the interaction ritual, Yazid posits himself in a submissive role, affording the boys power over him. According to Yazid they do not listen to him and he is clueless as what to do about it. He is a victim of the ritual, comparable to a mother claiming she is "powerless" when it comes to her children's disobedience. Yazid complains about the boys' behavior, not as something that disrupts the flow of the activity, but as it seems, something that afflicts him personally. This feeds into the boys repeating their behavior because it affords them power and status in the ritual. With Samir, his pitch does not go up, he is not (or hardly) personally affected by disruptions, and during the workout ritual he has already become their focus. Samir has become what Collins calls a "sacred symbol" of the ritual (2004, p. 109). With Yazid, they can argue, look for ways out, call his bluff. If they try that with Samir, they shut themselves out, disrespecting a symbol, thus violating the morality of the setting. They would be in danger of cutting themselves off from the interaction rituals (both between student and teacher and as a member of the group) that offer access to the core emotional reward of the gym: the approval, support and attention of the trainer. The "whining" (voice pitch and powerless attitude) and the things he says ("Why won't you listen") weaken his position in the interaction ritual. Yet there is more to it.

In his teaching, Yazid is not meticulous in his instructions. In his examples his moves seem kind of "half-hearted," starting off a combination with a punch or two and then, as if he were in a hurry, finishing it off, gesturing they should get the gist of it. To Samir, and most likely to the students, this comes off as careless and sloppy. Especially as compared to Samir's style of attention to detail, sharp eyes, clear instructions, and multiple repetition of examples. It is probably this unfortunate comparison that leads the pupils to say, "He is not sensei. Samir is sensei."

Yazid is of Moroccan descent, which affords him credit as being a member of an "ethnic underdog" group in society scores points (or it could) with the "street" oriented pupils who are, other than a few native "white" Dutch kids, mostly from different minority ethnic backgrounds, including Moroccans. He is young (in his early twenties) and male which often makes it easier to connect with the young boys. He has a fair mastery of kickboxing which is another big plus. On paper, Yazid is a perfect candidate to succeed in the gym. His general cultural capital matches the setting (Bourdieu, 1986) but he seems unable to *wield* that capital to make it count. As Collins (2004, pp. 132, 390) puts it, Yazid is not situationally charged enough with emotional energy to be socially dominant or impressive to Burak and his friends. Samir's emotional energy levels on the other hand are quickly charged up, resulting from recent successful ritual chains, making his (more advanced) cultural capital relevant and dominant in the experience of his participants.

Bodies adapted for the game

This is even more the case for Samir's brother Tarik. In the second fragment (see Section 3.2), I saw him engage Samir physically, instructing him as a mentor. My observation was that "he is clearly in control." Tarik led the sparring session. Samir "looked up to him" – he was physically not much taller, but Samir was the follower here. Tarik did not seem to do that much. He did not dance around but moved slowly, mostly flat on his feet. He allowed Samir some attacks which did not seem to faze him. Then, every now and then he moved in quickly and decisively and planted some punches through Samir's defense. This clearly flustered Samir and he had to recover. Tarik spoke to him calmly. He was in control. My first impressions of him was that he "owned the place." He commands and exudes authority. No one needs to tell him anything. He is the one telling you how it is, although without needing to prove anything. Other than that, he is very laid back and approachable. The way he carries himself, shows that he is in control, perfect control of his body, but also, if not perfectly then certainly impressively in control, of his life. I have not seen him in every situation of his daily life, but his poised composure definitively seems to have something situation-transcending. Wacquant applies Bourdieu's insights to conclude for such people that "mutual interpenetration of corporeal and mental dispositions" has progressed to such an extent that "willpower, morale, determination, concentration, and the control of one's emotions" become "inscribed within the organism" (Wacquant, 1992, p. 246).

Such development is not only applicable for the advanced martial artist. Something similar, if less obvious and impressive goes for earlier and more short-term development. I consider myself only a novice in Samir's gym, and due to the demands of my writing process I had not trained with him for nearly a year. When I started again in September 2014 I anticipated that I would have a hard time keeping up the pace of the workout. It was indeed difficult. Yet what struck me more was that when I stood across from my sparring-partner, my fighting posture and punching techniques were back *instantaneously*. My chin on my chest, my right hand on my jaw, turning my torso in for a low-kick. As my memories of Samir's instructions passed through my mind – obviously triggered by the current moves we were practicing – my body took on its moves automatically. Of course it was the micro-encounter that called out my adaptation to the situation, but the overwhelming sensation was that of a structure in my body and mind that apparently had never left me and could be "turned on" in the blink of an eye. There was no "building up an imaginary social reality from the ground up"; I followed suit in the one way I was supposed to. My body "functioning as accumulated capital, produce[d] history on the basis of history and so ensure[d] the permanence in change" (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 56). This point was reiterated when I visited a kick-boxing event in a suburb of Amsterdam a

month later. Many of the fights were between lower-level fighters and although I could probably not have gone the distance with any one of them, I saw (and had over time *learned* to see) as a safe spectator where the fighters were passing up opportunities to score points. A lot of punching without "sealing the deal" with a good kick. Or they hurled around aggressive punches that the opponent saw coming a mile away, to name a few obvious indicators. Some fights were different. It was kickboxing as it was supposed to be. Tight punches, a lot of leg-work, good defense, and lightning-fast counters. These "body-mind complexes" had something more than the ones in the previous fights. These were bodies thoroughly invested in and adapted for the game (Bourdieu, 1980/1990).

The same goes for spectators. In the opening segment of this chapter I mentioned that a few times I could not see whether the punches were blocked or not. This, however, says more about my observational skills than about the actual punches. Samir and other advanced fighters or observers no doubt distinguished every successful and blocked punch in the sparring-match, because their eyes over time have become accustomed to the speed and moves of the sport. They have learned what to look for and hence they are more likely to see it when it happens. As bodies that are pre-formed for the game, as opposed to (or beyond) bodies summoned in the moment, this points to visual skills that have been adapted over time. And although those eyes become especially attuned in the moment of a fight, their modification appears to transcend those moments, as their skills can be called upon instantaneously and at any time.

Samir's emotion-work

Being a symbol, as the center of attention in the training classes and the development of his students, is both a source of energy and a burden for Samir. He derives his legitimacy as a youth worker from this place. He gets satisfaction out of it as a passionate martial arts enthusiast. At the same time, he has to invest a great deal of time and energy in it to achieve results. "I really need to rest. I've been teaching on Mondays as well for the past two months [next to the regular workouts of Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays]; we have a match almost every week. Spent sixteen hours teaching, and then the whole Saturday as well for the matches, which take up about twelve hours. That's twenty-eight hours a week kickboxing and twenty-four hours doing youth work, and then I'm also married and have my own stuff to do." Even so, his impressive and consistent voluntary efforts make it clear that the emotional reward that Samir gets from this "enterprise" is still worth it.

One of the slogans on the wall says "Giving up is not an option." Samir seems merciless during workouts: "Come on! There are no breaks! Pass out or throw up. Otherwise you keep going!" But this particular slogan may primarily apply to himself. He may fall short occasionally in other aspects of his life, slacking off in

his studies, or dropping the ball in his private life. But nothing keeps the weekly workouts in the gym from going ahead as scheduled. If he really cannot be there, he arranges a replacement. And nothing is too much for the boys who come to the gym. The training sessions are held in a community center and the guys use it as such, a hangout before and after training. They share meals, watch football games and play ping-pong. Samir sees it as a part of the evening for these young people to have this space. "It's usually eleven or twelve before I make it home." Besides facilitating relaxation, he also checks (especially among the younger kids) whether they're doing their homework and has a rule that they show him their report cards. If young adults are looking for advice on their studies or need a part-time or full-time job, he helps them consider options and asks around in his network. His attention for athletic development and social wellbeing of his pupils are intertwined.

"Some of these guys, they're really like hopeless," Samir starts off. "You can't tell them anything. They just won't listen. They didn't get farther than the seventh grade (groep 7).[11] You can't do much for them. But yeah, they do come to work out, so, at least they're doing something. But for the rest, yeah… You know they're doing things that are not right. But what I think is really terrible are kids who are trying to do well. They're doing their best and aren't hurting anyone, but they just have too much happening to them. A boy whose father beats him over nothing. His brother steals from him. He earns money, saves up, buys a pair of shoes, and a day later they're gone. He can't build up anything for himself, because his father blocks everything. What are you supposed to do if your family's like that? […] I'll admit honestly, I really wasn't an innocent sweetheart when I was young. I was involved in some things. I had so much money at some point. But my cousin is addicted to drugs. I never should have trusted him, but he messed it all up. Spent all the money. In retrospect, that was the best thing that could have happened to me, because it made me see how pointless it all was. Easy come, easy go. These days I don't do anything haram, forbidden by Islam. I don't steal, and I don't accept stolen goods. Everyone around here knows that. That's why they don't try anything with me. And the kids are more likely to believe what I say. They know I have a past and what I've done. It gets me respect."

"That's nice," I replied. "That's what grips me as well. How young people in these neighborhoods have a few examples and can see that there's another way to do it. Not just seeing older teens as bullies, but also as people they could see as role models." "Bullies…," Samir smiles. "I was a bully once, you know. Well, not quite a bully; I was a person who stood up to kids who were bothering other

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11 Pupils in this grade are mostly ten or eleven years old. It is one grade before the last of elementary school.

kids. I was a bully to the bullies, kind of. Still am, really. I show them that you can't just get away with everything on the street. When I'm there, I don't let anyone bully anyone else into leaving, or hit anyone else, or anything like that."

I have often wondered how Samir kept it all going. Looking at myself, I have had spells in which coming to the gym was just too much for me. After months, or even a year, I would come back and try to get a routine going again. This is a totally different mindset from Samir's. The question for him is not whether there is time or energy for working out. The gym is a robust moral and social framework that compels his full attention. In terms of Hochschild's framing rules that help give meaning to daily life (Hochschild, 1979, p. 566), the gym is for Samir a framing *setting*, the rituals of which bring forth the frames through which to understand and view the world and his place in it. It is a setting competing for young people's attention, in a larger social space where there are "different sets of ideals and values that are revealed as well as produced through discourses and actions" (Deeb & Harb, 2013, p. 19). For Samir himself it is his *mainframe*. Although he admits to being tired, he will not give into it. He knows he is working too much, but he cannot allow the gym to be the cause of it. The gym is not just a place for working out. It is the base of operations to "set a *movement* in motion" as he puts it. The assertion that "[f]raming and feeling rules mutually imply each other" (Hochschild, 2003, p. 99), seems to apply here. Samir's passionate feelings, charged up and expanded through the regular workouts, fortify the robustness of the gym as a framing setting. And the strength of this frame directs him in how he should feel about his investment: giving up is not an option.

3.5   Intensity, marginality and failed rituals

Samir is effective at influencing participants. The interactions at the gym develop an emotional energy, embedded in "sacred" symbols, that exercises a strong attraction and may even produce moral convictions. This impressive mechanism does not, however, come with guarantees. Rituals can fail and drain energy from participants rather than generate it. Or the rituals can feel "forced" in which participants act as though they feel the energy that they would like to experience. Here I want to focus on differential progressions and outcomes of the gym's interaction rituals.

Early in 2011, local youth work referred three teenage boys around the age of fifteen years – Youssef and his friends – to Samir to train at the gym. They were regularly involved in mischief and caused a nuisance in the neighborhood. The idea was that they would be less bored and less of a bother if they had a hobby. The training was also supposed to teach them discipline and offer an outlet for

their energy. The boys liked the plan; kickboxing, or at least the idea of it, had an edge to it. Samir was happy to take them on. This is how he wants to make a difference in the neighborhood. It was apparent on the first day what he had brought into his gym. During the training class, a boy about eleven years old came in with his father. The boy was indignant, the father angry. They were there concerning Youssef, one of the three new participants. It turned out that he had stolen the boy's bicycle and ridden it to the training class. Samir mediated between them and arranged for the bicycle to be returned to its owner. Samir reprimanded Youssef, but did not kick him out of the class. "He is making a fresh start now, in 2011. Now I at least have contact with him." Over the weeks and months that followed, the three friends regularly came to train – or at least showed up. They were the only ones their age. Most of the others were eighteen, nineteen years old or older. They participated less seriously than the others from the start. During the group salutation at the beginning, everyone looks straight ahead, hands beside the body. The trainer says "sensei" and they all bow. The new boys didn't pay much attention to the routine. They didn't pay enough attention when exercises were demonstrated; during exercises, they spent more time talking, joking around and grabbing each other than working on the actual exercises. They did enjoy hitting each other, but it was about hurting each other rather than practicing the exercises properly. Samir warned them repeatedly and punished them by refusing access to the next training class. He occasionally sent them away because they were too disruptive during training. Two of the boys stopped coming after the summer; only Youssef stayed. He has fought in a match since then, which he won.

Various aspects play a role here: the boys are new, are not accustomed to the routines of the gym, are not the same age as the rest, and are right in the middle of puberty. Interactionally speaking, some other dynamics can be noted. The training classes have a high ritual intensity (Collins, 2004, pp. 115-116). The work out week schedule (at least three times a week), or what Collins calls *ritual density*, give participants the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in pro-longed entrainment. The bodies working synchronously on warming up and per-forming the exercises, the physical exertion, even self-sacrifice that is invested, all contribute to participants' intense ritual enthrallment. The intense investment means that the participants can hardly do anything other than assigning great value to the ritual. This time spent together combined with a relatively low rate of turnover contributes to this collective effervescence even more. Even so, it is not impossible to resist the ritual. Although the ritual intensity is high, we can characterize Youssef and his friends as *marginal participants*, especially at first. They see and experience a ritual and can tell that it is intense, but they are not part of it. In their mutual interaction, a skeptical attitude and comic acting out produce "magnetic" emotional rewards. They interrupt situations that have a

serious focus by questioning their usefulness or (comically) undermining them. They perceive the seriousness of the situation as part of a *forced ritual*. "These occur when individuals are forced to put on a show of participating wholeheartedly in interaction rituals" (Collins, 2004, p. 53).

The workout as a whole was still quite successful, but the newcomers achieved lower levels of participation. Samir frequently had to reprimand the boys, sometimes even sending them away, because they were too much a distraction from the ritual. The entrainment of the group as a whole did not attain a sufficient flow. When Youssef and his friends undermined the workout, it made other participants overly aware of the ritual and jeopardized its success. Samir intuitively senses what Collins' calls the weakness of forced rituals – they can result in failed rituals, and he intervenes before it reaches that point.

Youssef's friends attempted to combine their own symbols with the gym's symbols. They were unsuccessful and eventually stopped coming. Youssef handled it differently. He was able to temporarily "delay" his usual tendencies when he was in the training class. He eventually developed a way to take part in the rituals and to reap the social and emotional rewards. We could say he moved from the "periphery" of the ritual closer to its center (Collins, 2004, p. 116). Yet, his sense of emotional connection was to a high degree situationally dependent. During training, he increasingly followed the trainer's instructions and took part in the ritual of working out, but on the street with his friends, he remained caught up in his prior interactions.

Some participants from that point on display increasing solidarity with the symbols and morality of the interactions in the gym, even outside that context. But ritual entrainment does not guarantee specific social and developmental outcomes. In the months after Youssef fought his first match he attended the work outs less and less. I asked Samir once if Youssef was still working out. "No," Samir replied somewhere between disappointment and disapproval, "He won one match and now he walks around as if he's an A-fighter [a classification for top-level fighters who get paid for matches and can contend for championships]. He doesn't get that that was only the beginning." When I saw Youssef later on one of his sporadic visits to the gym, he told me he was busy studying and interning as a car mechanic. He felt he could not spend as much time as before on working out.

Although he did not continue as a fervent martial artist, I wondered whether his year in the gym had contributed to him "getting his act together" in school and work. He had been through multiple "world-shrinking" moments where outside structures "did not exist" and success depended fully on his effort. He had discovered, pushed and expanded his physical and psychological limits. Had these smaller successful moments of working out in the gym and the bigger victory in the ring contributed to him taking more responsibility for the outcome of

his actions, and steered him onto a more constructive course? Or did he simply grow a little older and had hormones become less dominant in his body, brains and behavior? Or were there other decisive dynamics hidden from my scope of observation? My experience is that there is hardly ever a "simple" answer, but the likelihood that Youssef's capacities for perseverance and focus were unaffected by his training seems small.

The perspective in this chapter is that the "world-shrinking" and local embodied interaction stripping the interlocutor of outside interference has massive effects for on-the-spot experienced reality and imagined (near) future possibilities. In the case of Samir's gym, this effect is often positive and constructive, giving participants a sense of expanded physical, social and emotional possibilities. At the same time, kickboxing is "not for everyone." Youssef's friends could not or did not adhere to the discipline. Others never even make it to a workout because their ideas of what it entails, or the "kind of people" that might attend keeps them away. A kickboxing workout might in some ways be an elite ritual, in that its high intensity, social density, and low social diversity (in terms of turnover, not in terms of what "kind" of people attend), produce strong mutual entrainment, but it also has strong boundaries. Only the bodies that venture within those boundaries are collectively and individually brought to a "higher level."

Discussion:
Ritually dependent momentum and ingrained patterns

The gym is a small, clearly demarcated, rigidly regulated, socially ritualized, and predictable space. As such, we could to an extent call it "a world unto itself." As participants get geared up they get geared toward themselves and each other. As warming up, exercises, and sparring succeed each other, the experience of a shrunken world becomes ever more dominant. Success in this realm becomes real success. It is not relative. It is not something next to many other things. It is the *only* thing.

The "shrinking-world" experience comes about because the intense dynamics of the activities demand a strong focus that block out other realities. Another way that subjecting body and mind to the discipline of the workout augments the primacy of the current moment, is through its morally forceful character or the moral self-evidence of its usefulness. The demarcated, regulated, and focused nature of the activities carry in themselves the conviction that they will contribute to a stronger body, quicker moves, more refined techniques and a sharper mind. Not only is this workout the only thing that exists in the here and now, it is the one *good* thing any participant could be doing that will undeniably result in improvement. The workout crowds out other realities and it strengthens the

reality that today's investment will find its rewards both in the near and more distant future. In other situations such as school curricula or socially enforced conventions, young people can easily feel estranged from, if not outright cynical toward, the promise of success or acceptance supposedly resulting from commitment. In the gym, however, both the strain as well as the promise are immanent and unrelenting. The only way forward is submission to its program. For those caught up in the magic of the moment, this submission is hardly experienced as a "choice." It flows "naturally" from the activity and the interaction's magnetic fixation. As a result, limits are discovered, pushed, and expanded.

Outsiders, too, often tend to conceive of kickboxing as a threatening and dangerous activity. To the participants it is a safe, controlled, and focused environment. It is a place where they can find their bearings simply by doing what everyone else is doing. For any exercise there are at least fifteen examples around them, should the trainer briefly be unavailable. Moving as others move generates an immediate visceral sensation of belonging. Though unarticulated (or more likely because of it), this bodily discipline enhances an experience of wellbeing and solidarity that they feel under their skin, as well as between one another's bodies (cf. Paulle & Emirbayer, 2015).

The absorption of the participants' focus, their physical and emotional entrainment, and the experienced commonality that flows from it, give the gym a character of a refuge from a broader social context where social boundaries are unclear because of their implicitness, demands are manifold and conflicting, and opportunities are ambiguous. In a world where ambiguity and "feminine" social exchanges abound, the gym offers an alternative with its clear, demarcated, rigid, and predictable curriculum that contributes to physical and emotional development for all its participants. But in particular for young people in destabilized, disadvantaged, and dangerous living conditions, it provides a powerful developmental remedy.

This is not to say that the gym is a breeding ground for overly masculine, non-subtle, inflexible, intolerant rule-followers who cannot think for themselves. The inculcation I speak of here is meant to take novices by the hand and guide them responsibly in the art of an ultimately risky sport. The epitome of accomplishment, however, is in individually going the distance with an adversary in the ring. By that time, fighters need to become self-confident, risk-takers, branding an own distinct style. When new apprentices observe the advanced fighters, it reassures them that the seemingly endless rule-following gradually will make place for asserting oneself, for one's place in the spotlight. Advanced pupils give novices a glimpse of what the future could hold for them. The gym crowds out the past, i.e. ethnic background, socioeconomic status, cultural baggage, and it brings together present – the engrossment and passion of the work out – and the future – in the form of the superior performances of the more advanced appren-

tices – all into a single moment. Should beginners despair about the point of all this effort, living proof breathes it in front of their eyes.

In Samir we see such a future glimpse, albeit in his case a glimpse of such mastery that it could be discouraging – is his level attainable for "mere mortals" like us? Yet, I have not noticed performances of his mastery, or of any other far advanced teachers in other gyms, to have a discouraging effect. I sooner detected a sparkle in pupils' eyes, a smile on their face, nodding toward each other, conveying enjoyment, maybe even as if to say "That's gonna' be me someday."

This chapter presents an apparent tension between on the one hand the intensity and primacy of the moment with bodies summoned for and subjected to respond to the regimes of those moments, and on the other hand, durably habituated bodies and mental schemes as the accumulated and ingrained outcomes of longer term investments.

Samir and his brother Tarek are prime examples of durably reformatted systems. They have "become" their (martial) art (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, pp. 73-75). Tarek was only occasionally present, and mostly in the background as such, and Samir has at the moment of writing this text, indefinitely suspended his gym's activities. While this has undoubtedly affected their, especially Samir's, overall energy levels and motivation, it has not "broken Samir's stride" nor fazed his gaze. It remains a question how long one can "be" a kickboxer without actually kickboxing. For the time being, ingrained patterns in body and mind appear so deep that we cannot say the interrupted ritual chain has in any lasting or "definite" sense reconfigured Samir's constitution. Whether we would see this as an "owned" psychological trait or the byproduct of neighborhood interactions and athletic networks, Samir's self-identification and experience as being immersed in martial arts, and his socially ascribed reputational capital as a kickboxing expert remain, at least for now, intact.

It is different for his novice apprentices. As the gym fell away, so did their stability. When the moment summons them, their fighter-pose will come into effect immediately, as did mine after a year without working out. This, and the fact that they have pushed passed many physical and psychological limitations, will serve them well *if* they manage to find a new gym. However, these junior athletes do not have a regime so thoroughly inscribed that they could perpetuate their workouts without "outside" assistance. The gym was *the* setting providing opportunities for their workout rituals powerfully reinforcing their motivation and belonging, as well as linking these rituals together in chains, facilitating a modicum of consistency and accumulative outcomes. Few of the gym's members, if any, have enjoined themselves to alternative or parallel settings so that they could continue their training. Most have stumbled into a gap and it will depend on their resourcefulness, networks (or perhaps a linking intervention by Samir) whether they will resume training elsewhere or in a different manner. In

their case, it seems indeed mainly the localized symbols and temporarily generated energy-levels that carry over residually to a next moment, which needs to come fairly quickly - preferably within a week – to remain relevant and powerful enough to keep their momentum going. Otherwise, the mood fades and focus is likely to dissipate. The powerful contagion of group entrainment becomes more a memory, if a positive one, than an experiential dynamic catalyzing (inter) action.

The main contribution of the gym is then to offer overburdened and discouraged young people a shrunken world in which accomplishment and advancement are in a sense simplified through a regime of clarity, rigidity, imitation, and repetition. This may seem "short-sighted" to some, but it is even (or especially) philosophically speaking a "high road" to increased ability in dealing with and producing complexity. Eventually – but not in first instance as erroneous pedagogic hype would have it – they develop skills at levels that generate initiative and autonomy. At such levels they have developed bodily and emotional control contributing to dealing productively with ambiguity and ambivalence in less anxious and more relaxed ways (cf. Paulle, 2013, pp. 159-165). We could say that they are then ready to step out of a shrunken world into an expanding one, although this runs the risk of representing development in an overly linear fashion. In the next chapter, I will explore what the idea of an expanding world looks like for novices as well as masters, and I will link this to how young people look for ways of belonging, either more entrenched and exclusively or more open and exploratively.

4   GROUNDING RHYTHMS

"As in basketball, so also in life" is a motto StreetBall uses to encourage their participants to do well in sports and to do likewise in school and other social environments. Basketball contains the micro-rhythms of the moment in relation to an external field of players, as well as long term individual development of "body-mind complexes." Less obvious but equally important is the recognition of people as complex creatures who reflect on, feel, and manage an inner life. While such themes are not often combined in one analysis, to understand young Beiruti basketballers, I will attempt to address them, in both basketball and life.

In part the principles are comparable to those described in the previous chapter on kickboxing. Imitation, repetition, and group activities flourish in conjunction with a shared focus, common moods and entrainment, which eventually leads to increased proficiency. Therefore, I will not elaborate on those aspects here as much. The emphasis is rather on management-efforts that go into securing quality and moral direction of the social and athletic rituals taking place.

A substantial difference between the rituals in the gym and on the court pertains to their *boundaries*. Whereas the gym's boundaries are quite solid, literally thick as walls, the neighborhood court is a setting of twin competitions, the "lines" of which are thin. One is the ballgame taking place between the teenagers, the other is over decisive momentum in moral influence, exerted by any and all participants and bystanders.

A main theme that surfaced through observing young people and their coaches on inner-city courts was that of settings and mindsets that focused, settled, and calmed young people's daily rhythms, competing with those that disrupted or detracted from them. Players aware of this multilayered game were all the more intentional in their emotional and social efforts of (situated) alignment. The lines across the court and the "lines" between competing moralities were both fairly easily overstepped, especially by those who did not know the games being played, or by those who did so deliberately.

A second type of boundaries concerned those of the broader (imagined) community. Two main types of boundary-management seemed prevalent. Firstly, a dominant discourse of entrenchment in local neighborhoods where things were "good" as opposed to "elsewhere" where things were "bad." These imaginaries could exist perfectly parallel to, and in neglect of, "bad things" *within* the community, such as neighbors that could not be trusted or traffic that was dangerous or too loud. The success of such a dominant discourse lay not in

the supply of explanations for all kinds of actual daily events and encounters. It was more a collective framing device to make sense of broad undefined circumstances that facilitated the positioning of one's place inside those circumstances. For instance, we "Muslims" and they "Christians" or "we" from the village as opposed to "they" from the city carried with it a host of commonly understood and misunderstood notions that "helped" keep people in place and out of the way of others. Far from such categories being "objective" or making up the "natural order of things," they were and are the result of active management of boundaries, motions and emotions.

Opposing this dominant frame, is Imad, a lead "character" in the story of this chapter, who stands out for his willingness to venture off to different parts of the city, while others prefer to remain buttressed in their own neighborhoods. As a somewhat opposite metaphor to that of the previous chapter – a shrinking world – here I recount how one young man explored and enticed his participants to *expand* their world. It is a journey of enlarging geographical and redrawing moral "zones of permission" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 250, see also Section 2.3).

This chapter more than the previous one emphasizes the relationship between micro-dynamics and their broader surroundings. Therefore, I will take some room to describe the wider context, before delving into what happened in and between basketball players on and off the courts.

Crossing the road

Somewhere around the turn of the century, probably in the late 1990s, Imad made a decision that would change everything. He decided to cross the road. On the other side was a basketball court, where kids played. Imad loved basketball as a young kid roaming the streets back then. He still loves it now as a twenty-eight year old university graduate in Sports Management and Marketing. What was so remarkable about crossing the road? This particular road happened to be part of what was called the "green line" during the Lebanese civil war that ended in 1990 (Fisk, 1990/2002, pp. 49, 50; Khalaf, 2002, p. 248). This was an important – probably the most important – battle front, dividing West and East Beirut, which soon came to stand for the main division between Muslim and Christian areas.

The fighting between different factions pitted against each other on either side of the city, the desolate look and feel when fighting halted, the always present snipers on rooftops which made the traverse next to impossible. These dramatic elements made the green line a focal point of imagery, captured in both scholarly and journalistic writing (Fisk, 1990/2002; Friedman, 1989; Khalaf, 2002; Nasr, 2003, pp. 149-150; Yahya, 1993, pp. 132-134) as well as artistic expression (Doueiri, 1998; Hage, 2006). Although today this forested front no longer physically exists, it still seems part of Beirutis' social imagination. In

adjacent neighborhoods such as Chiyah and Ain al-Remmaneh, where Lebanon's civil war started, the atrocities seem to be more vividly a part of social life than elsewhere in the city. The rage and resentment are more and sooner on the tips of people's tongues than areas where confrontation with "the other" is less frequent. Fisk goes one step further and sees the green line as part of a collective Lebanese psyche: "It represented the cruelest of all front lines, one that lay deep within the minds of all who lived in Lebanon and all who came there." (1990/2002, p. 52)

Imad, who was twenty-five when I met him in 2011, has a Muslim background and lived in *Chiyah*, a neighborhood to the West of the division. Across the street, on the other side of the Beirut frontline where Imad played basketball is the predominantly Christian *Ain al-Remmaneh* as part of East-Beirut.

While Imad grew up in these quite volatile circumstances, he tends to distance himself from both animosity and feigned amicability. "I don't want to be like people who say, 'Yeah, I have Christian friends. I know that guy and that guy.' To show that they are open-minded or something. But then, when there's no Christians around, they start talking bad about them. Me, I have friends from different backgrounds, religions. But I don't need to talk about it. People can just look at my life, and hopefully they will see that I am open-minded. But I don't need to show it off."

Imad's father died in the civil war before he was born and he grew up with his mother and three siblings. They did not have much but they got by. *Chiyah* used to be a suburb on the outskirts of the city, but Beirut (or greater Beirut) has expanded enormously. And although city-dwellers still consider *Chiyah* a suburb, it has in atmosphere, feel, and location become pretty much an inner-city neighborhood. Apartment-buildings of ten floors high and over, smaller and bigger stores and shops at the bottom of many of these buildings, loud and congested traffic on the main streets connecting the area with the rest of the city; none of this gives the idea that one has ventured out into anything suburban. The neighborhood has a history of poverty, deprivation, violence, and drug-abuse (Fisk, 1990/2002, pp. 96, 443, 556; Sbeity, 2011). Imad has his own experiences with some of this hardship. "When I grew up, around seventy percent of the people in my street used drugs." I asked, "So then you mean hash? Or something stronger?" "No, not hash," he smiled. "People there often don't even consider that drugs. I'm talking about heroin, pills, cocaine." I asked him about the current situation. "Now it's a lot less," he said. "Now some of them are in prison. Or they left the country. Or they're not in the neighborhood. Their families run them off because they're ashamed of them." At the same time he is proud of his neighborhood and, as we will see later, he is adamant about defending and restoring its reputation.

Imad has work experience as a sports coordinator at an elementary school

and as a tutor of high school students in the subjects of English and Mathematics. Since 2007 he has been involved with StreetBall, an NGO that organizes annual basketball training and tournaments on public courts throughout Beirut during the spring and summer. Basketball is very popular in Lebanon. At the same time, the political divisions that echo in virtually all facets of life, also pervade sports. "Lebanon, a country of only four million, is saturated with imported basketball talent and often triumphs over countries ten times its size. Today this is primarily because basketball is viewed by politicians and their partisans, as a means of showing off the superiority of their own sect and thereby, so goes the philosophy, the loyalty of their following" (McClenahan, 2007, p. 20).

As teenagers from different backgrounds participate, their central interest becomes: who can play well? The organization's representatives look for coaches from local communities who want to train children and teenagers. They train them in basketball coaching but also in playfully introducing themes such as leadership, teamwork, conflict prevention, democracy, and gender equality. In the first months, weekly practice takes places on participants' "own" local playground, after which tournaments follow, that require participants to travel to playgrounds elsewhere in the city where they form "mixed teams." The idea is to make religious and political affiliations less prominent, break down stereotypes and promote sportsmanship. To give a more complete picture of Imad's living and working context, the following subsection takes us across the divide, to the "Christian" part of town.

4.1   Challenging baselines of normal solidarity

The other side
Chiyah is commonly known as a (Shiite) Muslim neighborhood and Ain al-Remmaneh a (Maronite) Christian neighborhood. Certainly, we can see differences in perceptions and practices across these neighborhoods, such as holiday customs and linguistic expressions. Yet the daily experiences of people on both sides of the divide seem to have much in common in terms of their routines, struggles, and successes.

In Ain al-Remmaneh, Michael is a twenty-year-old basketballer and coach for YoungSport, a local youth development program. Khalil and his wife Hala founded the NGO to offer an alternative to the influences of these mean streets. They see their work as combating different kinds of poverty. It is quite comparable to the work Imad does on different playgrounds throughout the city. Khalil explains, "It doesn't necessarily have to be that they have no money. In this neighborhood kids grow up with hatred for the other. They hate each other, while they do not even know each other. That is poverty. Young people here with

us do many things. They play matches, some are really quite good. But their parents never come to watch. Some will not even pay the membership fee so that their children can participate. That is poverty. Around here you can get drugs anywhere. They use children to distribute drugs. There's fighting here. Young people hang out in the street and see all of this. They have food and a roof over their heads. They have enough. But you can't see poverty as just one thing." His wife Hala adds: "Their parents grew up in civil war. This was its area. You need cultural, social, educational rehabilitation. It never happened. We can host a hundred, a 120 kids. But not the whole area."

YoungSport works from an outdoor court, belonging to a public secondary school. They use the court for football and basketball. The court is surrounded by the school from two sides, and a wired fence from the other sides, giving it a courtyard effect. Behind the fence are several buildings with five to seven floors of apartments. When children start playing their games, people sit on their balconies like spectators in an arena, turning YoungSport's programs into community events. On the school side, the building has pillars, creating a hall way along the court, where participants hang out on benches, sheltered from either the sun or the rain, waiting their turn to play.

Michael described his neighborhood similarly to Imad's characterization of Chiyah. "*Everyone* knows, if you want drugs, come to Ain al-Remmaneh." He sees two kinds of kids, those who do "nothing" and those who come to play sports with them. "The kids here [on YoungSport's court], they don't smoke. Outside, the same kids, from the same neighborhood, they smoke! At fifteen, sixteen, they start working, and then they start smoking and doing drugs also. By eighteen, they quit school. In this neighborhood, if you don't smoke and drink at fifteen, then you're abnormal." Other than that, Michael disapprovingly mentioned talk of politics and religion. He did not mean that it is bad to discuss these topics. He referred rather to a typical Lebanese style of in-group speaking where participants exalt their own religious-political sect and spit poison on other sects, who in many cases are neighbors not too far away. The same kind of talk that Imad would rather avoid.

"The kids thirteen to sixteen years old have problems making decisions between what's right and wrong," Michael continues. They do not know how to respond to what they encounter outside, because their parents do not constructively engage with them about topics such as sex and drugs. "They're afraid to ask their families about things."

When Michael took one of my students and me on a walk through the neighborhood, it became clear how he saw these streets and what his mission was for the children and teenagers in his programs. "This is Ain al-Remmaneh. The war started here. Thirty-seven years ago the war started. People still remember. On every corner here there's two soldiers between Chiyah and Ain al-Remmaneh.

Chiyah is on the next street. There's fifty soldiers here and a dabbabeh [a tank]. It's a war here. Like fifteen times a day, fights break out here, and the soldiers have to come between them." While walking past a particular spot, Michael remembered the year before a fight had occurred there. "Five Christians fought with five Muslims over a poker game." A twenty-seven year old man who happened to walk by there, coming home from work, got stabbed in the heart. "He had nothing to do with it. Terrible." As far as volunteers at YoungSport are concerned, these streets are bad, and hanging around on them is bad for children and teenagers. They are exposed to the wrong influences of aimlessness, boredom, and quests for the wrong kinds of excitement. Other than constant physical and verbal aggression there are the drug-dealers who employ the under-aged to courier their product throughout the neighborhood. Michael points to a door of what seems to be a shack, "This is a place where Khalil has made trouble coz kids hang around inside and there's drug-trade in there."

As we walked down a street, Michael sees a boy of about twelve years old, greets him and promptly asks him, "What are you doing out on the streets'(Chou 'amta'mel 'at-tari')?" I could not make out the answer, but it was clear that Michael was probing whether the boy was purposefully going from one place to another or if he was killing time and wandering. As we walked on, Michael pointed to groups of adolescents hanging around on street corners and sitting on low brick walls. "Look at the guys. They're just waiting. Waiting. Not doing anything." Initially, I thought Michael's proficiency in English was lacking and that he used the word "waiting" for hanging around, which was probably true. But as I looked at them I felt there was a point to the meaning of waiting as well. They seemed to have nothing else to do and were waiting for something to happen, something to come their way. It did not look in any way like they were enjoying time off, hanging out with friends. A dullness in the eyes, scanning people as they walked by. Facial expressions that read somewhere between boredom and disdain, I could imagine that a wrong look or move could easily heighten (already present) tensions and turn into one of the fifteen daily fights that Michael mentioned earlier. "Come, let's turn here. Over there is not such a good area."

During another walk through the neighborhood after sundown, I got a more vivid impression of some of the phenomena Michael mentioned in passing. Groups of young people were still hanging around, but there were now, at least for me more visibly present, drug addicts walking around. Slightly hunched, shoulders scrunched up, looking at the ground while nervously and jerkily walking up and down the road. Constantly looking around, seeming permanently distracted by something that never becomes quite clear. I could easily spot this behavior from my social work experiences in Amsterdam. The "dope fiend lean and posture" (Simon & Burns, 1997) seem recognizable independently of culture and local customs. Amid these figures I saw a woman leaning on a car. She was

probably in her forties, but had many more wrinkles than someone of her age should have had. She looked unhealthily skinny and "worn out." As my friend and I walked by, she scratched her crotch as though she had quite an itch. She did not seem to notice or care that there were other people close by. Her short dress moved up and down as she scratched, exposing her genitals. Had I been in Amsterdam, I would have had every indication to see her as a specimen of the tragic figure that local police has worked hard to remove from many public spaces since the 1990s, derogatorily named the "heroin hooker." One of the hunched and scrunched men walked up to her. They seemed to know each other, they muttered something to each other, then he moved back around the car and stood in the background. We walked on to visit YoungSport's public screening of the FIFA semi-finals a few hundred meters down the road at their school courtyard. Italy had started off against Germany.

Michael joined YoungSport as a participant when he was a young teenager. "It really helped me. To come and don't think of what I can get [out of it]. I helped fix the court and the goal." He feels there was great value in changing his mindset from how he could benefit to how he could contribute.

Eli (20) too thinks of himself as a good example of YoungSport's efforts. He used to hate Muslims, now he has Muslim friends. Khalil showed him that his religion is not something he chose. "You're born into it. You were born here in this street, so you're a Christian. If you were born a few blocks down the road, you'd be a Muslim." Eli went on a group excursion with Khalil to Istanbul. They played sports there with Turkish peers and enjoyed it. Eli was impressed with the entire trip and particularly with Istanbul's Islamic architecture. This experience changed the way he thought of Muslims. "I didn't want to leave!" In YoungSport he came to play with Muslim teammates and became friends with them. Like Michael, Eli is now a coach, training children and teenagers in sports. Next to that he is an example to them of an active lifestyle, as opposed to the aimless "waiting", and positively reaching out to and connecting with people from other groups, instead of staying entrenched in his comfortable in-group.

A call to work
The workers of StreetBall and YoungSport that I encountered displayed an understanding that influence and changed lives is about spending time with them. Hala offers: "People love to use big words like 'we're teaching them teamwork, respect, …' You're saying you influence them, but you train them three times a week. The rest of the time they're out on the street. How are you influencing them?" I asked her if they were able to do things differently. "We spend time with them. We do things together. We have meals, go out. We have time for them." "So it's not just Friday and Saturday?" I probed. "That's when we have practice for the big kids and for the girls. But whenever we open the gate, they

come. They hang out here." She told me about a barbecue they had recently. "You need to transform your organization into a village. In a city no one knows each other. In a village, you eat to together, you go over to each other's homes."

Her husband's analysis ran along the same lines. "A week has what? 168 hours in a week. Three times sports isn't gonna' do much. That's only six hours. Twelve hours does more. Then, you do ten hour events. Then I start to put something in their minds. If he has good curiosity, he will start thinking. If it's bad, then we lose him." "That's a lot of time," I said. "So is this your paid job?" "Paid…" Khalil laughed "No." "So it's volunteer work?" I concluded. Khalil got a difficult look on his face. "Volunteer… What I do is not volunteer work. A volunteer comes and does something for free. I *pay* to do this. Doing this Eurocup [organizing a big screen event for the games] cost me three hundred dollars. I don't get anything. But what I get is to show them another life. There is a place here for them to come. They spend time from three, four o' clock until twelve [midnight]."

This approach reveals an underlying reliance on interactional dynamics: changing young people's lives is not about giving them the right message a few times a week. It entails the provision of a constant setting facilitating self-reinforcing social rituals. An important process or ingredient in these rituals we may call the active promotion of renewed emotion-management by challenging dominant framing and feeling rules (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Khalil goes against the prevailing tendencies of materialism and entrenched communal loyalties: "I want them to refuse some opportunities. They shouldn't say yes to everything. Not 'ok, if you want I will do it'." I wondered what exactly he meant, "Like jobs that don't pay well… or…?" "Yeah," he pondered. "Or even when it pays. Like here, in the neighborhood, drugs, or… I want them to become leaders. Independent from their political leaders, their parents even. This takes time."

He touched on some sensitive topics. Many Lebanese young people will put making money over any other priority. The only thing stopping them is their vanity; many will not take a job if it seems somehow "lowly." But this is not what Khalil means here. Vanity is a mere retreat from challenges. When Khalil imagines his participants as leaders, he wants them to work hard, but set their aims higher than becoming a servant of the highest bidder. He hopes to instill in them a vision that protects against slavery of materialism as well as vane retreatism. Paraphrased: "Value yourselves differently so you can dedicate your efforts to endeavors worthwhile. You need to think differently about your situation, and you need to feel differently about yourselves."

Something similar applies to his call for political independence. Khalil is asking emotion-work of his participants: he wants them to feel differently about people from other backgrounds. The athletic rituals at YoungSport facilitate them toward this; they can play basketball without having to focus on politics and religion. Michael asserts: "Here there is no Muslim or Christian. Hang your

problems at the door. Then come train. Afterward you can take your problems with you… But you can also leave them!"

Outside these Interaction Rituals these basketballers have to process what is happening to them. It is a constant issue for instance how they will "sell" this experience, and the ideas that it entails, in their different social circles. Young-Sport are not fighting ideas that can be reshaped by a few encounters. These are ingrained and deep-seated structures of sectarianism, clientelism, and materialism. It takes thorough reshaping of thoughts and it requires participants' emotion-work.

4.2   On-court regulatory dynamics

When I first walked through the neighborhood, accompanied by one of my students, looking for YoungSport's court, we saw a few children of about ten years old and younger walking around. Some of them wore brightly colored football jerseys. We thought they looked like they were part of something like a club and we were right. We asked them if they knew about a local youth sports club and they immediately said "YoungSport" and pointed us in the direction of the school court.

We walked in and saw young boys and girls, around ten to fourteen years old, playing football on an asphalted court of about two-hundred by a hundred meters, with goals on both sides. The players seemed fairly relaxed and calm but also focused. The team on our left had the ball. They passed it on, one to the other, and advanced across the field. A few more passes and one of them kicked the ball hard in the direction of the goal, attempting to score. The goalie caught the ball in midair and pulled it to his chest. The opposing players backed off, anticipating a counterattack from the other team. The goalie looked intently and pointed to the right center of the field. He threw the ball forward and his teammates received it and circled for their counterattack. This all happened in a fairly calm fashion. The players raised their voices to each other, communicating instructions, but I would not call it yelling. There was no cursing and hardly any scolding. They were focused on playing the game, and after attempts at scoring they quietly regrouped and readied themselves for the next round. At some moments, they talked to each other, instructed each other. "Make sure you cover him next time." Sometimes this would be accompanied by a frown and some gesturing with arms. Yet, the mood was far from negative. These coaching or directing instructions toward each other seemed generally accepted and not at all to bother anyone. It was part of the natural flow of the activity.

Alongside the field, there were other kids, some of whom observing and enjoying the ongoing game. Others were laughing, making jokes, running around, killing time until it was their turn to play. In this case it seemed the

game did not particularly grasp spectators' attention. At other times they would be more gripped and mesmerized by on-court play. This could be because it was part of a local tournament, which made the stakes higher – who would turn out to be the winner? But sometimes the waiting and observing participants would be similarly enthralled when it was "merely" a friendly game. This seemed to be due to the impressive level of gameplay and "dramatic build up" of the game (Collins, 2008) that commanded the attention.

We ventured inside the school to the indoor gym and found an older group of sixteen years and older playing two-on-two basketball. These guys were also calm and focused. The energy here was a bit more intense than outside. They moved a bit more rowdy, rubbing and bumping shoulders, as they tried to get past each other to score a basket. There were yells here too but I would also call these "controlled." The raised voices had the function of making themselves audible over the bouncing ball and the squeaks of shoes moving across the gym floor. Even when the game got a little "rough" physically, there was no visible agitation. Imad calls it "very competitive but very fair." I understood what he meant when I saw high fives, handshakes, and smiles at the end of the game.

These scenes might be fairly mundane descriptions. Nothing out of the ordinary is taking place. Calm, subdued bodies playing together in a common tranquil mood. Yet, this mundanity and tranquility combined with a sharp focus and fast-paced momentum is exactly what is so important for this chapter, all the more since this atmosphere turned out not to be an exception, but rather the rule as a type of social and athletic ritual we observed. Also of importance, as we shall see, is what is *not* happening, that makes these activities so significant in their contributions to the participants' experiences.

The rituals on and off the court comprised the dynamics through which coaches and participants (more and less consciously) situationally achieved physical, cognitive, emotional, and moral alignment. This may sound grand but that is probably due to the grandness and abstractness that we often assign to social dynamics and processes. I hope that by keeping descriptions and analyses concrete and "mundane", as I have called it above, I can convey both the realness and everydayness of the interactions and their effects.

Firstly, drills, exercises and games occasioned an alignment of physical move-ments. With totally different movements from Samir's gym in the previous chap-ter, the dynamic of the basketball workout was comparable in that it induced bod-ies and minds to settle in the athletic ritual. Often the drills were micro-oriented, with attention to stance (how to place one's feet), dribbling technique, and use of arms and wrists when passing or shooting. Also, coaches focused on more "exter-nal orientation"; how do you advance across the court, where are your teammates and opponents? This looking across the court to see where others are, inevitably made their eyes pass by onlookers outside the courts and people looking down

from the balconies. This was apparent from "double-takes" I saw them do during play and short glances upward to surrounding buildings. The spectrum within which participants focused on gameplay was thus inherently broader than that of kick boxers. The latter's focus was on one other person with peripheral attention for the edges of the mat or the ring. The former had a similar focus on their direct surroundings, especially when in ball-possession or defensive position in proximity to the offender, but quite some attention – more than that of kick boxers – was needed for the rest of the court to keep orienting and adapting oneself to changing positions of multiple persons, making up the rhythm of the game.

We can certainly say that playing basketball crowded out other realities and effectuated cognitive alignment among participants, yet to a different extent and in different ways than on the kickboxing mat. Participants were not thinking of problems they might have at home or the several categories in which they could place their opponents (religious, sectarian, neighborhood, class). The sheer speed of the game did not give time for players to think linguistically and have words, ideas, or images to portray the other in one light or another – at least not to any extent that would have outward consequences. First and foremost, there were moving bodies, rhythms, arms and hands that tried to acquire the ball. In such situations, not only do bodies align, but for every player, body and mind – especially trained ones – align to optimally perform what the moment summons them to do. I did not notice differentiating behavior according to identity-markers on the court during gameplay. Often, I could not tell who was from which neighborhood or social background. Coaches would point out to me proudly who were of "Muslim" or "Christian" background and that they were playing together as "one team." The main social identity was for all intents and purposes the team membership.

However, I cannot claim that such crowding out was purely due to the immediacy and speed of the gameplay. As is known from many sports situations in Lebanon, it is far from inherent in sports that sectarian identity is crowded out. The opposite is often more prevalent (McClenahan, 2007) and can easily come to dominate the focus and (negatively) energize gameplay. In both StreetBall's and YoungSport's cases as we shall see, coaches actively contribute to "filtering" of on-court experiences through constant moral messages and in the structuring of their exercises and matches.

A StreetBall board member describes the context of the activities on the courts, "We want to use the courts, the playgrounds. For some time they've been locked up or destroyed. We started to rebuild some of them and help manage them. We just want them to be open. Many of them, you pay to use them. Not many are public. After the nineties they were shut down. People got into fights there. It was a place for hoodlums. So the municipalities said forget it… Playgrounds can be dangerous areas. In Chiyah we rebuilt a court. It was aban-

doned. We had good guys from the neighborhood and for three years we had good management." He explained that usually "gangs of kids" claim a certain playground as their own. They bully other groups. Sometimes these groups run along sectarian lines. On the Qasqas courts right on the border of different Sunni and Shiite neighborhoods young people for years bothered each other, but also Iraqi and Palestinian children and teenagers (most of them offspring of refugees) could hardly make use of the courts without running into trouble. StreetBall is especially active in the spring and summer. After that, StreetBall members do still play on the courts, on the condition that the courts are opened to the public. A lot of them wait for the next StreetBall season, especially the girls. "There's no courts that are safe for them now. Parents won't allow them to go either." This has gradually changed but the change has been frail. I have seen the Qasqas courts filled with people from different generations: adults playing among each other, adults playing with their children, teenagers playing together, all males as well as females. The StreetBall format has attracted girls from the beginning, "something you don't see when you organize soccer", a board member comments. Thirty to thirty-five percent of the participants are girls. Up to eleven years old the teams are mixed. From twelve onward they separate boys and girls because the physical differences become too great. "Mixing the teams actually helps calm the atmosphere. When it's just boys, it's more rowdy. With girls around they control themselves. They say "behave! Don't do stupid things! There's girls around!" It clearly helps also that StreetBall has female coaches who play well. Boys as well as girls look up to them and girls use these coaches as "ammo" in conversations with boys who try to belittle their skills.

Yet the threat of old dynamics resurfacing remained a possibility, especially in seasons without StreetBall programs. Their input seems to have a spillover to days when they are not present. This spillover is less apparent when further removed in time.

In this context, playing on the courts and the activities accompanying the gameplay, such as preparation, instruction, but also casually hanging out together, acquire specific meanings. Basketball-drills and social chatting are part of the same interaction. They talk about hobbies, work, movies, and games. Social behavior and the importance of school are recurrent themes. "I tell them they should go to school and do their best. I also say they shouldn't come to practice before they finish homework." The participants appreciated Imad's input. "Because of you I started going back to school," one of them says proudly with a smile. Another says, "I used to play cards in the street [for money]. Now I play basketball." Here again, the moral implication is implicit. They assume they have said enough when they make such statements. Along Michael's lines they used to do "nothing" and now they were a part of *something*.

Participants became physically, cognitively, and emotionally aligned with

each other. This did not only pertain to basketball; playing a good game or practicing well made them feel unified "on a higher level." The positive feelings that came with physical exercise and mutual *entrainment*, made participants receptive for each other's input and oriented to taking action. We can characterize this entrainment as collectively experiencing success. A feeling of victory, of being absorbed in the moment, while at the same time a feeling they transcend the moment. It is these moments of success that boost the momentum for longer term success, to which I will turn in the next sections.

The first signs of durable change become apparent when the attention for being a good basketball player and being "good" in general acquire overlapping symbolic meaning, as they do for Michael: "In this neighborhood there's two kinds of kids. There's kids who hang around outside, do nothing. Then you know at some point, it's gonna' go wrong. And then there's the kids who come to play sports. They do something with their time."

The symbolic emblems (the uniforms, songs, logos, mentioned in the previous section) expand in meaning; they stand not only for participating in a sports team, but also for a different way of life. This expansion is a durable connotation between basketball, doing homework, and "being a good kid." Who they are on the court carries over meaning for who they are elsewhere. This becomes possible because who they are and what they do elsewhere are explicit topics of conversation on and around the courts, and this has consequences for their desired ritual positions and participation. Conversational topics become symbols of the group and reminders of shared solidarity (Collins, 1981, p. 1000).

Symbolism goes beyond emblems and slogans. The sports programs take place on the courts in the middle of neighborhoods. They become arenas with spectators looking down from balconies. The programs have become symbols of activity, positivity, and determination. The boundaries of the ritual give the game a special dimension. It is very different from Samir's kickboxers (in Chapter 2) who are tucked away in a gym. Those athletes only come into public display during matches, while the basketballers are on constant display. The very physical arrangement of the programs carries symbolic value: the way the boundaries are organized and the bodies are adorned. The participants are constantly aware of being watched and have a special attraction on spectators. "I live upstairs. When I hear their voices, I can't not come. I have to be here", Michael relates. "People sit there on the balconies. This is something very special for this neighborhood." The participants have symbols that energize their participation, but through their public ritual participation, they also become symbols.

The dynamic of on-court players' interactions with off-court publics and balcony-perched spectators taxes the on-court ritual and feeds into it. We could say the on-court ritual is wrapped up in a broader off-court ritual. Both Street-Ball and YoungSport offset their programs from negative neighborhood tenden-

cies. Being good athletes goes hand in hand with being "good people." This is an explicit message and has come to be known throughout the neighborhoods where these activities take place. People on balconies then come to anticipate the atmosphere that these activities will bring and come to expect specific behavior from the involved participants. Thus, next to players feeding into each other's behavior, they are fed by wider publics that guide their moral orientations. To an extent, the success of the "inner-circle ritual" depends on or is at least augmented by the successful ritual of the outer rim. This is all the more the case when coaches and leaders explicitly confirm the dependence on such relations to their players.

Through the interactional dynamics of spectators observing, anticipating, and expecting, the players' awareness of this, visible in glances and double-takes on the court, and the priming of coaches toward these dynamics, the situation calls participants to constantly manage behavior, feelings, and determination. Being a part of StreetBall or YoungSport stands for something and against other things. You're either doing nothing or something. You either smoke, drink, and "wait" or you do sports. Constant reminders in speech, themes, and in the structure of activities work as support in mutual and self-regulation.

I would be over-reaching if I stated that participants internalized this regulation. This does happen for some, but most need regular "external" reinforcement to maintain the group discipline. The stabilizing effects seem to wane with lack of interactional encouragement. This is apparent from courts where StreetBall operates. When they are active in spring and summer, their values and conduct "spill over" on days of the week that they are not present. Going into the fall however old habits and street hierarchies resurface on many of the courts. The StreetBall rituals are in those cases not sustained or less prevalent.

4.3   Priming and directing experience

Of course participation in these programs is not a guarantee for a better life. Now, I shall pay some attention to diversity in responses and outcomes, and the extent to which program leaders can influence them. "It brings people together. Muhammad and George[12] start seeing each other as good players. In the tournaments we mix from different zones [neighborhoods, and thus religious-political backgrounds], make them one team […] We've never had a fight. They come to play. They don't wanna' lose the opportunities. It's very competitive but very fair."

Imad is excited and proud of his basketball programs and what they do for

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12 Imad here uses the names "Muhammad" and "George" as archetypical names for Muslim and Christian participants. They are two of the most often given names in the respective communities.

his participants. He does not feel he is exaggerating in the statement above, and he is certainly not lying. Yet, sometimes there are problems on the courts during their activities. But when he starts talking about the meaning and contribution of his work to society, he chooses – or, more likely, gets caught up in – a developmental point of view, emphasizing not every negative incident that takes place, but rather the direction he sees participants taking. He cannot help but be positive. A good example is a tournament that took place in Chiyah, where Imad grew up and still lives. A board member told me that they do tournaments all over the city, but not in the "rough neighborhoods" because "they don't accept a lot of outsiders coming in at once." He mentioned Hay al-Sellom, Ouzai, and Chiyah which are all city sections that have poor areas and slums. Throughout the city these areas have a reputation of being dirty and dangerous. Additionally, these neighborhoods are part of the Southern Suburbs which are known by outsiders as "Hezbollah's stronghold." Studies of political development narrate Hezbollah's dominance in the area (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002, pp. 9, 46; Shanahan, 2005, pp. 114-119). This often gives the impression of this part of the city as a single and unified space, while the actual urban areas are far more diversified than commonly admitted or realized (Deeb & Harb, 2013; Harb, 2009). According to the board member the tournament in Chiyah was a "disaster." Kids had thrown fireworks on the courts and shouted lewdly at girls. "It was bad." Imad, by contrast, was excited about this tournament and saw it as a breakthrough. "There was tension but nothing [bad] happened. There were no fights." I told him I had heard differently and mentioned the fireworks. "Yes, tension. But no fights," he responded. "You know that there are people who are afraid to come to the Suburbs [al-Dahieh, of which Chiyah is a part]." I knew. I used to be one of them. I did not tell him at that point because I thought it might estrange us at this point of the conversation, but probably more because I was embarrassed. I thought of how amazing it was that people could have instilled in me (and many others) such a distorted image of such a large portion of the Lebanese urban society. Imad continued, "But now there were kids from all over Beirut. From Borj Hammoud, Tari' el-Jdeedeh, … In the beginning there was tension, but in the end they accepted them. 'They're from among us' they said [Henneh men 'andna]. Even though our neighborhood is known for thugs and troublemakers [za'ran w mechkeljieh]. It's not true but this is what people say. And we did this [organized this tournament], and we broke down that idea. After the tournament we made food and ate together. And people came who weren't even part of the tournament and ate with us. It was so nice. It's like, you want to organize a tournament in Tripoli.[13] People will look at you and say 'what?!' "

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13 Imad was speaking while violent clashes were going on in Tripoli that were generally seen as a spillover of the Syrian civil war (Al-Akhbar-NNA, 2012; Naharnet-Newsdesk, 2012).

Imad here was an employee of his organization; he was also a host representing his neighborhood. From how he speaks we can see that he saw things from the perspective of the Chiyah-participants: "In the end they accepted them. They're from among us." He saw that the kids from Chiyah at some point embraced the outsiders. He also seemed out to prove that his neighborhood was not anything like the reputation it had throughout the city. "It's not true … we broke down that idea." For Imad, this event had special significance in light of ongoing political tensions and violent outbursts since 2005 (Achcar & Warschawski, 2007; Daily Star AFP, 2008; El-Ghoul, 2005; Jazeera, 2008; Zablit, 2008), which have made the antagonism between Shiite and Sunni Muslims a far more severe issue than any Muslim/Christian divide. Sometimes, commentators have even alluded to a "new green line" between these communities (Ballout, 2014).

I would not assert that either the board member or Imad had a "more accurate" understanding of the afternoon. They seemed rather to have a different focus and reworked any upcoming feelings and thoughts accordingly. The board member's frame was probably tournaments elsewhere in the city and *needed* success in Chiyah to compare to their other successes. Maybe he was also preoccupied with images he had acquired and brought into the situation about local "thugs and troublemakers." Such images no doubt corresponded with those of the "guests" from the other neighborhoods. Imad on the other hand was *invested* in making the tournament a success. The not so successful elements he labeled as "tensions" which, if he would put enough effort into it, would have to subside. His focus was on making positive encounters come about, and when they occurred they strengthened his mood and energy-levels and, with it, his experience of the entire afternoon.

There are indications of Imad's ability to make his perspective contagious, noticeable from the words they choose to express their point of view. Participants from Borj Hammoud (a predominantly Christian – and Armenian – working class neighborhood) and Tari' al-Jdeedeh (a mainly Sunni Muslim working class neighborhood with relatively large segments of poverty) saw it as an adventure to go into this Shiite part of the city. And they did feel discomfort, but they also had a story that they were proud to tell: they went to a part of the city, formerly "off limits" by custom and it turned out to be worth it.

Imad cannot "make" people experience something but he can *direct* participants' experiences. In using and re-using previously charged up symbols of belonging – such as the StreetBall uniforms, ID-cards, and slogans – and because he is a ritual symbol himself, he can command participants' attention and commitment. From previous successful interactions, they know that following Imad is rewarding.

This reproduction of perspectives was common and fairly effective in StreetBall and YoungSport's interactions. We see it in Eli's adopting Khalil's was of

speaking about religious-political traditions. We see it in Michael's dichotomous view of "kids who do nothing and kids who do something (good)", which protects him and with which he tries to protect others from debilitating and detrimental daily interactional temptations. YoungSport has shown Eli and Michael how not everything that is local is trustworthy – they provide new criteria for distinguishing what belongs to "us", and what is worthy of belonging to. Street-Ball shows that there other parts of the city – or mainly *people* from those parts – that participants can see as "of their own", instead of a threatening "other." Imad, Khalil, Hala, and their coaches see the multiplication of such views as their successes. Interestingly enough, so do their participants. They speak with pride and satisfaction of being able to distinguish what they do *not* want to belong to, and that they can go beyond formerly closed off community-boundaries to belong with others. Experiencing and learning about different ways of belonging is part of being successful.

For young people to find stability in themselves to do "the right thing," to find it in their environments, and to know how they can positively be part of something bigger than themselves are ever-changing and open-ended issues. It is not that encounters such as the tournament in Chiyah – whether disastrous, successful, or a bit of both – forever change participants' perceptions. For people's perceptions and emotional states to acquire more durability, they need repetitive interactions that keep reinforcing a similar focus and mood, until they come to expect it before it occurs, until perceptions have become sustained in durable symbols of their rituals (Collins, 2004, p. 81). And even then, this does not guarantee permanence. When the young people move to a different environment or for some other reason stop interacting in circles that reinforce this particular focus and mood, the coercive power of the symbols will wane, as pointed out with regard to the Qasqas playgrounds in the previous section.

What is more, young people lingering in the periphery of the rituals enjoy the energy radiating from it, but not enough to become enthralled by the common group symbols. This was the case for the teens throwing fire crackers while a basketball game was taking place. They were able to participate without investing themselves in the common focus and mood. Due to the porousness of the public ritual that is urban street-basketball, these participants have the leeway to profit from the emotional energy, while largely escaping fully invested participants' "righteous anger" as punishment for their desecrating the ritual.

4.4 Navigation through emotion-management

Imad's emotional labor

Over the course of a number of years I have gotten to know Imad and have built up impressions of who he is, as a private person and as an employee of the NGO in sports and community development. He has a sharp glance in his eyes and a perceptive mind; he thinks before he speaks and his input is valuable. He has an overall sympathetic demeanor. He listens, tries to understand others, and seeks common ground in conversations. He does not usually think in common or prevalent stereotypes. He is rather out to understand others for who they are, not for the social and political labels they carry. He likes to joke and he uses jokes to bring things into perspective: to drive his points home, to critique society, or to show how things are not as bad as they seem. He has a soft smile. He is not necessarily a confrontation seeker, but he is not afraid of it either. He appreciates honesty and has a strong sense of righteousness. He wants to be there for unfortunate people, and looks for ways to contribute to alleviate their suffering. He is dependable, trustworthy, patient, soft-spoken, and kind.

On the public playgrounds where he organizes his programs he is someone who commands respect. He prepares his work thoroughly and participants as well as coaches under his watch admire him and appreciate him. This is the case in his own neighborhood where he grew up, but also across town in other neighborhoods he has earned the respect of children, teenagers, and their parents. He wants things to be done the right and correct way and pays attention to detail.

In interaction with his participants and the coaches he supervises, he *is* the message that he brings. When he advises or otherwise speaks into young people's lives, his convictions emanate from him. He has a compelling way of speaking that the people he addresses seem unable to circumvent. It is as if they have no choice but to receive his advice, but not because he is forcing himself on them. What he says connects with the young people's relevancies and rings true. But also, *he* connects with his participants.

These are impressions that are difficult to share from within the perspective of Interaction Ritual Chains. The question there would be which interactions call out in him forthrightness, humor, involvement and care for disadvantaged people. Then it is not Imad who possesses these characteristics, but social rituals that evoke responses, advancing ritual solidarity. Though such a perspective has brought me excellent entry points and elaborations for analysis, I here need to explore the idea of Imad "owning" his convictions and actions.

Imad's falling together of his verbal message, his demeanor and his actions does not mean he never makes mistakes, or that if we thoroughly analyzed his daily life we would find zero contradictions or discrepancies between what he says and does. The point is more that *he believes* and is invested in a moral mis-

sion that becomes easily apparent from the ways he deploys himself in his work. And next to his work, it shows in other activities in his life (such as his volunteer work for a scouting organization). That daily life is filled with social encouragement for that mission from his mother, friends, and work. But also, *he* strings those influences together into a cohesive whole. He makes seemingly disparate experiences and input work together for the sake and good of his convictions. This sense-making that he does, this reasoning from different perspectives that he encounters, and determining what is the best way to *feel* about those situations, is Imad's emotion-work. And when he does it for the sake of the advancement of his NGO's mission, it is his emotional labor.

This shows us that Imad "stands in the world" in a certain way. He carries his "way" into different interactions. To an extent those interactions shape him; we will see a different Imad when he leads teenagers on an inner-city playground from when he has a meeting with an official from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, or from when we are in "downtown Dahieh" watching a football game and smoking *argileh* (water pipe). Yet, in each of those instances, he is "all about" making a difference for young people through "social work and sports" as he calls it. This stems from a compassion for the unfortunate and a conviction that he can make a difference. With this overarching life theme and attitude, he is an important influence in any of his daily interactions. And he has that attitude *before* he enters those encounters. Certainly, he was not born that way. There have been multiple important and regular interactions that have contributed to who he is today. But who he is, has now become a fairly stable force by virtue of his experience, but also of his *will*. This will and vision sustain their energy from different regular interactions, but they also remain intact and consistent through a thorough work of reflection, navigation, and appropriation. It is the emotion-work of a convinced self that exists outside the interactions that shape and mold it.

Boundary-management: Allowing accountability and ambiguity

Thinking of why he is different from others he grew up with in the neighborhood Imad mentions his mom, being a part of the Scouts, and, more indirectly, his friends. Themes that emerge are clear dynamics of accountability in which he has learned to relate himself to others. Another theme is allowing ambiguity – this has become pivotal to Imad's boundary-management. Similarly to Street-Ball's porous game boundaries that need active management to promote fluent gameplay, Imad seems acutely, if perhaps tacitly, aware of the ambiguity of social "boundaries" in reaching out to others.

His relationship to his mother was one of accountability. "Maybe because my mom was always concerned with us. For example, I went to play football. If I came back late, she'd want to know why. Where were you? I have neighbors for instance, they don't ask their children. They go out and come back without

saying a thing." Home was a place of accountability, while for others it seemed a place to come for food and a bed. For sure it was ties like these that made it possible for Imad to be exposed to neighborhood temptations and dangers without being tempted by them. If his mom found out, he would have to explain himself; an undesirable prospect.

At some point, he joined the Scouts. He mentioned that had changed him. Before, he was mainly in his own environment, raised by people who lived through terrible atrocities of war and who had had no support in processing their traumas. These traumas were present but not always recognized; they came out in any which way and became a part of normal life, alongside suspicion, despise, and outright hatred for other groups. Then during scouting activities, Imad came in contact and soon made friends with peers from groups about whom he previously only heard negative things. The scouting concept with its uniforms, creeds, and conduct, backgrounded other identity-categories and forced members to think of each other in terms of scouting-criteria. This opened up his imagination to whom he could view as "us" and "them." He came to realize that the simple ideas about "others" he grew up with did not hold up against his own experiences. This was a valuable lesson he would carry with him and later made it easy to adopt a similar set of principles in the StreetBall approach.

Something that stood out to me about Imad was his name. In Lebanon, people determine where you are from and what your religion is from your name. They are able to distinguish between Muslims and Christians, and also between Shiites and Sunnis. Some names, however, are neutral, which is the case for Imad's first name as well as his family name. He plays with that in his work on playgrounds. He can see people wondering after they have not been satisfied by the answer because they do not yet have a definite box in which to put him, but he leaves them hanging. He might be one of "them" or one of "us." This is something he saw his scout-leader do. "He also had a neutral name. And he never told anyone what he was. He just leaves people thinking about it. I always liked that about him." Imad seemed to have little problem allowing for ambiguity, especially when this could help, according to him, make room for new ways of connecting with others.

This attitude helped him when he ventured off to basketball courts that had reasonable coating and actual baskets. As years passed, and post-war urban renewal continued, the good courts increased and Imad knew where to find them. He had come to see and chart the city differently from most people. He did not see neighborhoods (only) as "belonging" to a certain community that may or may not have been an enemy of his community. He saw them in terms of whether or not they had good basketball courts.

His friends are from different educational backgrounds and do not all have the same religious backgrounds. "Our parents don't think like most. That's why

we're friends. The parents, they grew up in war, so they raise their kids that way. 'Don't play there!' They live in a war-like atmosphere ['aisheen bi-jaww harb]." Imad is happy that he got to know different parts of Beirut, instead of staying entrenched in his own community. "It's something that relaxes you."

Sense-making through complaining and joking

Important moments of reflection and processing happen during times he spends with friends. They complain, joke, and recount events with each other. The outcome of these meetings is repeatedly relief, boosts of encouragement and, more than occasionally, inspiration for new initiatives. It is in these conversations, which usually begin with casual back and forth, that they contrived successful strategies for StreetBall activities and other sports programs, and set their minds and bodies in motion.

The complaints and jokes often pertain to current events, with the aim of putting them in the right perspective. A recurrent pattern in the conversation is that complaining is allowed, even cheered for, but eventually someone turns the conversation and steers them toward a more constructive angle. I do not know how aware they are of this dynamic but it is a crucial deviation from the standard Lebanese ranting as insiders will undoubtedly affirm. An example is Imad's following complaint of Lebanese complaints. "If you're a proper Lebanese, you complain about electricity, fuel, busy traffic, … Is there no electricity? Turn on the generator! Why is fuel more expensive? Coz it's more expensive everywhere. Why are the roads so busy? Coz people wanna' go places. Yeah, what do you want?"

Or a recounting of a joke by the composer and stage artist Ziad al-Rahbani, playing with an often used Lebanese phrase "Where is the state?" Imad: "He's so funny. You see him going around, asking 'where is the state?' And no one can find him. But that's true. You even see parliament members doing it on TV. They say things like 'Yes we really think the state should do something about it.' And then I'm like, wait a minute. Aren't you working for the state? Who are you talking about then?!" [we all laugh]

The complaining and joking they do has a double function, of which each of the above examples reveals one. First of all, it helps them distance themselves from some of the main discourses that reverberate throughout society, which could easily bog them down or put them on a wrong track. It is easy to bring "facts" into the conversation and intentionally or not create an atmosphere of gloom and resentment. Imad in the first example reversed this pattern by having a solution or less gloomy answer for all the standard questions he hears around him so much. The second example is an implicit criticism of the lack of functionality of the state and some of its institutions. Yet, this is not an outright dismissal of the state as an actor in their lives. In the same conversation Imad

relates that he has regular contact with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. He seeks their cooperation for his initiatives, applies for funding and has at least some hope that this will yield results. Through their regular conversations, they stay critical of both popular and official discourses, without becoming so critical that it would discourage them from all initiative. Imad has in these conversation a protection of his mind from being sucked in to ideas that go against his mission and he protects his emotional inner life from negativity that could deplete his energy, as it does for so many others around him.

Interaction rituals and emotion-management

As I got to know him, I noticed Imad's attitude was different from many people around me. He had an acute awareness of all the disadvantages of social, economic, and political circumstances that strangled hope and thwarted advancement of anyone trying to get ahead in life, such as the Iraqi refugees for whom he organized sports programs. At the same time, this awareness did not consume him or debilitate him as I have seen it do for so many other young Lebanese. It was as if he had an antidote against many of the socio-psychological ills plaguing the post-war generation. Imad has through his processing developed views on social issues of his generation and ways to manage his cognition and emotion to navigate toward his aims. Here follow some examples:

Imad sees depression as a big problem among people from his generation. "They're twenty-five or older and have no education, a job, or savings. Or some have saved money, five thousand dollars, and they buy a car instead of paying tuition. They say they can't go back to university because they're 'too old.' But for me, I've been to Denmark, and there it's normal to study when you're older […] I don't care that I didn't finish yet." He quit studying when he was twenty-two and returned at twenty-four. "There are people who say, 'You still didn't graduate?!' or there's guys [shabab] younger than me who say 'I graduated and you still didn't.' I don't care. So what? If I have to choose between making money and developing myself, I choose this […]"

Another problem he sees is the "hurry" or unrealistic aims young people set for themselves. "Guys who want to work, they wanna' be a manager [mudir] right away, not a clerk [muwazzaf]. But if you go to Hamrah, there's young people who go to university and work as waiters, so they're not all like that. If I wouldn't be a tutor, I would have another job. Whatever I can get [ha-yalla shi]. I don't care what I do. This is for a limited time." Also for the longer term, he puts his career-prospects at odds with what he sees people doing around him. "I don't worry about money. I want to be comfortable [mertah], so to speak, that I can live. If StreetBall succeeds or fails, I'm not counting on it. It's more that there's so many people waiting for it. That's my motivation'. 'Who thinks of himself goes into business. Who thinks of others works with an NGO." Imad made around

four to five hundred dollars a month in tutoring. He finished his Bachelor studies in 2013 at twenty-six and got a Master's degree a year later in Sports Management and Marketing. He is currently StreetBall's managing director.

Imad's emotion management through reflective conversation has the aim of preserving a sense of ownership and sanity in life and work. We see here "a developed inner life" (1983, p. 216) that can cope with the different influences coming at him and learning the abilities to direct how to feel about those influences. This self develops both in and outside interaction. We can view even the reflections as a search for emotional energy, as Imad becomes someone *through* the conversations, being reconstituted and redirected in the group. But he clearly also *is* someone who brings something *to* the conversation. I deem the following snippets of conversation as telling of both the strength of interaction rituals and emotion management.

Imad tells me: "Lately I haven't been doing so well. I had three options for a summer job but they all three fell through. I am now teaching myself some computer programs. I'm learning to work with Excel, an accounting program, and a program on statistics. Maybe I'll need it later, maybe not. I just don't want to just sit at home, feeling depressed." […] Osman adds: "'It is not good to sit still. Like me, I'm now working for a graphic designer. I could just keep doing the things I always did. But I always look at how I can learn things. How I can do it different and better."

Imad has here pre-pondered and aligned his ideas with schemes of interpretation and feeling to direct himself. Subsequently, Osman receives Imad's preparation. The interaction is more an affirmation of Imad's prior emotion-work, not so much a constitution of it.

From these conversation we can deduce principles that Imad and his friends have for understanding the world around them and what the best ways of feeling about them are, with regard to ideals that they foster. If I would have to summarize these ideals in a few words, they would be *momentum* and *connectivity*. To begin with the latter, the dominant attitude is one of entrenchment in one's own familiar community, at the cost of familiarity with or respect for others. The set-up of StreetBall's programs but also Imad's daily life is testimony of a challenge to such entrenchments. Their parents, who are "different from others", Imad's love for basketball that made him look for courts across sectarian boundaries, his experiences with the Scouts and StreetBall have all contributed to and strengthened his propensity for crossing boundaries and bringing others along with him in the process.

Osman's stance on "momentum" is clear when he says "It's not good to sit still." This is Imad's point of staying active at home. He did not have a job for a while and his idea was to make use of his time that would benefit him once he did. Viewed a bit more skeptically it can seem a feeble attempt at pushing away

feelings of desperation. Exploring Excel tables in order not to become depressed. Yet, we can also see it as a wise circumvention of being absorbed by a dominant idea that "it's impossible to get ahead in Lebanon." Imad and his friends do not see giving in to such an idea as "facing reality", but rather as an energy-depleting distraction. They construct their reality by staying "on the move" which protects them emotionally from becoming overwhelmed and subdued. Their idea is not that there are no opportunities in Lebanese society, but that they are hard to come by. They need a long-windedness to weather spells of discouragement.

Looking at the conversation as an interaction analyst, I noticed something else. At first, Imad was clearly low on energy, with downcast eyes, talking slowly, admitting he was not doing well. This was not an Imad caught up in stimulating, focusing, and energizing interaction rituals. His attention was scattered, unfocused. The initiative of self-teaching administrative computer programs reveals an Imad attempting to keep himself out of depression "on his own strength." This is totally different from the Imad fired up on center-court, or who stares down trouble-makers on any playground throughout Beirut. I witnessed a fairly defeated Imad who did not know what to do, and did not see a way out, yet mustered some semblance of positivity, because he knows he ought to.

Then during the meeting something happened. We talked about different topics. He talked about a girl he liked and met at a party recently. Osman and he told me about getting married in Lebanon (see also Section 6.4), politics, the war in Syria. Yet more important than the content was the change in Imad's demeanor. His speech time in the conversation increased and clearly became more than Osman's or mine. He would go off about funny situations in conversation with the girl, about something a politician a said. Sometimes we would interject but only to underscore or elaborate points that he made. He became the tone-setter (Collins, 2004, p. 135) and he pretty much controlled the speech rhythm. His eyes were not downcast anymore but turned to us and sharp (as I know them to usually be). He seemed (at least temporarily) to have forgotten what had been bogging him down. While emotion-management at home helped him from becoming debilitated, the conversation we were having seemed for him – but also for us – an invigorating interaction ritual, "picking him up" so to speak. At the end, he proposed we meet again soon to smoke water-pipe – always a good indicator that the current meeting did him good and made him want more.

Boundary- and emotion-management then are the outcomes of a continuous work that takes place in chains of interaction rituals. Yet, they also occur during crucial moments of reflection, retreated from the world, processing interactions and negotiating with oneself, deciding what recent impressions *should* mean to them. This is still a different issue from what they eventually *will* mean to them, but the point is that moral contemplation is an important input for interactions

(cf. Joseph, 2012). In Imad's case, such contemplation has directed him, shaped his convictions, and it brings his specific quality to interactions on the playgrounds, in government ministry offices, and in conversations with me.

Discussion: Managing boundaries and momentum

YoungSport and StreetBall invite their participants into new patterns of actions and reactions. Life changes at the moment young neighborhood residents decide to become players. They learn rhythms and patterns that do not exist in the same ways in other aspects of life. Avenues of success become possible that were not available or imaginable before. Rhythmic successes of the game dynamics and social successes of scoring and winning. The appeals of these successes become symbols of attraction, of an enduring desire to be part of them.

Another "game" which has in ways even higher stakes is one where coaches actively redraw and delineate "moral zones." They critique ethnic entrenchment in communal in-groups in which people distance themselves from stereotyped "others." They demand of their participants a restraint in taken for granted collective negative feelings toward those others and an opening up to a new set of feeling rules. They are asking of their participants some serious emotion-work.

What makes participants susceptible to these efforts are not necessarily and definitely not only the beliefs in moral messages. Rather, it is the mixing and meshing of motions and emotions that help participants align on a basic and primal level. Through them, moral convictions eventually become "natural" additions as group symbols emanating from what the group "stands for." This does not mean that these moral convictions are not real. If anything they are *more* real because of how rewarding athletic activities, constructive group dynamics, and powerful moral convictions line up, intertwine, and mutually reinforce each other. Reorganizing rhythms of solidarity from "street orientations" in the drug trade and volatile interactions, but also from communal insulation and "numbing materialism" to the rituals on the basketball courts entails then a meddling with the interactional dynamics of focus and mood, or more poetically, of longing and belonging.

The relative straightforwardness of this moral reorientation has advantages of clarity and predictability. There might, however, be some danger to this new moral "zoning ordinance" since it suggests new thoughts but not necessarily new *ways* of thinking. Dichotomous classifications have not seemed to evolve into something that allows more complexity, the lines between "us" and "them" might simply have been redrawn. Before it was Muslims and Christians, then it became "those who do something" versus "those who do nothing." There are signs suggesting more refined ways of thinking can have a chance.

For one thing the expanding world experience brings with it quite some marvel and amazement. "I didn't know it could be like this," is probably a good way to express what young people go through. The realization of having judged people from a distance and kept them at a distance for "no good reason" has huge potential for reflective impetus. Furthermore, participants themselves seem the biggest recruiters for these neighborhood activities. Rather than judging others for being judgmental, they appear to be willing to reach out and "testify" of a newly found conviction that is worth spreading because of the "poverty" of the old one. Framing the experience as "eyes opening up" and a desire to help others do the same, helps at least the likelihood of questioning and critiquing mechanisms that tend to frame social orders as inherently containing dichotomous oppositions. Imad, Khalil and Hala do in their ways invite such reflection and this can be a remedy. Yet, since they are also the proponents of the new frame and its oppositions, the opportunities for allowing complexity remain vulnerable. The endeavor to bring their participants into "active" frames of mind almost brings with it a "duty" to oppose it with inactivity and apathy. Other than that, any frame loses rhetorical strength with too much complexity because of the risks of confusing otherwise clear-cut, predictable and stabilizing convictions.

For Imad, expanding his world was something that *relaxed* him. He contrasted such calm with the anxieties he saw in many people who remained entrenched in their communities and imaginations. His story reveals a sophistication in "boundary-management" going beyond simple "we-they" binaries. Through his experiences in scouting and venturing off into the city in search for basketball courts he became *inclined* to openness and curiosity about "others." Also in specific instances when we see him "in action", such as the basketball tournament in Chiah, and others saw the disruptive young people as "rioting hoodlums", Imad's judgment tended to be milder. He saw them as kids who wanted to be part of the excitement but did not quite know how. Although Imad does not usually allow activities to be disrupted at the expense of the positive experience of the majority, he does actively look for inclusive approaches, also toward those who "do nothing."

Next to stabilizing and relaxing practices, Imad's story displays a kind of opposite dynamic. When he starts feeling bogged down, he looks for ways, and friends encourage him, to regain energetic momentum. In his moment of diminishing summer prospectives and his struggle to get out of a "bogged down state of mind", we can see the marked differences between on the one hand stable and stabilizing emotional states and on the other hand, passive acquiescence to a status quo or "crushed spirits." While Imad is "relaxed" he seems to also be able to stir up in himself a "healthy restlessness" going against prevailing tendencies of defeatism.

These dynamics of stability, belonging and restlessness exert an attraction on

participants. The longing to be a part of this extends beyond the rituals that generate it. Young basketballers love being in the *place* where the rituals take place, even apart from their actual occurrence. The common mood, shared focus, and emotionally experienced rewards "spill over" to moments outside the rituals. Participants then feed on past rituals and anticipate future ones. Being present in these settings becomes a symbolic expression of alignment. "I belong to this setting and what it stands for."

An important qualification to these dynamics is that there are limits to the spill-overs. The social and athletic basketball rituals of StreetBall and YoungSport are quite regulated and geared toward specific outcomes of stabilizing and focusing participants' minds and bodies. When the direct reinforcements and reminders of such regulations fade away, the evolved expectations of players and spectators retain some guiding influence, but over time they appear to "loosen up" and eventually become (pleasant) memories. Fired up emotions evoked either by game-play or other street dynamics seep onto the courts unchecked and before they know it, the playgrounds resemble battlegrounds that StreetBall and YoungSport have worked so hard to pacify.

Yet there is reason to assume possibilities for situation transcending alignments. Michael and Eli are examples of young participants who over the years have become part of daily practices and these have instilled in them a fairly lasting "vision and division" of their world (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19). In Imad who has committed to similar ideals even longer, such a stability in social networks and in mindset is apparent that we can typify him not merely a product of interactions, but oftentimes a producer of interactional dynamics. A long term investment in and commitment practices has made room for an inner life that generates, or at least reinforces, stabilized an stabilizing cognitive, emotive, and body-based patterns and rhythms.

5 ELEVATION AND DESTINATION

How do young people become successful when the "deck is stacked against them," meaning here that their "natural" daily routines can easily consist of mainly debilitating social rituals? In previous chapters I described how energizing interactions boosted young people's morale and momentum, and I highlighted the settling and soothing influences of group interactions in the midst of the tug and pull of detrimental alternatives. In this chapter I zoom in on Daniel and Farid, two young men who found themselves in the "lower social spaces" of the two observed cityscapes. A central theme will be to track their "navigation" in and between different interactions.

This will require a combination of attentiveness to slow long-term developments as well as an alertness for how different interactional settings "call out" what is mobilized in the moment. Not an easy task as these views usually crystalize from separate research endeavors. Yet, I hope that if I can give an adequate impression of how such perspectives can be used complementarily, the enriching insights will encourage greater attempts at mixed methods in this respect.

Daniel's and Farid's struggles consist of managing to avoid interactions that undermine them and deplete their energy, and to engage in those that build them up. This chapter is a description of how their daily social make-up improved, abruptly and dramatically for one and gradually for the other, and how this positively affected the young men's energy levels, expectations and determination. Yet it is also an account of living in tensions, as neither of them was able to make a complete or immediate break from all undesired connections.

Both Daniel and Farid are part of so-called ethnic minorities in their countries of residence, endowed with multiple negative (at times contradictory) social stereotypes in their immediate and wider surroundings. And, as is most often the case in any society, the fact that they are male, young and of modest means compounds and exacerbates their stereotypes against them. In the descriptions underneath I will attempt to show that ethnicity, class, age, and gender are not so much clarifying categories for how young people's development will take shape. They are rather, to a greater extent than often assumed, dependent variables whose meanings, relevance and importance are modified contingents on localized and unfolding interactions. The opening up or diminishing of social opportunities then is associated with how they "do" their ethnicity, youthfulness and

maleness, and what their interlocutors in each instance make of that. This does not mean that people engage each other as "blank slates" but that all interactants engage have situated "agendas" for what they choose to emphasize and deemphasize. Such agendas are not totally rational endeavors, since they are also swept up and "pulled into the action by a larger force" (Collins, 2004, p. 206).

As for experiencing success, the descriptions in this chapter give opportunities for exploring the interconnectedness of interaction ritual chains, emotionmanagement and insights on more durable dispositions. In Daniel's case there seems to be a clear case of changing interactions rituals making available more constructive emotion-management, and eventually a renewed internal stability, be it of a precarious nature. Farid's development in this respect is less straightforward. This may be due to Daniel's far more dire circumstances – any improvement was bound to have more dramatic and visible effects than those of Farid's whose deprivation was more relative. This, however, makes his case no less complicated or relevant.

5.1   Daniel's catalyzing event

Daniel was eighteen years old when I met him. He has a Congolese father and a Syrian mother. His father was sent back to Congo because his papers were not in order. Before that, his parents had marital problems and eventually separated. Daniel lived with his father in Lebanon. His mother lives in Syria with her daughter, near the Iraqi border. Daniel was born in Syria and has lived most of his life in Lebanon. He is a tall, athletic, handsome young man with a black African appearance and an excellent command of the Arabic language. He is enrolled in a vocational school and is studying to be a car mechanic. Later he would like to start a business, make money and at one point get to his mother and sister in Syria. Then they would move to Lebanon or another country. Congo is not a likely destination. His relationship with his father is not that good. He was never really there for them and drank too much. Daniel clearly did not like talking about him and did not say much more than that.

Daniel loves dancing, basketball and inline skating. He also plays football every day at recess or after school. When people see him dancing or play basketball they do not believe he is eighteen years old, or that he is not enrolled in any club. To be this good, he must have trained for years, so he should be older, according to them. Daniel tells me he is his own teacher. He practices whenever and wherever he can. He has no money for dance classes or a basketball club. He lives in an orphanage and is bused back and forth between home and school. He is adamant about doing things by himself. "From when I was little, I learned something: everything you want, you can do it without anyone else teaching

you. Challenge your fear. I had a younger brother. Me and my sister are twins. We have a brother, younger than us, nine years old. There's something called the back-flip. I don't know if you know it. So he's nine years old. My dad was enc[ouraging]… telling him, 'join a club and learn it.' He went to a club for a day and came back. He said 'I don't like the club' and whatever. He told them. 'I don't like it, the club.' I told him 'Why.' He said 'I wanna' do the back flip without a club.' I told him 'you can't' and I don't know what. In a week he was doing it, and without anyone. After that, eh, how can I put it, he got a problem, and he died [at age eleven, from an accident involving electricity]. From that time, I started doing things like my brother. I did everything by myself. And I started teaching my friends there at the Mission [the orphanage]. […] I started learning everything like my brother learned. Everything by myself. And I started teaching at the Mission there, […]. I teach dancing, I teach roller-blading. There's the younger kids there. I started teaching them. Until now, I learn everything by myself."

In what follows I will describe and analyze Daniel's life more in-depth. Partly I will try to do justice to the analysis Daniel gives, but I will also show that he himself gives an opening for a different or additional reading, as to what could be his "catalyzing event."

Insider on the outside

Lebanon is a heavily segregated society in which racist attitudes and discriminatory practices are not thematized and largely taken for granted as normal ways of dealing with "others," save for a few intellectuals and other social dissidents who hardly have anyone's ear. "Blacks" (*as-sud*) are simply "different," meaning they endure all kinds of stereotyped prejudices including not being smart enough for difficult work, not being trustworthy, and being "savage." Similarly, there are stereotypes for many foreign laborers such as Filipinos, Bengalis, Sri Lankans, and Indians. Arabs are generally held in higher esteem but Palestinians, Syrians, Egyptians, and Gulf-Arabs receive their own labels, as do the different Lebanese communities of each other. This makes for an intricate perceptual structure of we-they dichotomies, depending on who is doing the perceiving. Daniel notices this only too well in daily life: "I consider this my country but in this country they don't treat the stranger [al-gharib] like this is his country. I have friends and I know they like me […] But to come, just like that, to get to know someone, then it's like, "You, we don't like you. You're not from the country. We don't wanna' be with you" [Ma mnahki ma'ak]. I notice this a lot. Not a little. How long have I been in Lebanon? I don't have a lot of friends. I can count them on my fingers. Here at school, near my house, in Jounieh. That's it." I knew what he meant from the occasions that I have spent time in the city with "brown" and "black" people. They get different looks and are generally differently approached

from what are considered Western foreigners, who seem to more easily encounter politeness and civility. People who dress in what generally considered "shabby" clothes can also receive less positive treatment than "well-dressed" people. People can therefore go to considerable lengths to dress "up."

For Daniel, solutions are less straightforward. He cannot change the color of his skin. He has other tactics such as ignoring people's behavior, having stare-downs, or even engaging others playfully. But they are all tiring, and having social solutions for his problems does not make the situations anything to look forward to. The fact is that any trip through town entails dozens of interactional micro-rituals of frowns and glances that subtly or more overtly bring him down.

Restoring the damage
Daniel had a lot going against him. A society that saw Africans as second-class residents, who can never legally become citizens, parents who were not or could not be there for him, and a lack of material resources to work on securing his future. But all that seemed background against something more important: his determination to make something of himself. He taught himself to dance and play sports because he knew he could not expect much from others. He would have loved to be a gym-teacher. From what I gathered, it would be his first choice. But he said that because he is not Lebanese that would not work. "They would not accept me." Unfortunately, as far as I can tell, this is not an exaggeration. He is now learning a trade and would like to start his own business, though this too would not be easy, considering the described dynamics. Yet Daniel hopes to gain some independence this way. "As an employee for others, you're not at ease. You can't do what you want. Do this, do that. Take this, bring that. You're not working for your own interests."

He is enrolled in a vocational school for teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is situated on the outskirts of Beirut and pays much attention to individual development. The school is part of an NGO that also runs an outreach and rehabilitation program for juvenile law-offenders. Their school educates a hundred to a hundred-and-twenty students per year, in four vocations: general mechanics, car mechanics, electronics, and carpentry. The director explains, "When the student gets his Brevet, he becomes a recognized craftsman (mʻallim) in his field." It is a boys-only school as many of the students also live there. The numbers of Muslims and Christians are about equal. The school is one of only a handful organizations in Lebanon that reach out to homeless children and teenagers. Dr. Abboud, the school director, who is also a priest and former sociology professor, described Daniel's turnaround to me in quite dramatic terms: "[…] His father left him. […] He was sleeping in the bushes [al-hursh] for a year. Two ladies in the building nearby saw him sleeping in the bushes. […] Summer and winter. They called an executive of social affairs in Ayn el-Remmaneh. A [former

university] student of mine. They brought him to me. He was sixteen, meaning sixth grade. Extremely violent. This year he came out first [top of his class]. Imagine how smart he is. But his aggression was his handicap." Wilma, a local social worker who arranged this conversation, asked, 'Is he staying with you?'" "I got him a place to stay at [an orphanage]," Dr. Abboud answered. "He spends weekends there. Over the course of one year, he changed ninety percent [of his attitude and behavior]." "Because he felt safe," Wilma chimed in. Dr. Abboud nodded, "He was reassured and at ease."

The school has for Daniel become a lifeline pulling him out of a hopeless situation. The director's description is the stuff of Hollywood scripts. He came from nothing, sleeping outside, alone and destitute, to being the top of his class. He can be seen as the poster-boy example of what happens when interaction rituals improve. Before, all he had were his hundred daily debilitating micro-rituals, and at some point, it seems, *no* interactions with humans or at least of human dignity. He ended up living like an animal. Abboud took him in. He saw that Daniel was going to be a tough case, but he was not the director's first. He supplanted Daniel. He extracted Daniel from his detrimental cycle of being dehumanized and dehumanizing others, and submerged him in the rituals of the school. Coming in at sixteen, Daniel had only had a few years of formal schooling. The teachers helped him and he worked hard. "At first I wasn't succeeding at all. I was at school but I wasn't passing. I was always thinking of my family. What can I do? How can I see them? How can I go back? How this, how that' […] Now I'm not good at all my classes. I'm top of my class for Math, English, Sports. But there are things, they're not easy. You have to take them. I didn't succeed in there at first. Science for instance. There are a lot of things I should have taken before I came to seventh grade' [septième]." He made up for them in what seems like no time at all and when I asked him how he felt about the upcoming exams, he smiled, "I'm gonna' pass."

At the school, politics, religion, and socio-economic background do not dominate social interactions. It is a catholic school, so there are religious symbols and practices such as crosses and prayers before meals. Yet, these do not appear to be cause for any sectarian strife in ways that Lebanese communities seem so often to assert themselves opposite others. The religious objects seem present without taking up much physical space or attention-space. The prayers are collective moments but it is clear that a large portion of the students are simply going through the motions. And maybe not much more is expected. It is the motions that stir or, more likely in this case, subdue emotions (Collins, 2004, p. 64).

His daily schedule is completed at the orphanage. He summarizes it a bit glumly, "I consider it my home, but it's always less comfortable than having your own place. I can't go places with friends or go out at night. There's nothing like

that. I go from there [the orphanage] to here [the school] and here to there […] That's their rules [nizam]. […] I finish here, there's a bus that comes and takes me from here. Then I go there. That's it. I arrive, eat, study. At 10 [PM] I eat again, dinner. I go up, shower, sit in the living room. Then I go sleep. The next day it's the same thing. Next day, same thing." From his tone and the way he recounted the routine, it seemed to be more something he endured than appreciated. Yet I could not help noting the stark contrast with where he was two years earlier, sleeping in the bushes.

In between and throughout these rituals Daniel is "one of the guys." They learn together, play football together, laugh together. His daily presence there gives him strength. His experiences give him courage and hope. Not all Lebanese are racists after all. Daily interactions at school partly restore the damage that was done to him in the past, and is still done to him elsewhere in the city.

5.2   Solo-rituals and tension-management

Self-entrainment and ritually ingrained embodiment

As far as Daniel is concerned, his brother dying was a catalyst for his autodidactic convictions and practices. I will later in this section discuss this more elaborately. However his self-teaching discipline came about, the result is an impressive regime of exercise and relentless repetition. The emotional and physical aspects of this process deserve attention because of their self-perpetuating and transformational effects.

I do not see Daniel's story as an example of disadvantages being advantages, pushing him to work even harder or do even better, as is sometimes said to be the case (cf. Gladwell, 2013). We could indeed wonder whether Daniel's brother would have learned to do a back flip, or if Daniel would ever have reached the high levels of proficiency in dancing and sports if the Lebanese were more welcoming to black Africans. Might they have had less reason to isolate themselves into solo-rituals? Perhaps. Yet it would be over-reaching to portray Daniel's as a story of success *resulting* from the odds against him. A year earlier he was living on the streets, shunned in every way. Nothing (or very little) in him was positively charged during that period that would have sent him into any exercising frenzy. His lack of human and humanizing interactions were a definite disadvantage. His ensuing aggression as his default expression was "his handicap." Daniel needed a break in this chain of events and he was unlikely to accomplish this by himself. Abboud stepped in.

This also debunks the idea that Daniel is "self-made" or that it was *only* his hard work and impressive character that have pulled him through. He needed others to get him off the streets, to pay for his housing and schooling, and to

tutor him in making up for years of not being in school. The interactions and practices at his school and the regime at the orphanage thus ameliorated his quality of life, his social possibilities, and his general outlook. These interactions clearly comprise a fertile environment from which Daniel's spirits and motivation took flight. When he would show off his skills in small spontaneous performances, or when people happened to see him practice, he would usually receive their admiration in awestruck gazes and compliments. This functioned as confirmatory rewards for his dedication and added to a chain of improved interaction rituals that helped Daniel in prompting himself into activity.

Recognizing this improved social context, I would still like to pay special attention to the fact that Daniel's skill-development as a dancer and athlete was largely a solistic endeavor, withdrawn from interaction. Given that his technical improvement did not come through input from others such as a coach or a team, his exercising seemed to have built-in self-perpetuating qualities that need further examining.

His solo-practicing we can see as "interstices" between interaction rituals, or as *inner* interaction rituals that took place in his mind, in between the school's *external* rituals (Collins, 2004, p. 219).[14] It seems that Daniel was caught up in such inner rituals and through them was able to mobilize himself, focus and *entrain himself into a flow* of exercising. The endurance *during* practice, when no one was watching, came from being wrapped up in the activity itself. A solidarity with *oneself* rather than others (Collins, 2004, p. 219). Several dynamics seemed to have contributed to Daniel's skill-developing rituals. I will pay attention here to incantations, the regulation of social and physical space, of thoughts and emotions, and the delineation of moral zones of permission. The latter two are rather straightforward elements of social rituals. Of interest here is how they occur when Daniel was in interaction with *himself*.

Incantations are utterances of a person to themselves, enlivening and expressing the somewhat metaphoric idea of interaction rituals with oneself, such as the encouragement "You can do it!" (cf. Collins, 2004, pp. 205-211 on the incanting effects of cursing). Daniel's version may have frequently been "You can do it, because your brother could as well." I cannot be precise about how important this specific incantation was, as I was not able to observe his thoughts during his practice. I do know that the story of his brother was on the tip of his tongue when explaining his dedication to exercise. This gives me confidence that such incantations in fact are present in his inner rituals, but I have not ascertained (and Daniel might not realize) how many others there may be.

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14 Collins' assertion here is that mental dynamics are in some ways similar to social dynamics. Just as people look for interactions that energize them and make them feel good about themselves, so do individuals tend to drift toward ideas and thoughts that feed their emotional energy.

The other core mechanisms in skill-developing rituals pertain to the satisfaction Daniel derived from their organizing and regulatory dynamics. Although Daniel's social life had improved since being at the school, there was still a "big bad world" out there that he approached with anxiety and apprehension. "My life is not that great right now. I'm all alone here." In practicing, Daniel retreated from that world and their socially debilitating interactions to secluded spaces or courts that were rarely frequented by others. Away from the eyes of others, who told him who he was, who judged him for what he was, he felt exercising gave him the opportunity to re-determine who and what he was. In Lebanon he generally felt marginalized and unimportant. During practice he could place himself at the center of the ritual. Rearranging social and physical space meant re-determining center and periphery. He essentially pushed others out so they could not sabotage his determination. He became then the only spectator and judge of his performance. To use a metaphor from Chapter 3, the world shrunk in these rituals and thereby became manageable and palatable to him.

This rearranging of social and physical space also helped focus his thoughts and regulate his emotions. Practicing provided situational alignment opportunities, alignment of thoughts, motions, and emotions. When he practiced he could obsessively preoccupy himself with getting one move right for a considerable amount of time, and then go on to the next move. Perfecting his bodily techniques came with countless repetition and attention to detail. In the intensity of that concentration he temporarily lost himself and forgot about time. The more the thinking about a technique subsides, the more bodily knowing can take over. The level of competence Daniel achieved demanded therefore that he often *not* think of his brother, or anything else for that matter.

This situational alignment had moral implications. During the time of exercising he knew he would not be doing other things. He would not be wasting time. He would not be doing "bad things" on the streets, or thinking of them (even though his days were fairly structured, he still had "a lot of time" to spend, as he put it). He also would not be acting out his aggression. In these rituals Daniel could find himself. He got to decide who he was. It was where he was in control. Therefore, it is not only what he did, but it also felt like what he *should* be doing. Practicing had a dignifying quality to it.

This opens up possibilities for moving from temporary in-situ dynamics to possible situation-transcending effects of the rituals in which Daniel engaged. Up until now I have emphasized a situated perspective on Daniel. Configurations of thoughts and feelings either scattered and decomposed during his days on the streets, or they recombined, and formed constructive inner coalitions as a result of his immersion in the new setting of the school. The next important point I want to make is that Daniel over the span of two years, apart from being the beneficiary of positive interactional dynamics, *became* someone different

from who he used to be. His proficiency in dancing, basketball, and skating are expressed in durable transformations of his physical make-up. When he walked into the room the first time I saw him, his walk, posture, bodily appearance, and maybe even the sharp gaze in his eyes immediately conveyed to me that he was a sports practitioner, but probably more than that, he *was* an embodiment of athleticism. He had over time rebuilt himself according to parameters that cannot be undone except through a thorough and long-term commitment in another direction, say abstaining from working out and dedication to overeating. The way he walked into the interview room was not called upon by an athletic interactional setting that mobilized the athlete in him. It is simply the way he walks, at least most of the time. One possible counterargument could be that Daniel might have seen the interview as a challenge calling out his competitive side. Yet this still confirms that what he has learned (or taught himself) in sports settings, has become useful and usable in totally different settings. He understands the games he plays and he fluently and expertly deploys his adapted body and mind to those games. So much so that he routinely amazes spectators. The repetitive rituals seem to have *ingrained* and re-ingrained a range of almost automatic skilled responses to situations (Sennett, 2012, p. 202). The success of this deployment has given him confidence to "arrange himself" in similar ways in multiple "life games," especially when the "stakes" seem to rise (Bourdieu, 1980/1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Such social engagement betrays more than an adapted (physical) body. The interaction rituals that afforded Daniel his positive reconfiguration, over time enabled confidence, resourcefulness, and perseverance to *become* him. He is currently not working on perseverance. He tells me he *is* the type of person who perseveres. And it shows.

Firm foundations, precarious frames
Daniel prides himself in being able to learn anything he wants by himself and in reaching impressive levels of proficiency while doing so. He asserts there is no advantage to being in a club. He poses it as his choice not to be in one. Then he told me he likes hanging around a basketball court when a local club practices there. I noticed he got excited when he talked about that, so I started probing. "You really don't wanna' join? Wouldn't you enjoy competing in matches and stuff?" Then he revealed, "I tried a lot at the Mission to join a club. I wanna' play basketball. At a club. But they tell me no, we don't have money to pay for that. For a club, and to be in school. And there's more than one that they place at school [he meant that they have many people to take care of and pay for]. We can't pay for Hoops [name of a club] now. It's forty-five dollars per month, to go four times. That's why. It made me very sad, but I say ok."

It was not just that auto-didactics was an important principle to him. It also *needed* to be. He felt he had no other options. He does not want to allow his

limitations to affect him. So out of self-protection he *needs* exercising by himself to be just as good as participating in a club. And he puts every effort into it to make sure that it does. Hochschild distinguished moral, pragmatic, and histori-cal frames of reference through which people make sense of everyday actions; in her case the research topic was gratitude (2003, p. 116). In Daniel's reasoning, the three types seem to be jumbled up. He asserts exercising by himself as some-thing he does out of principle. He reinforces the strength of this principle by connecting it to an important past personal event, invoking an historical frame of reference. It also serves the pragmatic purpose of feeling good about a current situation he is unable to change. Summed up: *I don't need the clubs that I can't afford.* Since it took a while before this mechanism came above water, and I am more the one putting it into words than Daniel was, it is likely that making "a virtue of necessity" was more a "pre-adapted" process proceeding from "schemes of perception, thought and action", "generated by [his] history" than a very con-scious strategy (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 54).

We could see this as a myth reflecting what he wants to believe (however subconscious), a "cover story" to hide and manage tensions (Hochschild & Machung, 1989, p. 73) resulting from not being able to follow his ambitions. This could be the case, but we should be careful to see it as "merely" a myth. It is likely that this is a myth he needs to keep up his morale. An important ques-tion here is how well this tension-management holds up when he needs it most. Before proposing a direction for an answer, I will address two other issues that enter into the equation.

I suggested that over time, being immersed in the positive and structuring environments of his school and the orphanage, these external structures may well have become part of Daniel's internal make-up. His physical and mental structures durably adapted to his new life circumstances and are no longer that easily swayed with every new situation. He is well equipped for the games he needs to play in daily life. A question is how tough the game of life will become for him. He is currently in quite a strong support structure. Later he will be entering Lebanon's weak economy, within a society steeped in racist disposi-tions. Will he in the face of this adversity be able to wield his "accumulated capitals" (Bourdieu, 1986)? My guess is that this accumulation, the formation of his adapted dispositions, is not yet properly completed to successfully step into the economic field of labor competition and the ways that power is (abusively) wielded there. But with such odds we can wonder who could ever be.

Is it then not far more important that Daniel in the next phase of life will find constructive regular interactions that will boost his morale, sooth his need for belonging, and support him to get ahead? Reasoned this way, it seems less important how strong or determined Daniel has become, and more pertinent that he finds – or that someone places him in –interactions where his strength

is recognized, his determination fed, but also where he can rest from the burden to prove what he can achieve "by himself." In a sense he is already immersed in rituals providing him these things now, although his inclination seems still to be "the loner."

People have given him a place to stay, to study, and friends (if only a few) have accepted him. Can he allow himself to give this a more significant place in how he experiences the world? This is a tall order for someone who has lived on the streets, is permanently looked at with disdain and suspicion, and whose father has failed him. Yet, the bud for such a perspective appears already to be present. Daniel, the ultimate autodidact, would love to be a gym teacher and one of the first things he does when others want to learn, is teach them. He has lost a lot, but he has also started receiving, and it is in him to give. Can he expand what is already present? He has more reason than most of us to be cautious and "not need what he can't have." The memory of his brother is an important catalyst for this frame. Yet it seems that Abboud taking Daniel in was in a positive sense the most important intervention to propel him in a better direction. Newer or healthier framing and feeling rules can hardly be pasted on to his situation. His history of interactions testifies of the worst and best that people can give him. What will come to have greater weight seems heavily dependent on how regular interactions will restore and confirm him or deplete and undermine him.

5.3   Farid's focus

In Amsterdam, Farid contended in his own struggles for self-control and control over the outcome of situations (see also Section 1.3), albeit in less dire circumstances than those Daniel faced in Beirut. As we started to see, he knows very well what he does *not* want. The moments that remind him of this fuel his motivation for "getting ahead" in life. I got to know Farid when he was around seventeen years old. From my first experiences with him it was clear to me that he was a leader-type among his peers. What immediately impressed me was his strong personality, categorical convictions which he was not afraid to express in pretty much any context, and his input which generally commanded respect of other teenagers in the neighborhood.

Over the course of seven years I saw him advance through vocational school for sports instruction, succeeded by a Bachelor's in sports and management. My experiences with him were mainly as a young man attending and volunteering in youth work activities, and later, as a colleague (hired through a temp agency), organizing neighborhood sports programs. Throughout those years he appeared to choose his own path and has followed it through quite consistently. He increasingly realized that he could be something more than one of the "neigh-

borhood punks." He seemed from an early age convinced that this was the case, but this conviction became more overt and manifest as his successes accumulated throughout the years.

The remainder of this chapter is an attempt to unravel some of the dynamics that have contributed to how I – and many other people around him – have come to see this relatively successful young man, as simply "being the way he is."

Self-control in volatile surroundings

Farid grew up in the West of Amsterdam[15] in an old "working class" neighborhood, built after the First World War, with increasing pockets of middle class home owners since the 1990s, multiple squares with cafes and shops, a big park in the middle and several smaller green areas dispersed throughout. It was at least from the 1990s until well into the 2000s[16] a problematic and disadvantaged neighborhood according to local government, community development institutions and a number of residents. They seemed to especially problematize young people from Moroccan and Surinamese descent who hung out on street corners and playgrounds. Many residents and community development professionals saw them as socially difficult or even "unapproachable." There were reports of spitting on people, verbal abuse, and blocking the entrances to buildings of residence. Several larger families were infamous for having "gangs of sons up to no good," involved in criminal activity and were monitored by several care, penal, and rehabilitative institutions. At the time I got to know Farid, there was an ongoing gang molestation/rape case of a young teenage girl in which several neighborhood teenagers were suspects, some only ten years old.

Within this broader context, Farid was raised in a fairly stable family. All his siblings, among which he was the youngest, graduated or were enrolled in universities, and had settled lifestyles (jobs, homes, families). One of his brothers opposed two distinct paths of life in the neighborhood: "Either you don't give a shit about anyone, and you live from day to day. Or you study, work on your future and you think in years." Apart from how analytically (in)accurate such a dichotomous view could be, it seemed a helpful framing device for young people who made sense of "doing good" as "going against the grain," comparable to Aiman's outlook (see Section 1.2).

At the time, Farid was active in two community initiatives. One was a small hangout provided by a local NGO for community development and youth work

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15 I describe the neighborhood based on my experiences initially as a youth worker, and later as a researcher.

16 During that decade urban renewal strategies of renovation and gentrification set in, resulting directly or indirectly in replacing segments of the population. This somewhat "improved" the neighborhood or at least its status and reputation.

that Farid and some friends ran as volunteers for young people in the neighbor-hood. He also participated in a community sports project that employed a group of young men, taught them basic instruction and organizing skills, and deployed them on local playgrounds under supervision of professional sports instructors. This put him in a precarious semi-professional position among peers, obtaining status and praise from them for standing up for their interests, but also run-ning into difficulties when trying to set boundaries and limitations. At an early age already Farid noticed that this was not easy. For Farid it was a given that he could never do enough to meet young people's needs and he experienced this as an unrelenting pressure to do more. "Sometimes I want to lock up [the hangout-center] and I see them walking in the rain. Yeah, then I have to stay open. I can't leave them outside like that!" [17] At other times he would vehemently prioritize his own interests, as a kind of (over)compensation for giving (too much of) his time and energy. "They always wanna' stay longer. But then I think, yeah what-ever. I have other things to do. Screw them."

He is currently in his thirties, completing a Master's degree, teaching a "tough crowd" of kids Physical Education and Biology at a secondary school in Amster-dam West. Over the years he accumulated experience in organizing sports pro-grams in some of the most disadvantaged and most difficult neighborhoods in the city. This no doubt has contributed to him being one of the teachers at his school today who has fewer problems than many others in getting the actual teaching done – as opposed to merely maintaining order.

Increasing success and protective rituals
As Farid advanced, several professionals in different organizations deemed him a shining example embodying the ideal combination of being from the neigh-borhood, knowing it inside-out, but also having outgrown its disadvantages. To a large extent my observations support this view. His piercing eyes and sharp remarks, his focus, determination and dependability, his sinewy definition and short build, all added to a fierceness of presence. At the same time he had a warm smile and welcoming demeanor. He was a team player and had no need to dominate social interaction. It was this combination of characteristics that made him a number one choice to "fly in" as additional staff on neighborhood sports programs.[18] However, next to these successes Farid struggled.

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17 For outsiders, and for me at the onset, it seemed exaggerative to say they had nowhere to go, as these youngsters were not homeless. Gradually I learned that while they had a place they called home, it was not always the place they felt at home.
18 It was common practice to regularly hire additional people through temp agencies for tem-porary jobs and chores in community development and sports programs. This gave organizations, especially governmental departments, the possibilities to make use of outside expertise without becoming responsible for them as their employers.

As introduced in Section 1.3, when "bloodsuckers" started misbehaving Farid lost his temper. Although he was someone geared toward self-control, discipline and determination, there were some people – or perhaps situations – that could really "get under his skin" and call out the worst in him. His solution was to try and avoid those situations. He preferred us not to recruit him for activities where participants with whom he had grown up could drag him down and spin him out of control. He assured me he could deal with similar behavior from others elsewhere in the city. I wondered exactly what happened to him in those moments where he lost and disappointed himself, and I will give this more attention in the next subsection. Still, I also tended to believe him when he said self-control worked in other situations while it did not in this one, because of the similarities I encountered with other young people's experiences, such as Hicham's (see Sections 1.3 and 7.3). Farid needed some distance from his all too familiar surroundings to keep from being dragged into distracting and undermining interactions.

Farid's early involvement in football and perseverance in training provided an invaluable loop of positive reinforcement. Almost every user of the local playground could play football, and play *well*. However, not everyone had the spirit and discipline to stick it out with a club year after year and grow through the ranks to play in the top divisions. In fact, the "tough guy" demeanor "taking shit from no one" that scores points in the "street" oriented peer groups is exactly what conflicts most with the volunteer-run football clubs. There, sportsmanship and "good old-fashioned Dutch decency" (which by the way includes swearing, sexism, and racism) dictate normal conduct. Although Farid felt alienated by his "white hick" teammates ("*boeren*") and their excessive drinking (which he as a Muslim did not do), he loved the game and loved competing in the top ranks. He always stuck it out with them. His coach has always seen Farid's talent and encouraged him to continue, especially when Farid thought of quitting.

Football is by far the most popular sport among young and old in Amsterdam and the Netherlands. Being a top-level player earned him credit among pretty much anyone. In that sense his further career through education and employment in sports instruction actually greatly helped in being successful, while also remaining accepted in his community where being too successful could make him come off as arrogant or difficult to understand. Excelling at sports and earning money from it was something understandable and admirable. It fit collective categories of the community's imagination, where studying should – preferably sooner than later – yield financial gain. In a neighborhood where kids who do well in school are admired, yet also made fun of with nicknames such as "Brains" or "Professor" (which some take as compliments, others as insults), Farid's sports-route was accepted without too much difficulty. Majors in social sciences or arts, or more antagonistic positions of employment such as

policing or journalism would have been much more difficult to explain, let alone gain appreciation.

There was, however, at times a loneliness in Farid's route. Many peers had not much of an idea of the effort it took to become a top-level player. His peer groups praised his achievements but they were praises for *moments*. The long stretches of time it took to shine in those moments are unseen by the public (Chambliss, 1989). Expressing a dominant mindset concerning achievements, *you either got it or you don't*. Everyone knew that it takes practice to excel at something, but the idea was that someone like Farid most likely did not practice that much; since he's a "natural," a bit of effort was probably enough. This myth has stopped many from trying out new things.

Farid had learned to – in a sense literally – sidestep this myth, and the playground setting that generated it. He achieved his level of mastery in other settings, safe, or at least *safer*, away from the well-known gazes and sounds of mockery. It became a familiar sight to see Farid, gym-bag over his shoulder, walking to the bus stop. The neighborhood guys knew, "He's off to practice." As he advanced at his football club, at school, at work, all related to sports, this gym-bag became a symbol of his success. When he carried it, people knew he was "going places," literally and in grander ways.

All these smaller successes in different avenues of life, especially since they were all so easily inter-relatable, reinforced each other and established his reputation as an athlete (*een sportman*) with a promising future. They became a stock of identity-material at his disposal that helped him define himself in countless situations and has kept him free from temptations and ridicule, at least to a large extent. This helped him distinguish himself, and actually *feel* different from others. "I am really never at the playground [op het pleintje]. I can't sit still. I have to do something. I can't like those others hang around on the playground every day. I'd go crazy. Look at me, I study, I play football, and everything I can get my hands on [part-time work for a temp agency], I just do it."

I have seen and heard about such distinguishing actions and ways of charting and navigating the local geography more often. An example is Taoufiq, a kickboxing trainer looking back on his journey through his neighborhood to the bus stop as a young apprentice (who would later win multiple titles, including a world championship). "I knew of myself like eh, that I eh, that I didn't eh, that I didn't actually want that [getting into trouble or crime in the neighborhood]. And because I started to work out, you know, then I didn't get the chance and the guys they left me be also. [They] thought like, yeah, he's off to work out again. Very often I walked through the neighborhood [gym-bag over the shoulder]. I had to, to get to the bus stop, I walked past a group of guys, friends of mine, who always hung around there. They were scheming plans what they'd do that evening. Then eh I always hung around for like fifteen minutes, chatting

with them. 'How's it going.' 'Hey.' And then I went on. And the next day I got to hear, this and this happened." This walk to the bus stop has seemed for Taoufiq to have become a walk of life. I have travelled abroad with him and he has no suitcase or a carry-on, just a gym-bag over his shoulder.

For Farid, and many with him, the walk to the bus stop, gym-bag in hand, had become a protective ritual guiding him to something better, beyond what his domestic locality could offer. That locality proved to have both constructive and detrimental tendencies. The youth center and sports programs brought him success as he emerged a young community leader.

Farid was highly aware that losing self-control meant failing. To be successful he needed to avoid settings of failure, which he, at least at times, felt were the direct surroundings of his neighborhood. His educational career and his football club brought him opportunities both to avoid settings of failure and to find alternative settings that would eventually signify his success. Practicing diligently and playing well meant he could be a star in his football team. Doing well in school earned him appreciation and amazement of fellow students and teachers. Farid's case was, however, not as clear-cut as avoiding failure close by in his neighborhood and seeking success farther off in the city, as he experienced both successes and failures close by as well as far away from home. For himself, and for me as an observer, his chains of interactions were entangled. Only gradually it became clear that they needed disentangling in order to understand some of them as more debilitating and others as more constructive experiences.

5.4   Disentangling chains of interactions

Underdog in the rat-race
Farid's focus and course were fairly fixed and well established. Yet he also met with friction and experienced frustration from sources he had not foreseen or expected. "The other day I was working at the swimming pool. I work as a lifeguard, but I was cleaning up trash from the grass. And I saw Ismail. He was laughing at me. 'Hah, look at him. Garbage man! He's in HBO [a vocational track at the bachelor level] but look at him. Haha.' Talking to his friends like a moron. I didn't expect that of him. What was he thinking? I don't give a shit about what people think when I clean up garbage. I'm there making money. He's spending it. I know what I'm doing. It's not like I'm a garbage man for life. I'm studying. And even if I'm a garbage man, still better than him!"

The struggle in his living environment often resulted in exasperation. It drove him "crazy" and it estranged him from neighborhood buddies. Next to losing self-control in a football match, he felt a disconnect with some of those with whom he grew up. This loss of connection became more painful when not just

peers but others in the community seemed to be out of touch with his ambitions. "You know what happened the other day? Some neighbors started talking to my mother, that they had seen me outside [op straat]. After 12 [midnight] or something. Started asking what I was still doing out so late. What are they thinking? Why do they do that? Why do they pay attention to that? Why do they care what I do? They must think I'm like those other guys, that I do bad things [dat ik verkeerd bezig ben], just because I'm walking outside. All I do is keep busy man!" [Ik ben alléén maar bezig man. An expression of keeping oneself occupied with the right things, rather than spending time idly]

While in his community he struggled with translating what it meant to become increasingly successful, and his actions did not always readily fit frames of local understanding, outside that community he struggled with a different type of friction and frustration, related to ethnicity and group perceptions (Brubaker, 2004, 2008).

Farid is from Moroccan-Berber descent. His parents were immigrant-laborers. Being an immigrant, specifically a "non-Western" immigrant, and more specifically from Moroccan background, has solidified in public and political discourse a host of negative stereotypes (de Jong, 2007; Schinkel, 2008). So much so that some people who self-identify with these groups adopt the negative stereotypes, either as true or mockingly as "badges of honor."

For Farid it is normal to speak of "white" Dutch people as "they", as opposed to "us Moroccans" or "immigrants" when he experiences such a demarcation: "At school, I'm the only Moroccan. The only one! I can just see them [fellow students, teachers] looking at me and thinking: "What is that Moroccan doing here, actually?" But I work till I drop. And often I get the highest grades in class. Then you see them looking: "Huh? How can that be?!"

Such experiences seem more emotionally ingrained, prevalent and prominent than others, as when Farid casually referred to a similarity between Moroccans and Surinamese in Amsterdam. "Moroccans and Surinamese can get along with each other okay. They also feel that exclusion. That they're kind of on the outside, you know,'" alluding to a constant pressure and grief that some people simply 'have' because of the way they look (and are looked down upon) and the position they have (been allocated) in society (Paulle & Kalir, 2013), the dynamics and consequences of which many others ("whites") are simply oblivious.

Zooming in on daily life we can see that the lived understandings of what it could mean to be "Moroccan" are much more fluid than a first glance might betray. After I had since long gotten used to Farid and his friends *not* seeing themselves as Dutch, I was surprised when he in passing spoke of "us" Dutch people, differentiating between people born and/or raised in the Netherlands, and immigrants recently coming into the country.

Yet, considering such nuances and fluctuating perceptions from one situation

to another, Farid tends to predominantly live out the idea of being the "outsider" of a perceived "bad stock" needing to constantly prove himself in order to be accepted or, perhaps more poignantly, to become a force to be reckoned with, whether others involved appreciate that or not. It may well be that this perception is dominant because Farid's regular interactions at school and the football club were such that Moroccan-ness had come to acquire one specific set of stereotypes among "white" Dutch people, calling out Farid's "outsider" response.

His specific response was that of a fighter. This competitive spirit is something that no doubt his football matches and education in sports instruction have called out and reinforced in him. However, it seems also a way of "being in the world" that he brings into situations. This is an idea that I explore further in the next subsection.

Although Farid's situation was not destitute, his development is wrought with themes of growing up in a disadvantaged neighborhood and reveals the impact and mixed blessing of increasingly experiencing success. He had a stable and stimulating family, but in his neighborhood lives of crime, apathy, cynicism, and day-to-day survival coexisted with lives of studying, future-oriented ambitions, and long term planning. The former seemed more prevalent than the latter. Seductions for Farid lay not so much in participating in crime, as for Aiman (see Section 1.2), but in losing self-control among those who lived for the moments that things would spin out of control, as they too often did on Monday evenings.

In his neighborhood, he won praise for being and becoming increasingly successful. At the same time, even his success, and the changing positions that came with it were at times met with ridicule (by Ismail) and antagonism (by "bloodsucking" peers). And some of his activities (walking home late at night) were on occasion misunderstood or framed in unfortunate ways, based on what people were used to: a young man out late is up to no good.

Finding a way to fill the void of lost connection to the "neighborhood guys" paralleled a struggle over his "public" identity in an increasingly "culturized" society (Duyvendak, Geschiere, & Tonkens, 2016; Schinkel, 2008). His success was undeniable but also unexpected. He did not fit the right markers for people to easily anticipate success from him. They had to readjust to new realities that he created in their universe. This was met with amusement, fascination, but also unease and envy. Native "white" Dutch were the traditional and still appear in a sense the "natural" beneficiaries and inheritors of higher education(cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964/1979; Collins, 1979). This brought a strain on searching for and establishing psychological and social stability.

It appeared that Farid's main strategy to remedy this was to prove himself in ever greater ways, so much so that he risked become a martyr of merit-based advancement. At times, during Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, he would work so hard during the day that he could not wake up to eat the ceremonial Iftar

before daybreak. Farid mentioned that he would skip Iftar more than once and go without eating for several days. Other than that, he developed a heart condition disrupting his cardiac rhythm, demanding he not outdo himself and make sure to rest regularly. But his drive and motivation trumped his concern for his health. There was more work to be done and more to be achieved. Apathy and deviance sets kids up for failure and underdog positions according to dominant societal standards. Yet those same standards can bring those who come up from under into a rat-race of pursuits at the cost of health and happiness.

Management by anger

One Monday evening Farid was working at our weekly football activity. He needed something from a dressing room and appeared to have accidentally stepped into the ladies' dressing room. When he noticed he excused himself and closed the door promptly. A girl came out angry at him because this was just another time in a string of many that "those guys" supposedly mistakenly came into the girls' dressing room. The girl was some ten centimeters taller than Farid, looked twice his weight and still had some of her kickboxing training gear on. She was clearly fed up and was not going to leave it at "yet another fake apology." She walked right up to him and started yelling at him. I give it a bit of attention but did not think too much of it because I thought Farid would eventually settle it with the right subtlety and tact. But the confrontation did not die down, it escalated. Rather than keeping his cool, Farid became offended that this young woman thought so lowly of him that he might have walked in on her on purpose. Also, he felt disrespected that she categorized him as one of the participants – and specifically the troublemakers among them – while he was on the staff *supervising* the activity. Other young men standing around, attending Monday Night Football, saw the confrontation and started laughing at the woman, but also at Farid, calling them out to stand up for themselves, hoping for an altercation. Within seconds Farid and the young woman stood nose-to-nose shouting at each other, repeating what they had already said. Farid, however, did not repeat his apology, as I know other colleagues might have done in an attempt to deescalate the clash – leaving aside whether or not the other party was being reasonable. The situation had moved on to another stage and as far as Farid was concerned the apology no longer applied. Any moment one of them could have landed the first punch. In disbelief I came between them, facing Farid and asked him to come with me and help me out (an excuse to distract him), as I gently nudged him away. He kept looking at her and belittled her a bit but allowed me to take him off.

Farid is a fighter. It seems to me he tends not to back down. Not from any fight – educational, physical, or career-wise. I know there is a risk here in reading too much into situations, pasting on meaning where it does not belong,

stemming from an academic longing for abstractions that could cover a multi-tude of situations. But actually, in my analysis, my tendency was to push the per-spective of situational, contingent, and body-based flow of interaction as much as possible to see what insights it could provide. One could say I was *disinclined*, or at least to an extent less interested, to see habitual, slowly ingrained, social-ized behavior. Yet, in Farid's case his habitus, his transposable schemes of per-ception (Bourdieu, 1980/1990) are what struck me. A fighter who fights different battles on different fronts, and tends to see many of his situations as struggles and confrontations: being successful at school despite being a Moroccan, being a top-level player despite being short and light, and standing his ground in poten-tial street fights, even if the opponent is twice his size (not just in the case of the young woman). Of course, what will summon his way of actually engaging the situation, depends largely on the direct context. He will not respond to a career-challenge in the same way he responds to a physical challenge. Yet there is some-thing strikingly similar in the fierceness with which he approaches them.

Looking at Farid's confrontations from an emotion-management perspec-tive, we see and hear from him that he was generally geared toward self-control, but that some situations "called out the worst" in him. While Farid (and many with him, academically inclined or otherwise) tended to see his entering into a fight as losing control and a loss of focus on what is good, we can understand the fierceness of his engagement differently. In those moments (or shortly after) he has expressed feeling insulted and the sense that injustice was done to him. His retaliation can then also be seen as a way to "set straight" those others who tend to disrupt him. Stepping up is then an interruption of that disruption. Cursing, far from departing from decency, is a moral act, meting out punishment to those who are doing wrong, with the aim of restoring his own flow (Collins, 2004, pp. 206, 208; Katz, 1999). Cursing (as he does with others present or later in anger over something that happened previously) and escalating into confrontation was then a way to *gain* focus, heighten energy and mobilize himself against a threat that scatters his consciousness. The rewarding focus and feelings of righteous-ness resulting from anger are then a plausible explanation for how competition and confrontation had come to be a go-to course of action and how his fierce-ness had become such a developed and diversified character trait. With regard to some situations (especially physical confrontation) he was not happy with him-self – after the fact. His ideas of correct behavior conflicted with what felt right in the moment, and might even have contributed to him regaining the control he was looking for. He had developed a way of channeling his fierceness, mobiliz-ing it to meet his challenges. In a sense, his anger *was* his management. But his own ideas, and the general convictions of non-violence in his daily situational constellations (his school, his job), made that management an unproductive tool when it came to physical standoffs.

Reflecting on these situations the conflict between his frames of self-control and his actions presented too great a tension to resolve (Hochschild, 2003). In the time I knew him, his developed dispositions felt for him too ingrained to be able to "play the game" differently (Bourdieu, 1980/1990). At least in that period, the only viable resort he saw was to refrain from situations that were liable to bring him into these conflicts. Not so much because of the conflicts with others, but because of the conflict that resulted within him.

By refraining, he brought back congruence between what he thought and felt. This seemed to be the result of a conscious interpretation and reworking of his feelings (Hochschild, 1983, 2003). He had worked hard to distinguish himself from the "tough guy" street veneer. He had "outgrown" that. He was not an "at-risk youth," but a supervisor of at-risk youth. To fall back into "old behavior" was "beneath him." It was too big a cost for what he had built up, for how far he had come. He had invested in, and was committed to, new frames of understanding which were at odds with local understandings, especially those of self-control. In general, he lived out such principles. But there were some interactional settings that pulled him out of character, or perhaps *back into* character. He had never stopped being a tough guy from a tough 'hood.

Discussion: Protective rituals and hyper-pursuits

This chapter provides insights into what happens when we put what are often considered the "worst" people in the best of circumstances, or more to the point, in the best of interaction rituals. In an amazing tempo Daniel went from subsisting in dehumanizing conditions to being an exemplary student and to dazzling spectators with his athleticism and dance performances. Conversely, someone like Farid, who was in relatively good family circumstances and was considered among his peers the "best of them," when he was too often immersed in debilitating rituals, could (start to) become exactly what he did not want to be – an impulsive thug.

Both Daniel and Farid were persistently exposed to volatile, depleting, and, undermining interactions. They were (at least initially) limited in how they could constructively respond to such detrimental dynamics. Both were in their own ways eventually able to overcome those dynamics and develop practices that would protect, embolden, and empower them.

Notably, for both it was "external" social impetuses meshing with what had been building up "inside" them that was instrumental in helping them cope. For Daniel it was Dr. Abboud's intervention injecting him into new socially stable dynamics that had dramatic effects for the better. Farid probably did not experience people's influences as externally intervening as much. His story reveals

more of an embeddedness in supportive networks. His work at the youth center, the neighborhood sports programs, his football club, and his school all "naturally" provided him with experiences that he mattered, that he made a positive difference. Moreover, all these settings contained "key persons" who related to him, challenged him, and kept him engaged.

We could say that the mechanisms of connectivity and momentum that dynamized Imad's social constellations (Chapter 4) were *hyper*active in Farid's routinized interactional makeup. In the different settings he was constantly pulled outward and always forward to the "next thing." To the point that sitting still and hanging out on the playground was something he could not do. Not actively pursuing more drove him "crazy."

In these settings different self-reinforcing rituals appeared an entanglement of chains of interactions which at times made it difficult to distinguish debilitating from constructive dynamics. Being drawn out meant he was always connected, yet also that he was vulnerable to the varying dynamics in those connections. Farid had no shortage of moments in which he was made important or of confirmations that he was "getting ahead" in life. Yet, the settings that enriched him in such ways, were also those that could estrange him and brought him fundamental frustrations. A richly *expanded* world opened up with it exposure to harmful, dehumanizing interactions that for instance attempted to reduce him to one misconstrued identity-category, such as the neighborhood "hoodlum" or the underachieving immigrant. The difficulty for Farid lay in discerning where and how he was empowered from how he was being debilitated. School, the football club, but also his own neighborhood of residence for instance, were settings where both occurred.

Daniel's situation was by contrast far more dismal, but with that, also more clear-cut. The "big bad world" was no good and had almost killed him. Other than outright danger, there were the daily numerous subtle rejections that he incurred with every step outside the door. There was not much for him out there that he could reach out to and connect with. The school and the orphanage provided restorative alternatives. This made it highly probable that rather than reaching out to connect, he would retreat into a world of his own, a "shrunken world," as discussed in Chapter 3, but here of *inner* rituals and *self*-solidarity where he could redraw parameters of relevance and importance. Where Farid was likely overinvolved in and overexposed to several social constellations, and the good and bad in them, Daniel might have profited from entering, and being allowed into, some additional athletic and performance networks. However, his crowding out of the rest of the world afforded a powerful entrainment consisting of focus, sequential repetition of movements, but also imagination and anticipation of future accomplishments.

Both Farid and Daniel developed what we could call *protective rituals* that

helped them navigate potentially (and realistically) hazardous urban landscapes. Daniel became an expert at shrinking his world, making it safer, and more coherent, focusing all his efforts at what he knew he could influence. Farid also knew he had to retreat from some situations that could get the better (or rather the worst) of him. Simply staying away helped. Other than that, the gym-bag as a demarcating symbol, signaled to onlookers that his path, to the bus stop and to a better future, was set and not be meddled with.

This begs the question what other protective rituals young people in socially and subtly threatening and deprived urban areas have in which they can retreat or by which they can navigate through decisive moments? What symbols are at young people's disposal that are somewhat socially acceptable to carve out such paths? I have witnessed multiple instances where the "book-bag" failed as such a symbol. Teenagers mocked peers who would want to go home to do homework assignments. "Why are you even trying? You think you're gonna' achieve anything at school?" In one case the boy looked at the ground, muttered something inaudible, and lingered around, clearly wanting to go home, but did not feel he could "break free" from the group. A huge contrast with Farid's and Taoufiq's gym-bags.

All these instances portray maelstroms of push and pull social rituals. Their routinized ways of behavior leave little room for alternate conduct that might otherwise seem perfectly normal or healthy outside of it. Their powerful symbols successfully and instantly thrust meanings to those directly involved, and they direct energy to and from participants in the group.

A marked difference from many group members is that Daniel and Farid were not *just* caught up in such rituals in the sense that they were riding the coattails of energy-flows. We can see them increasingly as generators of rituals, at least partly stemming from their constant conscious assessments of situations and attempts at management of several impeding influences and currents of information and energies vying for their attention. To an extent they could no longer be tossed and tumbled in every social situation. Farid as well as Daniel eventually became adept and adapted "game-players" who could turn situations to their advantage. Especially in athletic contexts they could expertly deploy themselves and turn others into followers of their feats.

Yet both cases reveal the intricacies of an unfolding story that forces us to go beyond the typification of static attributes that any one teenager might "own" at any given point in time, as some tend to do (Ayyash-Abdo, 2010; Khawaja et al., 2006; Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2009; Moghnie & Kazarian, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2014). Rather than pointing out that Farid "is" resilient, for purposes of tracking what makes his success viable, it is much more essential how resilience plays out over a range of instances and how he manages to play into it, and at other times does not. His story shows that his "personal" resilience

might be a noteworthy characteristic, yet his path of development was wrought with obstacles and his way "upward" was not self-evident. This poses questions for claims that we need not worry about "resilient youth" in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Nieuwenhuis, 2015). Moreover, it is Farid's specific "fighting-style" resilience that would on occasion bring him at odds with contexts in which the use of "force" is frowned upon.

Daniel, whose future is much more precarious, reveals that the point is not whether kids are "good" or whether the neighborhoods are "bad" (Elliott et al., 2006). It is how kids become involved in or are excluded from specific interaction rituals within neighborhoods and across cities, that energize them toward specific activities or deplete their vitality. A stabilized or practiced self can only withstand so much in ways of hardship, strife, and temptation. It does not suffice to point to individual responsibility as the key variable in "doing good" and "getting ahead" when situational pressures, and interactional dynamics vary so wildly between societies, within neighborhoods, and, as we shall see in coming chapters, even within families.

In many ways, Daniel and Farid are extreme cases. Daniel for his former circumstances and his dramatic turnaround, and Farid for his self-management and how "far" he got, given his daily social interactions and the jumbled messages that informed and transformed him. Specifically, what characterizes their stories, is the extremeness of their determination and perseverance. Farid "has to" show his teachers and fellow students that "this Moroccan" can outdo them all. Daniel needs to become his own boss, he is determined not to need any coach and still be the best, which demands relentless effort. Additionally, it was combinations of complementing interaction rituals that have energized their potential and perspective. From that, they now feel that success is within their reach and leave nothing to chance. This seems to make them susceptible to what I have called hyper-pursuits. Yet we could deem meritocratic ideals of autonomy, self-reliance, and deriving self-worth from achievements as equally unhealthy and unrealistic as subsisting in poverty and adversity.

I have feared the debilitating effects that this strand of relentlessness might have. For Farid in affecting his health and for Daniel in driving him into too much of a socially isolated pursuit. It seems that dehumanizing dynamics can take over both at the low end of socioeconomic deprivation and at the "high" end of success at "all costs."

Despite their seemingly extraordinary determination, relatively strong support networks and outstanding achievements, Daniel and Farid struggled with detrimental influences as well. At crucial times they might have succumbed to pressures weighing in while navigating their pathways. How much more is this the case for countless others in contexts of (relative) deprivation or interactional detriment who "have" less impressive "characteristics" yet similar competing

energy flows tugging away at them from every possible angle? It is time for an approach that takes into account how constructive and humanizing dynamics beyond any one individual's control make a difference by increasing subjective self-control and objective control over the outcome of situations, or at least navigation through them.

6   YOUNG WOMEN'S PATHS TO SUCCESS

This chapter is about young women seemingly without resources who become resourceful and those lacking obvious support networks managing to find them in unlikely ways and places. There appear to be no great differences in the ways girls and boys think about success. They both seek attention, positive recognition for their being and their actions, and they hope to claim a space they can call their own, literally and symbolically. As their adolescence progresses, they look for independence in different ways and in increasing fashion. Eventually the deal most often comes down to a house, a spouse, children, a means of income, and being able to have fun in addition to one or other creative outlet. Some are lucky and manage to make their fun be their means of income. But if the two are separate, it does not necessarily make them less happy or experience less success.

Also their disadvantages seem to overlap. All young people, boys as well as girls, struggle with their possibilities, identities, expectations, the demands of society that privileges cognitive skills, and a social need to simply "fit in." In disadvantaged families that I have encountered, next to being economically distressed, there is little "space in parents heads" to constructively deal with their children's problems. When their children do not succeed, their parents usually lack the emotional competence to support them or help them discover and develop their qualities, let alone the strategic competence to support them in making those qualities relevant for their interests and benefits.

There are, however, subtle differences from boys in how young women carve out possibilities, deal with expectations and lack of expectations of significant others. These subtle differences often go unnoticed, especially by males, but turn out to make all the difference in the world. This chapter examines how girls and young women claim and achieve success in environments of financial distress, cultural disadvantages, and structures of male domination. It does so firstly by delving into the interaction ritual intricacies of daily life within the households and other settings of young women in Amsterdam and Beirut. Secondly, the aim here is to develop a perspective on how longer-term development occurs. This entails following chains of interaction rituals over several years and determining what qualities in young people "solidify" and consolidate. When it comes to young women experiencing success, this pertains to a management of emotions,

relationships, and of aspirations. In the most evolved cases this turns into an adeptness, a *sense pratique* in combining interests and sensitivities of themselves as well as those of others, that work together for their advancement. In this chapter I describe trajectories of four young women, Joumana and Nadine in Beirut, and Rachel and Farida in Amsterdam. Every story reveals different constellations of "personality traits," series of interaction rituals, and more or less consolidation of healthy and positive practices that advance their paths to a better life, or at least a constructive daily routine.

6.1   Joumana being nowhere and getting somewhere

> Here at home, no one encouraged me to study. I remember when I was little, I said "I wanna' get somewhere." So it was me, I encouraged myself. Not my mom or my brother or anybody. No one stood by me in anything. I accomplished everything myself. I went to university. I'm the one who brought myself where I wanted to get. And up till now it's the same. If I want something, I'm the one who does it. No one interferes. Well… I don't mean no one interferes. It's just that no one either encourages me or tells me 'no'. I live by myself. […] Success for me is that I graduated. I have a degree, I have a weapon.
> Joumana, Beirut

"It's a girl!"
Paul is a thirty-five year old man (see Introduction and Section 7.2) who has been married for two years. In the years leading up to that moment, his main preoccupation was leaving Lebanon in search for a wife and a better life. I will come back to his trajectory in Chapter 7. Last year his wife got pregnant and recently she gave birth to a beautiful girl. Paul and his wife live with his mother, his brother Joseph (22), and one of his sisters, Joumana (26), in a two-bedroom apartment. They did not choose be packed together like this, they had no other option. They had been lived well under the poverty line for well over a decade, since their father died of a heart-attack. Paul had become the sole breadwinner as a carpenter at age sixteen. Although he was doing well as a carpenter, he had to quit that job because of a developed sensitivity in one of his eyes, prohibiting him from doing heavy manual labor. Without a degree or being able to practice his craft, he was forced to look for menial jobs, where opportunities are few, pay is low, and benefits are virtually non-existent. Later his siblings started contributing to the family income and there seemed to be some space to breathe.

Joumana (see Introduction) had managed to achieve success academically and professionally. She matured into an emotionally stable woman, a source of comfort for her sister's young son and daughter (ten and six years old). She was also delighted to welcome another girl, Paul's daughter, to the family, in a society where girls are "second-best." This is well illustrated by Paul's visit to a friend's grandma, a neighbor of seventy-eight. Catching up since they spoke last time and his wife's pregnancy came up, Paul's neighbor asks, "Is it a boy or a girl?"

> Paul: A girl.
> Neighbor: Ah. [few seconds of silence] You know, nowadays, girls are just as good as boys. They do *better* even. Everybody's giving the jobs to girls now, not to guys.
> Paul: Not to guys exactly. They *prefer* girls.

In Lebanon, many parents prefer boys over girls, especially as their firstborn. The above conversation implies an especially economic reason for this preference; boys are traditionally expected to find jobs more easily, and to contribute to and eventually provide for the previous generation. In the experience of Paul and his neighbor, the roles have reversed or are reversing, while statistically, women in Lebanon still earn less money and work less (CAS, 2011). In any case, the upcoming firstborn female is in this conversation an 'issue', but it seems somewhat downplayed. However, next to the economic dimension there is a clear cultural issue of a male firstborn simply being 'better'. Paul makes this clear from the way he answers the question about the sex of his unborn child, which always convey a sentiment along the lines "Of course I'm happy but I'd rather have a boy." Joumana, this girl's aunt, seems cut from a very different cloth.

"I'm a special case"
Joumana has no real explanation for her ambitions or successes. "I've always been like this. I'm a special case." During an interview with her, I was looking for topics we could talk about, influences in (early) life, that might contribute to discovering a source for her drive. When this did not readily come, finding an explanation seemed very far off. In what follows, I describe what I have observed, which may account for her being a "special case."

Joumana could not point to her parents as people who stressed the importance of finishing her education. At most, they did not hinder her, but we can hardly call it proactive support. Her two elder siblings did not pave the way for her by modeling academic achievements. As mentioned, Paul became the sole income provider before even finishing secondary school, and her sister Rayan (born 1983) practically eloped before the age of eighteen with an army soldier

living in the neighborhood, becoming a stay at home mom, every now and then working a low-end job to contribute to her husband's income. One of these jobs as a sales clerk seemed so insignificant that her mom was skeptical about the wages even covering the transportation money to and from the store in question. Other than parents and siblings, more distant relatives did not seem to make a difference in modeling success either. They see each other on occasional visits, parties, and annual celebrations, but I have seen no inspirational interactions take place, nor do Joumana or her siblings make mention of any. More often, they emphasize how alone they are, especially when it comes to their financial plight. Extended family ties are not as tight as they think they should be.

Yet, some of this context in itself seems to have failed rituals, forced rituals (Collins, 2004, pp. 50-53), or mis-educative experiences (Dewey, 1938). It may very well be the "negative" examples of her elder siblings that helped fuel her ambition. She herself states this explicitly when talking about her sister. "I remember, when I was ten years old, the time my sister wanted to get married, I got into arguments with her and my sister's fiancé. 'No, why do you want to marry her. She's still very young!' Ask my mom how much we argued."

More than simply a statement in the moment, this view conveys an attitude Joumana has had since I got to know her as a sixteen-year-old secondary school student. Much like Farid (Sections 5.3 and 5.4), knowing what she does *not* want seems a clear drive.

> Sebastian: Where does your inspiration come from?
> Joumana: Me? Where does my inspiration come from? I do a lot of observing. So I observe close to me, someone, and I like it. I could observe people, girls, they're studying, carrying books and stuff, and I like it, I wanna' become like them. That's how I am. For instance, I see someone [in Arabic she refers to a female someone: *wahdeh*] who has a nice job, and I wanna' be in her position. I work so I can become like her. That's how inspiration comes to me.

This silent observation of what she did want, seems to be very important for her (it returns in a different form in Section 6.2 with Rachel). Here Joumana was able to be quite specific about who had the major influence on what she would be able to achieve. Her direct family and surroundings showed her what she did *not* want and in other settings with people more removed from her experience she saw her future. This in part inspired her to persevere.

To further explore how and why her ambitions and achievements formed, despite or thanks to her circumstances, it seems prudent to see them in relation to those of her younger brother Joseph. Leaving aside Paul who was forced to become head of the household at sixteen, and Rayan who started her own house-

hold at a young age, Joumana and Joseph grew up in the same household, dealt with the same or at least similar hardships, and they both had examples of low-success same-sex elder siblings. What accounts for their differences in development? Answers appear to lie in differences in ages and positions in the family, and their gendered patterns. The *dynamics* of how age, position, and gender play out, bring us back to daily interaction rituals.

First I turn to age and position in the family. Joumana was around five years old when Joseph was born. Seeing Paul's and others' responses to the conception of a baby girl, it seems safe to say that the family was elated when baby Joe came into the world. Joumana never mentioned this early period herself. Perhaps another conversation I had with a young woman can shed some light on such dynamics. Samar was driven in ways comparable to Joumana, also coming out of socioeconomic hardship in a single-parent household. At some point she told me she had discovered something during a counseling session. "When I was two years old my brother was born. A boy. Before, I was the star. I'm afraid I lived most of my life trying to prove to my Mom and to myself that I am there. I'm important. I have talent." In Samar's narrative, her brother never needed to do anything to prove himself. Being a boy was enough. And although Samar's drive brought her many good things – she studied at a private university, became a nurse, went out of her way to help people in paid labor and volunteer work – it felt like a weight was lifted from her shoulders when she realized she was often doing things to feel like she counted for something. She felt it was a revelation to start realizing that she was worthwhile without her achievements. It may well be that the "mystery" of Joumana's drive has a root in such early dynamics of Joe as a younger male sibling "stole her thunder." I am strongly inclined to think that this issue can be of crucial importance. As far as analysis is concerned, this is rather "food for thought" than data.

In my observations, it is the daily interactions on which I focused to understand Joumana and Joe's differential trajectories and their roles in the family. Family members talked about Joe as irresponsible. "He can't focus. He doesn't do his homework. His brother Paul is smart, but never got the opportunity. Joe's opportunity is here now, but he's not taking it." The family had gone to trouble to get him into a private school, because public schools were overcrowded and teachers did not have the attention he needed. But private school did him no good. In the Netherlands, I imagine that Joe would have been diagnosed with ADD or another disorder long ago. Where Western countries seem to over-diagnose children with disorders, Joe has his family's common sense label of simply not being "smart enough" or having "lack of focus," leading most of them to believe he could not succeed even if he tried. His mom's nickname for him is Abou 'Aj'a, translating roughly as Mister Chaos. Next to that there are the annoyed tones in Joumana and Rayan's voices when they speak to him or

about him, the hopelessness in his mom's voice when she speaks to him or about him. "I don't know what to do with that boy. He won't listen." Joumana on the other hand was the achiever, and she sealed her ambition and her recognition with actually achieving success. Not debilitated by any personality disorder or condescending interactions in her family differentiated her trajectory from Joe's. Growing up in the same households, being part of the same or similar interactions, but having achieved different interactional positions, appeared to have made a big difference.

Other than that, their gendered roles in daily life seem to have almost constrained Joumana to a path of success while they obstructed Joseph's success. Lebanese girls in traditional households, no matter where they come in order of siblings, are appointed roles as caretakers of other siblings and of the household (cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping). They are also considered "carriers of the family's honor" (and shame) (Joseph, 1994) so they cannot do as they please. Next to keeping sexual chastity, they need to maintain a good moral image, meaning they should not be seen at certain (shady) places, at certain (late) times, with certain people, to avoid even the *appearance* of being indecent, or "loose" (*faltaneh*). All this makes them learn what it means to take responsibility and to sacrifice early on in life, while boys play outside and far less restraints are put on them. Thinking of Joseph, this line of reasoning seems to fit, and reveals how Joumana's and Joseph's daily interaction rituals are thoroughly gendered. Joseph had interactions on the streets that energized him toward short–term cycles and whims. With his friends, hanging out, trying to get jobs as an assistant at a garage, at a barber. It was all about the quick money. Joumana did not have that. She kept away from the streets, and did not have a lot of friends outside. She saw that having no degree (Paul) or relying on a spouse to get ahead in life (Rayan) would not lead her to a better place. In a society where women's routes to increased self-determination and autonomy are education and a progressive spouse, Joumana was highly unlikely to find either outside a university. She found both there.

Looking back, this suggests quite a complex constellation of influences that prompted Joumana's initial success-drive. Observations of girls "farther away" (literally and symbolically) sparked her enthusiasm. At home, she had no explicit encouragement yet she also did not experience overt discouragement. This in conjunction with the ways her position in the family and domestic responsibilities played out, appear to have conspired to constrain Joumana on her "elevating" path.

Success-engendering rituals and emergent adeptness

Joumana obtained her secondary school diploma at seventeen. After the summer she started her first year at the Lebanese University (LU), where she eventually specialized in political sciences and graduated, at almost twenty-two. During her years in secondary school she often expressed her excitement of attending university. Attending LU seems somewhat of a mixed blessing. Its students often tell stories, and almost boast, about how tough its curricula and exams are. "Exams are almost impossible to pass, but that means you really have to study and when you graduate, you really know your field," a student tells me. Yet for Joumana, while her LU degree helped her acquire knowledge and skills that landed her employment at a well sought after company, among her colleagues graduated from private universities, she feels like a small fish in a big pond.

> Within companies, they don't consider the Lebanese University to amount to anything. Get your degree from NDU [Nôtre Dame University] or from AUB [American University of Beirut], better than the Lebanese [University]. Even though the Lebanese [University] is much harder. […] [LU] is better than all of them. Because it's very hard. […]
> Others come into the company and make nine hundred dollars [a month[19]]. I've been at the company for two and a half years and my salary is six hundred dollars [a month]. That's *very* low. [A colleague] told me [something] that really got to me. […] At the company I work, "who comes in weak, stays weak. And who comes in strong, becomes stronger." And really, up to now, I say he's right.

On the one hand, Joumana feels that private university graduates have unfair advantages mainly having to do with the unjust idea that they are better trained and equipped for the jobs for which they apply. According to her this is not only false, the reverse is rather the case: private university students are allegedly *less well* prepared than LU graduates. Adding to the injustice is that these graduates and their parents are well connected and therefore do not need to be the best candidate to get the job.

Private university students have their own stories of injustice about LU, and together these stories seem to be part of a struggle or, at least, weave a web of justifications for students' choices or lack of options in academic careers. Sonya, a young biology student at a private university tells me: "At the Lebanese University everything goes through connections [*wasāyit*]. And you have to get up

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19   The Lebanese Lira is tied to the US dollar (1 US dollar is approximately 1,500 LL). People speak in daily life in both currencies.

at six in the morning, to get a seat in the front of the class, otherwise you can't hear the teacher. And if you're not in a political party, you can't succeed. I don't like that." Joumana relates a different experience. "At the Lebanese [University] it's your cleverness and skills [that get you through]. You have to *study*. However much they will tell you that there's corruption [*wastāt*], I say there is none.[…] I spent four years at the university, I didn't notice *wastāt*, I didn't notice committing fraud in [exam] questions. I didn't notice a thing. […] There are like ten people in the [exam] hall monitoring you. They don't let you breathe." It did not sound like she made that last remark to convey that she felt treated unfairly. On the contrary, she was emphasizing how fair it is by how severe the rules are followed.

Joumana being on the side of the less fortunate, and maintaining a discourse of the tough schools and circumstances, producing the best employees, she is not one to accept seemingly unfair advantages as her defeat. "I consider myself now as buying experience. I'm paying the price for it. […] I'm doing a paid internship. […] Now I should look for a senior position. I got what I could from this position." Her determination remains ever as strong.

This seems to be a mode of survival in her circumstances. When they become overwhelming, when things seem not to work out, Joumana's mantra is '*I always take into account the long term*'. The word she uses here in Arabic is that of calculation and accounting. Any action or reflection must make sense when she connects it to her long term ideas. This may seem hyper-rational but it starts to make sense in an environment where short-term whims are so prevalent. Everyone around her does what makes sense to them right here, right now, and follows their feelings. She has been a ringside spectator of where that got them. Her pattern was to focus on the future and for a good deal to ignore or circumvent the present. In a busy household, she studied at night after the others had gone to sleep. Sometimes that meant sleeping less than others, or less than she would have liked to. Because of their dire financial situation, she worked more than other students to contribute to the household and pay her own expenses. She became strategic about which classes to attend. "I worked, next to school, and next to university. At times, I wouldn't study till exam time. […] At university, I didn't know the professor or the subject. I didn't even buy the books till halfway through the year. Or at the *end* of the year I'd buy books and study. And I got high grades. And one year I came out first [highest average score]."

Next to a calculating rationality, the emotional dimension is one of accomplishing being different from her environment. "There is no culture of education at home. Paul didn't go to school. My sister got married early, also didn't [continue school]. School wasn't important at home. There's no one but me. Even when I was little … I said Joe *has* to study. But Joe, he got health issues. That's why he didn't go on learning. […] From when I was little, I said I'm gonna' make

it. I saw the girls, the older ones, I wanted to be like them."

Studying after the others were asleep was convenient because it was quieter, but it also helped her get into a mindset that is out of sync with her family members. She needed to flee the dynamics of her mother's household, her children and grandchildren walking in and out, and visiting neighbors who were preoccupied with totally different matters and caught up in different rhythms. It was one of her *solo-rituals*, entraining her body and mind (see also Daniel and Farid in Chapter 5). The evenings were for eating, having fun, watching TV, hanging out with her fiancé. Later at night her mode, her focus, and mood changed toward the "slow-time activities" of studying and writing. Joumana had nowhere to go to physically remove herself from the family's rhythms, so she moved it to a different time slot, night time. This is the practical coping of a woman becoming educated in a home and neighborhood devoid of a "culture of education." More than that, it is part of the consolidation of a pattern of calculated action and emotional investment geared toward long term results and rewards. It is living "on a different wavelength" with direct surroundings, so to speak. And with that, more in line with her ambitions which resonate with other young women throughout the city finding ways to get ahead while struggling with finances and respecting and renegotiating tradition.

6.2   Rachel's inconspicuous talent

> Sebastian: I'm gonna' write a book about young people and experiencing success.
> Rachel: Oh. Are you going to write about me? A high school drop-out. Then I did level two. Then I stopped again. Then I worked. Then I went on to level three, and four. And now I'm doing a Bachelor's! [*Nu zit ik op HBO!*].

It was Rachel who made me aware of the value of including her in my research. Maybe as a joke, but there was no denying the relevance of her poignant summary. Joumana seems to always have had a determination to get ahead in life, and indeed during the years I have known her I had never seen otherwise. Rachel's case is more one of a gradual and modest evolving of aspirations.

She grew up in a family with three brothers, two elder and one younger, in what we could call a "working class" neighborhood in the north of the city, or what in the Netherlands people regularly refer to as a *volksbuurt*. Literally "people's neighborhood," the term has different connotations, including nostalgic ideas of hard working people and close-knit communities living simple but contented lives. Over the years and decades, some of these neighborhoods

have become synonymous with unemployment, insecurity, hostilities between estranged people groups, and "integration" issues connected with an influx of migrants who never "intended" and "were never meant"[20] to stay but nonetheless have been residing there for over thirty and fifty years. These are parts of the city that municipality governments have targeted with a mix of approaches ranging from 'zero-tolerance' crackdown on crime (which in the Netherlands never actually comes close to 'zero'; policymakers and politicians at times simply enjoy sounding tough), to socially oriented help and support programs, to city renewal initiatives with "gentrifying" effects. This has both changed, sometimes improved, the face and make-up of many neighborhood structures as well as symbolically stigmatized them. The latter in large part due to negative public attention and labels containing terms such as "problem", "risk", "disadvantaged", and the latest feeble attempt at reversing the stigma, calling them "communities of strength" (*krachtwijken*). Rachel's neighborhood and wider surroundings, indeed most neighborhoods of Amsterdam North, deal with many of such dynamics. Her neighborhood consists of two-story brown brick houses of fifty to sixty square meters (*eengezinshuizen*) dating back to before the second world war. Tenants who have been living there, since before laws concerning maximum rents for social housing changed, pay "old rent," some lower than two hundred Euros per month, in exchange for minimal up-keeping and maintenance by the housing company, while new tenants pay over six hundred. All houses are poorly insulated, making energy costs high (250 Euros per month for a household with children is not abnormal). Most people's highest school diploma is from secondary school, many are retired or unemployed and the informal economy is prevalent through the re-selling of stolen goods and the drug-trade. All of this must influence Rachel's life in some way, but it is the mediating micro-circumstances that show us exactly how these influences actually play out.

Walking to school 10 miles, barefoot through the snow, uphill
At the end of elementary school, she wanted to go to the MAVO, an educational track just above LBO, the lowest track. Her teacher recommended she enroll for LBO. MAVO would be too difficult for her. Rachel's mom was a high school drop-out, in fact she had been expelled at sixteen for wearing an "inappropriate" skirt (her knees were showing), and worked several jobs till she met her soon to be husband ten years later. Rachel's dad studied at a technical institute, which he

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20 Immigrants, especially from Turkey and Morocco since the 1960s, were considered to come as "guest laborers" for a short-term financial opportunity, after which they would return to their country of origin. This hardly happened. Since then, these "temporary immigrants" have been living and working in the Netherlands for over three generations, most of them having Dutch citizenship.

never finished but he always had jobs in mechanics, electrical engineering, and maintenance. Mom and dad also had their reservations about Rachel's desire. They did not want her to fail and wanted to protect her from disappointment. Rachel, thirteen at the time, would hear nothing of it and became very emotional. She *had to* go to MAVO. Her mom did not understand why this was so important to her. She did not have more friends going to that school nor did she give another specific reason for her steadfastness. Her mom's idea was that the step to secondary school was hard in itself and she did not want her daughter to deal with the extra difficulty of studying above her level. They had done the same with Rachel's two elder brothers. Even though they were smart enough for HAVO (a level higher than MAVO), they started out on MAVO. The reasoning was that if they could make a step "up" that would be fine, but starting out "high" and failing could be devastating.[21] One of the brothers went on to finish HAVO, while the other never "adjusted" to secondary school and eventually got expelled, after which he spent time (literally) in schools (or so they were called) until law no longer required him to and he started working.

Rachel's parents thought education was important but they also had an aversion to "too much" education. They deemed it healthy to keep a skeptical distance from self-important academic institutions and over-ambitious job sectors. Eventually Rachel's parents conceded to her wishes. She spent a year or two on MAVO but it was very difficult, educationally and socially. Other girls were mean to her and she did not know to defend herself. She swallowed it, did not say much, but suffered from it. Teachers did not do much about it. Her parents asked her about what caused the bullying and tried giving her advice, but it did not help her much. Her parents and Rachel talked to the teachers, but that did not help either. Thirteen year old girls can be mean, was the idea. Later in their twenties these girls had forgotten (or pretended to forget) their bullying had ever taken place. Eventually Rachel had to leave that school because she was failing too many classes. Her inability to keep up, her unwelcoming peers, and teachers passive to her plight became too much. She had to go to the LBO, the lowest track, which during her school years came to be named VMBO, the pre-vocational track. Her parents never told her "I told you so." They were more baffled at the passivity of teachers and staff who let their daughter be bullied and who pointed at Rachel's lack of educational results for not being able to continue, as if one had nothing to do with the other.

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21 This is a very different reasoning from a general "middle-class" parent who would do anything to keep their children from the lower-level schools because of the perceived detrimental social dynamics within such educational institutions.

"What am I doing it for?"

From VMBO she eventually made it into MBO (the vocational track), which has three levels called two, three, and four. Number one is presumably not counted at MBO because that level is still VMBO. The fourth level gives entrance to Bachelor' tracks at the *Hogeschool*, a poly-tech institute. Rachel chose retail as a track, did internships in small bookstores and had a part-time job at a department store. She passed level two. At seventeen she took a break from school and worked different jobs, among them cashier at a department store, and did some volunteer work for a while. Coming back to school she went on to level three where she switched from retail to secretary training. During this time, she was now in her twenties, she got the idea to go to law school. After MBO, she wanted to continue to HBO where she could do a Bachelor's track that could eventually get her into university. Her parents heard Rachel's ambitions and thought, "OK, if you think it works, try it." They never saw this coming. She passed level three and prepared for an entry exam to the Bachelor's (*21+ toets*). By this time, she had picked up a lot of momentum and excitement. She knew what she wanted and thought it pointless to continue MBO's level four. The entry exam would be her short-cut. Her determination was similar to when she was thirteen and wanted to go to the MAVO, and again her parents did not know how to respond, other than to not stand in her way and hope for the best. The difference between her transition to secondary school and now was that she had matured and knew how to deal with people who would stand in her way. In her late teens, these were not so much girls bullying her, as disillusioned teachers working in demoralized institutions not giving her the time and attention she needed to succeed. These teachers were so used to their student population, whose attitude and behavior can best be summarized as "in-school drop-outs", that they did not even recognize when someone was truly motivated.

> Our school was like a community center [*buurthuis*]. I don't know why most people came there . They just hung around but didn't do much. The teachers didn't do much either. I had a purpose. I wanted to make it. But I didn't learn much there or anything. Very often I had to tell the teacher what I wanted . "I want to pass this subject! What should I do? ! Do your frickin' [untranslated] job man!" [laughs] In my second year I switched from accounting to secretary. In the first year there was almost nothing to do. Then when it got much busier, the mentor said, "You have to make up for five classes you didn't take." I said, "What! For the past six months I sat back, I had nothing to do. And now you come with that." Then he started yelling at me. He told me to behave. But yeah, he suddenly came with this while I had so much to do. I could've already done it, if I knew before. A list with the complete overview of subjects only came when we were already halfway through the school year. They

didn't understand that I was angry. In the first half [year] I had a Dutch class. Write two letters. I got eight weeks. I was done in two days. What can I do now? "Nothing ", they said. "You have to wait for the presentation class." But I did have to be present every week. So I sat there doing nothing.

Through repeated emails and visits, she has had to enforce possibilities to take exams, have them marked, and have the school administration get her achievements formalized. Rachel has more astonishing stories about her demotivating educational environment. The question is where and how she got the energy to achieve despite these circumstances.

The time came for her entry exam into the Bachelor's level. She failed. She had to pass level four to get into her desired program, which meant another semester of studying in her trusted, disastrous school. She did just that, passed, and enrolled at the *hogeschool*. She was twenty-five at this point. She has had several setbacks at the *hogeschool*, due to bureaucratic negligence and teachers' lack of attention for her academic career, but also because of her own shortcomings in dealing with deadlines or understanding the logic and discipline of higher education. In her last years of MBO and first years of HBO, she has come to learn a lot, not in the least about finding out how procedures work, and knowing who to speak and how to speak to get things done. She has also practiced this outside her school environment: figuring out legal affairs for family members and friends. This brought her into an increasingly empowered position where she could take care of herself and others.

Rachel and I talked on the phone, a few months after she found out she could not start her internship because she failed to meet a bureaucratic formality. This meant she had to wait six months without any option for substituting classes or tasks. She basically felt like she was wasting her time.

> Rachel: I had for a while that I really didn't feel like going on. I thought, "What am I doing it for?" I was staring into space and didn't feel like doing anything. But then I heard a voice in my head: "Other people can't define you. You are the only one who decides who you are." Then I thought, Yeah! Why am I thinking so negatively? This is not me! I'm optimistic! I'm positive! And last week also. I was sitting in my break at work, with an empty stare. Then a girl came and showed me a letter. She said she couldn't understand what it said. I looked at it briefly and said [in a monotonous, absent-minded voice]: You asked to be exonerated and this says you don't have to pay. "Oh", she said.
> Sebastian: Ha!
> Rachel [laughing]: Then I thought, Yeah, this is what I'm doing it for. I wanna' help people. When they have trouble, I want to be there for them. Then it felt

different. Coz for a long time I was really de-motivated.

Sebastian: I didn't notice that about you

[in my notes from October 2010 I wrote: Remarkable is not that her academic progress is being delayed, but that it doesn't discourage her! She has a positive attitude. She has ideas and makes plans for how she can make good use of her time the coming six months. "I want to see if I can do volunteer work and I'm going to buy some law books to study"]

Rachel: Yeah, I'm a good actress! [laughs]

Sebastian: Coz you were gonna' buy those law books and stuff…

Rachel: Yeah. Back then I was really felt like doing that. It went with ups and downs, I guess.

Rachel's trajectory over the years has been a steep climb uphill. She has had clear moments of progress in her educational achievements, such as getting her MBO diploma, enrolling in the HBO Bachelor's program, and obtaining her first year certificate (called a 'propedeutical' certificate, which certifies that students can remain in higher education), paired with increased perseverance, confidence, determination, and competence in dealing with the world around her. She has slowly grown from an apprehensive, inwardly-turned person to a daring and assertive young woman.

Unintended side-effects becoming main effects

At times, her climb was also lonely. No one, including her family, saw this quiet, shy girl coming. She had always been sweet and no one expressed to her that she needed to be anything more than that. There seems to have been a vacuum in ambition of her environment with regard to her. This by no means came from malicious intentions. If anything it was to "protect" her from the stress and strain that can accompany the battle for success. Now that she had exposed herself to this battle, when the blows came, they hit her hard. Thoughts and feelings of self-doubt often debilitated her. Her mom has always been supportive but could not always help her see how she could deal with the situations she was in, as she had experienced little, if anything, comparable. The relationship with her dad grew strained over the years and they became estranged from each other, mainly because he did not know how to deal with a daughter, rather than a son, who became increasingly strong-willed about her life choices.

At first glance, it is difficult to establish in relation to who or what her ambitions were formed. As far as people knew, they were suddenly "there" and she ran with them. In her household, her father's ambitions in life, and that of her brothers, were always prevalent. Although careerism was a taboo and associated with egotistical people who forsook the value of family, there had always been a strong sense of

value for education (except that "too much education" was a danger), an esteem for working hard ("but not too hard, since working is for living, and not the other way around"), and a care and standing up for family and surroundings. Her home was thus not devoid of ambition, but it was hardly ever explicitly related to her. And although she never seemed directly challenged to bear these responsibilities, her daily exposure to them, and growing up in a "boys-home" preformed and fed her "capacity to aspire" (Appadurai, 2004). Joumana (Section 6.1) silently observed people in her wider environment, wanted to be like them and became like them. Rachel, maybe not as consciously, but similarly through silent observation was inculcated with her family's values and aspirations. The family's assumption was perhaps that these were "male" aspirations, but she absorbed them nonetheless.

Rachel's aspirational formation apparently sprouted from "unintentional" learning experiences. Her school career comprises a series of depleting and undermining rituals with fellow students and teachers, next to a few uplifting interactions. Rachel has developed confidence and determination, but the constellation of her regular chains of interactions do not seem strong or encouraging enough to bring her out of an apparent state of enduring precariousness. Comparable to Daniel (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2), she has developed positive personality traits and can probably "help herself" along, but she would at the same time benefit greatly from a set of more empowering and constructive figurations of regular interactions.

6.3   Farida's second living room

Multiplication of care
In a neighborhood in the North of Amsterdam, not far from where Rachel lived, Fatima and Farida, 16 and 22, volunteered for a community work organization that organized sports and recreational activities for children and teenagers. These initiatives turned into small parties for children who spent a lot of their free time outside. The outdoor activities also posed a challenge in turf and atmosphere to the rawer "street culture" oriented juveniles whom children and adults tended to see as a social threat. Fatima and Farida had been coming to the playground since they were young. Since a number of years, Imane, the local team leader within the organization, had been a source of sensibility and inspiration for them in a neighborhood where such examples were not always easily found. As children grew into teenagers, Imane gave them opportunities to organize activities for the younger children.

The two young women wanted to organize more activities for adolescent girls in the neighborhood, as they saw that this group was not attended to enough in comparison with other groups (e.g. adolescent boys and younger children).

Farida was finishing up a vocational study in social work (MBO) and Fatima was in her last year of prevocational secondary school (VMBO). Fatima and Farida came up with a plan of activities that was meant to increasingly engage young women in being there for each other and taking responsibility for each other's wellbeing. Their first activity was a trip to Rotterdam (a city about an hour train ride away from Amsterdam, and in the experience of the girls "very far") to go site-seeing and to attend the recording of a television program. Their aim was here to engage the girls, show them that they matter and warm them up for doing activities as a group more often. Other than that, the idea was to broaden their horizons, seeing something outside their regular environment. Regarding the future, the idea was to more actively involve them in and for their neighborhood. They were a group of ten in total.

> Farida: It was a nice day. The girls behaved themselves really well. They listened well. They stuck to the rules. We also had a lot of fun. It was really a good day. The girls thought Rotterdam was awesome. They could just be themselves there, without looking around to see if anyone would recognize them, or knew them, or something. You know. Here, people might see them and then there would be gossip in the neighborhood and stuff. They did ask us if they could smoke. I thought that was good that they asked us. Then I said, ask Imane also. They were also able to talk about things they normally don't talk about. That was also very good. About boys, about smoking, school. It stayed fun all day. On the way back in the train they were even dancing!

Fatima and Farida had fun and saw that the girls had fun, but they also saw needs.

> Farida: The way they opened up to us, you could really see that they need people to talk to. You see others in the neighborhood, they have places to go and people to see. But these girls just kind of hang around and no one really knows what they do, what they think, or what's going through their minds, what troubles them. Not even their parents or brothers really know.
> Imane: A couple of the girls are taking laxative pills because they want to lose weight. They don't realize they're doing themselves a lot of harm. No one realizes what these girls are doing. When I see these kinds of things, it reminds me of how vulnerable it all is.
> Farida: We want to do more for these girls. We should have a weekly drop-in activity, where the girls can just come and be themselves, and also so we can see what they are doing, and influence them. That we can tell them if they

are doing bad things, give them information. So at least they can know what damage they're doing to themselves. But also to help with things. Maybe with choices in school, or about boyfriends, anything. They need something like that. Really [...] You know, then I can maybe make a difference in their lives, like Imane did with me. That's something I'd love to do.

Sebastian: How are you guys different from the other girls?

Imane: What makes you think they're different? [everyone started laughing]

Farida: I don't think I'm really different. I was also like them. Maybe I got a little older. My brother was also looking out for me. He warned me not to do anything off [*geen rare dingen doen*]. "My name is clean. Keep it clean." That's what he said.

I thought they were "exemplary girls" trying to keep others out of trouble. In another instance, I saw Fatima at the door of the office with Imane, who told her "Ok, give it to me." Fatima pulled something from her backpack and handed it over. They said goodbye. I asked her, "Are those the laxatives that you guys sometimes talk about?" Imane smiled and shook her head in dismay. I then realized that although Fatima was trying to make a difference for others in the neighborhood and create a safe haven in the midst of their vulnerability, this did not make her any less vulnerable. Imane said, "People look at her and because she's so tall and mature looking, they think she *is* mature. But she's *not.* She's only *sixteen!*"

Imane did her work with great compassion and involvement and she had an attraction for many girls whom she encountered during and outside their activities. Imane lived in another city but felt she belonged in the neighborhood where she worked. Her language conveyed a love for the teenagers and families that went beyond the call of duty, and the way she led her team felt like she was leading a family.

Imane: This is a special place. For employees, interns, the kids. We eat together here… And sometimes we share things that are quite personal. First things have to be right relationally, between employees, and people have to feel safe and appreciated. Then we get to work.

Sebastian: Is that typical for [your organization] or is that typical Imane?

Yakim: Typical Imane. [laughs, along with Imane]

[She is not always aware of it, but her approach makes everyone feel appreciated. The atmosphere in their activities and on the playground is a tangible result of it]

Even as she felt she was outgrowing her job in capacities, possibilities, and ambitions, she found it hard to actually make the choice to leave because she was driven by being there for "her children." The choice was eventually made for her when the municipality government terminated subsidies for this public service (at least in that neighborhood) altogether.

For a few years Imane borrowed an office from an elementary school that looked out over one of the main playgrounds in the neighborhood. Imane and her team called this their "base of operations" (*uitvalsbasis*). It was a small room of about twelve square meters. It had a desk with a computer, a table, a few chairs, and a kitchenette. It became somewhat of a permanent hang out for children who did not join in on a particular activity outside but enjoyed simply being there. Whenever Imane was there, teenagers, especially girls, would hang around, drink tea, talk, and laugh. The girls affectionately called the office their second living room. It was also a place where more serious issues would come up. At some point Imane was considered one of them, or more importantly, the office was considered their domain, because some of them had no problem talking about personal subjects, even with me present.

> A girl of around sixteen sits in the office talking to Imane. She's upset. She has a hard look in her eyes, seems indignant and wants revenge. As they're talking, I find out that she has a social worker assigned to her who checks up on her and has rules for her behavior and activities. The girl has recently not complied. Her personal situation is full of trouble and indirectly she and Imane talk about domestic abuse. Surprisingly (to me), it turned out *she* hit her parents. Mostly when she was talking, she was ranting about her case worker, thinking of ways to "get her" as if they were in a personal vendetta. She said she'd pretend to go crazy, as she had done before, so that no one knows what to do anymore. Imane was trying to get through to her by telling her that outright defiance was not the way to get what she wanted. It could get worse. For a while the girl ignored Imane's advice and was focused on what her case worker "had coming to her" if she would keep "harassing" her. I offered some insights along lines similar to Imane's. She kept silent for a bit but at some point gave me a sharp look and a glance at Imane, questioning my authority in the situation, but I think also my legitimacy in offering her advice. I kept quiet. Imane confirmed I had made sense, and they went back and forth a few times before the girl said she had to go. "I'll talk to you soon, Imane. I'll let you know how it goes." It was impressive to see how Imane gave the girl space to talk and express her emotion and tried to make her see a different way, without ever showing a hint of judgment, while the girl was clearly on a path of self-destruction. After she left, Imane shook her head, saying "Poor girl. She tries to be so tough but she has way too much trouble in her young life."

Imane, in her calm, friendly and welcoming demeanor, but also through her constant presence and accessibility, made a difference for young women. For a while, I witnessed a mini-community developing where Imane's care and example multiplied. I turn now to how this contributed to those young women experiencing recognition as well as possibilities for change.

Change through modesty and discretion

Farida and Fatima taking initiative for their friends were themselves still coming out of a vulnerable social position. Instead of seeing Imane as an unattainable type of example of virtue, Farida saw in her a role model to which to aspire. Part of following this role model meant taking care of others like them. No doubt this identification was facilitated by the fact that they were both women, both from Moroccan descent, and that Imane had actively sought to develop Farida's potential during her internship.

Imane had an attraction for Farida as an "energy leader" (Collins, 2004, p. 108). It was, however, not typical of a social dominance at the expense of others. Imane puts her competence and presence in the service of allowing others to 'shine," facilitating their initiatives and making space for them. In Sennett's terms (2012, p. 94), she set out to achieve a "differential exchange," where she felt she reached her goals if the girls came away with more social attention and recognition – and with it higher emotional energy levels – than she did. Pulling this off time and again did nevertheless give Imane tremendous energy boosts. She was often in the background but felt like part of the action and of people's warmth. "Before I had always liked this neighborhood, and was fond of it. Now I've grown to care for it. The enthusiasm with which we're welcomed by everyone is overwhelming."

It is these exchanges and with it the energy that became the focus of the adolescent girls coming to the Playground Office, and thus was multiplied in interactions between them, initiating a more firm social base for a socially vulnerable group. It is still a tall order to transfer the qualities of these interactions to other settings. The teachers Rachel encountered (Section 6.2) at her VMBO and MBO schools are in their passivity and lack of motivation the exact opposite of Imane's involvement and compassion. It is safe and at the same time sad to say that Imane's girls attend schools where educational experiences were often similar to those of Rachel's. The teacher-pupil interactions conjure up totally different energies, and in a sense turn them into "totally different girls," which sets them up for totally different school careers than would be beneficial for them.

Fatima and Farida's trip to Rotterdam is in this respect an interesting initiative. Although the girls were in their own trusted group and Imane was there with them, it was an encouragement to step outside their regular settings and, in a micro-interactional sense, experiment with who they could be apart from

parents,' siblings' and neighbors' regular social constraints. To what extent can the girls transfer skills learned in these kinds of activities to other situations? A trip to Rotterdam might not make them more productively assertive in the classroom, yet the temporarily experienced freedom does have an effect. The regular constraints are revealing of a social order on the neighborhood playgrounds, one dominated by boys, while the girls move in their shadows. While Farida valued her brother setting boundaries for her, she also said that the girls look over their shoulder in their own neighborhood to make sure that no one will have something to gossip about. The ways that brothers and other family members set boundaries, was running its course as far as the girls were concerned. Now that they became young women, having others tell them what is good, no longer sufficed. They tended not to experience a responsibility for their own actions, because their actions seemed often tied to their families' reputations.

Spending time with Imane, who is an expert at making space for others, may in the long run teach them that they have more options than being for or against something. This is what it appeared to have done for Farida. In their routine settings the girls behaved according to what people in authority (brothers, parents, teachers) thought was right, or they rebelled against them. Imane facilitated behavioral experimentation, the venting of emotions, and discussion of topics of importance to them. This helped them become aware of their social position and the dynamics in which they were caught up, and offered them practical possibilities in personal and social development. As such, Imane introduced and encouraged a novel mode of emotion management.

However situated, from moments such as the trips to Rotterdam, and the fairly durable presence of Imane at her Playground Office, it was clear that the interactions there had transforming potential. It helped that the transformation was taking place from within the community: on a playground that people saw as theirs, with a community worker who saw the neighborhood as hers. Quietly they tried out smaller activities and bigger adventures, in direct contact with parents and with their approval, not at all in protest and defiance. Imane led them in slowly reshaping boundaries in ways that their environment could get used to, and other people involved would eventually see the merits of that change. Farida was first a target and later an agent of discrete change.

6.4   Nadine between submission and defiance

Nadine is a twenty-seven year old woman, living with her husband Tarek in an apartment of a newly built neighborhood in Hadath, at the edge of Beirut's Southern Suburbs. Nadine did a Bachelor's at the Lebanese University, is completing a Master's degree in Biology at the Arabic University and intends to

pursue a PhD. A mutual friend introduced us. Nadine invited us to come to her home. She was waiting outside her building when we arrived in the afternoon. She wore conservative clothing, including a *hijab* (a veil covering her head). Her ensemble struck me as stylish (color coordinated) and self-conscious. She had a friendly and welcoming demeanor. She smiled and nodded. I greeted her and we walked into the building. When we talked, a big part of our conversation revolved around her husband. His story according to Nadine is an example of perseverance through hardship. "He didn't accept his situation. He worked before he went to school. He worked a second job till 3AM. He worked two jobs and started from zero. He saved money, and at ten thousand dollars he started his own recycling company. He established his work well […] He strongly believes that anyone can change their fate. It frustrates him to see someone accept his situation ['ābil bi-wadʿu]."

Tarek is a self-made business man with a lot of experience and no formal training or degrees. Nadine's family fears the contrast in education between them. "I want to do a PhD. For society, for my family a Master's [degree] is already like 'wow'. But as far as I'm concerned, it's nothing! But [according to people in Nadine's surroundings] for girls [elementary] school is enough. All of them were against me with the Master's. […] My mom, my grandma. They said: stay at your husband's side [khalliki hadd jawzik]. I said, "my husband is right beside me!" […] He encourages me to continue. Tarek says, "I would have loved to study. If only I'd studied more, I could have established myself [zabbat hāli] more." So now, he works hard to compensate. […] My family now is saying 'go for the doctorate'. Before they were afraid that I would develop too strong a character [titʾawwa shakhsiyti]. People don't want to see that in a woman. They think if a woman becomes too educated they'll become too difficult for their husband and they'll split up. They say "Divorce is the most difficult thing." But I respect my husband's opinion and his experience. In this life we can't categorize. I teach at the Arabic University [lab instruction to first year medical students] and they teach me also, the students!"

For Nadine to follow her academic ambitions it was important to have her husband's encouragement. This of course stimulated her personally, but it also gave her a counterweight against her family's warnings. The women of her family advised her to watch out and not "rise above" her husband too much. Her husband's approval helped relieve the family's worries about career and personal development becoming more important than what Nadine should bring to married life. The colloquial term *ʾawiyyeh* (pronounced "aweeyah") is important here, meaning strong woman and related to how Nadine explained her family's fear of her character becoming too strong. It can have a complimenting connotation of a woman who will not let anyone 'mess with her'. But more often it has a negative connotation of a woman who will not listen to reason and will push

her own will, no matter what.[22] This is a fear of what "too much education" can do to women. In speaking of her development and making it understandable to her community, Nadine seems to be able to advance academically and socially but also shows that she is not becoming ʾawiyyeh, remaining approachable for her family and husband. There is a conscious strategizing and emotional tact to making her success work in her community's environment. While not wanting to come across as ʾawiyyeh, she does have ambitions in being heard and making a difference in her community. "I want to change and improve life in the village[23] but no one will listen, except if you study and have a Master's degree. There's many things we can work on. For instance, when someone dies, there's a lot of food. And whatever's left, gets thrown away. Give that food to the poor! Everyone says no, because you have to show that you can spend money. And then, there's giving away Qurans. But everyone has Qurans! So you just threw away money. You can use that money to improve the village and the country. People want money and power, but we're looking for *influence*. And that comes from critical thought. But people will only start listening if you have a degree. My husband worked hard to improve his situation, so people would start to listen to what he has to say [la-ykūn ʿandu kilmeh]."

Nadine had plans to change taken for granted traditions. She intends to become highly educated without becoming ʾawiyyeh in her community's experience, but simultaneously ʾawiyyeh enough in a positive sense that people will listen. With "respect where respect is due" she intends to use her husband's support in becoming a woman whose voice is heard. What makes her likely to succeed is what she displays in what Bourdieu calls *le sense pratique* (1980/1990). She has a considerably evolved social finesse exhibited in knowing what is important to people (their values and consequent habits and rituals), what they demand of her, what she feels is important and how to keenly weave through these different forces. In all this she hopes to "stretch" boundaries of what people deem acceptable and appropriate.

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22   It does not necessarily have a connotation of behaving in a "masculine" manner, in the sense of "butchness" or "tomboy" behavior. A woman who is "awiyyeh" has strong opinions and is quick to voice them (usually in a fierce manner) but can still behave in ways that people consider "feminine."

23   In Lebanon people's identity and heritage is derived from the village their family is from "originally" (meaning where ancestors have settled generations ago). Although now almost half the population of Lebanon lives in and around Beirut, people identify themselves by the village their parents and ancestors are from, and often they also still have (summer)homes there. When Nadine says she wants to improve the village she is expressing a feeling of wanting to contribute to a place of her (or her husband's) roots and heritage. First allegiance and effort are to these places of origin.

Discussion: Multiple fixations and discretely increasing success

Young women look for activities that boost their confidence, on the way to elevation over disadvantages. If they are lucky, they do so in ways that ground them in communities that acknowledge their ambitions, but also stabilize them emotionally. Unfortunately, this is not self-evident. Young women in Amsterdam as well as Beirut walk a fine line between different interests and energy flows. These pull at them and potentially yield them more or less (experienced) success. Young women have at least three ways of responding.

In a first possible way, there are girls who gracefully accept (male) authority and in doing so reap the benefits of obedience, a positive reputation in the community. They also live with the consequences of unjust oppression, forgoing on empowering experiences they might otherwise have had. In a second line of response, some young women defiantly challenge authorities, stand up for what they need, and achieve success for themselves as well as others around them, in showing them by example a new realm of possibilities for "their kind of people." The risk here is estrangement from their communities since their achievements become for their environment synonymous with a breaking away from what is traditional and sacred. This radical breakaway is perhaps a more "masculine" response. There are also females who do so but, especially in more traditional societies, it leaves them socially often more vulnerable than males.

A third way is for young women to invest socially and emotionally in both their communities of origin as well as the settings where they aspire to succeed, bearing the vulnerability of remaining open to often divergent worlds. While all three styles come with difficulties and hardship, the third is probably most demanding of girls because there is no definite shutting out of realms of possibilities. It requires constant adjustment and active plural fixation on one's diverse surroundings. It is mainly in this last style that I have seen the women in this chapter gain stability while also deriving strength and perseverance. I have seen few males who were able to be successful in this respect. The females and males who were successful had great advantages because of their adaptability but also an empathetic quality in being able to "read" people, tune into situations, and take anticipatory action.

While Joumana and Nadine have managed to get themselves an education that has improved their chances and positions in the labor market and their capabilities to view life from a better vantage point, and young women across Beirut are doing the same, their endeavor is not without social risk. Fortunately for them, academic education comes with intellectual formation and as they improve their socioeconomic position, they find words, a narrative, providing an explicit perspective on the vulnerability of their empowerment. A main ingredient of this narrative is a fairly well thought through strategy of weighing

importance of activities: studying enough to pass exams, but not so much that they neglect other responsibilities, such as helping out their moms in domestic chores, but also working part-time (sometimes full-time) jobs to pitch in on family expenses and pay their way through university. Sonya, a student of the Arabic University with whom I spoke, explained, "Most students [literally: three quarters of them, a Lebanese expression for most/many] works as well as study. In Business, many of them have full-time jobs. They only go to the last classes before the exam. […] Students work one semester, then work one semester. It takes them about six years to get a Bachelor's. They have to. Credits are expensive. Everything's expensive, so students have to help their families. They work in delivery, security, sales, waiters… Also, they bring their siblings to school before going to [class at] university themselves. […] Rich people make like three or four thousand dollars a month. Then we're talking about company owners, bank directors, doctors, … at least some of them. But most people are in the 'middle'. They make something like seven hundred to a thousand a month." I asked if those people lived comfortably. "No," Sonya replied, "not at all. They struggle" [baddon ydaffshu]. "Is your dad comfortable?" [mertāĥ] I asked. "No" Sonya replied again, "If he was comfortable, his daughters wouldn't be working" she added matter-of-factly.

In poorer and more traditional households (poor and traditional do not always go together but in Beirut they often do), the idea and practice of the man providing for the family, especially the women (wife and daughters) is an important source of honor. At the same time life in Lebanon is so expensive that many men are not able to accomplish this. This brings about an interesting and complicated dynamic, where it is becoming increasingly accepted that young women get jobs to 'help out'. They then acquire work experience and build careers that are not temporary family support, they lead to structural changes in the labor market as well as family dynamics and views of femininity. Young women develop a lifestyle that they are not willing to give up once they marry. And the men marrying them are usually only too happy that the burden of providing an income is no longer solely on their shoulders.

> Imad [the same as in Chapter 4]: There's three types of girls. There's traditional. Then there's the "strong" girls. They want to be the boss. They say "I wanna' do whatever I want, and you have nothing to say." And there's a mix. I like the third. A little traditional but also with a mind [laughs]. You need to work together. Like friends.
> 'Usman: Plus the girl has to work as well.
> I: Otherwise, you have to work two jobs and you never see each other.
> 'U: It's hard. You can't say to the girl's family that she should help you. *You* have to provide. But in reality, you need help. Not all families are like that.

> They can see that if you're not making money, but you have a good character, you're dependable, that you'll be able to make money. You'll find your way. They'll let you get married. Ok, you don't have a house, so you can start with renting one. But still, I feel I need to have a house, a car, a good job before I can get married. It's like, it just looks better. It feels better.

As Chapter 7 will show, the traditional view of males being responsible for income, in combination with material desires of young people (and their parents) beyond their means, postpones many people's possibilities for marriage indefinitely, blocking opportunities for "normal" and accepted advancement to next stages in life. While women joining the labor force partly relieve the younger generation of this postponement, they need to tread lightly. It has become part of everyday practical and pragmatic reality for women to "pitch in" but, as 'Usman makes clear, this trend cannot verbally or otherwise explicitly become part of an overtly new way of life. Women who openly claim a new position as educated and independent, do so at the risk of their community criticizing and ostracizing them, leaving them disconnected and lonely. Most often this results in the undesirable combination of being successful, yet unhappy.

In the Netherlands, ideals are more balanced out in favor of women, with partners supposedly having legitimate opportunities to work as a team. Practices in this respect vary. Rachel and Farida, who married in the meanwhile, do the bulk of the household work while also working daytime jobs. They do not (yet) have children, so their days do not yet feel like "double-shifts" (Hochschild, 1997; Hochschild & Machung, 1989). The question for women in Amsterdam as well as Beirut is how they can win space for themselves.

All cases in this chapter reveal a high boundedness to interaction rituals. Joumana, a strong-willed, energetic woman, perhaps partly feeding on an insatiable drive to prove herself originating in childhood dynamics, knew how to influence situations and people to work for her advancement. She very much leaned on her inner drive and developed solo-rituals that entrain her focus on the long-term in the midst of contexts geared toward short-term interests. Even so, she was forced to negotiate her possibilities within daily interactions with her family members. Through this she developed an adeptness of functioning toward multiple sets of interests almost simultaneously.

Rachel's case showed even more interactional dependence. Her numerous depleting and undermining interactions were at times too much for her to handle. Whatever "personal strength" she had developed, however valuable, was in those situations not enough. Farida and her friends were then lucky enough to have someone like Imane in their vicinity, providing what their "natural" contexts did not offer: a constant, welcoming, and emotional support. Imane initi-

ated and modeled coping practices of emotion management that helped them "elevate" themselves over their circumstances. This helped them to see themselves and their situations from a point of increased clarity, and showed them "new" options from which to choose. An enormous advantage was that this did not occur at the expense of their connection to their families and communities. It was subtle and discrete enough that these reinventions of female activities and roles were not seen by their surroundings as revolutions against an existing gendered order, but at most as acceptable reformations. This social finesse, that Nadine probably evolved more than anyone else, is an invaluable "capital" but most likely only acquired through "paying one's internship" in countless interaction rituals and social alertness.

7   DOWNS OF THE DOWNTRODDEN

Some young people have managed, despite their circumstances (yet also partially because of them), to experience success and with time *became* successful in their own eyes and have received social and formal recognition for it. This chapter shows another side of young people in hardship by giving prominence to those whose trajectories were not examples of ever increasing success but whose paths were more curved and tangled.

Section 7.1 starts in Beirut with accounts of people in the slums. Teachers, social workers, nurses, and doctors working with the most destitute of Lebanese society, from street children, to undocumented people groups, to war refugees; the inhabitants of the "Misery Belt." The experiences of these people and the professionals trying to improve their lives tell a story of overwhelming hardship, the importance of small contributions, but also of the limits of good intentions. Section 7.2 focuses on Paul in Beirut (see also Introduction and Section 6.1). His life contains illustrations embedded in the context of the previous section. I have already introduced Paul previously. Here, I focus on him to understand better why he lacks his sister's optimism, how he persevered nonetheless, and the limited yet significant results that has yielded. In Section 7.3 we continue with Hicham's experiences in Amsterdam (see also Section 1.3). He struggled in dealing with the formal institutions of education and labor. He sought the advice and support of youth workers with whom he had built relationships. They listened to him and tried to find practical ways of working on his ambitions. With and without their help, Hicham developed ways of trying to get ahead with varying results. In Section 7.4 Kevin is in a constant struggle against his own and his environment's negativity. This description shows how combinations of domestic dynamics, neighborhood influences, friends, peer groups, and personality traits can make for personal recipes of self-disappointment.

These accounts might seem gloomy. Yet, they are necessary to grasp the difficulties that these young people go through, to see when and how they feel that things are changing for the better, and when they feel that *they* can contribute to such change. As such, this chapter contributes to understanding the richness of experiencing success by re-placing in it in the context of miseries and disadvantages, but also by indicating what else young people facing overwhelming disadvantages might need.

7.1   Hope and despair in the "Misery Belt"

The Misery Belt (*hizam al-bu's*) is a name that journalists and scholars use for a strip of suburbs in Beirut where life is harshest (Jaber, 1987; Kassir, 2010; Kifner, 1985; Sajan, 2011; Yahya, 1993). Illegal housing, scarce public services, poverty, drugs, prostitution, and undocumented immigrants make up the context of bleak chances at even a minimal humane existence. These suburbs came into existence in the 1950s throughout the 1970s – some even dating back to the 1920s (Fawaz & Peillen, 2003, p. 7) – through waves of immigration, consisting mainly of refugees fleeing rural poverty and the dangers of warfare (Fregonese, 2012, p. 324; Yahya, 1993, p. 139). Adjacent to this belt are working class neighborhoods. Most people there are better off than in the Misery Belt, but these places contain a lot of hidden misery and "ordinary suffering" as opposed to absolute suffering (Bourdieu, 1993/1999, p. 4). This section and the next are accounts of how people live in, or close to, this misery. It deals with the struggles of trying to be successful in the midst of negative images, smells, and other impressions that force themselves on young people every day. These seem to impact different people differently. In this chapter and the one following it, I will try to show how different young people accomplish the foregrounding and backgrounding of these impressions as a possible understanding of different people's inclinations to positivity and negativity.

A structural divide
Children and teenagers growing up in and around the Misery Belt deal with disadvantages that are not of their own making and largely beyond their control. Many of their parents' incomes are below minimum wage[24] or even the recognized poverty line.[25] Education has been a great challenge for the whole country and in a context of illiteracy and preoccupation with day-to-day struggles, the younger generations of the Misery Belt are usually a lot less well off than average.

> The state budget deficit has led to a decline in the quality of education in the public schools and institutions in Lebanon. This has resulted in high drop-out rates, estimated by the Central Administration for Statistics (CAS) to be approximately 30 per cent; they are highest among boys aged 15–19, who leave school to look for work. A reduction in enrolment in public schools and universities is also reported. As of 1998, the Lebanese state required elemen-

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24   675,000 Lebanese pounds ($448/€339) a month, since 2012. Before that (2008-2012) it was 500,000 Lebanese pounds ($333/€225) a month. In 1994-2008, it was around 300,000 Lebanese pounds ($200/€150) (Abouzaki, 2011).
25   3,900 Lebanese pounds per person per day ($2.60/€1.95) (UNDP, 2008).

tary education for all children up to the age of 12, but this has not been fully enforced because the schools are not equipped to deal with the entire body of students. Public school registration fees are expensive for families with many children and who have little or no income (Makhoul et al., 2003, p. 251)

More recent statistics show some improvements (MOSA & UNDP, 2007, pp. 23-25), but this pertains mainly to elementary education and literacy. Secondary schooling and academic education rates are "significantly lower" (UNDP, 2009, p. 130), especially for the poor (p. 151).

Less than half of the Lebanese population, employed by the public and private sectors, is covered by social security, meaning most importantly that they have access to reimbursements for medical care (CAS, 1998; Makhoul et al., 2003; UNDP, 2009, p. 140). Outside these sectors, people are required to arrange their own insurance or pay their medical bills (and those of family members) themselves. With the overwhelming majority of the hospitals in Lebanon being privately run (UNDP, 2009, p. 139), these bills can run up high and subsequently become unaffordable for the poor.

Places such as the Palestinian camps (Borj al-Barajneh, Shatila), but also other neighborhoods in the city have poor water and electricity supplies and are known for makeshift creative inventions to provide homes (or shacks) with these amenities. Open sewers run through these neighborhoods exposing the inhabitants to discomfort and unhygienic circumstances. For Palestinian refugees[26] their world is smaller than other disadvantaged, since their statelessness blocks them from travelling abroad and there are seventy-seven jobs from which the Lebanese state prohibits them to work. They have no access to state education, leaving them with the option of private institutions which are unaffordable for most of them (tuition runs into the thousands of US dollars per year). Many international sports associations require athletes to have a state citizenship, effectively barring Palestinians from engaging in many international competitions. Being deprived of decent housing, education, and cultural participation brings many to develop alternative structures and find creative loopholes through which they find an outlet.

Mounir, a professional Palestinian rugby player, summed up at once his predicament and how he finds modest ways out. "Other sports don't allow Palestinians to play. But the Rugby federation doesn't ask for state citizenship, so we can play there. That's why we're doing it, and teaching kids in the [refugee] camps

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26 This term is somewhat misleading as they have been living in Lebanon since 1948, in families of three generations and over. However, their formal status remains that of stateless refugees, since they and their offspring are not eligible for Lebanese citizenship.

also." Yet, these are modest dots of light in what is overall a gloomy, exasperating, and devastating context for personal and communal wellbeing.

Between patronage and helplessness
Dr. Abboud, who helped Daniel get off the streets (Sections 5.1 and 5.2), is involved in Daniel's school as well as an outreach and rehabilitation program for juvenile law-offenders. They work with a big prison outside the capital, which deals with around 100-125 minors per month, adding up to 750-800 hundred per year.[27] The NGO's rehabilitation consists of a two year program, involving education, therapy, and restoring family relationships. They have psychologists, lawyers, social workers, social-cultural professionals (*animateurs*), and pedagogues working with them in five centers across the country. Not many organizations reach out to homeless children and teenagers in. Dr. Abboud, with his decades of experience (he is in his seventies now) knows of seven organizations throughout the country.

One such organization runs a school for seven to fourteen year-olds in one of the most destitute slums of the city. Seventy percent of their pupils are of Dom origin, an ethnic minority group present in many countries of the Middle East, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq (Tdh & Insan Association, 2011, p. 18). They are among the poorest, lowest educated (with half of the Beirut population never having attended school and only a third having finished elementary school), and most despised people of Lebanon, known as *nawar*, comparable to gypsies in Europe. The school had been working with them for some ten years when I visited in 2012. They focus on the Dom because they are too old for public schools, too poor for private schools, and their upbringing lacks the assumed level of development from which Lebanese elementary education starts off. "Our kids when they start here, they don't know colors. Most of them have never seen a book before," says Elizabeth, the school principal.

A year earlier I had visited these slums and spoken with employees of the clinic, belonging to the same organization. While we were talking, some children of around four or five years old came by, walking bare-foot on the unpaved road, asking, "Are there clothes today?" The receptionist declined with a smile. The boy and girl smiled back, hung around for a bit, then walked on. One of the employees told me that the children had just had their "graduation ceremony." A nurse at the clinic explains, "We are not an actual school, so our diplomas have no real status in Lebanon. But you should have seen it. It was a real graduation. The kids were so proud. And their parents too. It was a celebration. It was as if they graduated from university!" A parallel diploma for a parallel world. It made

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27 Possible explanations for the monthly numbers not adding up to a higher yearly number: 1) some months there are less prisoners than others. 2) a proportion of recidivism.

me think of what a local community worker told me about his school, working with refugees from the ongoing Syrian civil war. "One of the parents came to me and said, 'I'm so happy you are here. Now we have hope for our family, for the future. My children can read!' Not a degree or anything. Just the fact that they could read, was so big."

These organizations, one endowing students with formally recognized diplomas, the other with symbolic certificates, focus on education, but the overall aim, approach, and style is to contribute to community development. They realize full well that they are dealing with the wretched and rejected of society, so their methods, involvement, and commitment demands specialized adjustment to succeed. Elizabeth reiterates, "If they wouldn't have been here, they would have been nowhere… Our mission is to build their self-esteem. They have internalized the way others see them. […] We spoil them actually. We give them much more attention than at other schools. Encouragement. Positivity." I assumed Dr. Abboud as a school director would not have much contact with the students, and left that up to others. He reacted surprised, "Of course I do. I, as a general director, continue the work just as [my predecessor] did it. I'm here night and day. And always with the guys. In close contact, we talk, we have our frictions, we get to know each other."

What sets them apart from many other institutions in Lebanon is their seeming commitment to the real empowerment of the young people with whom they work. Lebanese society has a long history of patronage and clientelism (Hanf & Salam, 2003; Johnson, 1986; Salibi, 1988), and this has not left the field of welfare and community development unperturbed (Cammett & Issar, 2010; Jawad, 2007). For Daniel (Sections 5.1 and 5.2), the environment of the school has made a world of difference. He went from sleeping in the bushes to becoming the top-student of his class. He has been making steady progress and is growing in hope, perspective, and determination. But on which side of the structural divide is he? If a Palestinian is denied into seventy-seven jobs, which ones will be open to him? And if there are legal openings for him, how many employers will grant this black African a position? He has already determined that these possibilities are bleak, and is looking to start his own business. But this will leave him responsible for covering his medical bills and those of his family members. Although he seems to have tremendous potential, it seems an enormous feat to cross the structural divide to its desirable side.

7.2   Paul's perceived and imagined opportunities

Paul "did not see life"

I met Paul in an internet-café in Beirut at the end of 2002.[28] I was working on assignments for my MA coursework, while he was chatting online with girls in other countries. He leaned over and asked me for English translations of what he was trying to say to them. It started with a few words and before I knew it, I was on his keyboard typing his responses in fluent English. None of the girls seemed to notice or care that Paul's English had instantly and drastically improved. At some point Paul even walked away. I called him back and said I would not know how to respond on behalf of him. He said, "It's okay. Just say anything." I entertained the people on the other side of the Web for a while, already questioning if these "girls" where who and what they said they were, seeing that I was not.

Paul and I would spend a lot of time together over the following years. He helped me in my Master's research on young people's activities in internet-cafés, and I would visit him every time I came to Lebanon since then. He is a Lebanese Maronite (Christian), 24 years of age at the time, born and raised in East-Beirut, in a neighborhood near Dawrah. He lived in a three-room apartment on the top (seventh) floor with his sixteen year old sister Joumana (see Sections 1.1 and 6.1), his twelve year old brother Joseph (see Section 6.1), and his mother, who was in her late forties. Another twenty year old sister was already married and had a six month old baby boy. She married a professional soldier in the Lebanese army who worked three and a half days a week. When he worked, she spent most of her time at her family's house.

Paul unknowingly grew up under the threat of poverty, being part of a family making ends meet just above the poverty line. A characteristic of such "nearly poor" families is that they have little cushioning to sustain any shocks (UNDP, 2009, pp. 146-147). One shock was enough. His father died from heart failure at forty-eight years of age and the family plummeted into poverty. Paul was sixteen at the time and had to leave school and find work to provide for his family; he never got to finish secondary school or get a diploma. When I met him, he worked at a printing press nine to twelve hours a day, alternating day- and nightshifts every week. He earned about two hundred dollars a month, depending on how many hours he worked. His boss could call him at any time saying that there is not enough work and that he should not come in for the day. A day off meant a day without pay and these kinds of days would at times add up to a week a month, seriously affecting Paul's income. Even with a "full month's pay" it was not easy for him and his family to make ends meet. At the time, their

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28   I have freely used data and text here from research for my Master's thesis (2004).

income was less than $1.70 per person per day.[29] This was lower than the estimated poverty line of the time (UNESCWA, 2005, p. 54; World Bank, 2000, p. 17).[30] Paul himself supplies a more vivid impression of what this entailed.

"I don't have a lot of money or a car so I have no opportunities to do whatever I want, so I come here [to the internet-café]. If I'd have a girlfriend or more money I'd do other things. For example, if you go to the beach and make your own sandwich to bring along, it will cost you a maximum of five-thousand pounds.[31] A trip to the swimming pool, including food costs twenty dollars, so I go to the beach although I like the swimming pool more. So it's not just a question of having opportunities close to home but also at a reasonable price. About 80 percent of the families in Lebanon have a house in the mountains where they go in the summer.[32] I don't, so I have less to do than others… It's the government's fault that everything is so expensive; they don't set rules for maximum prices and they take taxes from us but don't give us anything in return." Paul came to the Internet-café every day of the week and spent two to four hours a day there. This would have cost him three to five-thousand pounds a day, but the café-manager knew Paul's circumstances and never charged him full price.

For years Paul was obsessed with immigrating to Europe. He was open to any kind of job available to him. "I want to leave this country. There's no way to work on a future here. There's no money and no chances to reach anything. My Mom says that if I find the opportunity, I should go. If I can find a European or American woman here or by chatting online, we can get to know each other and get married. Then I can get out of here, and make something of my life. I can send money home from outside the country. I wouldn't just get married to anyone, just to get away. I want to meet the right person, because marriage is for life. But if I find a foreign woman, I'm out of here. I have an uncle in Sweden and when he was here I asked him to help me to get there. He made all kinds of excuses. Afterwards, I found out he did help one of my cousins to visit Sweden, and he's

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29   A calculation I made by dividing Paul's monthly salary of $200 by thirty days and four people living in the household.

30   Later he worked for a construction company, where he started as a store keeper for the workers' tools and is currently involved in purchases. He then made eight-hundred dollars a month. This seems like a big step up from the two-hundred dollars he made ten years earlier, and it is. Yet, with the enormous increase in the cost of living Lebanon has witnessed since the beginning of the century - as can be deduced from the dramatic increases in minimum wage in 2008 and 2012 to keep up with inflation (Abouzaki, 2011; Daily Star Lebanon, 2012), his increase in income has hardly kept up.

31   In 2003, a Euro was around 1,900 Lebanese Pounds. The value of the Lebanese Pound is tied to the US dollar at a ratio of 1,500 to 1. Paul's trip to the beach cost around €2.60 or $3.30.

32   Paul is throwing out a number here. He does not have specific information about how many people own a house in the mountains. The fact is, however, that several people in his surroundings do.

arranging work and stuff for himself there. Why did he help him and not me? That cousin has parents and they're well off. We're off a lot worse and he didn't help me. I don't want to speak to that man anymore."

Paul's mother has asked me on multiple occasions, sometimes subtly, other times more directly, if I could get him into Europe to start a better life there. "Haram [exclamation of pity], he's had such a tough life. Always had to work hard, without any results, without being able to achieve anything. He's tired. This boy didn't see life [*ma shaf il-hayat*, meaning he did not get to experience a normal life, because of his father dying and having to assume adult responsibilities early on]."

Paul and I talked about this regularly over the years. My own father, now in his later years, regrets having stayed in the Netherlands. The cold wet weather and "cold-hearted people" are his main grievances. I shared this with Paul and told him how hard it was to start all over with no one to turn to. He would not have any of it.

"I don't worry about things like different weather, language, or culture [if he would move to another country]. A lot of other people have done it. You can learn a new language, and you get used to the weather. That's nothing. I have more of a European than an Arab mentality. For instance, when they hang commercials for lingerie in certain neighborhoods here in Beirut, people throw stones at it. Why are they so upset? It's not their mother or sister up there, is it? That's too fanatic. I hate Arabs, they're fanatics. They want to make Lebanon an Arabic republic, like Syria and Egypt, right now it's called the Lebanese Republic, and that's how it should stay. They want to make Lebanon a Muslim state, but it's a Christian state, the only one in the Middle East. I hate Syria as well. What are they still doing here?[33] They've been here for thirty years now! They come here for free and make money to take back to Syria. They also take taxes off everything, that's why a lot of things are so expensive. If a Syrian soldier dies in Lebanon, the Lebanese state has to pay thousands of dollars to Syria, because the Syrians are "protecting us." Phuh!"

Paul felt (and was) limited in his options in several ways, and he habitually blamed the government for his situation. For a while, he went to the internet-café every day. He said he went there because he had nothing better to do, but there was more to it than that. When he came, he was warmly greeted by other customers. His friends were excited to see him and he was valued for his playing skills in network games. At first glance, the internet-café was an affordable way of spending his free time. But over time it had become a place where he was recognized and appreciated. It was also a place where he was known as *Napka*,

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33   At the time Syria still had a military presence in Lebanon, lasting from interventions in the civil war. This ended in 2005.

his pseudonym in Counter Strike and his login name for his Hotmail account. It is an abbreviation for a slogan of a militia called the Lebanese Forces during the Lebanese civil war: *nabqa wa nastamurr*,[34] meaning "we will remain and endure." Paul said that at a certain point in the war, people doubted whether Christians would last in Lebanon. *Nabqa wa nastamurr* was the Lebanese Forces'[35] answer to this doubt. In talking about this, Paul conveys feelings of bitterness, constraint and frustration toward those who threaten his values and the existence of his community. Chatting on the Internet and playing network games were activities in which he asserted this part of his identity.

Paul's regular routines were filled with such situated identity assertions. While hanging out with neighborhood friends, their jokes and complaints, revealed a durable baseline, or a collective social entrenchment that I characterize as "the demeanor of the downtrodden." Paraphrased (quite accurately) this conveys something like the following, "Our kind of people lives in this kind of neighborhood and can afford only these (cheaper) kinds of products and lifestyles. We are proud of being out here in the 'real world'. But we are also limited. Limited, harsh reality is our plight, but it is also what makes us real, more real than others, whose lives are cushioned from harshness." The consistent repetition of this chorus in life experiences, in jokes, and complaints, dominated Paul's perspective and perceptions.

I am usually hesitant to impose the notion of a habitus because it can (incorrectly) invoke connotations of fixed states, suggesting little room for change. However, the patterns of speech, thoughts and feelings to which I refer here have been so consistently and emphatically built up in repetitive interactions, that they have become symbols of local solidarity and morality, and these do not wane easily. The power of such dynamics is that they locally and instantaneously empower those involved by an experienced connection of shared "fates," while at the same time discouraging them from any idea that it would make sense to tamper with "destiny."

This seems to be how emotional and social structures coincide. Paul is able in his mind to theorize about connections between working hard and achieving results. He even believes that it could make sense to do, but especially for others. He himself, however, has learned to limit and adjust his expectations according to experiences and their confirmations in regular interactions, until these have become symbols and demarcations of "how life is."

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34 "We will remain" (نبقى in Arabic script) is usually transcribed as *nabqa* with a "q" instead of a "k" because a "k" would make it sound almost like "we cry." *Napka* is, however, the way Paul spelled his nickname.

35 A political party that, like many other Lebanese parties, had a paramilitary wing for a period in history, especially during the civil war (1975-1991).

Cracks in the gloom

Paul did not end up marrying a woman from "the West" and did not immigrate to Europe. He married a young woman from Armenia, whom he met through mutual friends. She came to meet him in Lebanon and he went to Armenia to marry her. After an arduous bureaucratic ordeal of getting the right papers in order, they came to live in Beirut. They tried renting an apartment, but this got too expensive. After less than a year, they returned to his mother's place. A year later their daughter was born (see also Section 6.1).

He is a proud father. Getting married and having a daughter brought him a strong sense of accomplishment and happiness. Yet, this seems often in the context of "not having achieved as much as he should have" or as much as others around him have achieved. He has strong convictions about what the "good life" looks like (see Introduction). It seems these convictions do not need strong summoning to occasion them. They seem pretty much always latently present. And so, lacking what he should have, plays a permanent part in his life, and has become part of his downcast and downtrodden demeanor. Part of *him*. So much so that I wonder if even achieving everything he would like, or "should" have, would change that. To be fair and complete, he has a lighter side. He is a joker, he loves to kid around and have fun. He takes joy in small things, such as taking beers from the supermarket to the seashore, hanging out there with friends and staring at the sky. But his gloominess is never far away. Positive interactions and experiences seem to temporarily relieve it, but could not durably bring him out, except maybe in small ways.

> Paul: I did body-building for a while. Did I tell you? No? Yeah, I worked out for 6 months. I started last year, at the beginning of the summer, the same time of the year as now actually. It was nice. I worked out at a fitness center at Nahr el Mot [at the edge of Beirut, a ten minute car ride from his house]. I enjoyed it a lot. It costs 50,000 pounds a month.
> Sebastian: Why did you stop?
> P: I dunno. I did it throughout the summer. And then at some point I stopped.
> S: Was it because you got lazy or the money, or…?
> P: A little bit of both I guess. It's very intense. You have to work out, but also change your eating habits. You need to have the protein drink that costs a hundred dollars, the big bottle. I bought smaller one for [??] but that finishes in a week. It's expensive (*meklif*).
> S: Wow…
> P: Yeah, it really goes fast. It's a whole system (*nizam*) and regimen that you have to get into. I didn't eat any bread. No bread at all. I didn't eat anything fried. Nothing fried in oil. And I ate eggs. Five or six in a row. You need protein to build muscles. Look at this.

[He showed me a picture of him and his friend at the beach. P was flexing the muscles on his right arm. It was bulging. More than now].
P: Yeah, last year I was doing well. It's a shame. I should have gone on.

Working out had an impact on Paul. It made him feel good about himself. He liked showing off his arms, the results of his investment. He also liked how it made him feel; it gave him increased physical energy. Getting to know the others in the gym changed his outlook on life and health. I remember years before he did not believe that smoking was harmful. Since he started working out he had been talking of quitting. And on many eating occasions he commented on wanting to avoid fried foods. Even long after he had stopped working out, his feelings about harmful substances continued to guide his behavior. The change that impressed me was that before he did not *want* to be confronted with these ideas. Whenever I or someone else brought them up, his answer would be "Ahh" accompanied by a dismissive wave of the arm. Now he was the one raising the topic. It was a symptom, if ever so small, of taking control over his body, and through it, an indication that he could control his life, or at least an avenue of it. And this seemed to have durably changed his outlook on important topics such as health, the impact of making conscious choices, and the effect of willpower. No amount of classes filled with the "right" information could have transformed this in him the way that this body-based regime had done for him. To be sure, the people at the gym verbally informed him about smoking and the detrimental effects of fried foods. What opened him up to receive this information, however, was not the inherent "soundness" of the logic or its truthfulness. It was him becoming wrapped up in a workout environment in which he *wanted* to submit his body, and the prevailing regime obtained "from the body an adhesion that the mind might refuse" (Bourdieu, 1987/1990, p. 167).[36] It was the ritual and its embodied investment that led him. His mind followed later.

During the period when he was more actively engaged in working out, I noticed a more positive demeanor. Especially when he related to me what he was learning he became visibly more excited. These activities seemed to "ground" him. While he was an expert at regretting past experiences and worrying over the future, these weekly rituals may have had a meditative quality to them that freed him from the anxiety inducing illusions of past and future, and focused him on the present (Borkovec, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Being grounded then

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36 Paulle, Emirbayer, and van Heerikhuizen (2011/2013, p. 163) point out that Bourdieu tends to compare the effects of sports rituals to those of institutions of power and abuse of power, while it is prudent to investigate how longer-term processes in regimes of sports and "'civilizing' pressures emanating from rituals of sport can turn into *empowering* emotional self-constraints."

meant calming down, but also "lightening" his mood. I accentuate this experience because I saw how it transformed him, most notably not his body, but his convictions and attitude. A man who tended to say "this is how life is" started saying that he could live differently and obtained visible satisfaction from it. It remained, however, a fragile avenue of development. As he stayed away from the gym longer, the excitement about what he learned subsided, and with it, his newly learned habits. His work routine, financial constraints, family pressures, and his own cultivated tendencies toward pessimism were often a combination too overwhelming to conquer.

I am not implying that physical work outs could magically give Paul a better life. His socioeconomic limitations would not dissipate. But it is a huge gain for him to feel more at ease, in control, and maybe positively distracted from his burdens. This could contribute, maybe not to overcoming his circumstances, but to dealing with them within his means, with less anxieties about how it "should have been" or what others have accomplished.

7.3   Hicham's rewards and illusions of "doing his best"

Dissatisfaction and "crazy" aspirations

Hicham[37] grew up in Amsterdam West in the same neighborhood as Farid did (see Section 5.3). He had a reputation of being wild, reckless and unpredictable, earning him nicknames such as the "village idiot" (*dorpsgek*). There were several "infamous" families in the neighborhood with multiple male siblings, of which the older ones were involved in criminal activity, while younger ones, under fourteen, would display initial problematic symptoms such as behavioral and educational difficulties. Hicham was the middle sibling of such a family. I got to know him as a young teenager when I was still a youth worker. One of his favorite activities was the weekly football evening, discussed in Section 1.3. The playground that Farid so strategically avoided (Section 5.3) was right at Hicham's doorstep.

The interactions taking place there strongly influenced how local teenagers thought about their social opportunities. Aiman aptly and succinctly provided a perspective on the quest for success in a "neighborhood like this" (see Section 1.2). A main concern was how to get through the day *without* being tempted to crime and its opportunities of earning money, but also for thrills and excitement (Katz, 1988). Several young people in the neighborhoods have their stories of such struggles. Ali, a twenty-year-old, once mentioned matter-of-factly, yet with

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37   An abridged version of Hicham's story is published in an online article on the topic of "capacities to aspire" (Baillergeau, Duyvendak, & Abdallah, 2015).

a hint of irritation detectable, "My own brother asks me sometimes to do things for him. That bothers me. He knows I don't want anything to do with it and still he asks me. I've done it a few times, but not anymore. I just want to do my job, make money and that's all." Next to avoiding crime, a *second* concern was whether they could find what they *wanted* to do.

Hicham had his own struggles on several fronts. In addition to the temptations of the streets, he dealt with complications at school (a vocational track in Social and Pedagogical Work, MBO, level 2), around age twenty. Yet he was determined to obtain his diploma to create some perspective but also to acquire (self-)respect. He liked hanging around us professionals more and more and frequently asked questions about how he could get into *HBO* (a higher vocational track awarded with a Bachelor's degree). I helped him get the information but also warned him that it would be harder work than he had ever done in school. I told him this because he was already doing poorly at his current pre-bachelor educational track. He was never able to sit still or concentrate for long, and he did not perform well in class. He often blamed others for things not working out.

> Hicham: I *want* to finish school but school is not working with me on this [in other instances he has mentioned that school is outright *against* him]
> Sebastian: What do you mean?
> H: They're just not making things work out for me.
> S: What do they do then?
> H: For exams that I failed. I have to re-do them. But you can only do them when it suits *them*. I have to wait till the end of the year or something. I want to pass my courses but they won't let me. I ask them to help me but they don't have time for me. I have other plans and need to make it, but I guess I don't matter enough to them ... and now everything is piling up.

Hicham had the best intentions but hardly found a meaningful connection with his school. He barely had good examples of how he could make that connection or could communicate in ways that would have effect within an educational institution. At home, Hicham's parents' input was characteristic of many families in the neighborhood. They had vague expectations of their children to "do their best" but lacked awareness or know-how of practical activities that could enable desired achievements, leaving the children to fend for themselves. Teachers easily dismissed Hicham's attitude "playing the victim." They mainly addressed his lack of acknowledging his responsibilities and their rules and seemed to have no idea of the disorder of his home situation and environment in which he is to navigate his quest for success.

The local government sports department started a project, training young

people to become assistant sports instructors. Hicham applied as well. For some time he had wanted to shake off the image of "village idiot" (*dorpsgek*). He wanted to take on a new challenge. The project took place in his neighborhood and he knew the youth workers leading the project, making it easy for him to take the step to participate. His contact with the youth workers boosted his morale. An important reason for that was probably that they did not treat him as the "village idiot" but seriously engaged with him, his questions, and wishes.

During his time in the project some of the other participants made fun of his neighborhood reputation and his long hair ("You look like a girl!"). Sometimes he reacted but mostly, he let it slide. Still, it was these kinds of things that influenced him to look elsewhere, avoiding the familiar settings where his role felt over-determined by his peers' expectations (see also Section 1.3).

> Farid (a guy from the neighborhood, 23 – See sections 1.3 and 5.3): He really gets treated bad man. Even by his own family. So his whole family went away without him. During Ramadan. So, he calls them with my phone. So his brother says: "Tough luck. You should have been on time. Bye." So in the end he got there by public transportation. And if someone else, like from the neighborhood, hangs out with him, they say that he "dropped in rank" because he's hanging out with Hicham.

To an extent, Hicham saw himself as a victim of circumstance. School was "against him", in applying for jobs they discriminated against "Moroccans", the police are always "on our case." Yet, simultaneously, he looked for ways to direct his course. A Bachelor's degree was to him not a fantasy; he could obtain it by hard work. None of his siblings were enrolled in higher education, but perhaps people like Farid (Sections 5.3 and 5.4) helped his imagination here. Discrimination in the labor market did not deter him from going after the jobs he liked. Perhaps his reputation of being crazy helped here; "normal people" did not try to get these jobs, but since he was exempted from normalcy, he could take more risks. Other than self-victimization, Hicham had a healthy dose of dissatisfaction with where he was in life. We shall see that his endeavors did provide him with some opportunities. It also made him write me an e-mail, telling me he wanted to quit the project. At first this came as a shock, but we soon understood.

hi sabastiaan
i won't be present at the meeting this Thursday and I know now already that I
cant come along on the work trip I decided to end the project I came with this
today be cause today I got all clarity about my future and school of course I'm
just in a very difficult time right now where I don't feel comfortable I just don't
feel happy at the moment and I'm stressing I don't like it but there is no other
solution I don't feel good I made my first exam today and I that as far as school
is concerned this year the towel fell into the ring I know for sure I failed this class
yesterday I couldn't prepare in a quiet place at home and the atmosphere is also
not fine and I'm no buddies with my younger brothers im just in an insecure
phase and I regret it I'm 20 years old and at the moment I have achieved noth-
ing I had the suspicion that this would happened because I am simply unlucky
I haven't made any progress over the last 4 years I haven't benefited from it
from the all those conflicts around me then I'm mainly talking about my home
situation younger brothers and brothers and with school this was waiting to
happen so sabastiaan I've also decided to for the time being get away from the
neighborhood for a while until I can pick upmy life in a good way again school is
over and out that's one thing for sure and that's why this is just the best choice
to for now get out of the neighborhood I'll keep working at the [discotheque]
and keep doing sports I still have the 21+ test that I will make and I want to it in
peace and quiet so I don't want to do it in the neighborhood and not at home
I'll just study and sleep at my brother's for now or at my granddad's home there's
the only way to save what can still be saved you shouldn't see this as goodbye
moment or something like that no I'll come back for sure I'll also sleep at home
every now and then but I'll be there again this time when I picked up my life I'm
not happy and I regret that you've always been a friend of mine more than that
even and you know that if I needed something then you were my contact where
I should go but now I have to go my own way if I stay in the neighborhood be
at home often then it wont be any good so for nowthe comng 4 months I'll be
gone for a little bit peace and quiet is what I need and if I can do hbo if I've taken
my 21+ test and passed then I'm thinking to leave definitely from this neighbor-
hood if I don't take measures now then nothing will ever happen I'll speak to you
soon it's a pity that I wont be able to be present coming Thursday because I'd
rather tell you this myself so would you just tell [the others] that I quit the proj-
ect they don't need to know the reason because I don't like that to talk about my
problems except for you and Mo can know this also I hope we can still keep in
touch I'll probably speak to you soon because despite my situation I'm confident
that things will be ok with me in a couple of months but for now be alone
see you Hicham

I felt pity for him and his difficult situation, but I also saw that the insights he had, meant a turning point. I wanted to help him or stay involved with him somehow, but I understood that our project at once made Hicham aware of his possibilities while it was also a context of obstacles that were too difficult to overcome. He did quit the project and school ("for now") but did not leave town.

The body as a domain of control
More than opportunities for education and paid labor, Hicham discovered a venue, a domain of which he could be the complete master: his body. He picked up body-building, kickboxing, and jogging and dedicated himself to a rigorous training program that would get him up early in the morning. Over time, this transformed the way he looked, the way he felt, and the way others perceived him. This process took several years. The visible change was not a sudden 180 degree turn. Yet he started earning respect and admiration of several peers when he was still in our project for assistant sports instructors.

> Nabil: D'you know Hicham gets up to go jogging at 7 in the morning?
> Youssef: No way man
> Nabil: I saw him myself, when I was going to the bus stop.
> Youssef: Really?
> Nabil: You can say what you want about him man. But he works out every day.
>
> Hicham [another young man than the Hicham they are talking about]:
> Have you seen how muscular he got?

The e-mail above reveals the distress of his thoughts and feelings at the time. Over the next months and years Hicham *gave* himself to his training schedule. Alternating body-building and kickboxing, sometimes doing both on the same days, he vehemently worked his body, and indirectly his mind.

The venue in which he learned kickboxing was not far from his home, but it was in another neighborhood, as Hicham insisted on taking on initiatives outside his familiar surroundings. It was a setting similar to Samir's gym (Chapter 3). The trainer was a former kickboxing champion from Moroccan descent with a heart for "kids from the streets." He instructed children and adolescents in the sport, kept them off the streets, taught them discipline, and was personally involved in their lives. Across the city and the country, similar initiatives have popped up, some more successful and durable than others. Many of them have also managed to secure local government or NGO support, to minimize participants' financial contributions. Hicham saw in his trainer more than someone who taught kickboxing. He was a role model and a friend.

This made it all the more painful for him when the local government pulled its financial backing, due to the school's alleged irresponsible conduct with regard to finances. Without external financial support, the school had no way to continue. Hicham had no consideration for possible financial mismanagement; he had been stripped of a safe haven.

> Hicham: I can't believe they did this man. You know how good the good work is that this man does. He keeps hundreds of kids off the streets. There are like two-hundred kids training there every week.
> S: Yeah. But if he doesn't account for his money spending… he's got a problem.
> Hicham: No, that's all excuses. He's not doing anything wrong. Look at all the good he's doing. He's doing it all for us. He achieves more than anyone. It's just not right. And now what? Where can I go now? Now I have to start all over again. This is not right at all.

Hicham worked out in some other schools while his old school was dealing with its uncertain future. He did his body-building in a commercial gym. As working out and being healthy were becoming increasingly popular, different gyms were catering to different (economic) segments of the urban population and Hicham found one that fit his financial situation. Over the years he focused on body-building more than kickboxing. As I saw him less, sometimes with a few months between meetings, his muscle build-up was quite noticeable to me. Especially his chest and shoulders seemed to have expanded greatly, so much so that I and colleagues feared steroid use. Becoming such a big guy made him "grand" in his own eyes and in those of others. It seemed in every way to be an *embodied capital*: a physique that was impressive to see, but also as others talked to him and about him, this result implied an impressive process. His muscles told a story of his knowledge, abilities, and perseverance. Everyone knew there was a world behind this body that intrigued and impressed people. It was how he distinguished himself (Bourdieu, 1986).

The esteem of others, however, seemed of secondary importance. It was comparable to laymen being amazed at scientists' achievements – they marvel at what they do not understand. He was often more preoccupied with what his fellow body-builders in the gym thought of his improvements. An inner-circle of body-builders created a bond, geared toward a common goal, although that goal pertained to each individual's body. They saw each other in the gym, became friends outside the gym and on Facebook, and started going on (party-)vacations together.

Tired of getting rejected

As I mentioned, some social conventions, which kept his peers in check, had less of a restraint on Hicham. He used being the "nutcase" to his advantage and just tried out things, not fearing the social risk of "starting at the bottom" or being rejected. For instance, he wanted to become a bouncer at a popular club in one of Amsterdam's entertainment areas. When his physique had not yet developed much, he was already talking about it with his friends often. No one thought he would make it, including myself. Not because he was not big or strong enough, but because of his emotional imbalance and unpredictability. I figured those circles were filled with more "stable" employees. Hicham applied for a job at the club, not as a bouncer, but as a bar-assistant collecting empty drinking cups. His logic was that if he could not get the job he wanted, he would get the job closest to it in physical proximity that was attainable for him. One of his friends did the same, becoming a cup-collector while he wanted to be a DJ. From there, they would get to know the people whose jobs they wanted. I visited them there and saw them becoming amicable with their examples. I half expected the professionals to take pity on these young men, seeing through their attempts. To my surprise, they appreciated Hicham. He wasn't the nutcase there but just a fun guy who was allowed to be a little crazy. And as he grew more familiar and his body grew more impressive, he was allowed to assist the official bouncers. Suddenly, his strategy did not seem so far-fetched.

    His job at the club was not fulltime and he needed something additional to make ends meet. At some point, he got a part-time job as a fitness-instructor at a juvenile detention center. It was one of his personal highlights.

> Hicham: I was in charge there. And every time somebody acts out, then I gotta' show them who's boss. I grab 'em. [He mimics grabbing someone in a headlock, pretending to be in a struggle with them and crunches down the headlock. We laugh but also shake our heads].
> Sebastian: So these kids are in jail, and then you abuse them? I ask, taunting him.
> H: Yeah, well, they need to listen. If they do what I say, then there's nothing the matter.
> S: So, that's your job then? You make them listen by force.
> H: No, no. Usually everything is OK. Then we just work out and they learn a lot from me.

At the time, things seemed to be looking up for him. The increasing respect at the club and the job as a gym instructor both came from his investment in his body. He seemed to have found a way to make his life work, to socially and cul-

turally capitalize on his physical investment. After a while, the detention center had to cut back and had no more room in the budget for Hicham. When we met again later his hope seemed to have waned again. His girlfriend had just broken up with him. He had been applying for (literally) dozens of jobs without success. "I'm gonna' stop applying for jobs now for a while. I'm taking a break. I'm tired. I don't wanna' hear that rejection anymore."

Comparable to Paul (see previous section), working his body seemed to bring a rhythm to his daily routine, a focus and stabilization to his often scattered mind, and opportunities in uplifting social ties and work opportunities. How he feels about his accomplishments fluctuates over time and being "on the inside" of desired circles of excitement and opportunity, or, as described above, as the outsider who just cannot manage to "get in."

7.4   Kevin's pit of disappointment

"Everything will be alright…"
Kevin is Rachel's younger brother (see Section 6.2). He is twenty-five years old and has lived in the North of Amsterdam all his life. He grew up in a neighborhood with a predominantly "indigenous white Dutch" population. It is known for its unemployment rates, a high number of elderly retirees, an informal economy containing criminal activity, and as the origin of the infamous credo "Noord gestoord" (the North is insane). His father has a Syrian background and his mother is Dutch. He usually sees himself as "Dutch", although there are instances where he specifically asserts that he is not all, or not *at all*, Dutch. His friends from the neighborhood are all "white", but the North as a whole has quite a diverse ethnic composition, so through school and otherwise he has friends from other backgrounds as well (Surinamese, Turkish, Moroccan) with whom he has regular contact.

In elementary school, Kevin was one of the best in his class. So much so that teachers sometimes had difficulty finding him assignments – he was always done too quickly. Even when he got sick for a longer period and could not go to school, the hospital appointed him a home-school teacher and he diligently worked at everything she dealt him. The teacher was visibly delighted by his zeal. A few years later, the school's advice was that he should attend the intermediary secondary educational track (HAVO). His parents' idea was to not start him off too high and he attended a MAVO school (a lower track), at a five minute walk from his house. He was a young student (born early in the school year), so they deemed it alright for him to take this "detour" after which he could always still

get a higher diploma.[38] He completed the four year track but not with as much enthusiasm as he used to have. Teachers described him as "indifferent" and "unstirred."

Kevin wanted to continue because he had ideas about getting into university, by first going through the higher vocational track (HBO). He was thinking of becoming a psychologist, "I like helping people and I'm good at listening." With this MAVO diploma he was eligible for the HAVO track. He enrolled at another location of his school (a fifteen minute walk) at sixteen, to work on getting the higher degree. At this point something broke. He stopped doing his homework and his motivation for even going to school decreased (although he kept going). His parents only superficially noticed and asked him every now and then how he was doing at school and if everything was going alright. His answers were always short. "Yeah, everything is fine." It was not. At some point, when his report card came, many grades were below average or inadequate. His parents were shocked as they still had the image of zealous Kevin from elementary school. He was smart, he was good. This report card did not represent the Kevin they knew. They told him it would be a shame to waste his talent and opportunities. He agreed, ostensibly. He knew he could do better and he said he would. He did not. One report card followed after another and the same refrain repeated. His parents would tell him he could do better, and started asking if there was anything they could do to help. He declined, he would simply make up for it the next time. One of his brothers offered to coach him in his assignments, which he incidentally made use of. More often, however, he would neglect his books and go out with his friends. His brother warned him that if he would not succeed at HAVO, he would have to go to MBO, and that is not where he should want to end up. "It's basically a community center [buurthuis] for losers." To all of this input, Kevin had a similar response, "Yes, I know. Don't worry. I'll get to it. Everything will be fine." But, after having spent some three years at the two-year program, the school decided to expel him and Kevin went to MBO, a lower vocational track for Pedagogy.

His experience there was as his brother had foreseen, and worse. It was a place where no one, students or teachers, seemed motivated. Classes were uninteresting to him, assignments too easy for his cognitive level. For a while, internships kept him upbeat and motivated, but after a few years his efforts in that area dwindled as well. He did not have much more work to do to get his degree, but Kevin seemed increasingly desensitized and unaffected by anything having to do with

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38   As indicated in Section 6.2, many "well-to-do"/"middleclass" parents tend not to do this. They see it rather as a priority to keep their kids away from "lower" level schools, for fear of their educational quality and social atmosphere. It is not far-fetched that Kevin's four years at that school could have had detrimental effects on his motivation.

his school. This turned out not to be entirely true, as Kevin told me he is someone who "thinks about everything, all the time." His thinking turned to worrying and it kept him up at night. In any case, this did not prompt him into action and the MBO institution expelled him, relaying that there is too little chance of Kevin graduating. His parents helped him find a similar MBO institution that was prepared to take him in. As he had about a year's worth of work left, the school was happy to provide him the opportunity, probably because they foresaw minimum effort for a positive result. In reality it took another two-and-a-half years before he actually graduated (he was twenty-two at that point), having exasperated and aggravated the staff there with his "indifference" and "lack of effort." A mentor specialized in "hard cases," who scheduled regular sessions with him, and his eldest brother taking him under his roof for a few months, coaching him through the written assignments, were decisive factors in bringing Kevin to the finish-line. Later he found a job working nights as a receptionist at a hotel where more experienced employees increasingly included him in business ventures that are possibly more profitable and definitely more exciting than his current position.

Low-energy and temporary relief

At home, Kevin's father's main input concerning his education conveyed a message of "taking responsibility." His father expected results that he thought were reasonable. He did not offer much practical guidance or support in the process, largely because he did not feel he was able to. There was some moral support, but no practical help, and Kevin did not know how to arrange that elsewhere. Kevin described himself as someone who kept everything to himself and did not share his problems. For a while his father said Kevin was a burden (*blok aan het been*) because he did not finish his studies or earn any money. He was smart and had potential but the precise combination of his introverted social behavior, home atmosphere, friends with hardly any completed education or overt ambitions, and his discouraging school situation, added up to a context that made it next to impossible to have any constructive or uplifting experiences bringing him forward. In his own words, his wish was to get out of this "pit of despair and disappointment."

The point here is not to see who we can blame for Kevin's obstruction of development. Although Kevin's father may seem, from the description above, as a harsh and distant man, they are actually very close, and the father jumps in where he can and when he knows how, such as in the two instances where Kevin got expelled. Other than that, his father, and more so his mother, regularly sought "real connection" with him and tried to understand what was bothering him and how they could be supportive. There were, however, at least two other dynamics at play, thwarting good intentions and menacing Kevin's opportunities for self-fulfillment and development.

First, the interactions that were of great importance to his feelings of self-worth as well as his educational development, those with his father and his teachers, have had "taking responsibility" and "achieving accomplishments" as their greatest focus. Kevin's actions and lifestyle for years did not overtly share this focus. This lack of tribute made him the deviant in the interactions and constantly brought him in a position of low emotional energy. As such, his downcast demeanor, dull eyes, and lack of motivation, were not the result of a mysterious early childhood event, or the expression of the "way he simply is." They were the symptoms and symbols, or rather anti-symbols, of repetitive interactions that were meant to motivate him, but rather had the effect of further stripping him of his energy by persistently casting him in the low-end and low-energy position. Additionally, these interactions may have had a disowning effect on his educational process by reducing it to a means for results "owned" by others, preoccupied with them.

Second, there seemed a limit to which the relaying of cognitive information played any convincing role in improving his situation. People, such as the mentor for "hard cases" or his brother, who tried to be there for him, and were not that bent on him achieving results, also did not get through to him in first instance. Kevin's verbal responses were that he was not good enough and "doing better or more" would be the only way to improve his situation. Any relaxing of that thought would have been "being too easy on himself." What did such framing rules do for how he felt? He ruminated and this kept him awake. If anything, he did not seem able to bring his feelings in line with how he saw his situation and responsibilities. There seemed to be little success in terms of "mobilizing" himself and experiencing cogency and coherence (Collins, 2004, pp. 208, 219). He tried to control or suppress his feelings but he did not find a more comprehensive approach for constructive emotion management (Hochschild, 2003, p. 95).

There were, however, situations in which he did pick up momentum. For a while, working out in the gym gave him a sense of grounding and achievement, next to playing football on a weekly basis. For such activities he showed discipline, sportsmanship, and reliability. These activities seemed not to empower him to the point where he was able to constructively face the pressing challenges of his life. They were more of an escape, a temporary release and relief from the pressure. This was most likely of great importance in its own right, but in the end he had to return to his disappointment after the fun was over.

I cannot help but wonder if the disparity between the activities that lifted his spirits and those that darkened them could not have been reduced. Were there ways in which Kevin could get wrapped up in activities, educational or otherwise, that would relax his anxieties, like his sports activities did, instead of stirring them? He seemed often genuinely at ease after coming back from a meeting with his newly appointed mentor at school. They did not necessarily prompt him

into action, he simply appeared to have had a pleasant conversation. His brother taking him in for a while also seemed to have done him well. The conversations about how exactly he could finish assignments or what a feasible plan could look like were not his highlights. It was more just being in a different environment that "felt nice" to him. This comes close to an approach of "minimum force" (although there was, at least on the part of Kevin's brother no conscious approach, it was rather what they ended up doing) and indirectly achieving a goal (Sennett, 2012). Or maybe even the absence of needing to achieve anything and simply slowing down and "keeping things grounded in the actuality of present-moment experience" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 150). Much like Paul (Section 7.2), who only started listening "through his body," Hicham (Section 7.3) whose training regime did more for him than any of our advices ever seemed to have done, but also Farida and her friends' trip to Rotterdam (Section 6.3), Kevin might have needed more than anything some activities that *interrupted* his anxieties to redirect him.

On occasion, he was able to analyze his situation and the limitations on his possibilities. "This neighborhood is no good for me. Look at all these guys that I grew up with around me. What do you think that does to me?" His dad responded, "Yeah? Where would you have liked to live then? In the Bijlmer maybe? You know how that is? Living here is not that bad at all!"[39] Kevin's analysis did not, however, prompt him to break out of his situation, or approach it differently. Rather, it is an affirmation of his limitations, and acquiescence to the idea that things cannot get much better for someone in a situation like this.

I asked him if his friends discouraged him from finishing working on getting his diploma, but he found this not to be the case. "Friends say that I should finish school. They say things like, "I should have done that. I wish I had the brains for that." In his general context of interactions, however, I cannot help but think that these comments did not especially help Kevin much. They seem more like estrangements, confirming that he is not like them. His friends became another place where he did not totally belong. At home he was not successful enough, with his friends he was strangely successful.

Currently he does not have activities where he finds what he could call "success", but he gets satisfaction from small things. "One thing never gets old. When I'm done with work [nightshift], and I go home and I see all those people going to their work [laughs]. At Central Station you see all those people hurrying, stressing, running past each other. I just walk calmly calmly [rustig rustig]. Ahhhh! [a sigh of relief]. I'm walking there but I'm in a totally different place! [ik zit er heel anders in]. Especially on a day like this, when it's raining. You see

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39 The Bijlmer is a suburban area of Amsterdam in the South East, popularly it has had a notorious reputation for decades connoted with poverty and crime among other issues.

people going through it reluctantly. And I'm on my sweet way home!" [En ik ga lekker naar huis].

I asked him if work was getting boring for him. "Yeah, every now and then it gets boring," he replied. "Coz you do nothing all day. There's a TV with satellite and an X-Box, but yeah. And at 7 [AM]. I prepare breakfast, but yeah, I'm finished with that at 7:30. And sometimes I have to do a little more, but even that, I don't feel like doing, because I'm so used to doing nothing! [laughs] I still do it though."

Although this job is not his dream-job and could seem mind-numbing, it has made a big difference that he got his degree and that he is holding on to a steady job. Firstly it pulled him out of his "pit of despair and disappointment" and was "finally rid of that stress. I don't have that to worry about anymore." From these achievements, his interactions changed; he was no longer on the "wrong side." The way he made sense of doing his best and taking responsibility remained intact. When one of his colleagues got fired recently, it was, according to Kevin, "because he was a slacker." A term that his father used for people who do not take their responsibilities seriously. Kevin moved to a more favorable position in his daily interaction rituals. Yet his determination of self-worth still depended on rigid framing devices pertaining to "taking responsibility." Devices that seemed sooner to debilitate him than empower him to step up when pressures in his life arose.

Discussion: When experiencing success is not enough

In previous chapters I have described how determination, experiencing boosts (emotional highs), grounding (feelings of belonging and stability) and elevation over circumstances gave teenagers and adolescents positive outlooks on life and hope for more goodness. The descriptions of Paul, Hicham, and Kevin are less straightforward samples of success and positivity. Although they overcame odds and there are clear moments of advancement in their lives, they remain ambivalent about their achievements. Their emotional energy levels are overall not very high and their positive development fluctuates from one period in life to the next.

Paul's demeanor is often somewhat downcast and gloomy. He seems *subdued* by a web of entangled social, material, and emotional constraints. These leave him depleted, pessimistic, and anxious. Bigger achievements such as getting married and having a daughter help him in feeling he is doing well. There were smaller notable moments that have lasting influences on his perceptions of self-control and determination, such as the relation between body-building and physical health. More than that, they seemed to "bring him into the moment,"

reduced his anxiety (if only temporarily), and provided some excitement and positivity. In general, however, life is "happening to him" and he feels minimal capacity to influence the outcome of his course.

Hicham was often *over-energized*. Goofing off put him at the center of attention and he was frequently able to draw a lot of emotional energy from this dynamic. It would be going too far to say that it was all "merely an act" but generating attention did not only give Hicham energy. For the longest time, it was this exhausting "performance" that made his presence appealing to him and others, but eventually this reputation became a burden for him. It distracted him from advancing in life and undermined him in growing into an adult (and being recognized as such). Working out brought him regularity of a routine that stimulated him, it increased his emotional stability, and eventually afforded him durable embodied capital.

For Kevin the web of expectations in which he was entangled depleted and debilitated him. He felt overburdened and anxious about meeting demands he could not or would not meet. Sports activities brought him relief and release from these anxieties and burdens but did not give him ways to durably address them.

I want to reiterate that experiencing success in this study is not merely about increasing levels of emotional energy. If that were the case, Hicham would a lot of the time have been successful. Neither are Paul's and Kevin's anxieties helped with boosts and bursts of energy. The dots of light in their gloom came rather from what Bowen Paulle has called soothing relationships that contributed to "calming bodies and regulating emotional states" (2013, p. 162). Success is commonly associated with advancement, progress, and thus *movement*. And while these young men's sports activities had everything to do with physical movement, it seemed to have helped tremendously in coming to a stop of detrimental "thought movements," to "gather themselves" and just breathe (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). This is akin to *Restorative Rituals* (as I call them in Section 9.2) can do for young people.

This is why experiencing success should encompass more than feeling important and accomplishing impressive feats. There needs to be a "grounding component" (see Section 8.3) that helps people be embedded in healthy social environments and that stimulate emotionally stability. For people in (severely) disadvantaged circumstances this is probably one of the first prerequisites to work on anything resembling the more common notions of success. Yet, I would suggest that achieving this is *part and parcel* of success that goes beyond material advancement.

People in disadvantaged situations who do not feel they are "getting anywhere" often focus more on *belonging* somewhere. This can have a positive quality to it (see Section 8.3), but can also be overshadowed by more "entrenched"

ways of belonging. Paul adopts a discourse of this type that I refer to as the demeanor of the downtrodden, reinforced in young people's jokes, complaints, and reenactments on street corners creating a common mood and a "baseline" of normal ways of seeing the world (Collins, 2004, pp. 174, 178). Although I would not negate the value of togetherness that this can conjure up, it is not always an altogether positive or constructive demeanor either. It is perhaps making a virtue of necessity but it is also a form of social entrenchment, cutting them off from the possibility that their circumstances could improve.

In a harsh context such as that of Beirut's Misery Belt this is an understandable means of coping. There are few intervening circumstances offering relief from this harshness. Life around that belt, in its vicinity, is a little better. Still, hardships prevail and inhibit people from rising above it. There are organizations with well-trained and experienced people working to alleviate and partially ameliorate those circumstances see Section 7.1). However, a structural divide, undergirded by state (mis)allocated means and services, deters substantial empowerment of destitute communities. In so far as this divide is not likely to be redrawn anytime soon, initiators of social justice have a main task in supporting these communities within their means, as well as looking for future possibilities to cross the divide. It is an uphill battle. Perhaps "bridging social capital" (Putnam, 2007) that Paul was hoping for from his estranged uncle in Sweden. More of such bridging (without necessarily having to leave the country) could, in absence of a societal overhaul, be one of the few ways out of destitution for people in the Misery Belt.

Although Paul does not live *in* the Misery Belt, in many ways his life is, or parts of it are, illustrative of its hardships. He and his family have survived under the poverty line for years, watching others' lives "move on" as he felt his life was stagnating. Perhaps a main difference between him and many people in the slums is that where the latter feel they "belong" at the "bottom", Paul felt he deserved better, but could not make it happen. This discrepancy between his sense of entitlement and experienced possibilities made his situation all the more painful. We could say that Paul has suffered both "absolute" and "ordinary" misery (Bourdieu, 1993/1999).

Experiencing success, if it is to contribute to improving people's lives significantly, should be about more than feeling good, and it should be an ingredient (an important one), in a broad array of strategies and tactics. I trust that the coming chapters go some way in providing insights to that end.

8 TOWARD A THEORY OF EXPERIENCING SUCCESS

The idea of experiencing success is the central concept that has guided my curiosity and investigation of the lives of socioeconomically unfortunate and disadvantaged teenagers and adolescents in Amsterdam and Beirut. In this chapter I determine how my empirical observations and experiences of previous chapters can contribute to this concept's theoretical substance/substantive content.

In conceptualizing experiences of success, I draw from the descriptions of young people from Amsterdam as well as Beirut, both male and female. Where appropriate I have given attention to distinctions in context and gender. In general, however, I did not encounter difficulty in drawing up a framework that accounts for variations in settings and genders. Admittedly, this is a first analytical endeavor in understanding these experiences. Future work will lie in further "fleshing out" this framework. Yet, the challenges of disadvantaged young people in the two societies and the way they perceived, met, and often overcame these challenges were comparable enough to outline generalized principles applicable in both contexts.

I gave each of the three components of experiencing success their own sections (8.1 through 8.3). This makes it possible to show how each dimension merits its separate attention, focusing on its specific and unique contributions. The *boosting* aspect gives physical and emotional energy, to take initiative and to be in control of the outcome of situations. In the *elevating* aspect disadvantaged young people make connections between what happens in the moment and what they would like to see happening in their futures. In the case of such development, it is no longer a *boost*, but a transformed consciousness of reality, an *elevation* over circumstances. The *grounding* aspect makes young people feel emotionally stable and socially connected.

In the final section of the chapter I relate these analytically separated dimensions to each other. The different forms and the extent of prominence that each component can take on give possibilities for typifying experiences of success and for revealing their internal tensions. These different types of experiences also have common aspects. Rhythms and structures of success give points of access for exploring such commonalities.

8.1   Boosting

Discrepancies can exist between experiencing success and being successful. Young people in dire socioeconomic circumstances have quite divergent ideas about what makes them feel good and what makes them feel they "got ahead" or "achieved something." Some are rather conformist and contain ideals of working hard within society's formal institutions of education and labor, persevering in the set standards, and seeking their rewards through legitimately endorsed means. Other young people are more disillusioned – often understandably so – and do not believe these institutions will reward them for their efforts. Their endeavors therefore have a more "deviant" character and they would not shy away from employing "illegitimate" means to achieve their goals. The aim here is to discern which means and ends, which experiences, are beneficial for their development, not just from their perspective, but also from a more intersubjective point of view. At the onset, however, we shall see that personal, subjective experiences count most. As we delve into series of experiences as chains of interaction rituals, we will be able to discern patterns and their longer term outcomes. This will help us differentiate "good" from "bad" (or "better" from "worse") experiences and understand experiencing success in ways that transcend individual notions.

The research subject of experiencing success is, philosophically speaking, hardly a postmodern one, where "anything goes." In the most tragic cases lives are at stake. In the milder ones, opportunities for establishing a social identity, having a notion of worthy and participatory membership in any desirable social constellation, hang in the balance. Either way, there are serious issues with leaving such stakes up to chance or allowing people "freedom" to work this out as they see fit. There is little freedom in being "allowed" to wallow in misery.

Coming out of the mire of disadvantage
The *boosting* dimension of experiencing success is more tied up in the *momentary* unfolding of experiences than the other two dimensions which have more clearly lasting consequences for the longer term. In first instance, the moral direction of the boosts themselves is not much of an issue. The initial question is whether young people are able to experience boosts at all. This determines what their likely energy levels can be in different situations and makes for an overall distribution of emotional energy across people and settings (Collins, 2004, pp. 131-133, 258-296). This distribution itself is the real moral issue.

Having the opportunity to experience boosts is vital. Any sense of "owning the moment" makes one realize that this feeling is a possibility. This generates within young people physical energy to take initiative and positive feelings about oneself. In subsequent instances, ones that they perceive as similar to the previ-

ous one, emotions trigger memories of that energy, making them feel that it will be possible to experience it again.

In addition, others around the person in question, with every similar moment, will increasingly have the expectation of that person becoming a focus and source of energy again. They push him or her as it were to the position and spotlight of that energy. Previous boosts thus make future boosts more likely to occur. Collins (2004, p. viii) calls these boosts a form of social dominance. We should not understand this as a necessarily negative social form. Being dominant for Collins is foremost a way of asserting one's presence and gaining emotional prominence. This can be of a zero-sum sort, where one gains energy at the expense of others' opportunities (Collins, 2004, pp. 113-114, 122), or it can be a matter of turn-taking and momentum where people build up energy levels together, albeit that some build up more than others (Collins, 2004, pp. 68-69).

Hicham felt dominance during Monday Night Football (Section 1.3). Youssef felt it as he was making progress in the gym, and especially when he won his first public match (Chapter 3). Rachel and Joumana felt it after passing their first university exams successfully (Chapter 6). For Hicham the *consequences* of asserting his physical prowess and "owning the place" were not always good for him in the long run, also according to himself. Yet having the opportunity to assert himself taught him the *possibility* of boosting his energy and being the deciding force in the outcome of a (game) situation. This contributed to the difference between tendencies of being either a spectator or an initiator in the course of his life. The description of Hicham's development was more an example of "ups and downs" (Chapter 7) than a "path to elevating success" (Chapters 5 and 6). However, the initial boosting experiences facilitated the "ups" that were still to come. The changes in physical make-up, the rise in emotional energy levels, and the increased awareness of possibilities were in themselves invaluable for his social development. Kevin (Amsterdam) and Paul (Beirut) did not experience many of these boosts (Chapter 7). This kept their energy levels at an overall low, it curbed their will to take initiative in multiple periods of their lives, and thereby stunted them in making use of available opportunities to their advantage.

Avoiding negativity as a moral orientation

In second instance, moral issues of the boosts themselves are at play and the question becomes what the *direction* of development will be. Boosting experiences pertain to the body's sensory perceptions, the emotional engraving of meanings, and the cognitive connections between feeling and action. Driven by emotional and bodily needs and desires that are quite universally human, the ways that young people will seek to fulfill these desires are cognitively and socially determined. If some boosts are good for bringing disadvantaged young people out of their mire of misery, what kinds do they need to "stay the course"?

And what are desirable courses?

The boosting experiences make people hunger for more because of feelings of enjoyment, accomplishment, but also of increased positive self-awareness and control over the outcome of situations. What can hardly be overestimated are the moments and settings in which these experiences take place. The (at times literal) "audience" of the experience encourage more of the same "performances" because they become an "entourage" and co-recipients of the emotional energy (Collins, 2004, pp. 132-133). If the event is one of violence, more violence in the future will be encouraged to reproduce the enticing surges in emotional energy (cf. Collins, 2008; Paulle, 2013). If the occasion is passing an exam, the future is likely to hold more preparations of exams so that successfully passing them will incur the emotional reward (Sections 5.1 and 5.2). Success is in the power of the ritual that affirms the action. Therefore, it is crucial that young people's achievements are affirmed in settings that also affirm what is in the interest of their longer term development.

Disadvantaged young people struggle with competing energy flows vying for their attention (Chapter 5). On street corners of disadvantaged neighborhoods of Amsterdam and elsewhere in the Netherlands, the "thug-life", or its image and glorification and thereby its symbolic power and influence, is a well-established phenomenon (Hadioui, 2010; de Jong, 2007; Paulle, 2013). The struggle of trying to stay out of its embrace and entanglement is real and gripping (Chapters 1, 3, and 7). Hicham and Farid show us that a viable strategy in winning (part of) this struggle, is avoiding settings of temptation and seeking out alternative settings where they can become part of new interactions, be part of new rituals, and experience new boosts (Chapters 1, 5, and 6).

In Beirut's neighborhoods of derelict and destitution, Western or American gangster culture has less of its symbolic power and influence. Yet the experience of having to choose between hanging around with the "hoodlums" (*za'ran*), "up to no good" on the one hand, and "doing good" on the other hand is ever-present. Michael's (Section 4.2), Imad's (Chapter 4), and Paul's (Section 7.2) strategies of avoiding the "wrong" and doing the "right" mirror those of Hicham and Farid.

In institutionally organized forms of education, sports, and arts, young people often have the benefit of dealing with professionals who are trained to optimally develop a specifically desired aspect. This kind of focus has the risk of entailing somewhat "bureaucratized" forms of development. For instance, a football coach generally focuses on playing football well, a math teacher on how to solve math problems. There is less inclination or capacity for a more holistic approach. That is not a critique per se, as it is not my view that all coaches and guides should develop their practices on such principles. The point is that limited and partial focal concerns, scattered across contexts, characterizes the spec-

trum of young people's experiences.

  In the cases of disadvantaged teens and adolescents there is the added issue that many institutions presuppose forms of knowledge and customs of which the young people are not aware. However, these same institutions function as gate-keepers to success in mainstream society, so it becomes all the more crucial that disadvantaged young people learn to search for ways that will *boost* them within these formal trajectories. Especially since the illegitimate paths of development are so bleak in their prospects and in their moral robustness.

  In such situations, a turn-around can come from a first successful meeting or conversation with an office clerk or bureaucratic guardian of the status-quo, such as Rachel had learned to do (Section 6.2). I would call this an *initial boosting* experience. Follow-up boosts often come from having a disciplined mind in doing what is possible within one's means and knowing who to speak to and how to speak when expected results are absent or unclear. Chapter 6 portrays young women who have mastered this skill set. Hicham (Chapter 7) and other young men have had trouble in this area without being able to pinpoint the issue. It may well be that the skills to persevere and ascertain the rewards of follow-up boosts within formalized trajectories are drawn from specifically or predominantly "feminine" qualities. An important difference regarding experiencing success and paths of development then runs not so much between Lebanon and the Netherlands as societies, but more along gender lines. For young women as well as men, a condition for *boosting* is the capacity for self-control. Very often this is fairly literal bodily control; keeping oneself from physically being somewhere or from moving into situations that act as a precipitance to losing emotional control. Farid's and Hicham's descriptions display this, among other situations during Monday Night Football (Sections 1.3, 5.3, and 7.3). For Paul, bodybuilding made him more aware of his physicality and it became an avenue of control that encouraged him in taking control in other parts of his life as well (Section 7.2). While this seemed a struggle for young men, it appeared to be a more "natural" part of young women's discourse and lifestyles. (Traditional) gender roles undoubtedly play an important role here.

  People involved do not recognize or they misrecognize this line and sooner frame the issue as whether someone "can study" or "has the perseverance or capacity of foresight and long-term planning." Such framing obscures the sources of communication breakdown and the paths to increased success from those – mainly young men – that search for it.

Mountain top or peak experiences
After initial boosts and some follow-up boosts, young people are increasingly brought out of their downward spiral of negativity and discouragement. If their initial focus was to stay away from negativity, they can now become increas-

ingly focused on what brings them positivity. For Youssef (Chapter 2), if his first boosts were having a good workout in the gym (and staying off the streets doing the "wrong" things), winning his first kickboxing-match was a "mountain-top" boost. That day he was the champion of the match, the hero of the day, and he stayed a main focus of positive attention and energy in the gym for weeks after the match. Even walking the street alone, without anyone knowing who he was, in his own perception he was a champion, on the way to next victories. Something similar goes for Farid winning football matches, Rachel (Amsterdam), Daniel, and Joumana (Beirut) passing their exams at the end of the year, promoting them to the next level after the summer.

While experiences are very subjective and individual, the mentioned events tend to trigger very similar feelings and even expressions and descriptions of how they feel. The combination of tremendous exertion of effort, formally awarded results, the recognition of those results in social circles that matter to them, and the *intensity* of that recognition are what makes them feel "on top of the world." The extent to which this feeling can last depends on how frequently young people (can) spend time in settings that confirm their successes, and allow for occasions that affirm their success. Many young people learn to become successful within formal institutions but have not internalized the cultural rituals of how these institutions celebrate success. A graduation ceremony, for example, is an event that graduates from disadvantaged circumstances easily skip. If they come, family is often absent. This is not because the graduates or their families do not care. The ceremony is simply a non-familiar and estranging form of affirming success. They do not feel ownership of that process and see it as a formal procedure – something that usually works to their disadvantage. The institutions and their ways remain objects of suspicion. This seems to rob them of a momentary boosting experience that could mend some past hurt. Embracing a moment where an institution shows or "admits" formal recognition can be the start of developing a different or more differentiated perspective on relating to the outside world.

Facing adversity, equipped this time around

A life of disadvantage is seldom left in one dramatic escape. Young people deal among other things with debilitating learned habits that are hard to unlearn, insecurities, paranoia, bitterness, and family who are literally or feel emotionally "left behind." Other than getting out of the mire and reaching mountain tops, young people come full circle when they learn to face their settings and interactions of disadvantage in critical yet productive ways. This is why experiencing success entails more than momentary boosts of energy.

8.2   Elevating

Elevation is the idea and process of "rising above" the drudgery and negativity of one's circumstances. With it come feelings of new or renewed hope and strength to take action, and seeing connections between one's own actions in the present and results in the shorter and longer term future. Thus there are clearly more emotional and more cognitive components to *elevation*. My intention is not to force a clear-cut dichotomy between thinking and feeling. Yet I find separating the two at times is helpful for purposes of analytical clarification, only to afterward rejoin them, doing justice to results of research as well as subjective experiences of the young people in question.

Elevation codetermines social mobility
In the Netherlands (and elsewhere) the idea and concept of social mobility is often expressed as one of "elevation" (*verheffing*) (Rath et al., 2013; Uyterlinde, Engbersen, & Lub, 2007; WRR, 2006), meaning the rise of "lower" socioeconomic classes to a "higher" position. This has to do with an age-old image of the "higher" strata of society looking *down* on the less fortunate, but also the duty and endeavors of "pulling them up." In Lebanon there is less of a tradition of actively stimulating social mobility for the "underclass." Initiatives to improve the lives of the disadvantaged and destitute have always existed but have seldom developed beyond the point of charity and sectarian patronage (Cammett & Issar, 2010; Jawad, 2007; Johnson, 1986) , some exceptions noted in previous chapters. In my analysis I too employ the image of an upward movement to indicate a qualitatively improving change, slightly different from the literature on social mobility, yet also connected.

The *elevating* component of experiencing success distinguishes itself from the *boosting* dimension by the "height" it brings the person and the durability of its effect. Next to momentarily experiencing physical and emotional strength and "owning the moment", a strong feeling of positive self-awareness and conviction of capabilities is thrust into the future. The elevation in the moment enables young people to make connections between what is currently happening and what they would like to see happening in their futures. When such awareness and connections occur, the experience is not only a *boost*, but a transformed consciousness of reality, an *elevation* over circumstances. In Collins' terms, the emotional boost, which probably "has a 'half-life' between a few hours and a few days" (2004, p. 150), has found a long-term stability in a durable emotional *state* (pp. 105-111). I do not mean here an emotion that disrupts the normal flow of interaction, but rather a determination, stability, a backdrop on which the more commonly recognized emotions come to the fore.

My language may seem to confuse thoughts and feelings, but in following my

empirical observations and studies on cognition and emotion, the two are actually more "fused" than many common sense distinctions make us believe. We think with our feelings and we feel through our thoughts. In experiencing success young people feel something, it brings them thoughts about themselves and their futures, and how they think contributes to categorizing feelings: "To name a feeling is to name our way of seeing something, to label our perception" and "different patterns of perception and expectation correspond to different feeling names" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 223). It also plays a role in *constituting* feelings: the act of management is inseparable from the experience that is managed; it is in part the creation of that emerging experience (1983, p. 206).

For *elevation* to take place, young people should typically experience success a number of times. This is especially the case for disadvantaged young people who have been dealt little positive feedback on their behavior and take a while before they learn to see their accomplishments as a precursor for greater things to come. Many of them can quickly experience *boosts*, but their history of negativity at first usually hinders them from *emotionally* connecting their here-and-now achievements with possibilities for the future. This is a crucial point in understanding how development of discouraged and disadvantaged teenagers and adolescents works. Knowing that they can achieve something and can become better at something is not a matter of accumulating factual information of what to do and how to do it. It only comes with a transformed consciousness that is able to receive information as *emotionally relevant* for them. This is actually the way it works for everyone (Zull, 2002). It is simply less of an issue for many other people. In their case, the emotional stability, security, but also the self-evidence of a right feel for the game to "effortlessly" adjust to the situation (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, pp. 66-67), needed for self-development, can be taken for granted and never needs to be explicitly addressed. In the case of disadvantaged and often damaged young people, addressing this issue is crucial if any kind of progress is to occur (Davidson & McEwen, 2012; Heckman & Masterov, 2007). I am not denying a broader need to address social injustice and institutional bias against disadvantaged young people. Yet, this does not negate that cognitive and emotional *elevation* over hindering circumstances and psychological damage is the key to social mobility, or in Dutch terms "social elevation."

Challenging and changing baselines of normal solidarity
Collins uses the term *baseline* for the normal way that people do and say things to accomplish successful social interactions (2004, pp. 69, 124). In Section 1.2 I introduced how young people in Amsterdam and Beirut accomplish this in daily life through joking, complaining and reenactments. Throughout *chains* of Interaction Rituals, the topics of conversation and ways of speaking (ways of joking and complaining) become symbols of the street corner in-groups, sta-

bilizing a common mood, ways of seeing the world, and their opportunities in it. A distinct mode of feeling and thinking that is *dissonant* from mainstream dominant frameworks of experience. Discourses asserting that hard work is rewarded accordingly, do not resonate with their ideas or experiences and they refute them as not being available for "their kind." Positive experiences fail to occur; young people feel the dominant frame fails them, and they find ways to undermine this frame through alternate frames of experience. Young people in disadvantaged neighborhoods through their interactions perpetuate a certain "dissonant frequency of experience." While providing emotional stability and security, these interactions also lock up young people in Amsterdam and Beirut in their limiting social positions and possibilities.

Elevation contributes significantly to freeing them from this emotionally fueled "lock up." This occurs when experiencing success becomes more than a temporary *boost* and transforms the way a young person sees his or her future, most notably increasing *hope*. These transformations can seem like temporary *boosts*. The difference is that with *boosts*, the young person emphasizes feeling good or excited about something. When the *elevating* dimension takes prominence, they start speaking of their endeavors with increased confidence and determination.

Elevation changes perception, which pertains to the emotional as well as the cognitive. As the young people in question start seeing and thinking increasingly in terms of possibilities, and less in limitations, the constant frequency on which their peers joke and complain begins to *dissonate* with their perceptions (Farid in Sections 5.3 and 5.4, Nadine in Section 6.4, Hicham and Paul in Chapter 7). It no longer gives energy but drains it. The reason why the type of energy is uplifting for one person, while draining for another, is not solely because of situational dynamics of for instance the first being an energy-leader while the other is not. Farid in Amsterdam (Sections 5.3 and 5.4) and Paul in Beirut (Section 7.2) were respected young men in their neighborhoods and among their peers. Their voices and input mattered to their respective street corner groups. Their energy depletion in "old" situations was caused by a shift they made in *frame of reference and experience*. The group symbols no longer confirmed their experiential rhythms but distorted them. Their new experiences had shifted their emotional frequency and cognitive focus and this caused feelings of estrangement toward their peer groups. Feelings of being the downtrodden, the victims of society, no longer applied (or applied less). The accumulative power of their experiences of success made them first feel differently about their situation and capabilities, and subsequently made them think differently about their opportunities. New experiences changed feeling rules and the young people were able to "reformulate" framing rules (even if subconsciously and not necessarily in actual words). Perceived reality and their position in it had improved. The old normal

was just that; old and no longer normal. They broke with the normal baseline of discursive solidarity to their peers (Collins, 1981, 2004) and the old frames of experience. We could, with Appadurai, call this an awakening or rekindling of a "capacity to aspire." This is a situated and cultural capacity with *navigational qualities* that depends on "practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture, and refutation" (Appadurai, 2004, p. 69).

Such a capacity becomes all the more important when disadvantaged young people find themselves in the uncharted territories of success. The "old normal" has been discredited but there is no clear concept of what the "new normal" is or even how to navigate toward it. They usually have few others to take as an example; *they* are often the examples for their environments that others will follow. Examples are Farid with his amazement and frustration over being the "odd duck in the pond" (Sections 5.3 and 5.4), Daniel's uphill battle against racism (Sections 5.1 and 5.2), and Joumana's and Sonya's practices in navigating their college careers in conjunction with their family demands and needs (Sections 6.1 and 6.4). These are all illustrations of pragmatic, intuitive paths to elevation. It is often not self-evident for these young people to adopt wider society's taken for granted frames of success, since these had long been symbols of oppression and exclusion for "people like them." After initial hesitance some adoption of these ideas does occur, yet signs of suspicion and critical distance remain. As we shall see, this has some merit to it. The extent to which they succeed on this path depends on the energy boosts and positive reinforcement their experiences give them, but also the ways and contexts in which they can find *grounding*.

8.3   Grounding

Emotional and social *grounding*
The *grounding* dimension of experiencing success makes young people feel they belong somewhere. It consists of fundamental feelings of having the right to exist, and the need to have that recognized. This finds its expression in stable emotional states and being firmly and positively embedded in social networks.

Some clinical psychologists refer to grounding as the idea of gaining emotional stability through a cognitive focus. It relates to expressions such as "getting (back) in touch with oneself", "being down to earth", and "getting back to basics". In short, "to 'ground' you in or immediately connect you with the present moment" (Tull, 2008). It is the antithesis of "having one's head in the clouds", being anxious or "unanchored." Simple exercises in focusing the mind, the senses, and the emotions are supposed to relieve people from confusion, stress, and even trauma (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010, p. 146; Salters-Pedneault, 2009; Tull, 2012). This refocusing helps people strip thoughts and feelings from an

impression-overload to regain control over basic functions and make it through the day. From there they can start taking on bigger and more complex challenges. My concept of grounding encompasses this idea because the contribution to cognitive and emotional stability is essential to disadvantaged young people's experiences of success. Next to this emotional aspect, I need to sociologize grounding by interrogating the embedding of individuals in their physical and social environments. Duyvendak's notions of "feeling at home" and belonging come to mind. This "increasingly comes to depend on the behavior of others" and "is increasingly the result of interactions with many others: it develops in a relational field" (2011, p. 30). Grounding is not achieved without being embedded socially.

If emotional grounding is about *being*, then social grounding is about *connecting* and *doing*. The three are closely related. Social *grounding* is feeling the right to physically be somewhere in relation to others. This *grounding* can be an unreflective connection with others based on common features, customs, and *familiarity* (Duyvendak, 2011, pp. 26-38). Simply being "who they are" makes people feel connected. In Lebanon the history of the civil war and the post-war "re-entrenchment of communal and confessional solidarities" give self-enclosed and pathological tendencies to *grounding* (Khalaf, 1993, p. 32; 2006, pp. 121-122; Yahya, 1993, p. 129). This presents enormous challenges to any meaningful connection beyond one's own community (see Chapter 3), invoking a rather "fortified idea" of belonging (Duyvendak, 2011, p. 30).

Social grounding is also often caused by achievements that feel good and which peers or other "audiences" recognize as achievements. According to Sennett (2012) cooperation and competition are two central ways of human beings finding *connection*. For these connections to become pleasant, or at least non-threatening, people search for productive balances between cooperation and competition. Competition alone would make human connection too aggressive. *Rituals* are a main regulator for balancing out competition with cooperation (2012, p. 93). Comparable to Goffman and Collins, Sennett sees such rituals in all kinds of daily situations and imputes it with emotional and bodily investment (2012, pp. 86-93). Feeling connected then comes *through* doing, and specifically cooperative doing. Duyvendak sees this as the "more outward-oriented and/or symbolic" aspects of belonging: "they help individuals to 'be', develop and express themselves collectively, and to connect with others, often through the creation of intentional communities" (2011, p. 39).

Through achievements, young people can start feeling the right to occupy physical space, but also space in the consciousness of those with whom they share that space. Initially these feelings pertain particularly to the settings where achievements are publicly accomplished. This is temporary *grounding* in particular interaction rituals, empowered by a common entrainment (Collins, 2004).

As the young people develop self-confidence, overall feelings of belonging in broader contexts, such as "society," become possible. In unreflective connection, old framing and feeling rules that direct sense-making remain intact. For disadvantaged young people this carries in it the danger of a restriction or limitation in social possibilities and an emotional "lock up" (see Section 8.2). New experiences can bring old framing and feeling rules into question. New achievements can open up young people to the idea that they can belong in "new" places and with "new" people (such as Farid in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 and Hicham in Section 7.3). The urge to "get somewhere" in life (*elevation*) can be at odds with the need for familiarity of "belonging somewhere" (*grounding*). This brings an experiential incongruity between thoughts and feelings. Seen developmentally, young people tend to this incongruity by "doing the emotion-work" (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) of allowing feelings of belonging with regard to places and people that were previously framed as "off-limits" or would make them feel like "sell-outs." With this expansion of emotional limits of permission comes a reframing of what settings they want to be connected to.

How disadvantaged young people regard their "old" peers and settings also needs emotion-work. Reframing how they regard new settings can seem to almost automatically affect how they regard old ones. New settings give attractive possibilities, so old settings "hold them back." Different young people go through this process differently. Some are able to navigate through old and new settings fairly unproblematically or at least quite skillfully (Joumana and Sonya in Chapter 6), while others need to distance themselves from old settings to avoid emotional or social incongruence (see Farid in Sections 5.3 and 5.4).

Disadvantaged young people must do some of this work quite consciously, sometimes by confronting old ways or people who pull them in other directions. However, they achieve a more developed *grounding* by *decreased* self-awareness and by a *subconscious* self-evidence in their belonging to particular places and general spaces. The remainder of this section is about the conscious emotion-work of disadvantaged young people with regard to achieving social and emotional *grounding*, and the process of this *grounding* becoming a "naturalized" and backgrounded self-evidence.

Practicing *grounding* in "second living rooms"
If young people can achieve emotional and social *grounding* through "being," "doing," and "connecting," the question becomes where and how such opportunities surface. A large part of their disadvantages comes forth from the specific constellation of the interactional settings available to them.

The home situation often does not provide a productive mixture of challenge, guidance, and support. Family roles are pretty much determined and frozen into status symbols. There is little conscious effort in promoting growth in respon-

sibility (see Rachel in Section 6.2, Hicham and Kevin in Chapter 7). Or, as in Paul's case (Section 7.2), tragedy brings too much responsibility too quickly and hurls them into a state of chaos and uncertainties, leaving them to barely cope with their tremendous challenges. They do not have the luxury to sit back and calmly reflect on how to cope, or to spar with peers or mentors about their predicaments. There is only the day-to-day feeling of hardily getting by, always at the level of damage-control, never at the level of transcending circumstances to look at the bigger picture.

School settings seem too often unequipped at dealing with children and teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is a gap between the assumed knowledge, skill-sets and cultural presumptions on the one hand, and the harsh daily realities of the pupils on the other hand. Schools then become for these kids not a place of learning and development, but of control and restraint.

The "streets" and other unsupervised settings add to their "spaces of disadvantage" as dominant socializations there abound with harshness, trickery, lies, and insecurities. They are places to be on guard, not to let your guard down or show vulnerability. At the same time, these socializations are the ones they are most familiar with and it is this familiarity that unreflectively connects them to these interactional settings (Duyvendak, 2011, pp. 26-27). Through this connection they can "be" who these socializations and settings have made them to be. So while these interactions are the cause of serious limits on young people's development, these are also the social exchanges to which they feel they *belong*.

One could make the case for how this teaches them valuable life lessons in not being too naïve or gullible. However, the described contexts of home, school, and street settings do not usually make for combinations that set them up for balanced and deliberated engagement with the outside world. Paranoid anxieties, debilitating suspicions, and paralyzing insecurities are rather what they bring forth, making for combinations that isolate, impair, and estrange disadvantaged young people from feeling and being successful.

The detrimental nature of the young people's ways of connecting and being impairs them from reaching the stability and security needed for emotional *grounding*. Furthermore, their investments in local "social games", upholding the symbols of their "street" interactions, afford them social success in their own circles of friends. Yet these ways of *doing* are of limited value or even counterproductive in other contexts. This type of social *grounding* is at odds with achievements in formal institutions or more formalized settings in society (cf. Paulle, 2013). Their particularized senses of belonging isolate them from more generalized belonging-opportunities (Duyvendak, 2011, pp. 30-36).

These young people need settings and people that actively counteract such conditions and contribute to transforming their ways of being, doing, and connecting, to improve their *grounding*. They need socially safe places where

they can experiment with their behavior and explore responsibilities and boundaries, where the harm and insecurity of other socializations can be undone, if only partially. These places need people watching over these teenagers and adolescents who care for them. People treating them as responsible adults – even when they are not yet – who challenge them in becoming members who *matter* to their communities. People who value their opinions, who discuss with them, who do not forbid but explores options. This is where teenagers start valuing a place and start feeling valued. The context itself could be anything in a wide range of settings, each of which have their own ways of providing opportunities for *being, doing*, and *connecting*.

What they have in common is that the young people experience them as "second living rooms", such as Imane arranged for Fatima, Farida, and their friends in Amsterdam (Section 6.3). For some this might even become their "first" living room. For Hicham Monday Night Football was such a setting (Section 1.3) because it facilitated relationships with youth workers who helped him belong. I became a friend to him and "more than that," while home for him was no home (Section 7.3). Dr. Abboud literally took Daniel from the streets and made the school a house and a home for him, turning his life around (Sections 5.1 and 5.2). Paul (Section 7.2) had a second living room for a while in the local internet-café, but lacked it for much of his teenage years. This left him to fend for himself when it came to discovering "how the world works" and how to establish himself in it, while never really recovering from the early loss of his father.

In Samir's gym (Chapter 3), at first glance *doing* seems to dominate the interactions. A closer look reveals that through the workouts and relentless repetition of activities the participants feel they are part of something bigger than themselves. Their achievements are socially embedded, which helps them feel connected and makes them feel the legitimacy to *be*.

Imad shows us the power of connecting when it is subtly prioritized (Chapter 4). The activities he organizes throughout the city bring people in contact with each other that normally do not meet and would often rather not cooperate. Being able to go to different parts of the city, instead of staying in one's own enclosed community, *grounds* him. '*It's something that lightens and settles you* [*hayda shi biyrayyhak*].

Second living rooms create opportunities for practices that offer positive and productive alternatives to their disadvantaged and problematic ways of *grounding*. Positive in that they provide social safety promoting emotional stability. Productive in that they encourage ways of connecting and achieving that they can replicate and multiply in different settings, including formal institutions and more formalized settings throughout society.

Tensions in *grounding*

Disadvantaged young people can experience *grounding* partly through increased personal capacities (doing) and self-confidence (being), but it comes to fruition with positive and affirming responses from people in their surroundings (connecting). Joumana (Chapter 6) is a shining example of *elevation* through career advancement (success in university and in paid labor), and through it, an unproblematic *grounding* of her emotional constitution and her social position. Any hardship she has to endure she frames within the idea of "suffering for a greater cause." That greater cause is in first instance her focus on "getting ahead" in her own life and this sometimes brings her long-term drive at odds with her family's short-term interests. She herself is quite clear in her stance: she does not belong in these circumstances of disadvantage and she is working on getting out. While her social *grounding* in the family at times becomes an issue, her *emotional grounding* remains unfazed. Her goals and actions to her are legitimate and commendable.

Not all manage to set out such determined courses. A constant (negative) attention for even the presence of categorized people groups hinders *grounding*, as it needs to become non-prominent or even subconscious to succeed. The unrelenting problematization by news media and politicians of Moroccans in the Netherlands and Palestinians in Lebanon prevents to a great extent a *social grounding* experience from ever taking root (cf. Barreto & Ellemers, 2010). In Lebanon, Palestinians' legal status and regional political issues are also at play. However, it is the experience in daily interactions of being an "other" that overdetermines their consciousness and blocks them from an unproblematic experience of belonging in the here-and-now. Grounding is not automatically an issue of race or ethnicity, although it can become that when those involved (or interfering) make it so. This goes for many Dutch Moroccans as well as Palestinians in Lebanon, albeit in different ways and degrees.

Disadvantaged young people from different backgrounds generally struggle with experiencing success because of an unawareness of capacities to contribute to their *elevation*, and a preoccupation (too much awareness) with their uneasy *grounding*. When *grounding* does take place, who they are becomes less problematized in their perceptions and simply "being" becomes a subconscious and therefore easier, or even effortless, accomplishment. Different tensions between elevation ("getting somewhere") and grounding ("belonging somewhere") are at the heart of the dynamics of experiencing success and give opportunities to differentiate in types of experiences. This will be a main topic in the last section.

Discussion: Types of experiences

Through descriptions of young people's different activities I have shown different aspects and dimensions of experiencing success. Reviewing different types of activities highlights different (*boosting, elevating,* and *grounding*) components of experiencing success that seem present in all, be it to varying extents and prominence. In this section I look at possibilities for typifying experiences of success according to the distinguishing dominance of one or more of these dimensions. I also explore tensions between the different dimensions providing the dynamics of these experiences making for possibilities, challenges, and difficulties in young people's development. Finally, I examine the experiences in terms of overarching commonalities by looking at rhythms and patterns of emotions and actions.

Types of success and tensions between components

Boosting, *elevating,* and *grounding* components make up the main characteristics of experiencing success. The prominence of one or more components over the others gives possibilities to discern types of experiences.

In some experiences, *boosts* are central. These are for example feats of physical prowess in sports activities, passing exams in school curricula or other courses, finishing art and/or exposing it for pleased audiences. They have in common that they are "staged activities" with a more or less public character, implying an on-looking audience that has an emotional involvement and expectation over the outcome or results of the "performance" (Collins, 2004; Goffman, 1959, 1967). These publicly performed achievements bring feelings of accomplishment and fulfillment to the performer, a sense of *owning the moment*. The *elevating* dimension is or can be present in the sense that these achievements give disadvantaged young people new realizations about their (future) possibilities. Because of incurred hardships and emotional damage, the momentary victory may not immediately carry in it much of an elevating effect. The same goes for *grounding*. It can be present but, owing to accumulated disadvantages of the disadvantaged, feelings of emotional stability and social belonging do not necessarily take root in first instance. The experience of *boosting* as a real possibility is initially most important in disadvantaged young people's development.

When the elevating dimension becomes more prominent, young people do not only express feeling good or proud. It is accompanied by an increased awareness of competence and capabilities, and determination in what they would like to achieve. To continue earlier *boosting* examples, not just accomplishing a workout, but winning a match, not just passing an exam but successfully completing a school year, not just recording a song but publishing an album. They are in short, victories of a greater magnitude and significance than in *boosting*

experiences. Next to owning the moment the young people in question have the idea they are "getting somewhere." Yet, since experiences are subjective, we cannot make clear-cut distinctions between what someone deems *boosting* or *elevating*. However, in general there is a correlation between the social and cultural "weight" of activities and personal taxation of importance. Also, there is a temporal element: accumulating experiences of success have the tendency to initially be more *boosting* and gradually become more *elevating*. Experiencing more success makes young people increasingly believe that their efforts have an effect. *Boosting* makes *elevating* possible. Furthermore, while experiences of success with a prominent *boosting* dimension do not necessarily contain prominent *elevation*, the reverse is almost always the case. When disadvantaged young people feel elevated over their circumstances, it always has a *boosting* effect.

In experiences with a prominent *grounding* dimension, young people find that their emotional stability and positive social connectedness both increase. This happens in activities that give them opportunities to experiment with behavior and the gradual mastery of desired skills. Such a setting provides stability in two senses. One is that it is structurally available (on a regular basis) and second, it has a structuring of time and tasks within each given "episode" of an activity. The predictability of the order of activities and of the demands on its participants functions as a stabilizer for "guided development" and as an antidotal counterweight to many of the young people's fractured and threatening interactions. Examples are athletic work-outs, music rehearsal and recording, and other kinds of artistic practice, but also social events and especially the joint and shared responsibility in organizing these events. The opportunity to keep returning to a given activity, becoming one with it through physical movement and repetition, the gradual mastery of movements and forgetting these movements and their mastery in the moment, bring structure and stability in emotional experience (Bourdieu, 1980/1990; Sennett, 2008). Doing these things in a group bring the experience of connectedness and belonging, initially in the ritual itself, and later as a symbol of lasting solidarity (Collins, 2004; Sennett, 2012). Doing these things also *becomes* the participants, as structures of movement and body become structures of mind and experience.

Grounding can seem at odds with *boosting*. Whereas *grounding* is about gaining emotional stability, self-control and calm, *boosting* is often about being energized and excited. However, as Section 1.3 points out, not all *boosting* is beneficial, particularly when it does not contribute to *grounding*. Monday Night football can *boost* its participants in ways that they *lose* self-control, while positive *boosting* (Chapter 3) increases it. I have described this as the difference between "losing oneself" and "owning the moment."

At times *elevating* and *grounding* dimensions go together as an obtained state and place of belonging has also become what helps young people "get

somewhere." Conversely, "getting somewhere" does not get them in trouble with where they once belonged. When these dimensions are balanced as such, disadvantaged young people are on a steady track of improving their emotional and social position vis-á-vis their surroundings. More often, their endeavors of "getting somewhere" are at odds with "belonging somewhere" and they have emotion-work to which they must tend to bring congruence between their ambitions, experiences, and disparate interactional settings.

Upward and downward metaphors

The metaphor of upward movement that *elevation* implies is an appropriate one. In daily life, socioeconomically disadvantaged young people often feel "drowned" in their circumstances. The worries of financial deficit, the lack of moral support in any productive direction, and seeing no way out of their predicament while others "move up in the world" all have the connotation of being in a "lowly" position. Emotionally freeing oneself from that position, distancing oneself from the anxieties that preoccupy them, and obtaining tranquility for clarity of thought are well described by reaching an elevated position. It gives space to move and breathe, gaining overview over a grander scheme. In Beirut this sometimes entails literally getting out of the stuffy city to spend time in the mountains. People's demeanors visibly change during such trips. It made them speak and see things differently. The more I noticed this, the more I came to pity people who never made these trips. People like Paul who felt trapped in Lebanon (Introduction, Sections 6.1 and 7.2), I came to realize, were really trapped in the city where buildings literally block perspective, people are in each other's way, and exhaust and fumes prevent breathing life. The point is not that disadvantaged young people should not live in cities but their constant immersion in the same physical environments relates to their experiential frames of social mobility (see Paul, Hicham, and Kevin in Chapter 7).

There are objections to the upward metaphor as well. A common one is the critique of the linear notion of development that it implies or can at least evoke. "Down is bad. Make the journey upward, and your life will be better." This idea is too simplistic as developing a skill and becoming *experienced* have a more circular nature. It is not "going somewhere else" that makes you better, it is going back to the same place, practice, or movement time and again from which mastery originates (Ericsson, Roring, & Nandagopal, 2007; Gladwell, 2008, pp. 38-76; Sennett, 2008) . Another, less common, objection is that going up is not necessarily better. You lose touch with your surroundings, your head is in the clouds, and you actually see things *less* well because of your distance and altitude. Being low means you are connected, "down to earth." Real development seen this way does not come from an upward but rather a downward motion. There is much to say for these objections and it is my contention that they

together with the idea of elevation have complementing value for understanding experiences of success. The grounding dimension, as discussed in Section 8.3, deals more elaborately with the downward motion as part of success and self-development. The dynamics between the *elevating* (upward) and *grounding* (downward) dimensions address this circular or recurrent motion as part of disadvantaged young people experiencing success and development.

Rhythms and structures of success
In Chapter 4 I proposed how (street) basketball in Beirut entrains participants in physical rhythms that sweep them up and, parallel to it or woven in, social rhythms and contents become part of the "normal order of things." Moral stances toward education, taking responsibility, and "living well" in general are inculcated together with basketball drills and dribbles. "Rhythmic synchronization is correlated with solidarity" (Collins, 2004, p. 76).

On an abstract non-verbal level and a visceral level, participants learn that success is about being part of rhythms that are bigger than them. The most important efforts become developing personal rhythmic senses of being part of the game. In basketball, but also in life, both of which have cooperation and competition as vital components, which their collective rituals keep in productive balance (Sennett, 2012).

Whereas *boosting* is the magic *in* the moment, in *elevation*, success has found some stability beyond moments. Repetitive actions and/or exercises become structures in the minds, bodies, and interactions of the participants. The motions, visuals, and sounds of their activities preoccupy their minds long after they leave the interactional setting. Bourdieu would have it that the musicians *become* their music: through "total investment and deep emotional identification" (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, pp. 73, 75).

The obsession with getting a song, a movement, a speech just right structures cognition and prompts participants to structure their ideas and their (free) time in ways that will optimally prepare them for the next session. It is not just an emotional reward in the future that makes them take initiative. It is also losing oneself in schemes and schemata of perfecting a craft. Good work for goodness' sake (Sennett, 2008). For those who are caught by the craftsman's curse, it is not just emotional energy bringing fickle forms of temporary structure that quickly wane if they are not charged anew soon enough; it is also sturdier structures of actions and cognitive preoccupation (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 75).

The workouts in the gyms are exemplary in this respect (Chapters 3, and 7). The group workouts have patterns of drills and exercises that orient participants; knowing what to do and when to do it. The more regular the workouts are in their structures, the more easily they become schemes in the mind and the body, seemingly unconsciously and effortlessly, they become inscribed "durably in

the body, in the form of the rhythm of actions or words" (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, p. 76). Patterns emerging from repetitive action at some point smoothen the way for action. After working out a few days a week for a few weeks, participants are even able to work the drills on their own, outside the gym. Structures, or – more modestly – patterns, become applicable (although not coercive) outside their original contexts.

To summarize, experiencing success consists of shifts in emotional and attitudinal frequencies, becoming part of bodily and social rhythms, and inculcating patterns of action and thinking. These all need moments in which young people develop a feel for what brings them success; to get caught up "in the swing of things." This is how disadvantaged young people get their emotional fuel in the form of inspiration and motivation, which can bring about transformational practices that shake and even change frames of reference and experience. Next to that, disadvantaged young people need a cognitive focus, a preoccupation enthralling body and mind through repetitive action and its gradual mastery. Rhythmic dynamics sweep up emotion and patterns of action become patterns in minds, bodies and experiences.

The *boosting* component of the experience is the magic in the moment, when young people feel physically and emotionally empowered to take initiative. It is usually an energized and excited feeling that helps them take control over the outcome of direct here-and-now situations. This *boosting* is a specific form of emotional energy geared toward increased control of one's life situations but also *self*-control. This distinguishes it from other types of boosts that could energize young people but at the same time makes them *lose* self-control.

In the *elevating* component feelings of self-control and belief in being able to influence one's future are greater than in the *boosting* dimension. Next to positive feelings of one's own capacities, cognitive processes of structuring thoughts and actions to accomplish greater achievements take prominence. In many activities this commitment to accomplishment expresses itself in patterns and rhythms of bodily movement.

The *grounding* component is expressed in increased emotional stability and social connections that positively affirm the presence and achievements of disadvantaged young people. It is about young people finding positive ways of focusing thoughts and senses on here-and-now situations (*being*), being able to impress others with their accomplishments (*doing*), and relating to others in productive combinations of cooperation and competition (*connecting*). This produces feelings of belonging, first in the situational rituals, and with time, in broader and more durable frames of experience.

In different experiences of success one or more of the three main dimensions will be more prominently distinguishable than others; this gives different experi-

ences of success a variety of characterizations and types. A main tension exists between the *elevating* and *grounding* dimensions. Whereas *elevating* is about "getting somewhere", *grounding* is about "belonging somewhere." The figuratively suggested movement of the first and the lack thereof in the second often find quite literal expression in the lives of the disadvantaged young people. Improving their lives can entail leaving their trusted places of familiarity. This can bring about experiences of incongruity between thoughts, feelings, and settings of activities in which they are involved. It demands intense emotion-work to restore desired congruity. The main tasks therein are working on achieving their ambitions, allowing themselves to belong in the places that will encourage those achievements, and finding (new) ways of being connected to their "old" people and places of belonging. In some cases successful detachment from those old places becomes a main concern, because they see no other way of accomplishing *elevation*. *Grounding* then needs to occur in new settings. A more mature development occurs when young people learn to resolve tensions between elevation and grounding, or learn to accept such tensions as part of their increased success.

9   DEVELOPING SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN URBAN ARENAS

> Capabilities are *social* and societal basic goods, in so far as they are not due to natural talent but are *produced* socially, and more, when these capabilities are increased, accumulated and distributed in social cooperation. Social justice calls for these capabilities to be *distributed* as social goods as fair as economic goods or fundamental freedoms to meet the conditions of a minimally fair and just society (Schrödter, 2007, pp. 14-15).

Success and failure are not static traits of socioeconomic classes or ethnic groups. Neither are they the results of individual (lack of) efforts and talent. Rather, people actively coproduce them, now with tremendous focus, then more as a side-effect of other initiatives, for themselves and for others with whom their regular routines are entangled. Disadvantaged young people are at a disadvantage because of constant interactional constellations that they instigate and in which they become wrapped up.

Experiencing success is the emotional fuel that helps disadvantaged young people feel more positively in and about their circumstances and possibilities. In previous chapters I have described how youth workers in Amsterdam and Beirut have developed approaches in facilitating these experiences for their young participants. In this chapter I attempt to extract from those descriptions what we can learn from their work in terms of underlying principles that could inform the way we perceive youth work efforts and results.

The specific interaction rituals, that many disadvantaged young people on urban street corners are part of on a daily basis, create a baseline of normal solidarity (Collins, 2004, pp. 69, 124), fueling defeatism that at once energizes its participants in the short term through a shared morality of being the "underdogs" of society, as well as paralyzing them in the long term for any meaningful or positive change (see Chapters 1, and 7). These interactions are geared toward momentary emotional protection against outside threats of dominant discourses and toward celebrations of familiarity and the appeal of belonging to like-minded peers. In Section 9.1 I call such interactions debilitating rituals, of which I distinguish three main types. Each

of them has specific outcomes contributing to low (or too high) energy emotional tones, skeptical attitudes, and negatively reinforced states of mind.

As the rituals become patterned and well-rehearsed, the energizing potential increases and repetition becomes ever more attractive. Even in strong rituals though, variations can and do occur. For every "sanctified" symbol there is a "heretic" and for every energizing mood, a "leech" sucking away the energy. Through humor, sarcasm, frustration, and anger interaction rituals can be questioned, ridiculed, and undermined – even with the threat of heavy sanctions on such subversive behavior. We should not then see these interactions as "airtight bubbles." Rather there are *competing energy-flows* vying for the young people's cognitive and emotional attention. In the case of young people caught up in undermined and depleted dynamics this is good news.

In different youth work practices I have identified three main types of *constructive rituals* that counter the negative effects of debilitating rituals. I have dedicated Section 9.2 to these restorative, invigorative, and confirmative rituals. These each in their own ways contribute to the boosting, elevating and grounding aspects of experiencing success. Restorative rituals bring about restraint and renew focus, invigorative rituals inspire momentum, and confirmative rituals feed that momentum. In each kind of ritual youth workers display working modes along continuums of prominence and unobtrusiveness and of more or less direct influence.

Section 9.3 addresses how youth workers' varying input contributes to young people's experiences in the moment and over longer spans of time. Although development can be quite precarious, there are indications that constructive chains of interactions can contribute to positive and stable dispositions.

In Section 9.4 I address how youth workers can develop the proficiency relevant to operating in these different rituals. They *immerse* themselves in the world of their young participants, they actively engage in imagining how that world could improve (*inventiveness*), and they construct *vocational narratives* that feed and direct their actions and emotions.

9.1   Debilitating rituals

There are three main types of *debilitating interaction rituals* that each have specific types of outcomes. Their repeated and excessive occurrence, and their combined outcomes in which young people's regular routines are caught up comprise the actual dynamics of being disadvantaged. I would not typify the effects of these dynamics as opposite to those of experiencing success. It seems rather that they, or at least some of them, resemble the effects of those positive experiences, but with a definite downside. The temptation of these experiences is then that they seem to provide false senses of success.

Undermining rituals are interactions with outright negative effects on self-esteem and motivation of young people. Notable examples are the daily interactions among peers in which they ridicule and discourage each other and complain about the impossibilities in their lives. It is these interactions that Samir (Section 3.3) is only too aware of (*'when do these kids ever encourage each other'*), that Farid (Section 5.3) avoids at all costs, and the ones that Paul, Hicham, and Kevin are caught up in so often (Chapter 7). These kinds of interactions result among young people mainly in distance and disengagement. Complaining about their position creates distance from dominant ideals in society concerning personal effort and progress. Criticism of dominant ideals can be good in itself, such as I described in interactions of Imad and his friends (Section 4.3). It is in this critical approach that this distance resembles the elevation component of experiencing success. The difference is that in the case of undermining interactions it reinforces feelings of fatalism without any perspective on escape or alternative. While elevation combines critical thought with constructive engagement, the focus in undermining interactions on negative circumstances acts as an amplifier of a negative state of mind. The ridicule, the jokes, and the complaints hinder young people from opening up to each other in a sensitive manner. This hampers exploration and self-development. Young people who do look for this, such as Farid (Section 5.3) and Hicham (Section 7.3) often find it outside their circle of friends. Or relative outsiders such as Khalil (Section 4.2), Imad (Section 4.3), and Imane (Section 6.3) step in and contribute to dynamics facilitating or reintroducing such possibilities.

Those who stay caught up in the mentioned dynamics with their friends and who experience similar negativity in contact with parents and other adults, end up in cognitive and emotional patterns of expectations that are not easily broken by a single positive interaction. Paul, Kevin, and Hicham's routines (Sections 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4) unfortunately exemplify such dynamics. Daniel's constellations of interactions hang in a delicate balance and it is not obvious to determine what will get the upper-hand in his development (Sections 5.1 and 5.2). It is, however, quite certain that the more debilitating Interaction Ritual Chains weigh in the more durable negative energy will gradually build up. For people like Paul and Kevin this seems to internalize and become an embodied disposition, even if cracks in the gloom seem now and then to pierce through and reveal hope for something more positive.

Distracting rituals are not downright undermining but they focus on other things than self-control, stability, and determination. A characteristic of constructive interactions is that they generate emotional energy that participants experience as rewarding. In the case of distracting activities and interactions they can generate *too much energy*. Then the emotional energy is not a stimulant for development, but a goal in itself. The energy at the moment feels like

a positive boost because of an achievement. The difference is that a boosting experience (Section 8.1) increases positive feelings in the ensuing moments and encourages focus. A distracting ritual provides a momentary kick, but it is usually accompanied by a loss of self-control on which participants usually look back with remorse, leaving them more scatter-minded than focused. Striking examples include the documented sports situations in which Farid and Hicham "lost themselves" (Sections 1.3 and 7.3) and which they have since then tried to avoid.

Depleting rituals are a lighter form of undermining rituals. They are not a frontal attack on self-esteem and motivation but because of the lack of a desired outcome, their "hope is deferred too long" and turns into frustration and despair. A general vague idea creeps up on young people that "the world is against them" and that they are not able to do much about it. They feel institutions and their representatives (teachers, social workers, etc.) have made promises that they do not keep. It is not of importance here how factually accurate this is, it is the overwhelming feeling of being strung along and not having influence to alter the situation. Typical utterances include: "The teacher does not understand me" (Section 7.3) or "He doesn't want to help me" or "I can't talk to anyone about what I really want" (see for instance 7.4). Depleting interactions can be a breeding ground for undermining interactions when there is no relief from these debilitating feelings. Cynicism, apathy, frustration and anger consolidate. Distracting rituals can be a surrogate relief for an excess of depleting rituals. Young people in constant low-energy positions of interaction are tempted to look for high energy rituals and activities as an end in themselves. Where boosting activities can eventually lead to an elevating effect, these over-energizing activities are usually more exceptions to the rule, since they do not necessarily replace the ongoing depleting interactions.

In these low-energy states a social *entrenchment* can set in. This resembles the grounding effect of experiencing success because it provides clear and safe boundaries of belonging with "their kind of people." At the same time, it is an inwardly turned belonging stemming from a defeatist attitude, excluding themselves from the rest of the world, because they feel the world has given up on them. The difference with the grounding component is that the direction of the latter tends to be toward that of an *expanding* world, becoming increasingly comfortable in different settings (see Chapter 4, particularly Section 4.4 on boundary-management), whereas entrenchment leads to decreasing ease with different settings in which young people are expected or forced to engage.

The combined outcomes of these interactions are *proximate cycles of dehumanization*.[40] Young people dehumanize others, seeing teachers as obstacles, police officers as threats, and parents as powerless. In turn young people are constantly dehumanized themselves. Young people do not feel they are seen as they fully are. Unfortunately in too many cases, adults and peers do not go further than seeing them as representatives of stereotyped ideas: nuisances, lacking potential, unfocused, and in the worst cases, lost causes and/or threats. Mutual undermining, distraction, and depletion bring about disengagement, loss of control, and social entrenchment for the most disadvantaged.

This brings with it an enormous strain on their emotion-management. Young people, especially those who have not resigned to their current circumstances, experience losing self-control as a self-compromise that they cannot reconcile with who they want to be (Farid in Section 1.3, Paul in Section 7.2, Hicham in Section 7.3). For others, who feel more depleted and undermined than distracted, the strain is worse as they experience hardly any relief from the burdens of being misunderstood, having unanswered questions, and lacking skills to navigate through mazes of bureaucracies and alien subtleties. The challenge of explaining to oneself what is happening, of distinguishing between causes and consequences, becomes insurmountable. Some are able to find constructive ways of retreating to "gather themselves" in "solo-rituals." These contribute to facing upcoming encounters with a bit more courage and confidence. Daniel and Farid (Chapter 5) were shining examples in this respect. However, they also testified of an already greatly developed skill-set and attitudinal adaption, and this is hardly common among young people overcome with hardship.

Failing to get a grip on one's own circumstances goes hand in hand with the embarrassment of not succeeding to account to others for their lack of progress. They do not manage to bring across more than what is generally deemed an excuse or a feeble defense.

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40 I refer here not (necessarily) to the crude and absolute form of dehumanization as happens in wartime and during other atrocities. There are forms of human conduct, such as the ones I put forward here, that have also been considered processes of dehumanization, but of course in a different way from literally taking someone's right to exist. It is in this case more subtle. Through dehumanizing dynamics, people involved end up feeling *less than human*. Freire seems to take a stand against both forms when he relates humanization to the emancipation of labor, the overcoming of alienation, and the affirmation of men and women as persons (Freire, 1968/2012, p. 44). Humanization has also been contrasted with *instrumentalization* (Westoby, 2016). In this view, dehumanization stands for seeing relationships as means to ends, guided by "hyper-rationality" toward "results, outputs, quantity" (2016, pp. 37, 38). It is then overruling people's intrinsic dignity by reducing them to their instrumental (lack of) worth. It is such subtle dynamics to which I refer when invoking a seemingly extreme concept of dehumanization. In the same spirit, I deem constructive rituals to contribute to humanizing values such as belonging, community (Buber, 1923/2004; Westoby, 2016), affirmation, and emancipation (Freire, 1968/2012).

A question sometimes asked is whether socially problematic or controversial behavior, such as self-destructive activities, crime, and extremist tendencies, can contribute to experiencing success. My data on such issues is limited. When it comes to crime this pertains mainly to self-reports of young people who were involved in street-crime, such as mugging, stealing, break-ins, vandalizing, assault, and small-scale drug-dealing. They have since then turned away from these activities and have some remorse or at least distance from "that life." Concerning extremism, there have always been individuals in the groups I have followed who had some radical ideas, some of whom showed intentions of following through on their ideas, and for instance ended up abroad in foreign armies.[41] Based on my limited empirical findings I do have some reflections that are worth sharing.

I will attempt to view such activities from the perspectives of interaction rituals and emotion management as I have been doing. The question is then if we can typify them more as dynamics of debilitating rituals or if they come closer to the boosting, elevating, and grounding components of experiencing success.

One of the most controversial characteristics of street-crime is the violence and often the extremeness of it inflicted on undeserving innocent victims. Seen from the perspective of the present analysis this seems to fall in the category of *proximate cycles of dehumanization*. Violence is then an extreme form of dehumanization. Sennett (2012, pp. 72-86) provides an overview of human exchanges ranging between 'winner takes all' and altruism as a spectrum between competition and cooperation. In his perspective, interaction rituals have the potential to temper people's ruthlessness as they can curb competitive interactions to cooperative ones (Sennett, 2012, pp. 93-95). The reflections of Jerry and Muhammad (Section 1.2) resembled more a "winner takes all" approach than one that left room for multiple winners. Aiman's experiences (Section 1.2), Daniel's first encounters with Dr. Abboud (Section 5.1) and Samir's recollections (Section 3.2) portray an engagement where criminals engage others either as potential victims or as superior predators, trying to move out of the position of *becoming* a potential victim. The options for courses of action then become either disengagement and distancing or violent engagement. A marked difference with the interaction rituals that I maintain lead to experiencing success is that they combine critical thought with constructive engagement.

Another difference between experiencing success as I have described it and street-crime stems from the aforementioned disengagement and distanc-

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41   Joining a foreign army is not in itself a radical or extreme idea, yet the extremeness of uncertain and insecure prospects in which many young people ended up and the volatile circumstances with which they have had to cope, can contribute to increased exposure and propensity for extremist ideas and behavior (cf. Abla & Al-Masri, 2014; AFP in Beirut, 2016; Anera, 2014)

ing. Street-criminals' worlds seem to be fairly limited as far as sharing success is concerned. Suspicion, secrecy, and lack of openness are not just functional traits for criminal transactions, they become "second nature", a "street-habitus" (Fraser, 2013, 2015; Shammas & Sandberg, 2016) Violence and the threat of violence engender enduring atmospheres of anxiety and intimidation (cf. de Jong, 2007; Paulle, 2013). Now in the case of living in a very dangerous world this might be an excellent mode of survival (see Section 5.1), but if young people are to increase quality of life, this cannot remain an automatic mode, lest it linger, maybe as a trauma-induced response in situations where it hardly serves a purpose. Experiencing success implies (after some point) a more evolved emotion-management beyond survival mode (cf. Kooijmans, 2016). This also implicates a gradual relief from circumstances that so constantly strain young people's emotion-management. Otherwise these dynamics and the ensuing mode, more than grounding, sooner suggest entrenchment, which I have come to see as resulting from debilitating rituals.

A last aspect of both street-crime and extremist propensities is the allure of adventure and thrills of excitement from "pulling it off." These can provide both boosting feelings and feelings of competence and fulfillment. Both Jerry and Muhammad (Section 1.2) mention this in their own ways. Here it is difficult for me to differentiate between a "cheap thrill" and a "valuable boost" based on participants' experiences. Earlier I have mentioned that thrill-seeking is something different from experiencing boosts when they become an end in themselves and participants become over-energized. But it could be that successful street-criminals or "extremists" in fact feel something similar to a student passing an exam or a musician mastering a difficult melody. However, in my reasoning multiple boosts lead to elevation over circumstances and contribute to "getting somewhere" in life. By asking where these boosting experiences are getting them, we can "test" the boosts in whether they lead to elevation and grounding, or more toward cycles of dehumanization.

Since I take some moral standpoints in this analysis, it is appropriate to add some cautionary comments. First of all, given the disadvantaged young people's limited (experienced) possibilities it is not surprising that some resort to criminal or other controversial activities for thrills, belonging, and getting ahead in life. We could deem it rather strange that not more young people do so. In a normally low-energy, down-trodden routine, it can be one of the rare ways to raise energy-levels. Disengagement can be a defensive practice from an overwhelming feeling that people important to them in their direct surroundings have given up on them. We could then wonder who originally initiated the disengagement, the young people or the people responsible for their wellbeing. Similarly, entrenchment can result from feelings of having only that one group in which to retreat.

Secondly, from an interactional perspective, the dynamics deemed debilitat-

ing and in some cases criminal are not altogether different from more socially legitimate ones. Top executives of multinational companies display relentless careerism and a lifestyle of far-reaching instrumentalism, seeing anyone and anything as a means to get ahead. It is quite tenable to oppose such (quite widespread) instrumentalization to humanization (Westoby, 2016, pp. 37, 38). Instrumentalization is then a form of dehumanization, of which criminal violence is a manifestation, which happens to be legally untenable. In both cases, however, constructive engagement is not part of the all too strategic agendas. More examples abound: stock brokers deceive their clients, police lie to suspects, soldiers wound and kill people. None of these interactions are deemed criminal, but all of them breed suspicion, cold-heartedness, and other unfortunate outcomes of debilitating interactions. Most of them relate more to hyper-pursuits that actually hindered Daniel's and especially Farid's success (Chapter 5). The mentioned "mainstream" outcomes of debilitating interaction relate less to elevation and grounding as I have described them, but some of them are often successfully disguised as success.

Thirdly, these debilitating rituals and their effects can be a point of departure for a journey to a "better life." These young people are not "simply the way they are." They have become this way through specific constellations and series of interaction rituals. And they can become different by altering these interactions or by challenging, inviting, or supporting young people to do so. Disadvantaged young people who want to improve their lives can often indicate well what they do *not* want (Joumana in the Introduction and Section 6.1, Farid in Section 5.3). That is frequently an initial drive for change. They become gradually more determined to achieve something in life. The idea and feeling arise that things could be different. They realize that disappointment can be demotivating as well as instructive. The trigger for this can be a conversation with an outsider, an impression of a situation or even a television program. The awareness of possible change grows as young people experience an estrangement from and dissatisfaction with their surroundings. They develop different ambitions and needs that do not match with those of their peers. This is a possible catalyst to start searching for new interaction rituals, where other symbols of success are kept in reverence. The question is then to what extent they will have access to interactions that offer them something better than their current ones.

Youth workers and young people can at times be at odds about what success is in a particular instance. But, as we shall see in the next sections, there is quite some consensus when it comes to possible directions and accumulation of experiential outcome as to what is beneficial for young people's success. If an excess of debilitating rituals is what holds young people back, it is in *constructive interaction rituals* that they find restoration, invigoration, and confirmation.

9.2   Constructive rituals

As disadvantaged young people are bogged down by debilitating interactions, youth workers attempt to facilitate rituals that inform and transform young people's thinking and feeling. These interactions are of different types, some of them quite mundane, others more extravagant, containing specific qualities that inspire and feed experiences of success, with their *boosting, elevating,* and *grounding* aspects, as explained in Chapter 8. Invoking the idea of ritualized interaction advances two pivotal aspects of youth work initiatives. The first is that youth workers cannot one-sidedly "make" things happen to young people. They are involved, invested, and caught up in interactions that depend on input and response from others as much as theirs. The ritual perspective emphasizes a joint focus and effort. Secondly, youth workers do often take a leading role in interactions with young people. Rethinking these interactions as rituals reveals the multileveled input and investment of youth workers. Anyone can be present or partake in a conversation but to restore dignity, boost morale, and to affirm confidence is to be an "energy-leader" (Collins, 2004, p. 108). These interactions are rituals, not in the sense of boring routines, but in the sense that they add dimensions of meaning to everyday situations, through repetition, intensity, symbols, dramatic expression and emotion (Collins, 2004, pp. 48-49; Sennett, 2012, p. 90).

In what follows I describe three main types of constructive interaction rituals and I show how they, linked into chains, contribute to experiencing success. There are no strict one-on-one relations between the types of interaction rituals and characteristics of experiencing success. They are loosely related as one type of ritual can induce one or more of the three characteristics of experiencing success.

In the different types of rituals, youth workers use their presence and influence in different ways. I call it "functioning along continuums of prominence and directness" (see Figure 1).[42] *Prominence* I derive from Collins' insights about the positions people can take in interaction rituals. Some people play a central role, drawing attention to themselves or to a meaningful symbol and that way they can carry the whole group to higher energy levels (Collins, 2004, pp. 108, 116, 122, 124). Others remain in the background. The continuum of *directness* is therefore a crucial addition, which I deduce from Sennett's work. He especially emphasizes the importance of indirectness in how counsellors and coaches approach people (Sennett, 2012, pp. 221-227), but for the purposes of understanding constructive rituals it is important to tend to the whole spectrum of indirectness to directness. In some cases, youth workers are particularly

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42   I have constructed a figure of these continuums. This figure and the one at the end of this section are meant as visual aids only. They are not in any strict sense causal models.

prominent and try to exert their influence directly. In other cases, they are in the background and their influence is noticeable only indirectly. Between these extremes there are two intermediate forms: prominent but influencing indirectly, and non-prominent yet influencing directly. With this in mind, I will continue my portrayal of the three constructive rituals.
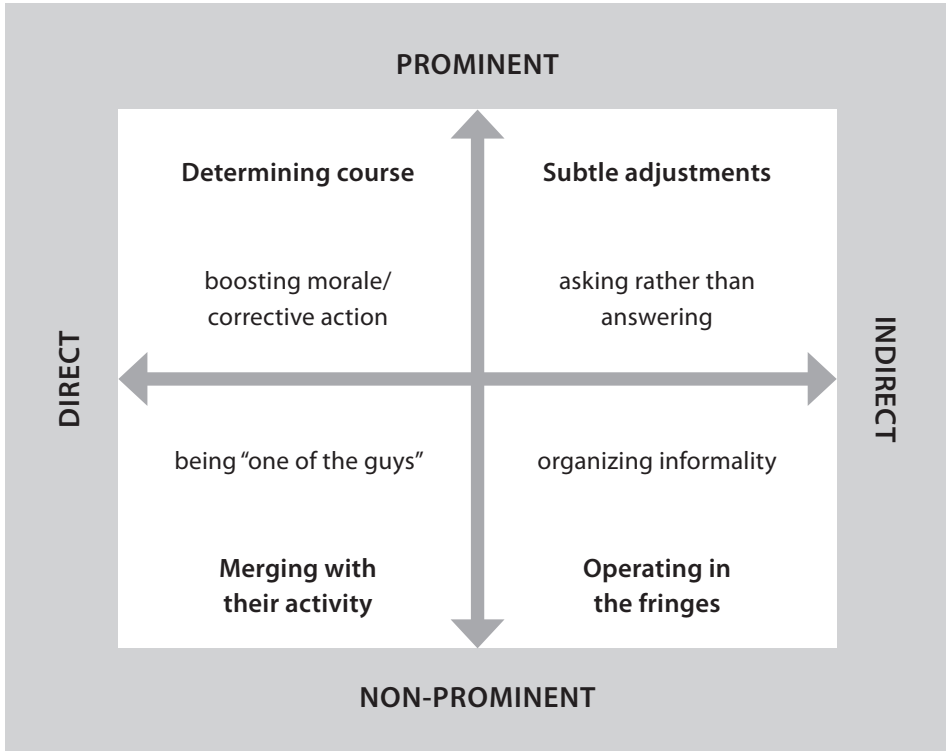
Figure 1
Spectrum of Youth workers' Prominence and Directness in Interaction Rituals

Restorative rituals
Restorative rituals are about setting straight what, through external circumstances or internal struggles, has become crooked. Youth workers who operate from a logic and interest of their participants' development can become guardians of that development. Social structures of inequality and specific interactions of discouragement can threaten young people's spirits and motivation, leaving them anxious and at times outraged. In other instances, young people from within the group can become over-energized, taking too much attention and dis-

rupt the group's momentum. Both the external and internal negative influences need to be thwarted to make room for more positive group dynamics. I call this youth workers' restorative work. This can take the form of calm and quiet conversations, disciplining interventions, or a joint refocused group activity.

Restorative rituals in calm and quiet conversations can come up spontaneously or youth workers can more or less plan them in advance. For instance, a young person or a group of young people get caught up in a perspective of fatalism and defeatism. Their "street corner talk" takes an emotional turn that bogs them down and keeps them down (See for instance Section 1.2). Whether immediately or not, youth workers look for ways to address the conversations and the emotions that they provoke. This could be through joking to break the prevailing mood and "distract" them from their negativity (cf. Sennett, 2012, pp. 222-223). A contrary approach could be to delve deeper into their negativity to dissect it; asking more about the details of their complaints and laments. What exactly is it that affords their fatalism? Are there concrete experiences? Sometimes reflection on the details can shed a different light on what happened. Instead of an abstract thought that "society is against us" they discover it was one person in a position of power that ruled against them or simply had a bad mood or bad timing. Processing details through conversation which provides a different perspective on a situation can lighten the mood and the experienced burden. Youth workers thus invite their participants into active emotion-work through reflective conversation. In employing humor, fact-checking, asking pertinent questions and proposing alternative frames for understanding situations, youth workers help smoothen paths for such work.

Furthermore, just the fact that a youth worker takes time to explore what is bothering the young people and helps them look for a "way out", is something they can experience as support when they feel none from others. Imane and the girls of the neighborhood organized such an environment at her small office. In a neighborhood where poverty, social neglect, bullying, petty crime and general feelings of unsafety were commonplace, Imane's office was an island of calm and safety. It was a breeding ground for restorative rituals (Section 6.3).

It is important that youth workers, in the way they speak and ask questions, convey that they are open to the idea that the world is in fact "against them" while at the same time gently introducing the young people to other possibilities. A too crude interjection of alternative views might come off as trying to defend society and dismissing the young people's dismay. The key then is that youth workers can see things from their perspective, so that a possible refocusing effort will have a chance of connecting in relevant ways.

Imad's efforts in Beirut to connect teenagers from different neighborhoods and religious backgrounds was at its core an effort in restoration. He provided environments where kids like Elie (see Section 4.1) were invited to drop their

anxiety and meet "others" of flesh and blood. Where "they" could become "us", even if only a little. The basketball tournaments had a visible calming, pleasing, and easing effect on people's faces and behavior. When that fell into place, participants' energy could be refocused on playing ball. They experienced success in knowing that they could transcend the entrenched and cramped feelings of their locale, and in playing a game they loved playing (Chapter 4).

Other than calm and reflective conversation, restorative rituals happen through youth workers taking on a disciplining role. They do so from fairly explicit ideas of "right" and "wrong" behavior. Some behavior such as swearing or other lewd language might be tolerated at times, but at other times, taking into consideration timing, intent, and intensity it could "cross a line." Physical violence, especially "serious" fighting as opposed to "play-fighting" is not acceptable. Youth workers will intervene, and depending on the situation reprimand them, punish them, or even involve the police. Such interventions happened only too often during Monday Night Football (Section 1.3). I have seen youth workers respond to this partly from an interest in the safety and wellbeing of involved parties, but also from an outrage over the disruption that the offenders cause. Restoration is then not just about safeguarding the fighting parties but also about protecting the activity and the rest of the group from the violence and ensuing anxiety.

Other kinds of behavior perceived as disruptive are excessive joking, lack of attention or commitment, such as Samir's "moral speech" to his new young participants after a work-out session (Chapter 3). In these instances, youth workers operate from ideas of what the best atmosphere for an activity or setting is and they see themselves as guardians of that atmosphere. If individuals do not pay heed to these calls for restraint, youth workers are usually reluctant to remove them because the whole point is to *reach* them. However, if they are to accomplish their aims with the group, it will at times mean removing those who disrupt. Youth workers will generally look for ways to reconnect with those individuals in other instances to "draw them back in."

When youth workers intervene in disciplinary ways it can have a restorative effect, bringing calm to a situation that has too much energy and unrest. The idea and immanently felt urgency is that restraint is good. Whether the restorative effect will actually take place depends strongly on what the intervening youth worker conveys nonverbally. There are attitudes that communicate a need for self-restraint for the sake of self-respect, and preventing kids from doing things they could regret. It is an intervention with the (perceived) best interests of the kids in mind.

However, in daily contact between youth workers and young people not all communication is ideal and things can play out in different ways. Depending on how sharp, tired, patient, tactful youth workers are at any given moment, their

reactions to disruptive behavior could come more from an attitude of entitlement that "demands" adherence or simply a fed up feeling communicating "behave and stop making my life difficult." These kinds of attitudes sooner add to the nervous energy of disruptive participants and will rarely achieve restorative effects (cf. Paulle, 2013, pp. 168-175 on teachers "losing their cool" and contributing to escalations).

The obvious outcome of restorative rituals is a *grounding* effect. Youth workers invite young people who are anxious, exhilarated, and nervous to come back to a state where they can better relate to others, which is social *grounding*, and to have the calmness to get "in touch with themselves", which I called emotional *grounding* (see Section 8.3). In Sennett's terms, this ritual steers away from competition and more toward productive cooperation (2012, pp. 93-95).

Restorative rituals reposition and refocus. Therefore they can also have *boosting* effects. Participants feel set free from pressures, distractions, ideas, and feelings that were bogging them down. They feel lifted up and energized to start or continue doing "the right thing" again.

Invigorative rituals
In invigorative rituals youth workers attempt to jolt young people's energy-levels. This second type of ritual is in some ways an opposite of restorative rituals, where the idea was to bring calm and self-control. Here, youth workers raise their voices, jump up out of their seats, and remind their participants of their ambitions. Youth workers can "admonish" young people for giving into fatalism and, with a wink and a smile, challenge them to get up out of their negativity. In their presence and influence, youth workers are quite prominent and direct (Figure 1, left/above).

Mindful of the relation between physical movement and motivation, youth workers will sometimes literally ask their participants struck with fatalism to stand up from a sitting position to "shake it off." This movement often *really* helps; simply standing up and moving around (making moves as if one is dusting or throwing something off oneself) brings a modest smile and makes them *feel* differently. Energy has returned to start or resume the intended activity. The right activities can encourage apathetic young people to become engaged and preoccupied in a positive atmosphere. This instills hope. Hope for the here-and-now that gives energy to continue. Hope for the near future because participants know what they can work on and be a part of in the coming days and weeks. Hope for the longer term because they can (again) imagine that their efforts will amount to something worthwhile. The youth workers' artful competence in *boosting rituals* is in finding ways to ignite that process.

Sports and physical activity play such a big role in this research because participants there literally have to get into a position where they can move, antici-

pate, and counter – a totally different bodily posture and accompanying attitude as compared to one that awaits what overcomes them. This "game-posture" is acquired only after numerous work-outs. These experiences feed their normative ideas about "good posture"; they start correcting themselves and each other. Competition, whether as an element of the game, or as coming forth from participants comparing themselves to each other, can be a powerful motivator for full investment in the game.

This physical learning process does not automatically transfer to other spheres of life, but as I have shown in Chapters 3 through 5, with the right guidance and circumstances it becomes possible and even likely. Physical engagement and development have metaphoric meanings beyond sports activities. As described in youth workers' tactics to get their participants into motion, this transfer of meaning is not confined to the realm of metaphors.

Youth workers' moralist speeches and participants' responses to it in formulaic yells or "high fives" can become group symbols of their motivation and perseverance. These carry them through difficult times and even have the power to stretch efforts beyond what people thought they could achieve, such as in Samir's gym (Chapter 3). As these interactions and symbols become "shared property", the youth workers need not be the sole carriers of the group's continuation; other members can initiate *invigorative rituals*.

Until that time, youth workers have a far more overtly directive role in invigorative than in restorative rituals. They are key in stirring up and arousing energy. In restorative rituals youth workers can also be quite directive and prominent, such as in disciplining interventions. In quiet calming conversations, however, the image of the youth worker leaning back in their seat, and allowing frustration or anger of the others to come, is more prevalent. Every now and then inserting a pensive or provoking question suggests the application of *minimum force* (Sennett, 2012, pp. 211, 223) and allowing for *emerging results* (Ord, 2012, pp. 3-5) more than when youth workers raise their voice, jump up, and demand immediate energetic response. Youth workers' directive intervention and intense prominence usually characterize invigorative rituals.

Invigorative rituals quite obviously have strong *boosting* effects, in terms of characteristics of experiencing success (see Section 8.1). It stirs energy, it brings participants into motion. Yet the increased energy and getting back to work can also have *grounding* effect. Being refocused on and energized for the reasons for participation brings (back) emotional stability and feelings of usefulness and belonging (Section 8.3).

Confirmative rituals
Lastly, there are interactions where youth workers try to maintain existing momentum. They encourage their participants to "stay the course", to persevere

even in the face of adversity. Youth workers also point out achievements that their participants might not be aware of or which they do not deem that important. In making a big deal of achievements that could pass by unseen, youth workers provide discouraged and demoralized young people with moments of pride and satisfaction. This has both *boosting* and *grounding* effects. The explicit compliments in the context of the group make young people feel appreciated and it strengthens their faith in what they are accomplishing and can still accomplish. This *boosts* their self-confidence. The expressed appreciation also makes them feel they are in "the right place." Doing well and being recognized for it has the ability to make people feel they belong and thus socially *grounded* (see Section 8.3). In short, confirmative rituals are about identifying achievements that matter according to youth workers, giving those moments public recognition, and turning them into moments of celebration. In achieving this, youth workers are quite prominently present and their influence is fairly direct (figure 1, upper left).

Initiating celebration demands tact and subtlety. Disadvantaged young people have often developed a hypersensitivity to rejection. This goes hand in hand with cynicism to acceptance and appreciation others might direct at them. To break through this cynicism, compliments need to feel well-meant, as opposed to hollow sounds of optimism, and they need to address things that matter to them. For instance, Samir (Section 3.2) the "tough teacher" whose compliments have tremendous effects on his participants, and makes encouragement a structural component of his workouts. Encouragements and compliments are then the small-gesture celebrations of accomplishments.

Because of these young people's problematic relationship to discouragement as well as encouragement, there are also more indirect ways that confirmative rituals take place. Explicit compliments can be disturbing for participants perfecting a technique. They sometimes feel better just being "in the flow" of an activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Kooijmans, 2009), and this is in itself rewarding. Youth workers then limit themselves to staying in the background. Through small gestures, or simply by leaving their participants be, they contribute to confirmative interactions (figure 1, bottom half).

Greater celebrations take place for instance when a fighter wins a match at a kickboxing event. In some cases, such as a first match, Samir makes sure that fighters are celebrated even when they lose, as he regards entering the ring a victory in itself. In such cases, it is Samir who intervenes and directs the interpretation of an event. Even a defeat can be a victory. Youth workers walk a thin line here. If a youth worker's conviction of such an intervention is not convincing, if the youth worker is not *invested* in it by displayed belief and clear arguments meriting the case, or if participants do not hold the youth worker's convictions in high regard, they will see such framing as "fake."

This does not mean that youth workers always have to "feel" something and display emotion. Samir often operates from the insight that a participant *needs* to hear or see something. He addresses perceived emotional needs and he does so by clear verbal communication, a determined look, gazing the participant straight in the eye, as if to check how his message is received, leaving no room for it *not* to be received.

Youth workers such as Samir, Imad, Khalil, and Imane, have over time mastered the art of complimenting, encouragement, and the celebration of victories. They know when to compliment and how to make that compliment "land" in their participants. They know not to overdo their complimenting but they also recognize when overlooked achievements need to be magnified and made explicit. They turn otherwise hidden accomplishments into celebrations. These are *boosting* and *grounding* moments, but they are also instructive occasions where participants learn how to reframe seemingly mundane actions and situations as significant to their ongoing development. This is the *elevating* effect of confirmative rituals.
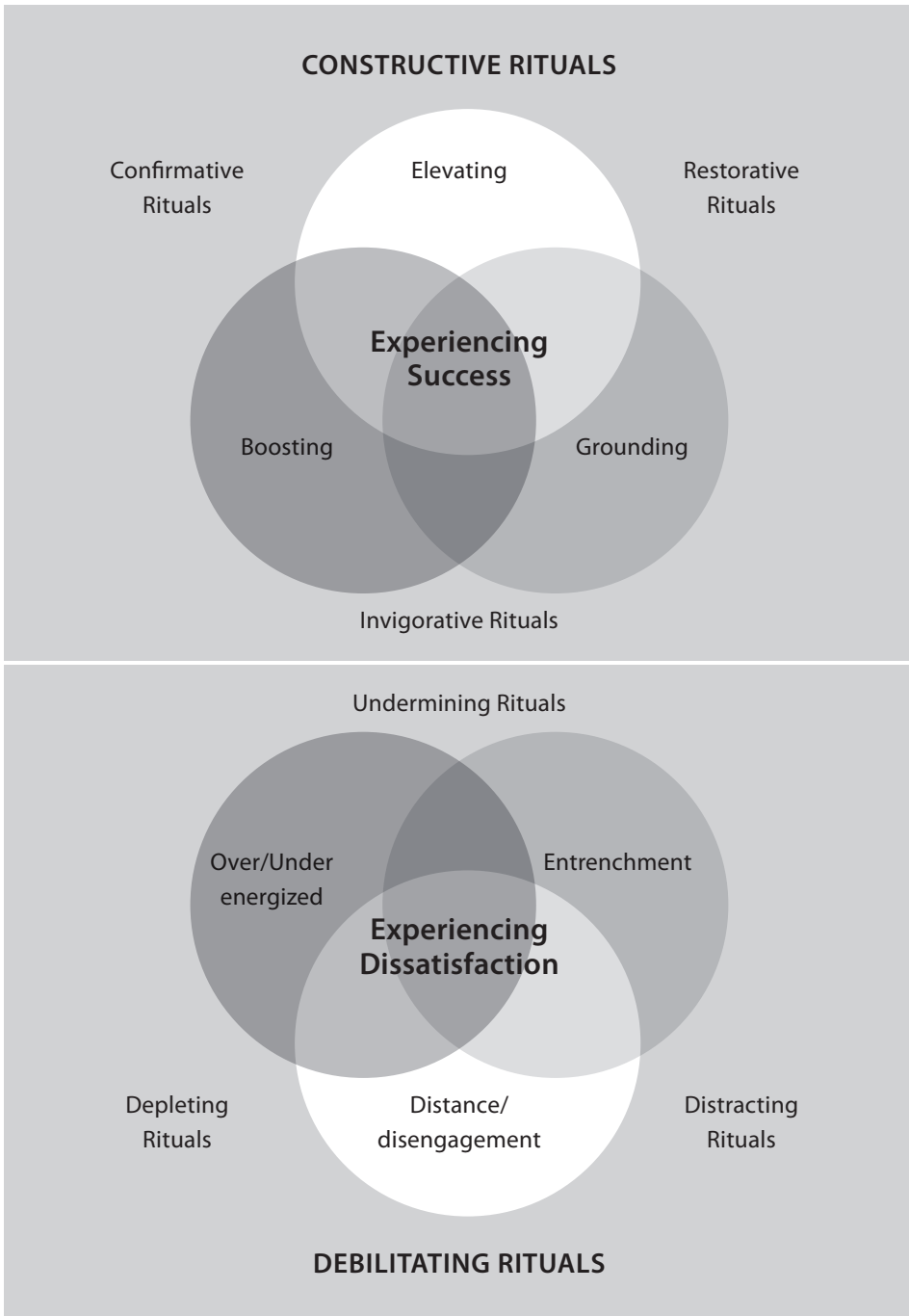
Figure 2
Overview of Constructive and Debilitating rituals with their effects

9.3   Types of exchanges and accumulative ritual effects

Types of exchanges

Sennett discusses a range of exchanges between "winner takes all" and altruism as a spectrum between competition and cooperation (2012, pp. 72-86). According to him interaction rituals have the potential to temper people's ruthlessness as they can curb competitive interactions to cooperative ones (Sennett, 2012, pp. 93-95). This provides a diversified pallet of possibilities of what takes place between youth worker and participants.

How people respond in constructive rituals depends on the type of exchange that youth workers and participants can bring about and how they feel they come out of that exchange. How successful youth workers are at contributing to constructive rituals depends on their ability to sense the types of exchanges that need to take place and to invest and respond accordingly. For this, youth workers must seek to steer the interaction as prominent "energy-leaders" (Collins, 2004, p. 108) while also being able to "step back" and allow others to become prominent in the interaction and gain energetic momentum (see for instance Section 6.3). The energy that participants other than the youth workers gain from the interactions is an important part of the restoration, invigoration, and confirmation.

Looking at the initial stages of youth workers' relationships with young people, *non-prominence* is essential. A youth worker sets out to know their world as it is and not so much as it should be according to others, however noble and beneficial those views could be. In the first interactions, youth workers do not try to gain any prominence or emotional energy. They are observers of group interactions and spectators of how energy flows to and from individuals. In a sense, these interactions could be zero-sum scenarios (Sennett, 2012, pp. 83-85) where some of the young people demand all attention and youth workers have very little to add or change. How youth workers feel, coming away from such interactions, depends largely on how they frame such situations. They could feel like they drew the short end of the stick, not having contributed much, thinking they still have a "long way to go" before they achieve anything worthwhile. Such a perspective would most likely leave them feeling emotionally drained. However, more experienced youth workers know such initial stages to be a part of the process and, while the moments could be themselves emotionally and physically exhausting, they soon after frame them as "part of the game." They came out scoring some points: they know the young people better now than they did before; that is progress. Thus, *framing* interactions in hindsight is part of the processual emotional labor. It helps limit the momentary emotional drain and prepares for future encounters (See also Section 9.4 on vocational narratives).

Further along the relationship, youth workers will usually gain trust or at least the young people have gotten used to their presence. This allows space for

different social rituals to take place in which youth workers display different modes of prominence, direction, and exchanges. In *boosting* rituals youth workers can become very prominent and directive as they are out to "pump some energy into the group." We can typify youth workers here as "energy-leaders" (Collins, 2004, p. 108), as the young people "pull themselves up" by clinging to the youth worker's energy. Youth workers need to know when to lean back and when to lean in. '*Sometimes they don't know what they want. Then they really want you to arrange things for them, that you take them in tow. You can't always make it come out of them. Sometimes you're the one who needs to start something, take the lead*' (an Amsterdam youth worker). In Sennett's typology of exchanges, these could be "win-win exchanges" (2012, pp. 75-78), where both youth worker and young people come away with similar boosts of energy. There could also be a "differentiating exchange" (2012, pp. 78-83) where for instance the youth workers gain more emotionally than their participants. After all, young people who are in a rut (as suggested in Section 8.3), are still pulling themselves up, while the youth worker is already on another plane of energy, based on an (imagined) horizon of positivity.

The differentiating exchange could also benefit participants more than the youth workers and this is hardly in the youth workers' disadvantage. In restorative and confirmative rituals, youth workers can be very prominent but their influence can be very subtle, as in Imane's case (Section 6.3). "The only thing I do here often is opening the door. They come in, start chatting and think up all kinds of things. I'm in the background then. At some point, they do come to me asking if they can organize something. Many things are possible. It doesn't always have to cost a lot either or whatever. If they are excited about something, then I think it's important to open doors for them."

Being an energy-leader as a youth worker is then to restore, invigorate, and confirm young people's levels of emotional energy, symbols of solidarity, and their morality (Collins, 2004, pp. 108, 116, 122-124). But it is also about the ability of becoming "non-prominent", the use of "minimum force" (Sennett, 2012, pp. 211, 223), and encouraging young people to take the position of energy-leader. Imane frames young people becoming prominent in taking initiative as a professional victory. Part of her energy comes from young people's increased energy-levels and how they put that to use.

The extremes on Sennett's continuum, altruism and winner-takes-all, are not common in youth work situations. Youth workers do encourage some of their participants to become less calculating about what they "give to the group" selling it on the moral principle that it is simply "good to be nice." But here also, there is usually a give and take; others will be nice back to you. Concerning winner-takes-all, there is the exceptional example of participants "ruling" the moment at full expense of others, but even here, winning a game or a social

stand-off is almost never done in full brutal disregard for others. Paraphrasing Sennett, winning should not be so ruthless that the loser will never try again. Otherwise, there would be no more game (2012, p. 84).

Ritual chains and accumulative effects

Youth workers do not usually speak of interaction rituals nor do they consciously think of their work as consisting of rituals. Yet there are specific ways in which they are geared to restoration, invigoration, and confirmation and we can discern this tendency across different activities and initiatives, and even across countries. This is made possible by identifying repetitive patterns of action and interaction and their symbolic qualities, the types of exchanges, youth workers' specific abilities and proficiency, and their moral dispositions concerning young people's development. It is these ingredients and outcomes that help qualify the interactions in youth work as social rituals (Collins, 2004, p. 48).

While I have differentiated three kinds of rituals, some of the concrete behavior across these rituals can be or seem the same. For instance, all three can contain encouragements, positive comments, and have an energizing effect on the people involved. There will not always be clear distinctions between types of rituals. Yet there are clear differences between for instance addressing unaccepted behavior (a form of restorative rituals) and talking people out of a rut (a kind of boosting ritual). Although the distinctions between rituals are not absolute they are helpful in identifying how youth workers frame a situation, what they choose to address, in what kind of outcomes they are invested, and in comparing that to what actually occurs. In describing and typifying the interactions as rituals, we can get beyond technically addressing what we see. For example, a youth worker can warn someone or admonish them for unacceptable behavior. If we define this action as disciplining behavior we overlook a dimension of social meaning. The technical emphasis could for instance steer toward questions on "how strict" youth workers should be in disciplining their participants. In the context of the ongoing relationship, more is at play. Youth workers address issues of group solidarity and uphold the symbolic relevance of the group efforts. This approach to the interactions helps distinguish what develops in emotional energy, experiences of success, and in the different characteristics of these experiences. It then becomes more pertinent to ask how a youth worker should intervene in a way that would optimally promote a restorative ritual (a question geared to contextual prudence) than to wonder which "offense" merits which "punishment" (a hopeless endeavor for law-like context-independent knowledge) (see Flyvbjerg, 2001 on the distinction between situated prudence and context-independent knowledge).

An important contribution youth work has to the development of disadvantaged young people is facilitating the *repetition* of these rituals or, that these

interaction rituals form *chains* (Collins, 2004, pp. 102-131). The effects of such chains are the consolidation of shared symbols of success, a durable emotional energy fueling group solidarity, and a morality of success. I have tried to discern if and when we could speak of a less varying and a more "fixed" or stabilized situation-transcending set of dispositions geared toward success. Among young people growing up in volatile, uncertain and demotivating circumstances, this is not a given. For some people, such as Samir (Section 3.4), Farid (Sections 5.3 and 5.4), and Joumana (Section 6.1), of whom I was able to track long-term development, I noted that evened out character formations had actually taken place. For people like Daniel (Section 5.1 and 5.2), Rachel (Section 6.2), and Hicham (Section 7.3) their resilience and robustness was less – sometimes far less – evident, especially as a given to fall back on in difficult times. In their cases, it seemed more likely that positive reinforcing interactions would have to keep making much of the difference. Yet, there are no strict "either or" demarcations between durable dispositions and interactional dynamics. Depending on specific constellations of debilitating and constructive interaction rituals merging with habitualized patterns of responses, even the most "solid" and dependable people display behavior we deemed should not generate from their consolidated dispositions (Bourdieu, 1980/1990) (see Section 5.4).

Given the lack of self-evidence that young people can, especially at precarious beginnings, rely on "good character" to improve themselves and their circumstances, I emphasize the importance of continual exposure to and immersion in constructive interaction rituals. Over time, these dynamics do in many cases contribute to increased motivation, stability and resilience, expressed in the three different characteristics of experiencing success (Chapter 8). Continual *boosts* contribute over time to increasingly recognizing one's own achievements, and allowing oneself to feel good about them, boosting self-confidence. Especially invigorative rituals but also restorative rituals contribute to the *boosting* effects of experiencing success. The energy and solidarity that these rituals generate can also have *grounding* effects. Emotionally, young people become increasingly stable and self-confident. Moreover, they grow in knowledge of choosing what is beneficial in stimulating their continually being *grounded*. Grounding begets grounding. Socially, *grounding* helps young people in being increasingly aware of how and where to connect and cooperate with others, especially with those who will advance their experiences of success; those who will help them continue the right chains of interactions (cf. Paulle, 2013, pp. 131-165). Confirmative rituals are the ones most contributing to *elevating* effects because they help connect the here-and-now to ideas for a "bigger picture": *What you do now (the small things) is relevant for later and will contribute to bigger things.* They fuel determination to persevere, even when facing adversity.

Chains of these interactions and their combined ritual effects infuse young

people with positive emotions about themselves and their abilities. They inspire hopeful imagination and thoughts about the future. They eventually even change physical postures displayed in eyes and bodies that are both "open" to receive from their surroundings and determined to engage in them.

9.4   Forging a craft

> The rhythm of skill-development becomes a ritual, if practised again and again. Faced with a new problem or challenge, the technician will ingrain a response, then think about it, then re-ingrain the product of that thinking; varied responses will follow the same path, filling the technician's quiver; in time, the technician will learn how to impress his or her individual character within a guiding type-form. Many craftsmen speak casually about the 'rituals of the shop', and these rhythms, I think, stand behind that casual phrase (Sennett, 2012, p. 202).

In studying the mastery of a skill or skill-set, researchers conclude that whether it is 'playing a sport, performing music or making cabinets' (Sennett, 2012, p. 201), the avid learner gradually crosses a barrier from being a "rule-following" beginner to an experience-based expert (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 9-24).

Researchers of development are always careful to point out that spending time in itself does not guarantee expertise. Some speak of a modicum of "innate talent" to begin with, while emphasizing motivation (Sennett, 2008, pp. 241-285; 2012, p. 201). Others thematize meticulous attention to detail (Chambliss, 2009), and deliberate practice (Ericsson, Prietula, & Cokely, 2007; Ericsson, Roring, et al., 2007). In this section I draw conclusions about how such insights can be of value in understanding youth workers' proficiency. I see this as consisting of three skill-sets: (1) discerning what types of interaction rituals *are* taking place among young people, (2) deciding what types of rituals *should* take place to further young people's experiences of success and personal development, and (3) knowing how (in)direct and (non)prominent their input should be to those ends, and acting accordingly.

Immersion and exposure
In building relationships, youth workers go through a process that can open up possibilities to become influential in young people's lives. Immersion in and exposure to young people eventually leads to increased discernment and authority. Immersion in their world entails youth workers becoming acquainted with young people's ideas, feelings, interactions, and perspectives. They try not to

judge that world but first "reside in the phenomenon" for a while (see also Male-koff, 2007 on "staying in the mess"). They look past exteriors which often entails developing a "thick skin" for the rough and rowdy behavior and ways of speaking. They are eventually not shocked by their participants' behavioral excesses (Abdallah, 2007), but are able to see those as specific expressions of general and basic human tendencies and needs (de Jong, 2007, pp. 209-241). Resisting "quick fixes", they allow themselves to reside in and live with the circumstances, problems, and perspectives of the young people for longer periods of time,[43] to become "moved by the things that move them" (Abdallah, 2012, p. 142). This breeds inventiveness, patience, and deeper understandings of different dynamics in the young people's world (Sennett, 2008, pp. 220-221).

Youth workers become a presence that young people accept and "forget" to the extent that they are not a constant reminder and disruption of natural flows of interaction. Youth workers need to be aware of any estranging feelings they might have toward "the ways of the young" and they need to let these feelings subside and allow the young people to do what they normally do. Not because it *is* normal or accepted, but because it *needs* to be in these first moments of becoming part of the group. Even in later stages, when youth workers have earned authority to give more input, opinions, and to intervene in group interactions, it will have more of an impact if they do this from an attitude of understanding and familiarity with "their ways" instead of fighting "bad behavior" with outsider feelings of indignation and repugnance. The only way to achieve this familiarity is by a willingness to "sit with the problem" and allowing it to exist instead of wanting to fix it as soon as it arises (Sennett, 2012, pp. 208-212).

Among youth workers whom I have researched, the importance of understanding young people's perspectives and experiences was so prevalent that I am prompted to say that the nature of the work is such that youth workers cannot afford any quick fixes. The regular contact with young people and the aim of organizing a natural and comfortable environment for young people pretty much compel an attitude of "minimum force" (Sennett, 2012, pp. 211, 223). This means they apply a "light touch" to sense their participants' sensitivities. This implies youth workers' active curiosity about how young people's world works.

With time, youth workers develop sensory skills of *discernment* to perceive what is "really going on" among their participants. People in interaction make constant judgments about whether to take behavior at face value or to read deeper into it, seeing something "under the surface." One of youth workers' most

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43   (See van der Laan, 2006, p. 57 on social workers being "embedded" and "online" with their clients; Sennett, 2008, pp. 214-238 and; 2012, pp. 208-212 on working with resistance and ambiguity; Spierts, 2014, pp. 250-251 on social-cultural professionals being "embedded," connected, exposed, and curious)

important skill-sets pertains to distinguishing when to do which. Youth workers refer to such situations frequently. Where outsiders can see young people as "rebellious" or "disrespectful," a youth worker will view them as insecure or afraid, thus reading deeper into surface behavior. At other times, when outsiders worry over what young people's behavior "actually means", youth workers could choose not to read too much into it. As Khalid, a youth worker from Amsterdam West puts it: "Young people sound extreme and then adults worry about them. Like when the twin towers went down. Kids saw that on TV and said 'Wow, check it out. Awesome'. And then people think they're with the terrorists. But they're not terrorists. If you talk to them, you find out what they're really about. When they're watching something on TV they just react to the images, like when they're watching Die Hard or something."

It is tenuous to maintain that outsiders are always "wrong" and youth workers "right" in their judgments of young people's meaning attributions. It is maintainable, however, that youth workers' sensory skills become increasingly attuned to the perceptions and experiences of the young people with whom they work (van der Laan, 2006, pp. 71-74; Sennett, 2012, pp. 201-202). This suggests that through continuous chains of interactions youth workers have developed a durably adapted adeptness to understand and respond within those chains.

After the immersion in the world of young people, and a discernment of what matters in what ways in that world, youth workers at some point "get a say" in group interactions; they acquire *authority*. Because of their immersion and familiarity, youth workers find ways to intervene that resonate with the young people. The developed relationship gives youth workers the authority to share in and shape their moral universe. Youth workers have *earned* the right to speak into young people's lives. The most interesting interventions with regard to promoting experiences of success neither reproduce nor condemn what the young people are and do. Rather they productively challenge the status quo in engaging ways. Youth worker Ahmed (Amsterdam South) put it to this way to his kids: "Guys, pay attention. Take this seriously, because this is a real opportunity for you. You can come here to just hang around and goof off or you can actually do something. You're behind 2-0 [a football expression meaning "down by two points"]. For one thing, you're Moroccans and two, you're from the Diamantbuurt [a neighborhood that has received a lot of negative media attention because of misbehaving children and teenagers]. So if you wanna' achieve something you've got your work cut out for you."

Youth workers influences have both disciplining and challenging effects on young participants. The message is often something along the lines of "We're gonna' fight an uphill battle, and it's gonna' be tough. But I'm gonna' see you through it and make sure you come out better." This is exactly the route that Samir sets out for his fighters in Amsterdam to become better kickboxers

(Chapter 3). It is what makes Patrick and Imad compelling when they engage their participants in street-basketball and translate court-behavior to life outside the court (Chapter 4). For young people in Amsterdam and Beirut, Samir and Imad *being* the way they are has a disciplining effect. Young people spend time with them, they follow them in the game, and they think about what they say outside the game. This influences participants' daily routines. Sports show physically how investment and strain yield results and improvement. In that, they concretely display what occurs perhaps less obviously in other situations such as learning at Dr. Abboud's school (Section 5.1) and socializing with Imane (Section 6.3). Through these very practical and repeated encounters lives are reshaped, re-disciplined, and restored. What starts with youth workers' exposure to young people's routines can lead to young people's immersion in series of constructive rituals.

Inventiveness

> An ordinary person, even an observant person, looks at a scene, takes in many of the details and manages a general assessment. A good detective looks at the same scene and comprehends the pieces as part of a greater whole. He somehow manages to isolate the important details, to see those items that conform to the scene, those that conflict, and those that are inexplicably absent. [...] some of what happens at a crime scene, if not exactly antirational, is decidedly intuitive (Simon, 1991, p. 80).

Next to being attuned to how young people's lives are, youth workers are also preoccupied with how their participants could be. Youth workers often have some kind of visionary inspiration to go beyond what they currently see in their participants and their circumstances.

They engage in supporting young people solve their problems. Yet they also wonder about and ponder the work they do. Are they actually contributing to improvements for their participants? Or are their efforts (at times) counterproductive? How conducive are their institutional conditions to what they aim to achieve? The majority of youth workers with whom I spoke regularly wondered about such topics, discussed them with colleagues and they were important themes in conversations they had with me. In this sense we could call them *problem-finders* (Sennett, 2008, p. 280) who see their craft not just as to make things work, but also contemplate how things could work differently. Sennett claimed that the principles of craftsmanship on objects are applicable to social relations, citizenship, and politics (2008, pp. 289-291). Marcel Spiers, a Dutch researcher, has used Sennett's insights (among others) to analyze the historical development

of craftsmanship within the Netherlands' social work professions, including youth work, and with regard to their methods he concludes:

> By improvising with it, by using it in a different way, by taking risks, we learn something about the imperfection of it. Often we understand things better only when we repair them; those who create and repair possess the knowledge that enables them to look beyond the elements of a technique, to the overarching purpose and coherence of it. (2014, p. 256).

Spiers here writes about methods as tools in the sociocultural professional's hands, metaphorically affording them physical dimensions, but he also proposes to "look beyond the elements" and *see* "purposes and coherence." This suggests seeing things that are not (yet) there. Sennett might call this a "leap of imagination" or "intuitive leaps" drawing "unlike domains close to one another" (2008, pp. 220, 279).

In looking for ways to facilitate young people's experiences of success, youth workers need to imaginatively *reach* into possible futures and sometimes into unlikely possibilities. An example is Samir "seeing" one of his fighters standing in the ring at a future kickboxing event and subsequently challenging the boy or girl to "step up" and intensify their training: "*I see you getting in the ring soon*" (Chapter 3). The youth worker "clears the road" to make a developmental path possible. Since training young kick-boxers is Samir's biggest passion and one of his main activities, this example does not demand a lot of his imagination. Still, there is an imaginary path between the present and a not yet reached destination. Another instance is the project in which Hicham participated (Section 7.3) where "youth took the lead." The teenagers and adolescents were in local youth policy seen as "target-groups" of different sports and cultural services. In this project, they became apprentices, assistants, and to an extent colleagues to the community professionals. Imad's work in Beirut had a similar approach (Chapter 4). These types of initiatives are nowadays quite commonplace. Still, to see the "neighborhood scourges" as potential community leaders takes an imaginative leap, even if you have heard that "this kind of thing" works in other places or countries. Actively seeking out connections between today's realities and tomorrow's possibilities is a mandatory task for any youth worker's development, because it demands ongoing adaptation of responsibilities to newly established routs for their participants.

Vocational narratives

> "We're on a mission from God"
> Elwood Blues in The Blues Brothers (1980)

Youth workers I spoke to in Amsterdam and Beirut were always eager to tell me their story. Even those who did not come off as inspired or visionary had analyses of society's ills that they connected to their work and they conveyed strong convictions about what was right for "their kids." Having a job-story to tell seemed to them more than merely passing time or going through the motions. Most of them even thanked me for taking time to listen to them.

Some of the youth workers' stories stood out to me in the ways they expressed convictions and dedication. I saw in them a way to make sense of their daily activities by connecting their experiences and observations to bigger ideas, and ways to give meaning to events that directed and inspired their motivation. Youth workers who seek out "difficult" teenagers and activities know why they want to work them. A team-leader of Amsterdam community sports workers remembers: "Recently a colleague left the playground after a sports program. He almost got a brick thrown to his head from one of the teenagers who were there. He had an argument with them earlier or something. He laughed about it with his colleagues and they made some jokes about it. At some point he said, 'yeah, but these are the guys we should be reaching. If you're not reaching them, then what are you doing it for."

While many employees would see in such an incident grounds to look for a safer job, these Amsterdam community sports organizers framed it as a confirmation that they were on the right track. This incident carries in it more than a simple "brushing off" of a serious danger. It is an example of effective emotion-regulation that, far from denying the presence of danger, helps them give it a place to process it and persevere in their work.[44] In Hochschild's terms (1979, 1983), they have *framed* the incident as "not that serious an incident, since the kid missed" and at the same time as "very serious, since we're working with the worst. Who throws a brick?!" These seemingly conflicting frames allowed them to at once be humorous about it, getting some relief through the jokes, while also feeling satisfaction that they are reaching a crowd that not many professionals in their field manage to reach. Their *framing* thus enabled humor, an energizing

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44   In dangerous situations there are for these employees protocols in place to involve the police. In some cases, this has ended up with neighborhood teenagers at the local jail. The point here is not what professional measures are taken in dealing with these situations, but how youth workers make sense of these situations.

emotion, and positivity through occupational pride.

Khalil and Hala in Beirut moved to the neighborhood where they run Young-Sport so that their daily lives would be wrapped up in their youth work. The term "volunteer" does not sit well them; "a volunteer works without receiving payment, but I pay to make this possible." It is an investment beyond paid labor or volunteer work. It seems to resemble Abboud's use idea of a "calling."

Youth workers' stories about their work are not fleeting anecdotes. They are illustrations of their ongoing project to make sense of their work. They have *sense-making frames* that they invoke to understand what they are doing and especially *why* they are doing it. Discursive frames for vocational narratives and routinized interactional investments seem to reinforce each other and propel youth workers craft development.

These frames also help them regulate and vent their feelings about a multitude of situations. Dr. Abboud's main frame is that youth workers need to have a calling to be of significance (see Sections 5.1 and 5.2). Samir sees his gym not just as a place to work out but as the potential to start "a movement" for and by young people who have been cut off from society (Section 3.4). Imad says, "I will always be doing something with sports and social work. This is who I am. But in Lebanon, I don't know if it's always gonna' be possible. So maybe I'll move somewhere else" (see Chapter 4). The stories and the discursive frames that empower them stimulate motivation, understanding, and even proficiency.

A coherent vocational narrative seems to contribute to a focus and feelings that inform youth workers' responses to job-situations. Research confirms that people are able to regulate and direct, to an extent at least, their conscious emotions (Hochschild, 1983, 2003) and that emotion is a main trigger for memories (Zull, 2002) When youth workers actively engage in discussing and determining how they should feel about what they encounter on the job, they contribute to such emotion-management. When a new situation presents itself, youth workers' memories of similar cases will arise, giving them scenarios for how the situation could play out. When they have gone through this many times, anticipation comes routinely and their responses will seem "natural" and more importantly "right" to them. The anecdote of the Amsterdam community sports workers above is a case in point. Since memory is triggered mainly by emotion, youth workers will compare the situation at hand to situations that *feel* the same. If youth workers with longer experience have developed frames that help them make sense of their work, and thereby have found ways to *feel what they think they should feel* (adapting their emotional responses to their framing rules), this could create tendencies in connections between events, emotions, and memories. Having an overarching coherent story can help trigger emotions and memories that benefit youth worker's in-situ responses.

A side-effect of youth workers' *skill-developing rituals* (Sennett, 2012) is that

they seem to rub off on young people making use of youth work programs. Youth workers' constant presence, dedication to developing their work, and their narratives of having a meaningful impact on other people's lives in some cases seems to go beyond benefitting young people's initial experiences of success. They contribute to longer-term career trajectories.

This may be an as of yet undetected chain of rituals taking place between youth workers and their participants, which is worth deeper investigation. Yet it is already evident from its results: in each of the programs I followed there were young participants who eventually joined as volunteers, and some of them enrolled in vocational schools to become youth workers, or acquired another job in the social sector helping and supporting young people. In fact, it is how Samir (Chapter 3), Imad (Chapter 4), and Farida (Section 6.3) got the jobs they had when I met them, and it is most likely how Farid (Sections 5.3 and 5.4), and Hicham (Section 7.3) got on their respective vocational tracks. Sometimes this may start out in a fairly opportunistic fashion where "older youth" acquire a job in a place where they feel safe to take a chance. Yet in the situations that I studied youth workers were in word and deed fully invested and (when I was able to trace it historically) their speech and attitude resembled that of their predecessors who helped them get the job.

Discussion: Justice, magic and expertise

Youth workers in Amsterdam and Beirut are "workers of justice" in that they labor to provide disadvantaged young people with possibilities to experience success, and from that hope, self-confidence, and determination. Their work is an emotional labor in that it demands of them a mobilization, not only of their cognition and physical effort, but also emotional investment. It is a journey in which youth workers *immerse* themselves in the young people's world, acquire *discerning* skills to understand what is significant, and ultimately, they gain *authority* to speak into young people's lives. They attempt to provide environments that are familiar, attractive, and socially safe as contexts to slowly build relationships where curiosity, discovery, and ambition are allowed to emerge among their participants.

Youth workers' added value lies in their social and pedagogic proficiency. Participants' fragile and vulnerable development depend on youth workers' abilities as "energy-leaders" who are sensitive to what kinds of interactions benefit the group. Rather than approaching this as a technical, methodic competence, I view it as "bringing about magic" that enchants and captures participants. Interactions as rituals that help restore, invigorate, and confirm young people's development and wellbeing. This can be by "pulling them out of a rut," by calming

them down in a tranquil conversation, by calling for restraint, by giving them a boost through a pep-talk, by jointly refocusing on a shared activity, and by celebrating (unnoticed) victories. Youth workers who successfully engage with their participants in such situations are not focused on "rules for professional conduct." They have learned the craft of their rituals; to observe, to listen, to perceive, to respond relevantly, and to keep the center of gravity of the interaction *between* the interactants instead of in their own hands. While each type of ritual contributes in its own ways to the boosting, elevating, and grounding components of experiencing success, their accumulative effect is the increased likelihood of stable and stabilizing paths for young people's development.

Some question the need for professional intervention in the lives of disadvantaged young people. The input of adults is problematized as it can inhibit young people's imagination, creativity, and ultimately, their possibilities (Delgado, 2002, pp. 58-59). But there are people in such dire circumstances that it is highly unlikely that they would pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Asking for help and providing institutions that help should then not be framed as shameful but rather as part of processes of development and empowerment (Bourdieu, 1993/1999, 1998; Sennett, 2003, pp. 101-126; Wacquant, 2009).

An important discussion coming forth from such deliberation is the characterization of youth work as a methodic (professional) or ethical practice (Coussée, Verschelden, Van de Walle, Mędlińska, & Williamson, 2010; Coussée et al., 2014). In my approach I have not clearly decided for one or the other. My analysis of the added value of youth workers as contributing to restorative, invigorative, and confirmative rituals, and the idea that their proficiency is the result of exposure, inventiveness, and the maintenance of vocational narratives can easily be taken to underpin youth work as an ethical practice. Yet, studies of craftsmanship and proficiency show that this is exactly what is needed for expertise, and while they do not exclude amateurs (lovers of craft) from their paradigm, most of their examples are in fact "professionals." The point of my study is not to show how "professional" a youth worker must be to "get the job done." It is rather to show that there is a typical proficiency and expertise to supporting and guiding young people who have fallen so low that they cannot come up from under by themselves. It takes more than "common sense" or "community." It is a situated prudence, developed over time, based on specific knowledge of what it means to be disadvantaged, attitudes that convey acceptance of "where the young people are" and at the same time, skills geared toward improving that position.

CONCLUSION

Answering the main research questions

People in disadvantaged circumstances generally lack an environment that enables, equips, and promotes their success. If anything, their surroundings have merely a few unsubstantiated ideas of pushing for success or following dreams. Other than that, discouragements abound, telling young people not to stand out or try too hard for fear of disappointment. Some even end up on hazardous paths of crime as a means to (limited) success.

In the researched contexts such experiences were strikingly similar. On street corners in Beirut as well as Amsterdam disadvantaged young people's conversations had similar tones and at times comparable use of language. Depleting and undermining interaction rituals in both cities resembled each other. Although the provisions of a European welfare state objectively left the disadvantaged better off and spared them a lot of hardship, not coming along as much as others seemed to bring about resembling intensities in feelings of shame, frustration, anger, and apathy.

It hardly helps to invest in giving these young people "good information" or to bring them moral messages about the pay-offs of "doing their best" without being attentive to their experiential realities. In such circumstances, it is crucial that they find ways to become energized beyond cliché notions of doing the things that are good for them.

In the empirical Chapters 3 through 7, I have provided accounts and analyses of group situations and individual trajectories that showed the presence, and at times absence, of experiencing success. In Chapters 8 and 9 I analyzed how these experiences and the people contributing to them made a positive difference in disadvantaged young people's lives. Here I will try to succinctly state the results of said accounts and analyses.

The first part of my main research question was how disadvantaged young people get to experience successes that alleviate their circumstances and eventually elevate them from those circumstances. This happens when they get to experience *boosts* that raise their energy levels in what are generally low-energy routines (Section 8.1); when they experience *elevation* over their circumstances and develop an idea that they can "get somewhere in life" (Section 8.2); and *grounding* that helps young people feel part of something bigger than themselves which also helps calm and stabilize their moods and emotional constellations

(Section 8.3). These experiences can initially pertain to small victories in which young people feel and realize for the first time, or for the first time in a while, that they can achieve something. This energizes them and, initially to a modest extent, focuses them, encourages them to look for more of such experiences. Gradually, such experiences can increase in number, intensity and significance for the young people in question and others witnessing improvements in their habits, attitudes, and lives.

My approach of the moral content and direction of such experiences is not random or postmodern in nature. Experiencing success is not "whatever the young people in question say success is." Disadvantaged young people's lives are filled with detrimental interactions that appear to provide them with nice experiences but end up not fulfilling their needs. Energizing kicks revive them for short time spans. The difference with positive boosts is that these kicks often have "energy" as a goal in themselves instead of a means to a constructive end. Young people end up losing themselves while constructive boosts *increase* control and focus. So do grounding and elevation have deceitful counterfeits. When young people close themselves off from the rest of the world this is not grounding in emotional and social stability but an excluding entrenchment and paranoid suspicion. When young people distance themselves from activities and people out of fear and defeatism, this is not an elevation over circumstances, but a disengagement that hinders and hampers their development.

Disadvantaged young people generally seem to have too many of these detrimental experiences and too few settings that provide them with opportunities for constructive experiences. Whether they do get to experience success depends on what happens to be available in their neighborhoods or what they get to know through their networks. Samir's gym (Chapter 3) attracts young people from the neighborhood and participants' classmates. Imad's StreetBall (Chapter 4) is its own advertisement as a public attraction on neighborhood courts where children and teenagers can easily be spectators or join in. Paul and Kevin (Sections 7.2 and 7.4) who had generally low-energy routines got into sports practices through friends. In both cases movement stimulated their motivation and positive feelings about themselves. Imane (Section 6.3) provided a second living room for young women such as Farida and Fatima that became a place of calm and rest from which they became inspired to undertake activities that helped them and others think and feel differently about themselves and their circumstances. Rachel and Nadine (Sections 6.2 and 6.4) found places of alleviation in advancing through school curricula, which brought them increasing satisfaction and determination. In the latter cases, since education brought them settings in which they could be successful, they looked to extend these positive experiences in prolonged education. While the settings were not in themselves physically close by, they felt to them as "natural" extensions of their familiar environments.

For Rachel (Section 6.2) the educational environment eventually turned too much into a place of defeat and prolonged torment, without lecturers paying much attention or showing understanding for her predicaments. For Hicham and Kevin (Section 7.3 and 7.4) settings that temporarily or periodically boosted their energy levels and gave them something to look forward to, could suddenly fall away or they would lose interest or motivation to persevere. Daniel (Sections 5.1 and 5.2) who had dramatic feats of success was in more precarious circumstances than others and the question is whether he would be able to continue such success on his own after graduating.

This is what makes youth work initiatives – and initiatives resembling youth work – so important. They provide settings for disadvantaged young people in their close surroundings in ways that are relevant, familiar and attractive for them. The more such programs are structurally provided, the less young people in disadvantaged circumstances are left to their own devices and haphazard coincidences of opportunities. Through stable chains of positive experiences they can develop a stabilizing set of dispositions that over longer spans of time can even become second nature.

This brings me to my second main research question on how youth workers contribute to young people experiencing success. It lies first in being able to recognize debilitating and constructive rituals in young people's lives and to make them aware of these interactions. The aim is here to encourage increased participation in constructive rituals while discouraging the involvement in debilitating rituals. The youth workers then guide young people in making choices within their existing circumstances and options. Second, their contribution is their knowledge and skills of facilitating constructive rituals. In these cases, youth workers endeavor to enrich young people's circumstances and options (Sections 9.2 and 9.3). In general, the ways Dutch and Lebanese youth workers were capable of effectively supporting these young people were very similar. There were also differences.

Depending on the context, some types of rituals were more relevant than others. In Beirut, dynamics of exclusion and avoidance were dominant among participants. There, youth workers emphasized restorative rituals, focused on reflection and renewed contact with the "other." The ways that the people in question set social boundaries became an explicit theme. Through playing basketball and reflective conversations they redrew such boundaries and this felt more constructive to all involved.

The material circumstances in Beirut were usually more dire than in Amsterdam. It seemed much harder to be disadvantaged in Beirut than in Amsterdam. Although there were similarities in how young people in both cities spoke and felt, frustrations in Beirut sometimes seemed to be more intense and the apathy more severe. In those circumstances, we can see restorative rituals as a prelude

for the invigorative and confirmative rituals. In Amsterdam, there seemed to be some more space for the latter two, although that also depended on the type of activity. Kickboxing workouts in Beirut were at least as invigorating as those in Amsterdam.

Another noticeable theme was how young people spoke about their respective governments. The Netherlands, with its current and future budget-cuts, remains a state with a strong welfare tradition and character. Lebanon is very modest in that respect. Much has been organized in religious-political "pillars" where the state is not involved and does not seem capable to contribute significantly. In fact, the state has difficulty consistently providing basic infrastructure (Fawaz & Peillen, 2003; Kabalan, 2016; MOSA & UNDP, 2007; UNDP, 2009). Nevertheless, young people in both countries complain in similar ways about their governments' shortcomings and in both cases they feel neglected in their vulnerabilities and disadvantages. In Beirut, young people thus feel as resentful toward their government as young people in the Netherlands do. One could say that Lebanese would expect less from their government since it has no strong tradition of intervention in the social and cultural domains. And indeed, people do say they expect little, but this is usually in tones of resentment, indicating disappointed – and thus present – expectations.

Conversely, although young people in the Netherlands can benefit more from redistributive provisions, young people feel disadvantaged in ways similar to their Lebanese counterparts whose governments leave them to their own devices. Here, the perspective of constructive interaction rituals and experiencing success seems to be insightful. The expressions of young people cannot be trivialized as exaggerations or lapses in sense of reality. They arise from interactions in which material poverty is exacerbated by emotional degradation. Young people in both situations lack regular interactions in which they are positively engaged in communities or networks that challenge them and confirm them in who they are and what they can do.

Primacy of the interactional order

This brings me to reiterate that experiencing success and increasingly feeling and having control over the outcome of situations, and experiencing a decisive influence over the course of their development, are the results of *situated, interactional, and embodied practices that are positively charged with participants' mutually generated emotions and energy*. For some, this may seem self-evident, but it is far from embedded anywhere in the important institutions that host, contain, and constrain young people living in more and less dire circumstances of hardship and adversity. Therefore, the implications of this conclusion are enormous.

First of all, it poses a challenge to prevalent policy categories, which for the purposes of managerial and bureaucratic clarity, rely on self-descriptions and public popular notions of demarcated, mainly ethnic, groups. While there is not necessarily an inherent flaw in grouping people or wanting to belong to groups, it has become seriously flawed when this translates into the barring of people from opportunities, and imposing on them characteristics such as "difficult to deal with," "not prone to submit to authority" and "unlikely to excel cognitively." These may seem barbaric labels from an earlier era, but sadly, they are stigmas implicitly and at times explicitly invoked in both Lebanon and the Netherlands. Such notions simply do not hold up in any prolonged interactional exposure to the people in question. I do not mean here that "ethno-cultural practices" do not exist or that people do not shield themselves and fend off others by means of them. What I mean is that such customs and worldviews do not *determine* what takes place between people in the flow of interactivity. What is more, it is not such cultural traits that inhibit or promote their positive experiences and social advancement. They are at most a "part of a greater mix," a "dependent variable" flowing as determined by interactional dynamics. Hicham did not struggle against an inherent "Moroccan-ness" inside of him in trying to be successful. At most he struggled with how others responded to their own skewed images of him being – to them – a "Moroccan" (who happened to be born and raised in Amsterdam). Neither did Farid excel from an innate "Moroccan" motivation. For completeness' sake, Farid also did not successfully overcome being "Moroccan." Rather, their disappointments and successes were wrapped up in the daily routines and social exchanges that fueled them for and propelled them toward more of the same. Similar reasoning applies to Daniel (and others) in Beirut.

In theory, we are past the idea of ascribing to individuals the static traits of their supposed cultures. We know, for instance, that when Europeans adopt Asian babies, they will for all intents and purposes grow up to be "Europeans." Yet, in practice the reification of acculturated practices coupled to individuals and their ethnicities is as alive as ever (cf. Brubaker, 2004; Paulle, 2013, pp. 203-209; Paulle & Kalir, 2013). Culture is naturalized and its function is to immobilize people from being something else. Their efforts are latently thwarted and manifestly obstructed when these do not fit with who they are "supposed" to be according to stereotyped distinctions. I have focused here on the ethnocentric labels as obfuscating success and development. Yet, there are more ways in which we tend to divide the world that render people defenseless (or befuddled) against exclusion and unjust constraints.

Throughout this study I have treated poverty and direness of material means as part of being disadvantaged. And certainly, it is not something I wish for anyone, especially not in countries where affluence abounds and there seems no need for the suffering that poverty entails. Yet, it is not always the *lack of*

financial means itself that is detrimental. However risky this argument could be, because it plays into the hands of those who manipulate and abuse this reasoning, it is important to counter the idea that "the poor" are intrinsically a class of humans who lack discipline, resilience, order, or stability. My research indeed runs the risk of being abused in showing that people of modest means are able to get very "far" by their societies' standards. Material poverty deprives young people from quality education and other supportive means for their achievements. Yet, it becomes truly detrimental when it feeds into, and becomes part of, daily debilitative interactions. This is not to say that poor people should try to be more content in their poverty. It is, though, a recognition that here also the interactional dynamics contribute to what poverty is conceived to be. To come back to the start of this study, it seemed something different to Joumana than to Paul. Moreover, if we can recognize how material and interactional dynamics reinforce and detract from each other, we can more accurately determine how materially and/or socially poor people can be supported in dealing with that which overwhelms them on a daily basis. This can have powerful restorative effects for people that are too often in advance deemed to be "unable" or "incompetent" because of their material conditions.

It is time to challenge and change all practices that are subtly or overtly based on such notions that actively deny people access to chains of stimulating and confirming interaction rituals. I would direct my proposals to policy makers, but since my arguments build on the primacy of lived practices, I suggest that practitioners take the lead and (in more explicit ways) establish their work on interactional principles. It would not be the first time that policy developers eventually followed in their language and categories what seems to already succeed in its application.

Youth work rituals as benign regimes

In the interactions, I have given special attention to emotional and embodied dynamics and processes. I conceptualized a boost as a feeling of exhilaration that energizes body and mind for initiative and action, while also stemming from achievements accomplished through action (cf. Collins, 2004, p. 118). We sense success as a *rush through the body*. While elevation has a cognitive element to it, in which young people make connections between the current moment and future possibilities, this too is charged with (increasingly) positive and optimistic feelings about themselves and their opportunities. Lastly, grounding is a positive and affirming feeling of social belonging and a sense of internal stability. All three components of experiencing success thus have strong emotive tones to them.

This too is a crucial critique of current regimes of social advancement and

systems of awarding development, which unjustly isolate cognitive dynamics from emotions and physiology. Subsequently, these regimes privilege the cognitive as all but the sole aspect of human development worthy of consideration. To be sure, there is consideration for emotional development, but this is mainly when young people seriously deviate from the norm (see Sections 2.1 and 2.2). For those cases there are elaborate studies of what went wrong, and often stunted emotional development and an error in forming healthy attachments in important relationships (notably, emotion-related problems) are brought forward as causes for such deviation. There are, however, also studies of the positively stimulating role of emotions and their effects on cognitive development, social behavior and senses of wellbeing (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Fredrickson, 2013; Kabat-Zinn, 1990). These appear to receive far less attention in popular communication and institutions appointed with young people's development and wellbeing.

How long will we keep treating our young people as "heads on a stick" that have no hearts or bodily constitutions? How long will we deny that the head is actually a part of those constitutions and does not think without feeling in its nervous system or without sensing the world to which it is exposed? Let us allow ourselves to bring back experience into learning. Let us allow young people to explore with their fingertips and intuit with their cogito-emotional make-ups to develop their *integral* navigational skills through which they come to "know" in the fullest sense their being deployed in and related to the world.

To this end I suggest a centrality of constructive, uplifting, and stimulating interaction rituals as a mode of engagement. Because of their demand of bodily, cognitive, and emotional commitments, such rituals are optimally suited for experience-based development. This involves restoration from socio-psychologically incurred damage, invigoration of positive and stimulating feelings and courses of action, and confirmation of what participants are and contribute to their contexts.

Seeing young people, in this study specifically those from disadvantaged circumstances, as body-mind complexes (Bourdieu, 1980/1990), should turn what we facilitate for them upside down, as it were. Instead of contemplating what they need to know or learn, to improve their chances or gain advantages, we need to consider which *bodily regimes* we can invite them into, in which they can allow their bodies to "follow suit" so that their lagging minds[45] can catch up and discover what the ritual in question can do for them. Kickboxing workouts are an example of an intense and demanding regime. Its severe physical and mental

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45 I mean here the mind that lags in resistance, while the body has already submitted, such as in the case of a dive into cold water. The mind has immediate objections but the only thing the body can do midway through the dive is finish the rushing course through the water.

challenges magnify what takes place in other rituals. Its intensity gives it an "all or nothing" character, but this also makes the promise greater: compliance yields unmistakable and impressive results in sharpened minds and proficient bodies. The principles of these rituals apply as well in less intense rituals, or rituals that appear *physically* less intense. Making music, solving math problems, watching documentaries, and so on, are (or are *also*) physical activities. It is perhaps that some, or all of them, are too much conceived of as first and foremost mental activities that young people who are deemed not "smart" enough become less able to succeed in them. Because we tend not to pay attention to how a "physical regime" can constrain or enable people in their performances of tasks and solving problems (Emirbayer & Maynard, 2011), these environments gain all the more influence, at the cost of an individual's potential or competence. The fact that such a regime can be predominantly implicit, in that it negates the relevance of bodily functions, most likely makes it all the more effective in constraining success.

The proposal of advancing "corporeal regimes" of course invokes connotations of authoritarian hierarchies and obedience without questioning. The youth workers in this study, also Samir the kickboxing trainer/youth worker, show that this is not necessary. On the contrary, all of them, sometimes more than other adults in the young people's routine interactions, invite critical thought and the questioning of taken for granted ideas and situations.

What is more, the rituals for which youth workers invite or entice their participants are far-reaching in terms of involvement and caring attention compared to what a lot of the young people receive in other settings. While a ubiquitous credo seems to be "do your best" this is usually a general and non-discriminatory appeal, meaning there is no consideration for the conditions under which each young person should achieve this "best." What they achieve is typified (say, in standardized test scores) as likely being what they were able to achieve as opposed to what they managed to achieve, *given their circumstances*.

Youth work rituals then, far from imposing authoritarian rule, are contexts in which participants are gradually freed from regularly imposed constraints of flawed pedagogies (or at least these are somewhat alleviated), so that seemingly lost opportunities can be restored and multiplied. Perhaps calling these rituals regimes is also a way of differentiating them and demarcating a sense of "sovereignty" from the threats of a general social environment that is too used to treating these young people as disadvantaged and at-risk. The question is then not if bodily regimes are a way to go, but rather, if we keep young people disadvantaged in their current ones, or facilitate possibilities for more benign regimes.

Before getting into demands of "doing their best," we need then to scrutinize the circumstances in which they are expected to do so. Success and having opportunities to do their best are thoroughly social achievements. If the general

message is to do the best they can, where do they get to practice this? From which settings are they excluded and will they thus never get to experience as an avenue of "their best"? What worlds are they shrunken into that eventually become their *whole* world? What do they commit to, and who told them to do so? Who pushes them beyond their presupposed limits to be "more" than they thought they could be? Who imposes what focus? Who invites them into which expanding worlds and how do they do so?

These questions again point to the importance of available constructive inter-action rituals in which young people can practice and experiment what their best looks like, what it could eventually become, but also the reassurance that they are welcomed and recognized while they do so.

This study implies that the analysis of micro-dynamics reveals principles that apply in very diverse societies and macro-contexts. The micro-context seems to be of great importance to what is needed to improve the opportunities of socially vulnerable young people. Youth workers are called "workers of justice." This applies in the sense that they develop with young people constructive ritu-als without which they would usually be stuck in debilitating dynamics. The fact that youth workers stand up to fill this gap and counteract this social deficiency is a political and moral message to those compliant and complicit to flawed ped-agogies and excluding practices.

All societies, whether "advanced" such as the Netherlands, or "developing" such as Lebanon, reveal and hide their skewed moralities through institutional strategies, formal and informal practices, and by perpetuating unjust distinc-tions and inequalities. The more powerful a society can organize its youth work to be a forum that fosters and nourishes the younger generations, that provides services to equip and empower them, and that identifies and addresses struc-tures of inequalities and injustices, the more seriously we can take them when they claim that humanity and justice are of integral value to their social and political fabric.

I have tried to show that facilitating experiences of success is a key indicator and result of such processes. Providing *boosts* to fuel young people's motivation and imagination, contributing to *grounding* in emotional stability and social belonging, and engendering *elevation* to help young people rise above their cir-cumstances and envision better futures. This is what societies as a whole should be doing for the young and vulnerable. To the extent that they do not, I find it all the more valuable when I see youth workers who do. Seeing them in action over the past years has given me faith for humanity, hope for situations that seemed hopeless, and a feeling of personal and professional belonging. They help me experience success.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

I have had the privilege to work on a dissertation that slowly evolved from curiosity within the youth work profession to an academic research endeavor that had as its methodic approach an involved and embodied ethnography. Emerging and distancing myself from my profession in the early stages, I was aware to an extent that the youth work field was saturated with policy language. It soon came to my attention how much I used that language to describe what I knew and saw. I had been part of a general tendency where instrumentalizing (public) management language was framing, coloring and directing categories of thought, speech, and action. Youth work organizations, youth workers, and young people discussed issues of being disadvantaged, making progress, causing risk and danger, being at risk, and so on. Yet they (we) most often seemed to do so within the discursive frames that prevailed nation-wide within a given time-frame.[46]

A focal concern became to consciously notice different political discourses and how others and I tended to use such concepts and frames. For my own research it became important to stop automatically "pasting" such language on what I gathered empirically. I started writing detailed accounts of what I saw, heard, and felt, in terms of what was going on in the instant, and less in terms of what it could mean, contribute or imply for broader surroundings and longer spans of time. If I were to include "extra" meaning to what I observed it needed to "earn" its place in my analysis by recurrently "emerging" as important for the people under study and relevant for my research concerns (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Privileging the primacy of the moment is also why I tended to remain faithful to Collins' approach and why I was disinclined to "see" habituses as ubiquitously present. Fairly late in the analysis did I "allow" the explicit idea of developed habitus to understand what I had observed among young people and youth workers.

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46 Sometimes professionals were able to "stretch" concepts. In the 1990s "activation" was in government policy defined as acquiring paid labor. Community Development professionals were able to convince the public and public bureaucrats that the meaning should also apply to other forms of participation in society, such as volunteer work and similar public contributions (Spiers, 2014).

What first emerged for me in Amsterdam and later in Beirut, before I had a research question, were the struggles young participants of youth work and other young people outside those programs had – and that they saw themselves as struggling – to "get somewhere in life" and to "belong somewhere." Their struggles were filled with negatively charged emotions such as anger, frustration, fear, and daunting feelings that "it was never going to work." Their predicament gripped me and at times overwhelmed me, although I tried to remain thoroughly aware that they knew far better than I did what the concept of being overwhelmed entailed. Before I realized it I had become caught up in young overburdened people's debilitating emotional contagions. Their urgencies pressed on me by simply spending time with them in ways that interviews and certainly survey-questionnaires could not bring about.

My youth work in Amsterdam became a way for young people to share their experiences with me. Initially I tried to look for and design exit strategies for them, in the hopes of lifting their spirits and catalyzing action, and to an extent relieving my own gloom on their behalf. But I learned there were oftentimes no quick fixes. And other times they had no energy to listen because they had "tried it all before." More than occasionally all that was left was to "sits with them in the mess" which they appreciated since it was better than sitting in it alone. In that common dejection lay a basic principle of the primacy of experience. It was a precursor of discovery: if I was to understand more I would have to actively pursue ethnography as a youth worker. I started feeling their hopelessness, their sense of "nowhere to go."

Later in Beirut, I was not a youth worker, but internet-cafés impressed me as settings of young people's struggles and quests (Abdallah, 2004, 2008). Finding relief through shoot 'em up games, chatting with others across the world – sometimes for fun, sometimes in the hopes of finding a potential spouse to start a life with more perspective abroad. I ended up with them on street corners talking about life, having coffees or beers, passing time. Here also, I felt their camaraderie and enjoyment, yet their pessimism and boredom was inescapable. I had some money in my pocket, a European passport that gave me entrance to any country I wanted (a greatly desired asset in Lebanon), an upwardly pointing trajectory attending university and later on a steady job with a good income, and a generally positive outlook on life. On those street corners these things did not make much difference to the overall mood. We had no car, and if we could borrow one, we had nowhere to go, because "everything was expensive." Moreover, there was generally not much energy to take initiative, other than walking over to the street vendor to get another coffee. Being bored in Beirut was something I slowly sunk into. I learned how to walk it, sit in it, and eventually even feel quite comfortable in it. Yet this was not all I observed.

At times there were bursts of motivation and initiative. And in every neigh-

borhood and group of friends there were guys and girls who were "always on the move." They were "going places." Literally in their daily lives and figuratively to improved emotional states, bodily stimulating positions and dispositions, and a cognitively inspiring focus. This too implied not only being better informed, being more intelligent or having more talent. These young people had (increasingly) differing daily experiences, and with them more positive and uplifting emotions, from those who appeared locked up in debilitating dynamics.

All this pointed to the necessity of a perspective that foregrounded lived experiences, and to perspectives that did so *carefully* considering the data, without too quickly imputing meaning on findings. Cautiously considering moments and settings as relatively independent instances of unfolding interactions yielded attention to details of language, emotion and bodily deployment. It is in these details that I could detect the implications young people's disadvantages, their experiences of success, and youth workers' contributions. This reveals at least somewhat the promising possibilities of these small-scale moments, as well as their limits. The latter cases call our attention to larger-scale (socio-structural) or deeper seated (psychological) inhibitions to improvements of young people's experiences and lives. With such differentiation I hope to distance this project from oversimplified conclusions that "hard work will lead to success."

Working with the different theories afforded opportunities for exploring the interconnectedness of interaction ritual chains, emotion-management and insights on more durable dispositions. At times this was not easy. At multiple junctures in the analysis I ran the risk of instability or the lack of a clear course. It was challenging to work with theory that carries in it tensions between privileging momentary dynamics – the interaction rituals – and developing something durable over time – the chains. It was even more challenging to connect this or at least relate it to Hochschild's and Bourdieu's work whose concepts of an inner self and an embodied habitus seemed more "static" entities than Collins' more fluid interactional self.

At the same time, it was more satisfying, even if more toilsome, to try to unpack the dynamics influencing participants in different directions than assuming a process that "somehow" must have led to internalized dispositions (habitus-formation). Seeing routines of daily encounters as interaction rituals and thematizing people's active management of emotions and outcomes of interactions afforded opportunities to differentiate stable and stabilizing development of success from haphazard and more precarious initiatives toward life improvements.

The decision on prioritizing the concept of "experiencing success," its subdivision into the three dimensions of *boosting, elevating* and *grounding* functions, as representative of what I saw happening in young people's lives, was a process. I can best summarize it as a series of iterative movements between three types

of efforts in which I was involved and which during different occasions and periods blurred into each other. I will number them to facilitate the discernment between them, but this does not imply a hierarchy of importance or an order in time. One effort consisted of my observations and conversations with young people growing up in hardship. Working with them as a youth worker and following their lives and development as a researcher fed my curiosity for what possibilities they had to escape or overcome their adversities. A second effort was seeking out and studying literature that could substantiate, deepen, and challenge my understanding of what I saw. A third effort was to reflect on what I observed and studied in life and in books. This reflection took place partly in solitary thought, but for a good deal also in interaction with colleagues and students in youth work, education, and research. These efforts together formed a search for words to express what I observed, and empirical evidence that supported or complicated what I was trying to say. Concepts grounded empirically, and practices connected and endowed by (me giving) meaning. I tried to remain true to what I observed, while at the same time contributing to understanding better what I studied. Categorizing phenomena in the social world, subsuming a multitude of motions and meanings under a few headings, is necessarily a reduction of those phenomena. I can only hope that the trade-off I made in multitude and complexity for clarity and understanding of a part of reality is worth the effort.

As a youth work study this research is a bit unusual as I used theories of youth work and community development only peripherally and they were not key to building my perspective. I decided to start with the young people with whom youth workers are concerned. Perhaps, true to my professional origins, I chose to privilege the subjects' experiences over the systems that beset and belie them. As a "proximate professional" I decided that youth workers' input would be a secondary addition, an "interdependent variable" in the dynamics of young people's struggles. I hope have shown throughout that I am not ignorant of pressing issues in youth work theory and have tried to relate my insights to some of these issues. Moreover, by applying, combining, and developing insights from theoretical work somewhat "alien" to (most) youth work research, especially in the Netherlands and Lebanon, I hope to contribute to further and expand knowledge and development academically as well as professionally. In a policy-saturated profession, I believe that these insights "from within" instead of "targeted at" it can help (re)claim a language that increases vocational accuracy, specificity, and ownership.

APPENDIX B:
QUERIES IN YOUTH WORK
AND YOUTH STUDIES

Here I take the liberty to share some reflections I have collected on two themes my research has brought to my attention. Of course there are many more themes and reflections I could have included. I see that as a task for me and colleagues to commit to at a later stage. For now, I briefly address two issues, namely Gender and Political engagement. In both themes I reflect on what I have found, what I was less able to ascertain and what could be fruitful questions to ask with regard to my findings. Also, I have thought about how I have seen youth workers and their organizations respond to these themes. Since I have in my descriptions and analyses remained mainly positive in my descriptions of youth workers' contributions, I take some liberty here in what I see as lacking, or as opportunities for improvement

Some reflections on gendered experiences

Young women and men in disadvantaged circumstances in two disparate societies looked for, found, or failed to find success. I have started thematizing how such struggles were gendered but their possibilities and implications deserve more attention than I was able to give them here. What I can give attention is how I saw young women and men struggle, succeed, and fail, and how this related to their gender strategies and, especially, practices. Such practices were not clearly "masculine" or "feminine" but were more blurred and appeared to have simultaneously conscious and unconscious aspects to them.

The young women I observed did not have ideas or plans to seek ruptures with their surroundings in order to become more successful. Although their environments – both European and Middle Eastern – privileged the success of men in different ways, I observed no wishes or practices revealing far-reaching measures. Rather, they displayed ways of speaking and working that I characterized as discretely increasing success. Whenever educational and career ambitions were not unexpected or subtly or more overtly discouraged, young women found ways, almost without being noticed, increase the space they needed for

their growing determinations. In a single instance, someone did move out, while in that family it was not customary for daughters to do so. This was to relieve tensions in family relationships than to cause a permanent break.

This is not to say that these discrete paths were without strain. Young women who studied helped in their households more than their male siblings did. They worked part-time jobs to contribute something "real" rather than the "vague" importance of their studies. Young women seemed more than young men to feel the need and actually dealt with demands to prove the worth of their efforts. Most likely these demands pertained to the double standard of being allowed to be successful as long as they remained "feminine." In a very real sense their "double (or even triple) shifts" (Hochschild, 1997, 2003; Hochschild & Machung, 1989) started in their parental households.

Maybe one of young women's subtle ways of increasing "accepted" and "understandable" success lies in finding legitimate avenues for being "masculine," such as in sports. While being "subtle, discrete, and accommodating" are traits associated with "femininity," in kickboxing work-outs they were "competitive, rough and tough," which are normally seen as more "masculine" characteristics. Young women were privy to such distinctions, noticeable from utterances such as I heard a girl say, "Here we don't make that distinction. Here on the mat we're 'guys.'" The acceptance of such "masculinity" expanded, at least at times, to parents who, in all other respects would be categorized as "traditional," now proudly cheered on their daughters as they won matches.

In my study I have not given sports experiences of females their due attention as related to success. In Chapter 7, sports activities have emerged as being pivotal in aiding the young men's moods and focus. The case is not, however, as simple as sports being of significance to men while they are less so for women. In the sports activities I have observed, women derive at least as much enjoyment and satisfaction from them. Indeed, the kickboxing sessions in Chapter 3 and basketball drills in Chapter 4 were all attended by girls and boys, even if girls were usually less in numbers. I have not foregrounded women's experiences in this respect enough. This is partly due to the activities I observed which tended to attract boys more easily, and needed specific targeting to reach (more) girls. In Lebanon as well as the Netherlands, young women generally cross more of a social barrier than their male counterparts, to participate, especially when it comes to martial arts and football. Something else that precluded me from advancing a well-developed female perspective of sports and success is that the young women whom I had chosen to focus on (and whom I could follow up on with interviews and observations) did not make an explicit topic of sports, dance, or other kinds of movement. All this to say that I have seen the benefits of sports activities to boosting, grounding, and elevating experiences, but these definitely need more attention in their own right.

Young women constantly dealt with "not being men" as well as "adequately being women" as elements in their struggles. This has obvious added complications for experiencing grounding and elevation. Yet it seemed that they were able to overcome such complications and experience success. My perspective of boosts helping young people to forget their surroundings and temporarily "owning the moment" should also mean that for a moment their gendered inhibitions "fall away." Yet, here my "embodied ethnography" falls short and I could not bridge this gap of identification. I did not inquire how boosting experiences made them forget their genderedness. At most I can state that no one, male or female, referred to gendered identification in relation to boosting experiences. This is, however, a limited finding.

Young men tended to have different challenges regarding gendered experiences. Struggles seemed mainly related to living up to their ideas of masculinity. These were for the most part fairly traditional ideas, such as being able to provide for a future spouse. In Beirut this entailed fairly rigid conditions, among them owning a house and a car, which considering the general economic situation were not easily achieved. In Amsterdam, a rented house was acceptable as well, as there seemed to be more of a commonly accepted notion of "building a life together" as opposed to the male "having it all" in advance. This and the more stable economy placed less of a strain on them than on their Lebanese counterparts.

Yet in both cities, young men had a hard time dealing with "femininized institutions" of education and government in which deferral of gratification, patience, docility and self-restraint were the norm, especially to gain advancement and acceptance. In either case, young men in disadvantaged circumstances feel at best awkward tending to such procedures and for instance overcompensate in displays of physical prowess that feel out of place in these institutions precisely because of their "feminine" nature. At worst, the young men feel thoroughly misunderstood and feel no means to express this in ways that "fit" in these bureaucratic mazes of conduct. They leave depleted, or are sometimes forcibly removed because of their "inappropriate" behavior.

Sports and physicality are then again often an outlet in which "being a man" feels to them less complicated. The "rigid" regimes of the work-outs paired with the high physical demands helps young men "give themselves" in ways that feel "right" to them because it "fits" their frames of "masculinity."

It may well be that youth work is one of the few (the only?) "feminine" institutions where young men feel they can (eventually) come and show vulnerability, or display "femininity." This can start out secretly, by email to a youth worker, explaining one's worries and fears. It can continue in private conversations. At times, groups of young men "allow" a youth worker to lead them into conversations to discuss and explore issues that matter to them, in which they are otherwise unlikely to engage.

While being a place of openness for young men, the situation for young women is more complicated, especially in Amsterdam. In Beirut youth work initiatives are far more scarce and it seems that when they exist, they are to some degree sensitized in consciously dealing with gender. This is also the case for some youth work organizations in Amsterdam, and has increased over the years, for instance in setting up girls-clubs existing youth centers. Yet, traditionally youth work, especially the neighborhood-based work as opposed to larger city-wide initiatives, has usually attracted more young men than women. And it has also been more geared toward the young males' preferences and tendencies. A general assumption of boys externalizing their problems, attracting attention (also of public means), while girls tend to internalize their problems more, plays an important role in the ways youth work resources are consciously or reflexively allocated for working with young men. This is unfortunate, seeing how much young women like Fatima and Farida relied on Imane as a source of support and sensibility. In neighborhoods where social problems have piled up and people cannot pull themselves out of their mires, such support is in dire need, both in Amsterdam and Beirut

Political aspirations and engagement

In following young people in their struggles and quests for success, there was no real mention or display of political ambitions. It seems aspirations were more geared toward education, occupation and consumption than to citizenship and political action (Baillergeau et al., 2015). I did not actively pursue this theme to probe where young people stood with regard to being politically active. It did arise from time to time, but usually this was with regard to grand issues being "out of their hands" or "beyond them," such as security issues and the economy. Political issues seemed to be part of a job for "others" to take care of, usually politicians. There was little notion of involvement in politics or political issues as citizens. Exceptions are Imad and his friends talking about how they could influence a political party to clear their playground, and the connections they tried to establish with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Chapter 4). But then Imad has moved beyond the category of "youth" and is here more a youth worker. This categorization might not be completely fair since it was as a young person that he learned to become active in public and social influencing, which probably led to him currently pursuing political influence. Still, among the people in my study there seem to be few other signs of initiating political engagement. This does not mean that such ambitions and practices are absent but rather that people were not inclined to consciously link them to experiencing success. In what follows I explore how we could understand political engagement in the

lives of disadvantaged young people.

In the Netherlands[47] political aspirations are generally low among young people (de Winter, 2006, 2011), but the reasons for this can vary between different groups. For higher educated and economically well-off young people, this might be characterized by taking democracy for granted, as something that does not need their on-going input or efforts (Groot, Goodson, & Veugelers, 2013). For young people in disadvantaged situations, it might be as De Winter suggests, more the case that democratic values are experienced as irrelevant and even dangerous for their daily lives (de Winter, 2006, pp. 19-24). On playgrounds and on street corners of troubled neighborhoods, and even some schools (Paulle, 2013), showing empathy, advancing violence-free solutions, and prioritizing public interest over group-values can entail serious social, emotional and physical risks (Hadioui, 2011; de Jong, 2007). Elsewhere, it has been noted that young people's distrust for politics is related to being poorly treated and stigmatized by governmental agencies which contrasts with the proclaimed democratic values (Furlong & Cartmel, 1999; Marlière, 2008). If democratic values prove to be vain or threatening, it would not be surprising that young people don't feel the need to exert what others frame as their political duties. Similarly, it is unsurprising that democratic values do not fuel political aspirations among young people.

Zooming out slightly more, young people are growing up in a time when political rhetoric, public discourses and general social climates display strong individualizing tendencies with regard to responsibility and culpability (Bourdieu, 1998; Boutellier, 2011; van der Laan, 2006; Sennett, 2003, 2012; Verhagen, 2005; Wacquant, 2008, 2009). It is then perhaps quite logical that young people are less inclined to relate or actively contribute to a "greater good"? Additionally, youth work in the Netherlands and Europe has undergone processes of depoliticization for decades. While central contributions of youth work have been to both social cohesion and social justice, it seems now to focus mainly on helping young people to "fit in" (Verschelden, Coussée, Van de Walle, & Williamson, 2009). In the more general occupational group of social workers there seem to be strong individualizing tendencies. They find difficulty in constructively connecting people with their surroundings and networks (de Waal, 2017). "Autonomy" and "Self-reliance" remain strong and prevalent political, social and professional ideals, yet professionals do not always have tools or insights to determine when that has been achieved (Hoijtink, Jager-Vreugdenhil, & de Jonge, 2017). How are young people expected to reach out to others, develop public interconnectedness and civic awareness and responsibilities in such a climate?

Still, there are modest examples of youth workers stimulating young people

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47   For the paragraphs on political aspirations in the Netherlands I have reworked a text I contributed to an earlier publication (Baillergeau et al., 2015).

to "turn outward," take responsibility for and change their environment, (Spiers & Abdallah, 2015). Also, there is evidence of youth work organizations positioning themselves in varying ways with regard to their political mission and this yielded results in having a voice in the local political spectrum and giving voice to their participants (Abdallah et al., 2010). If we could interrelate young people increasing their political awareness and activism with youth work reinventing their politicizing contributions, experiencing success on political levels could become a more prominent dimension the lives of young people in disadvantaged circumstances.

Lebanon appears a more differentiated pallet of political engagement. Middle and upper-class young people seem to have "made their mark" in what has been dubbed the "cedar-revolution" (Gahre, 2011). There are, however, questions and criticism on whether the categorization of the phenomena involved as "youthful" are empirical or ideological (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015), yet the reinvention of Lebanese middle and upper-class youth identity continues (Fregonese, 2012; Jabre, 2009; Kegels, 2007; Larkin, 2010). Working class and the poor are often more seen as targets of political programs (Cammett & Issar, 2010; Jawad, 2007) or as pools of recruitment for mobilization during events (Worth & Saad, 2008). In the latter cases they are often deemed "dupes" of ideology and more associated with passive compliance than political activism. Yet there are several studies indicating that young people from backgrounds of "modest means" have ambitions pertaining to public influence and political direction. In some cases the lines blurred between political influence, militant action and criminal activity (Abi Samra, 2011; Sbeity, 2011). Yet there have also been situations where young people were driving forces in bringing about public change in non-violent ways, as when they claim, color, and redraw the ways in which communities conceive of and use public space (Deeb, 2006), particularly how leisure obtains shape and content (Deeb & Harb, 2013). This may seem to concern chiefly consumptive practices, but the practices indicate consequences in shifting power balances over what is ruled as common, shared, and appropriate.

In all these cases it is important to delve deeper into how political apathy and engagement are mobilized. Who are chief actors? Who are and feel responsible? Who are involved? Who feel that they are not, and/or should not be part of the political game? How is this achieved? What situations exist that show exceptions? Initiatives such as StreetBall and YoungSport seem to have tones of political involvement and ambitions for public influence for their participants (Chapter 4).

Such initiatives shed light on another political dimension of success. Youth work programs make their participants aware of possibilities and provide settings in which they develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes that empower them. If such programs manage to become massively successful in these endeavors,

what does that imply for existing social relations? What if the socioeconomically disadvantaged in vast numbers become "advantaged"? Will this increase the quality of life in society in general? Will it be at the cost of the prosperity of those "above" them? Will those "under" them suffer even more? No matter how individually or collectively we approach experiencing success, it has political implications, and therefore it must have proponents and antagonists anticipating such shifts.

SUMMARY (ENGLISH)

STRUGGLES FOR SUCCESS

Youth work rituals in Amsterdam and Beirut

Increasing numbers of young people in big cities struggle with societal conditions and social dynamics that overwhelm them in different ways. In some cases, young people learn to disentangle themselves from these disadvantages and gain perspective for a better life. My present research arose from youth work settings in which youth workers deal with these young people on a daily basis. In the interactions it became apparent that positive emotions and uplifting experiences were related to having perspective and the energy to take initiative.. The main questions are therefore: *How do young people from disadvantaged neighborhoods in Amsterdam and Beirut get to experience success? How do these experiences alleviate their circumstances, and in some cases, eventually, elevate them from their circumstances? How do youth workers contribute to such experiences and processes?* The study focuses on young people in Amsterdam and Beirut. The comparison arises from the initial discovery that experiences of disadvantage, vulnerability, struggle and success in disparate situations were at play in similar ways.

Chapter 1 constitutes a tour of the empirical field. I zoom in on who the young people are, what makes them socially vulnerable and how this relates to their efforts and results when it comes to experiencing success. They are faced with more than average obstacles in achieving accomplishments that matter to them and that "count" in their societies. In addition, they experience temptations to "waste" their time, to cause mischief, to give up in the face of daunting challenges and no longer strive for "good" things such as school and part-time jobs. In some cases they participate in criminal activities. Some youngsters will lose themselves in these temptations for longer stretches of time, others oscillate between different commitments, and still others get tired of or frustrated by these temptations and seek something else. Some do that with more support from their environments than others. Parents, relatives, teachers, police-officers, legal guardians, sports coaches, neighborhood sports organizers, and youth workers can contribute in different ways and to differing degrees. In this research, I focus on people, especially professionals, who endeavor to positively contribute to the development and wellbeing of youngsters at risk. In Amster-

dam, I focused on youth workers and additionally to neighborhood sports orga-
nizers if they had a particular focus on the social development and wellbeing
of young people. Lebanon has no youth work in any formalized or institutional
sense. There I focused on organizations and people who undertake all kinds of
initiatives, often at neighborhood level, to support socially vulnerable young
people in their development and opportunities for education, labor and deploy-
ment in meaningful activities. They do that as employees at NGOs, as entrepre-
neurs of social enterprises and as involved neighborhood residents. In the strict
sense of being employees (of government agencies) they are not all "profession-
als." What makes them interesting is how they tend to emotions, experiences,
energy and interactions of young people.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of insights from relevant literature regarding
"youth in society." There are three main accents: 1) youth as transition to adult-
hood, which relates to the vulnerability of youth and the need to protect them
on their way to adulthood, 2) youth agency, emphasizing strengths, opportuni-
ties and capabilities, and 3) critical youth studies, focusing on social structures
of inequalities that socially impair young people. Each strand has their own
interpretation of what success can mean for young people and each weighs the
importance of subjective experiences differently. I give an indication of how
these strands of thought are present in science, policies and practices of institu-
tions targeting youth in the respective countries. Then I show how my chosen
theoretical perspectives focusing on *interaction ritual chains* (IRC), *emotion
management* and *embodied dispositions* contribute to existing knowledge. The
IRC perspective compels us to not assume youth's agency uncritically, but
to understand in concrete situations what actually occurs. Agency does not
(merely) depend on resourcefulness as an attribute of individual young people,
but evolves in interaction. In addition, interaction rituals reveal limits of indi-
vidual agency. The perspective of emotion management explains how young
people and youth workers deal with their possibilities. When they stumble upon
limitations and disappointments this perspective helps clarify how they make
sense of and process such experiences. The perspective of embodied dispositions
thematizes the durable effects of young people's long-term commitments.

Following these introductory chapters are three thematically interlinked descrip-
tions and analyses. In chapters 3, 4 and 5, I call attention to three components
of experiencing success. Chapter 3 concerns a *boosting* component, a feeling of
doing something important and being important in the moment. Chapter 4 is
about *grounding*, feeling connected to a larger whole and achieving increased
emotional stability. Chapter 5 presents the *elevating* component: the feeling and
the idea of young people that they are elevated over their circumstances and

can get ahead in life. These components are present to differing extents in each of the contexts described in these chapters. I have chosen to emphasize the one aspect in each chapter that seemed most manifest for participants and for me. By empirically indicating them here, I lay the groundwork to develop them conceptually in chapter 8.

Chapter 3 is the first empirical in-depth analysis. It concerns a kickboxing gym in Amsterdam East, run by a youth worker who is also a martial arts enthusiast and master. Through detailed descriptions of training sessions, particular scenes within the sessions, reflections of the trainer and participants and my own experiences as an active participant, a number of findings surface. The design of the workout creates a tremendous focus. For a brief time slot, the gym becomes participants' entire world. Only that which occurs in the moment, mainly demanding exercises, are what matter. It is an experience of the world shrinking. Momentarily crowding out the rest of the world (and its worries and disappointments) helps immensely in becoming able to experience success in the here and now. It gives participants temporary *boosts* that invigorate them. It stands to reason that this may be of particular importance to young people who hardly ever experience this elsewhere. After emphasizing the importance of the moment, I focus on how "chains" of experiences contribute to development beyond the moment. In addition, I pay close attention to the role and contributions of the trainer whose manners of speech, behavior, presence and investment become ingredients in impressive interaction rituals and effects. Such ingredients and rituals do not guarantee that participants always respond positively. Therefore, I discuss different paths of development of participants.

Chapter 4 is a study of street basketball in Beirut. It deals with the theme of *grounding*. Also in this case, young people are exposed to various harmful influences, including apathy toward future prospects, inwardly-directed communal exclusion, and drug use and drug-dealing. Some adults try to create positive alternatives to these influences in their neighborhoods. They have backgrounds in sports, they have obtained additional training in dealing with young people, founded NGOs and organize weekly sports programs and social encounters for young neighborhood residents. Of particular interest here are what rhythms of weekly activities and sports rhythms during gameplay contribute to focus, mood and subsequently solidarities and moralities of participants. The rhythms provide patterns that make them feel part of something bigger that is attractive and increases their senses of wellbeing. Weekly patterns of activities provide short-term prospectives to which they can look forward. Patterns of movement offer steadfastness in which they can literally "insert" their bodies. They can experience and show others where their solidarity is. Belonging to the club

means that they practice sports, that they show sportsmanship, that they inter-act positively with fellow members and other people, etc. Sports rhythms and "moral rhythms" blend and their interconnectedness becomes taken for granted. The interaction rituals in and around the basketball games appeal to participants to commit themselves to a specific management of emotions and relationships. This contributes to *grounding*; an experience of embeddedness, interconnected-ness and increasing emotional stability. The coaches invite their participants in different ways to go beyond their usual patterns and frameworks. The movement they make here is to *expand* their world and to feel increasingly comfortable in that world. This is in a sense a counterpart to the shrinking of the world in the previous chapter.

Chapter 5 concerns the *elevating* component. Here I describe two young men, Daniel from Beirut and Farid from Amsterdam, who struggle with competi-tive influences in their daily lives. By analyzing different situations and interac-tions, I show how these impact their wellbeing and development. In addition, "solo rituals" and protective symbols indicate how they rely on strengths "of their own." I use quotation marks here because characteristics of individuals and the influences of circumstances appear to be blended. In some cases Daniel and Farid displayed impressive strength and quality. In other instances it was remarkable how beneficial it was that others were there for them in specific ways. At still other times, there was a reciprocity between individual characteris-tics and interactional dynamics in which it is unclear and difficult to distinguish where one ends and the other begins. Recognition for this is important in order to realize how interactional and personal characteristics blend and blur, also when it comes to having and experiencing success. The lives of Farid and Daniel are dissimilar. Daniel in Beirut deals with much greater hardship than Farid in Amsterdam. However, both descriptions show how important it is for them to be in interactional dynamics that positively reinforce their "personal qualities." This enabled for them an "upward path": an *elevation* over the circumstances in order to continue with determination.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to the experiences of young women. The *boosting*, *grounding* and *elevating* components are also applicable to women's experiences of success. However, the routes to those experiences and the activities in which they experience success can be different. In this chapter I focus on overlap and differences in those routes and experiences. Joumana in Beirut was inspired by images of girls who immersed themselves in their studies. Furthermore, through her dire circumstances, she knew what she did *not* want and worked hard to get to a better place, despite the fact that her circumstances were hardly conducive to success. Rachel's talent was initially overlooked in her family and at school

in Amsterdam. Expectations were focused on the boys in the family. Slowly she worked up to where she thought she should be. Farida in Amsterdam experienced social control making sure she would behave with "dignity." Together with a youth worker, she looked at how she could subtly create more space for herself. More than being "good," this pertained to her desires for safety, freedom and development. Nadine in Beirut dealt with explicit warnings and discouragements of having "too much" success because she would become "unfeminine." She had to make sure she would not be known as a "stubborn and tough" and that her husband would see her too much as a competitor. In her interactions, she balanced tactically between her aspirations and expectations of others. The stories of these young women show that the appeal of success is as strong for women as it is on men. However, women usually have other, often subordinate, positions in their daily interaction rituals with men. They develop different "social techniques" and approaches to experience success. They combine these social techniques with "feeling rules" that help them explain to themselves and others how success is applicable to them. Their "social ingenuity" resides in the fact that they do not alienate themselves too much from their important relationships, while (and because) they are aware of such risks.

Chapter 7 deals with situations in which experiences of success hardly occur and how this negatively and durably affects the people concerned. Sometimes minor positive experiences do take place but they are not enough to counteract the chains of debilitating experiences. The previous chapters exhibited how young people, more and less supported by others, managed to overcome difficulty and hardship. Also there, the negative circumstances are not denied. Nevertheless, some could misinterpret this study as a plea for hard work despite harrowing conditions with a good result as a promise. That promise does not always hold. Paul grew up in Beirut. He lost his father at sixteen and was unable to continue as a carpenter because of a physical disability. He saw no other opportunity than to take on low-paid unskilled labor to support his family. For a long time he felt he was a victim of these circumstances. He could not build up anything for himself or for a potential spouse, so his life could not progress to the next stage: marriage and children. For years he oscillated between taking small initiatives that could bring him something and a resignation to circumstances that he could not significantly influence. Hicham in Amsterdam struggled with similar feelings. His material circumstances were less severe than Paul's. He had more access to supportive facilities and he could fall back on his parents, but the relationship with his brothers consisted mostly of unrest, quarreling and distractions from his ambitions. Kevin, also in Amsterdam, had an internal struggle with what he was "supposed" to be but he felt he could not meet. Parents and teachers spoke to him but they did not reach him. He got caught in a pit of

disappointment and did not know how he could come out, even if others leant him a hand. These young men were engaged in regular interactions of depletion, distraction and undermining. Their ability to regulate their emotions and ideas, or to constructively make sense of them, seemed inadequate. Prolonged negative emotional energy was an important consequence of these interactions as well as other causes and conditions.

Based on the descriptions and analyses in Chapters 3 to 7, I arrive in Chapter 8 at a conceptualization of experiencing of success. The *boosting* component pertains to the local and temporary experience of "owning the moment." This generates within young people physical energy to take initiative and positive feelings about oneself. The *elevating* component helps young people to cope with their adverse circumstances, in cognitive and emotional sense. They make connections between what happens in the moment and what they would like to see happening in their future. This component is of longer duration than a boost; it is an anchored determination. The *grounding* component makes young people feel they belong somewhere. This component consists of basic feelings of the right to exist, and the need for recognition thereof. This is expressed in stable emotional states and in being firmly and positively embedded in social networks. This is a momentary experience and can turn into a longer lasting perception. There is a tension between the elevating and grounding components. To be elevated above their circumstances is to get ahead in life. Young people develop new or more comprehensive ideas about how far they can get. Grounding is about belonging. Thus, in their development, young people can become wrapped up in loyalty conflicts when the "place" they want to be in implies they need to leave something behind (their neighborhood, friends, habits, etc.). The extent to which young people can experience lasting success depends on how they solve or learn to live with such tensions.

In Chapter 9, I analyze how youth workers and other (professional) program organizers and community leaders are of significance in the hardships and successes of young people. Social vulnerability and disadvantage of young people is expressed in an excessive exposure to debilitating interaction rituals. In different ways they are undermined, distracted and depleted by peers, adults and themselves. Emotionally, this causes energy-shortages, avoidance of initiative and, in some cases, negative pursuits for emotional energy. Constructive rituals counterbalance these debilitating rituals in different ways. I distinguish restorative, invigorative and confirmative rituals.

   Restorative rituals are interactions where youth workers try to restore calm and order. When young people are restless, in states of anxiety, youth workers try to "ground" them, bring them back "in touch with themselves and reality."

In addition, they contribute to meaningful contacts with peers and the broader environment. *Boosting rituals* are about inspiring momentum by generating energy to initiate or accelerate a process. When young people are apathetic and seem to have lost hope, youth workers can step in and reframe the circumstances to reposition and refocus the group for their desired aims. *Confirmative rituals* are encounters in which youth workers engender and nourish the already existing momentum. There are recognizable relationships between the types of rituals and the components of experiencing success. Restorative rituals mainly have grounding effects, invigorative rituals have especially boosting effects, and confirming rituals have elevating effects. But they are not strictly related. The different effects can be found in all three types of rituals. Important is the repeated facilitation of these rituals because they contribute to the increased experience of success, and thereby the recognition of one's own abilities and capabilities, of being connected, feeling stability, and of advancing in life. However, these sustainable effects are not self-evident. They seem to depend largely on how constellations of regular interaction rituals have more constructive or debilitating impacts on young people's paths and activities.

There are youth workers who contribute particularly well to young people's struggles for success. This pertains especially to the recognition of debilitating and constructive interaction rituals in the daily lives of young people. They discourage the debilitating interactions while encouraging constructive interactions. Furthermore, youth workers make a difference by being themselves initiators of constructive interaction rituals. In those rituals, they can make themselves very prominent or operate in the background. They can intervene directly or indirectly.

Youth workers develop such proficiency in at least three ways. First, exposure to or immersion in the world of the young people with whom they work. Second, a focus on inventiveness. Youth workers accept young people as they are, but they have ideals and ideas for how they could improve their quality of life. They actively use their imagination to "see" what is not yet there and try to inspire young people. Third, youth workers develop a vocational narrative. Through experience and exchanges with colleagues, they arrive at conclusions about "what they are doing it for." This provides frameworks in which they interpret and give meaning to different developments in society and among their participants. This helps especially in difficult periods and situations to keep motivation and maintain course.

In the conclusion, I answer the main questions of this study, and I outline implications for approaches of young people who struggle with their circumstances in different ways. Disadvantage and vulnerability are loaded with negative emotions and experiences. Young people are caught up in debilitating emotional dynamics. It makes no sense, then, to provide them with the "right information."

First, attention and recognition is required for their perceptions of daily situations and how these affect them. To become more positively oriented, they need better experiences, through which they can gradually develop more positive feelings. In time, this can contribute to optimistic thoughts and developing more open attitudes to useful information.

When youth workers facilitate reinforcing rituals, different accents become relevant depending on the context. In Beirut, dynamics of exclusion and avoidance were dominant among participants. There, youth workers emphasized restorative rituals, focused on reflection and renewed contact with the "other." The ways that the people in question set social boundaries became an explicit theme. Through playing basketball and reflective conversations they redrew such boundaries and this felt more constructive to all involved. The material circumstances in Beirut were usually more dire than in Amsterdam. It seemed much harder to be disadvantaged in Beirut than in Amsterdam. Although there were similarities in how young people in both cities spoke and felt, frustrations in Beirut sometimes seemed to be more intense and the apathy more severe. In those circumstances, we can see restorative rituals as a prelude for the invigorative and confirmative rituals. In Amsterdam, there seemed to be some more space for the latter two, although that also depended on the type of activity. Kickboxing workouts in Beirut were at least as invigorating as those in Amsterdam.

By experiencing success young people increasingly feel and have control over the outcome of situations. They experience a decisive influence over the course of their development. These are the results of *situated, interactional, and embodied practices that are positively charged with participants' mutually generated emotions and energy.* Such insights lack recognition in the important institutions responsible for youth supervision, education and wellbeing. Therefore, the implications of this conclusion are enormous.

Both policy categories and popular notions are too much based on (imagined) ethnic labels when it comes to expectations about what people are capable of. Implicitly and explicitly, we link the likelihood of individuals' successes to the group we place them in, often based on external physical features. But cultural traits and ethnic practices are only part of the dynamics of interactions. They can become very prominent or severely downplayed. They do not determine the success that people experience and achieve. Of determining significance are the constellations of people's routine interactions. How strong do restorative, invigorative, and affirmative dynamics, or undermining, depleting and distracting rituals prevail? This determinative influence also explains why financial poverty or lack of self-sufficiency does not *by itself* have to cause persistent vulnerability and disadvantage. If the daily interactions contribute positively to the mood and motivation of young people, they too can experience success.

The focus on interaction rituals also implies a criticism of the dominance of the one-sided emphasis on cognition as a determinant for success. In youth work rituals, participants are involved cognitively, emotionally and physically. *Boosting*, *elevation* and *grounding* all have strong emotional and physiological aspects. Socially vulnerable and disadvantaged young people can be successful if they have access to positive experiences that feed these aspects. In this sense, youth workers are an example for other professionals because they (some more consciously than others) offer their participants access and bring them into constructive rituals, which they find too little elsewhere.

SUMMARY (DUTCH)

STRIJD OM SUCCES

Jongerenwerkrituelen in Amsterdam en Beiroet
Steeds meer jongeren in grote steden kampen met maatschappelijke omstandigheden en sociale dynamieken die hen op verschillende manieren overweldigen. In sommige gevallen weten jongeren zich uit deze achterstanden te ontworstelen en krijgen ze zicht op een beter leven. Dit onderzoek is ontstaan vanuit jongerenwerk-settings waarin jongerenwerkers dagelijks met deze jongeren te maken hebben. In de interacties bleek hoezeer positieve emoties en beleving samenhingen met perspectief houden, de energie om wel of geen initiatief te nemen, en wat deze zaken met succes en succeservaringen te maken hebben. De hoofdvragen zijn daarom: *Hoe ervaren jongeren in maatschappelijk kwetsbare omstandigheden in Amsterdam en Beiroet succes? Hoe dragen deze ervaringen bij aan opluchting van en verheffing uit die omstandigheden? Welke bijdrage leveren jongerenwerkers aan die ervaringen en processen?* De studie richt zich op jongeren in Amsterdam en Beiroet. De vergelijking komt voort uit de aanvankelijke ontdekking dat belevingen van achterstand, kwetsbaarheid, strijd en succes in uiteenlopende situaties op vergelijkbare manieren speelden.

Hoofdstuk 1 is een tour door de empirie. Ik zoom in op wie de jongeren zijn, wat hen maatschappelijk kwetsbaar maakt en hoe dat zich verhoudt tot hun inspanningen en resultaten als het gaat om het ervaren van succes. Ze hebben te maken met meer dan gemiddelde obstakels in het boeken van prestaties die er voor hen toe doen en die in maatschappelijk opzicht 'tellen.' Daarnaast liggen er gevoelsmatig ook veel verleidingen op de loer. Om de tijd 'nutteloos' te verdoen, om kattenkwaad uit te halen, om het op te geven als uitdagingen te groot werden, en zich niet meer in te spannen voor de 'goede' dingen zoals school en bijbanen. In enkele gevallen nemen ze deel aan criminele activiteiten. Sommige jongeren gaan op den duur volop in deze verleidingen mee, anderen schipperen tussen verschillende commitments, weer anderen worden moe van of gefrustreerd door deze verleidingen en zoeken iets anders. De een doet dat met meer ondersteuning van de omgeving dan de ander. Ouders, andere familieleden, leraren, politieagenten, hulpverleners, sportcoaches, sportbuurtwerkers, en jongerenwerkers weten op verschillende manieren en in verschillende mate bij te dragen. Ik richt me in dit onderzoek op mensen, in het bijzonder professionals, die positieve

bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling en het welzijn van jongeren proberen te leveren. In Amsterdam richtte ik me op jongerenwerkers en daarnaast op sportbuurtwerkers als ze een bijzondere gerichtheid hadden op de sociale en maatschappelijke ontwikkeling en welzijn van jongeren. In Libanon is er geen geformaliseerd jongerenwerk. Daar richtte ik me op organisaties en mensen die allerlei initiatieven ontplooien, vaak op buurtniveau, om maatschappelijk kwetsbare jongeren te ondersteunen in hun ontwikkeling en hun kansen op educatie, werk en ontplooiing in betekenisvolle activiteiten. Dat doen ze als werknemers bij stichtingen, initiatiefnemers van sociale ondernemingen en betrokken buurtbewoners. Ze zijn in formele zin niet allen 'professioneel' in de zin dat ze werknemers zijn bij jongerenwerkorganisaties. Wat hen interessant maakt is hoe ze inspelen op emoties, beleving, ervaringen, energie en interacties van jongeren.

Hoofdstuk 2 biedt een overzicht van inzichten uit relevante literatuur als het gaat om 'jeugd in de samenleving.' Grofweg zijn er een drietal accenten: 1) jeugd als transitie naar volwassenheid, dat betrekking heeft op de kwetsbaarheid van jeugd en de noodzaak om hen te beschermen onderweg naar volwassenheid, 2) de *agency* van jeugd die krachten, kansen, en kundigheid benadrukt, en 3) kritische jeugdstudies, die zich richten op maatschappelijke structuren van ongelijkheid die jeugd benadelen. Allen hebben ze eigen invullingen van wat succes voor jeugd kan inhouden en allen geven ze een eigen gewicht aan ervaring en beleving. Ik geef een indicatie van hoe deze stromingen aanwezig zijn in wetenschap, beleid en praktijken van instituties die zich in de resp;;respectievelijke landen op jeugd richten. Daarna laat ik zien hoe mijn gekozen theoretische perspectieven, die zich richten op *interaction ritual chains* (IRC), *emotiemanagement* en *belichaamde disposities*, een bijdrage leveren aan bestaande kennis. Het IRC perspectief dwingt om de *agency* van jongeren niet voor lief te nemen of op te hemelen, maar in concrete situaties te begrijpen wat er eigenlijk van terecht komt. *Agency* heeft niet (alleen) te maken met vindingrijkheid als eigenschap van individuele jongeren, maar komt in interactie tot stand. Daarnaast laat dit perspectief zien wanneer *agency* van individuen duidelijk tegen grenzen aan loopt. Het perspectief van emotiemanagement belicht hoe jongeren en jongerenwerkers omgaan met hun mogelijkheden en hoe ze het stuiten op grenzen en teleurstellingen aan zichzelf uitleggen en verwerken. Het perspectief van belichaamde disposities thematiseert wat duurzame effecten zijn van langdurige commitments.

Na deze introducerende hoofdstukken volgt een soort drieluik. In hoofdstukken 3, 4 en 5 thematiseer ik drie verschillende componenten van het beleven van succes. In hoofdstuk 3 gaat het om een *boosting* component, het gevoel van iets belangrijks doen en belangrijk zijn in het moment. In hoofdstuk 4 gaat het om

grounding, zich verbonden voelen aan een groter geheel en emotioneel stabieler worden. In hoofdstuk 5 komt de *elevating* component naar voren: het gevoel en idee hebben dat ze boven de omstandigheden verheven worden en vooruit komen in het leven. Deze componenten spelen in elke beschreven context van de drie hoofdstukken wel een bepaalde rol. Ik heb er hier voor gekozen om in elk hoofdstuk die component te benadrukken die er voor deelnemers en voor mij het meest uitsprong. Door ze empirisch te duiden, doe ik het voorwerk om ze in hoofdstuk 8 conceptueel uit te werken.

Hoofdstuk 3 is de eerste empirische diepgaande analyse. Het betreft een kickboksschool in Amsterdam Oost, gerund door een jongerenwerker die tevens vechtkunstliefhebber en meester is. Via gedetailleerde beschrijvingen van trainingen, scènes daarbinnen, reflecties van trainer en deelnemers en mijn eigen ervaringen als actieve deelnemer, kom ik op een aantal bevindingen. Het ontwerp van de training zorgt voor een enorme focus. De gym wordt eigenlijk even de hele wereld van de deelnemers. Alleen wat er op dat moment gebeurt en de oefeningen die ze op dat moment doen, zijn belangrijk. De wereld krimpt. Het even wegvallen van de rest van de wereld (en haar zorgen en teleurstellingen) helpt enorm om op dat moment succes te beleven. Ze krijgen een tijdelijke *boost* die hen doet opleven. We kunnen stellen dat dit van bijzondere betekenis is voor jongeren die dat elders weinig hebben. Na het belang van het moment te benadrukken, ga ik in op hoe 'ketens' van ervaringen bijdragen aan ontwikkeling voorbij het moment. Verder besteed ik uitgebreide aandacht aan de rol en bijdragen van de trainer die in spreken, omgang, uitstraling, en investering een bijzondere combinatie heeft die zorgt voor indrukwekkende interactierituelen en effecten. Dit biedt niet de garantie dat deelnemers er altijd positief op reageren. Daarom bespreek ik verschillende paden van ontwikkeling van deelnemers.

Hoofdstuk 4 is een studie van straatbasketbal in Beiroet die ingaat op het thema *grounding*. Ook hier worden jongeren blootgesteld aan diverse schadelijke invloeden, waaronder apathie ten opzichte van toekomstmogelijkheden, naar binnen gerichte uitsluitende gemeenschapsvorming, en drugsgebruik en -handel. Enkele volwassenen pogen in buurten hier tegenover positieve alternatieven te stellen. Ze hebben een sportachtergrond, hebben zich op verschillende manieren bijgeschoold, stichtingen opgericht en organiseren wekelijks sportactiviteiten en sociale ontmoetingen voor jeugd. Interessant is hier wat weekritmes van activiteitenprogramma's en sportritmes tijdens het spelen doen met de focus, het gemoed en vervolgens de solidariteit en moraliteit van de deelnemers. De ritmes bieden patronen waardoor ze voelen dat ze deel uitmaken van iets groters dat aantrekkelijk is en hen goed doet, hen opbouwt. Weekpatronen van activiteiten bieden vooruitzichten op de korte termijn waar ze naartoe kunnen leven.

Bewegingspatronen bieden vastigheid waar ze hun lichamen letterlijk 'in kunnen voegen' waarbij ze voelen en anderen kunnen tonen waar hun solidariteit ligt. Bij de club horen betekent dat je sport, dat je sportief bent, dat je positief met medeleden (en medemensen) omgaat, etc. Sportritmes en 'morele ritmes' raken met elkaar vermengd en voelen als vanzelfsprekend aan elkaar verbonden. De interactierituelen in en rond het basketbal doen een beroep op deelnemers om zich te committeren aan een specifiek management van emoties en relaties. Dit brengt *grounding* teweeg; een ervaring van geaardheid, verbondenheid en toenemende emotionele stabiliteit. De begeleiders nodigen hun deelnemers op verschillende manieren uit om buiten hun gewoonlijke patronen en kaders te stappen. De beweging die ze hier maken is het *uitbreiden* van hun wereld en zich daar in toenemende mate comfortabel bij voelen (als tegenhanger van het 'krimpen' van de wereld in het vorige hoofdstuk).

Hoofdstuk 5 betreft de *elevating* component. Hier beschrijf ik twee jonge mannen, Daniel uit Beiroet en Farid uit Amsterdam, die ieder worstelen met concurrerende invloeden in hun dagelijks leven. Door verschillende situaties en interacties na te gaan, laat ik zien hoe deze hun welzijn en ontwikkeling beïnvloeden. Daarnaast laten 'solorituelen' en protectieve symbolen zien hoe ze kracht 'uit zichzelf' putten. Ik plaats dat tussen aanhalingstekens want eigenschappen van individuen en de invloeden van omstandigheden blijken met elkaar vermengd. In sommige gevallen vertoonden Daniel en Farid indrukwekkende kracht en kwaliteit. In andere gevallen was het opmerkelijk hoe gunstig het was dat anderen er op specifieke manieren voor hen waren. Op weer andere momenten was er sprake van een wisselwerking tussen individuele kenmerken en dynamiek van interacties waarbij het moeilijk te onderscheiden is waar het ene eindigt en het andere begint. De erkenning hiervoor is belangrijk om te beseffen hoezeer sociale context en persoonlijke eigenschappen in elkaar overlopen, ook als het gaat om succes hebben en ervaren. De levens van Farid en Daniel zijn verschillend. Daniel heeft in Beiroet te kampen met veel grotere tegenslag dan Farid in Amsterdam. Wel laten beide beschrijvingen zien hoe belangrijk het blijft dat ze in sociale omstandigheden kunnen verkeren die positief met hun 'persoonlijke eigenschappen' in wisselwerking staan. Dat maakte voor hen een 'opwaarts pad' mogelijk: een *elevation* boven de omstandigheden zodat ze vastberaden konden doorwerken.

Hoofdstuk 6 is gewijd aan de ervaringen van jonge vrouwen. De aspecten *boosting*, *grounding* en *elevating* zijn ook op de succeservaringen van vrouwen van toepassing. Wel lijken de routes naar deze ervaringen en de activiteiten waarin ze die beleven soms anders te kunnen zijn. In dit hoofdstuk ga ik in op overlap en verschillen in die routes en ervaringen. Joumana in Beiroet was van jongs af

aan gedreven door beelden die ze had van meisjes die opgingen in hun studie. Verder wist ze door haar armoedige omstandigheden vooral wat ze niet wilde en werkte hard om zich daar uit te werken, ondanks dat haar omstandigheden zich daar nauwelijks toe leenden. Rachel's talent werd in haar gezin en op school in Amsterdam aanvankelijk over het hoofd gezien; er werd vooral veel verwacht van de jongens in het gezin. Langzaam werkte ze zich op naar waar zij vond dat ze moest zijn. Farida ervoer in Amsterdam vooral sociale controle die ervoor moest zorgen dat ze zich 'waardig' gedroeg. Samen met een jongerenwerker zocht ze naar hoe ze subtiel kon werken aan meer ruimte voor zichzelf. Dat ging niet alleen over 'braaf zijn' maar ook over haar wensen omtrent veiligheid, vrijheid en ontwikkeling. Nadine in Beiroet had te kampen met expliciete waarschuwingen en ontmoedigingen om 'teveel' succes te hebben omdat ze te 'onvrouwelijk' zou worden. Ze moest uitkijken dat ze niet bekend zou staan als een 'taaie tante' en dat haar man haar teveel als concurrent zou zien. In haar interacties balanceerde ze tactvol tussen haar ambities en sociale verwachtingen van anderen. De verhalen van deze jonge vrouwen laten zien dat de aantrekkingskracht van succes niet minder vat heeft op vrouwen dan op mannen. Wel hebben ze doorgaans andere, vaak ondergeschikte, posities in hun dagelijkse interactierituelen met mannen. Ze ontwikkelen daarbij verschillende 'sociale technieken' en benaderingen om toch succes te kunnen beleven. Deze sociale technieken combineren ze met gevoelsregels die hen helpen aan zichzelf en anderen uit te leggen hoe succes op hen van toepassing is. Hun 'sociaal vernuft' zit in het feit dat ze zich daarmee niet te zeer vervreemden van hun belangrijke relaties, terwijl (en omdat) ze zich bewust zijn van dergelijke risico's.

Hoofdstuk 7 gaat over de situaties waarin het ervaren van succes uitblijft en dit langdurig de betreffende mensen negatief beïnvloedt. Soms zijn er kleine positieve ervaringen maar die zijn niet genoeg om de ketens van negatieve en gemoedsverzwakkende ervaringen tegen te gaan. De voorgaande hoofdstukken laten zien hoe jongeren, meer en minder ondersteund door anderen, zich weten te ontworstelen aan moeite en achterstelling. Daarin worden de negatieve omstandigheden niet ontkend. Toch kan de misvatting ontstaan dat deze studie een pleidooi is voor hard werken ondanks de omstandigheden met een mooi resultaat als belofte. Die belofte gaat lang niet altijd op. Paul groeide op in Beiroet, verloor zijn vader op zijn zestiende, kon zich vanwege een lichamelijke beperking niet door ontwikkelen als timmerman, en zag geen andere mogelijkheid dan laagbetaald, ongeschoold werk te doen om zijn familie te onderhouden. Lang voelde hij zich slachtoffer van deze omstandigheden. Hij kon niets opbouwen voor zichzelf of voor een potentiële levenspartner, waardoor zijn leven voor zijn gevoel niet naar de volgende fase kon: trouwen en kinderen krijgen. Jaren schipperde hij tussen het nemen van kleine initiatieven die hem

iets konden brengen en een berusting in omstandigheden waar hij weinig aan kon doen. Hicham in Amsterdam worstelde met vergelijkbare gevoelens. Zijn materiële omstandigheden waren minder zwaar dan die van Paul. Er waren meer voorzieningen en hij kon terugvallen op zijn ouders maar de relatie met broers bracht hem vooral onrust, ruzie en afleiding van zijn ambities. Kevin had in Amsterdam vooral een interne strijd die hij voerde met wat hij 'hoorde' te zijn maar hem gevoelsmatig niet lukte. Ouders en leraren spraken hem aan maar bereikten hem niet. Hij raakte gevangen in een put van teleurstelling en wist niet hoe hij eruit kon komen, ook niet als anderen hem de hand reikten. Deze jonge mannen zaten verwikkeld in regelmatige interacties van afmatting, afleiding en ondermijning. Hun vermogens om hun emoties en ideeën te reguleren of een constructieve plek te geven leken ontoereikend. Langdurige negatieve emotionele energie was een belangrijk gevolg van onder andere deze interactionele omstandigheden.

Gebaseerd op de beschrijvingen en analyses in hoofdstuk 3 tot en met 7, kom ik in hoofdstuk 8 tot een conceptualisering van het ervaren van succes. De *boosting*-component is een tijdelijk gevoel van voldoening en overwinning als jongeren iets moois voor elkaar krijgen. Het geeft emotionele en lichamelijke energie om initiatief te nemen. De *elevating*-component helpt jongeren zich te verheffen boven hun nadelige omstandigheden, in cognitieve en emotionele zin. Ze maken verbindingen tussen wat er gebeurt in het moment en wat ze graag in hun toekomst zien gebeuren. Deze component is van langduriger aard dan een *boost*; het is een verankerde vastberadenheid. De *grounding*-component van succeservaringen geeft jongeren het gevoel dat ze ergens bij horen. Deze component bestaat uit basale gevoelens van het recht te hebben om te bestaan, en de behoefte tot erkenning daarvan. Dit komt tot uitdrukking in stabiele emotionele toestanden en in stevig en positief ingebed zijn in sociale netwerken. Er zit een spanning tussen de *elevating-* en *grounding*-componenten. Het verheven worden boven je omstandigheden betreft namelijk het verder komen in het leven. Jongeren ontwikkelen nieuwe of uitgebreidere ideeën over hoe ver ze het kunnen schoppen. *Grounding*, het ergens geaard zijn, gaat juist over ergens bij horen (*belonging*). In hun ontwikkeling kunnen jongeren dus in loyaliteitsconflicten komen als de plek waar ze heen willen betekent dat ze iets (de buurt, hun vrienden, gewoonten etc.) achter moeten laten. De mate waarin jongeren blijvend succes kunnen ervaren, hangt af van hoe ze deze spanningen voor zichzelf oplossen of ermee om leren gaan.

In hoofdstuk 9 analyseer ik hoe jongerenwerkers en andere (professionele) begeleiders van betekenis zijn in de moeizaamheden en successen van jongeren. De maatschappelijke kwetsbaarheid van jongeren wordt onder andere geken-

merkt door een teveel aan verzwakkende interactierituelen. Op verschillende manieren worden ze door leeftijdsgenoten, volwassenen en zichzelf ondermijnd, afgeleid en afgemat. In emotioneel opzicht zorgt dat voor energietekort, vermijding van initiatief en in sommige gevallen negatieve jacht op emotionele energie. Onrechtvaardigheid in de samenleving uit zich door deze jongeren aan teveel verzwakkende interactierituelen bloot te stellen. Constructieve rituelen bieden op verschillende manieren tegenwicht tegen deze verzwakkende rituelen. Ik onderscheid herstellende, animerende en bevestigende rituelen.

Herstellende rituelen zijn interacties waarbij jongerenwerkers proberen om de rust en orde te herstellen. Wanneer jongeren rusteloos of bezorgd zijn, proberen jongerenwerkers hen te 'grounden,' hen in contact te brengen met zichzelf en de werkelijkheid. Daarnaast dragen ze bij aan zinvolle contacten met leeftijdgenoten en de bredere omgeving. Animerende rituelen gaan om het op gang brengen van 'momentum,' dat wil zeggen het genereren van energie om een proces op gang of in versnelling te brengen. Wanneer jongeren apathisch lijken en de hoop verloren hebben, kunnen jongerenwerkers ingrijpen en hun kijk op de omstandigheden een positieve wending geven. Dit heroriënteert de jongeren op hun gewenste doelen. Bevestigende rituelen zijn ontmoetingen waarin jongerenwerkers het reeds bestaande momentum koesteren en voeden. Er zijn herkenbare relaties tussen de typen rituelen en de componenten van succeservaringen. Herstellende rituelen hebben vooral *grounding* effecten, animerende rituelen vooral *boosting* effecten, en bevestigende rituelen *elevating* effecten. Maar ze zijn niet strikt aan elkaar gebonden. De verschillende effecten zijn terug te vinden in alle drie de typen rituelen. Belangrijk is de herhaalde facilitering van deze rituelen omdat die bijdraagt aan het steeds meer ervaren van succes, en daarmee de erkenning van eigen kunnen en mogelijkheden, het verbonden zijn, stabiliteit voelen, en vooruit komen in het leven. Deze duurzame effecten zijn echter niet vanzelfsprekend. Ze lijken goeddeels afhankelijk van hoe constellaties van regelmatige interactierituelen meer verzwakkend of versterkend inspelen op koersen en activiteiten van jongeren.

Er zijn jongerenwerkers die bijzonder positieve bijdragen leveren aan de strijd van jongeren om succes. Dat zit met name in het herkennen van verzwakkende en versterkende interactierituelen in het dagelijks leven van de jongeren. Daarin ontmoedigen ze de verzwakkende interacties terwijl ze de versterkende interacties aanmoedigen. Verder maken ondersteunende professionals een verschil door zelf versterkende interactierituelen te initiëren. Daarbij kunnen ze zich heel prominent opstellen of juist op de achtergrond opereren. Ze kunnen direct ingrijpen, of op indirecte manieren beïnvloeden.

Jongerenwerkers ontwikkelen deze behendigheid op tenminste drie manieren. Ten eerste, blootstelling aan of onderdompeling in de wereld van de jongeren met wie ze werken. Ten tweede, een gerichtheid op inventiviteit. Jonge-

renwerkers accepteren jongeren zoals ze zijn, maar ze hebben idealen en ideeën voor hoe ze hun levenskwaliteit zouden kunnen verbeteren. Ze gebruiken actief hun verbeelding en 'zien' wat er nog niet is en proberen jongeren daarin te inspireren en mee te nemen. Ten derde, ontwikkelen jongerenwerkers een beroepsverhaal. Door ervaring en uitwisseling met collega's komen ze tot conclusies over 'waar ze het voor doen.' Dit geeft hen kaders waarbinnen ze verschillende ontwikkelingen in de samenleving en bij hun deelnemers interpreteren en betekenis geven. Dit helpt vooral in moeizame perioden en situaties om motivatie en koers te houden.

In de conclusie beantwoord ik de hoofdvragen van deze studie en schets ik implicaties voor wat dat kan betekenen voor de bejegening van jongeren die op verschillende manieren worstelen met hun omstandigheden. De achterstand en kwetsbaarheid is geladen met negatieve emoties en ervaringen. Ze verkeren in verzwakkende emotionele dynamieken. Dan heeft het weinig zin om hen van de 'juiste informatie' te voorzien. Er is eerst aandacht en erkenning nodig voor hun beleving van dagelijkse situaties en wat dat met hen doet. Om op een beter spoor te komen, hebben ze andere ervaringen nodig, waarmee ze geleidelijk positievere gevoelens ontwikkelen. Mettertijd kan dat bijdragen aan optimistischere gedachten en het openstaan voor nuttige informatie.

Als jongerenwerkers versterkende rituelen faciliteren, worden verschillende accenten relevant, afhankelijk van de context. In Beiroet waren onder de deelnemers dynamieken van uitsluiting en vermijding dominant. Daar zetten begeleiders in op herstellende rituelen waarbij reflectie en vernieuwd contact met 'de ander' centraal stond. Het stellen van grenzen werd een expliciet thema en dat kreeg door spel en reflectie een andere invulling die door alle betrokkenen als constructiever werd ervaren. De materiële omstandigheden waren in Beiroet doorgaans troostelozer dan in Amsterdam. Het leek aan alles veel zwaarder om in Beiroet maatschappelijk kwetsbaar te zijn dan in Amsterdam. Toch was er een vergelijkbaarheid in hoe jongeren in beide steden over hun situatie spraken. Ze gebruikten er vergelijkbare woorden voor en de emoties leken op elkaar. Wel leek in Beiroet de frustratie soms heviger en de apathie soms drukkender. In die omstandigheden kunnen we herstellende rituelen zien als voorwerk voor de animerende en bevestigende rituelen. In Amsterdam leek voor die laatste af en toe wat meer ruimte, hoewel het ook afhangt van het soort activiteit. Een kickbokstraining in Beiroet is minstens zo animerend als in Amsterdam.

Door het ervaren van succes voelen en hebben deelnemers in toenemende mate controle over de uitkomst van situaties en ze hebben een beslissende invloed op de loop van eigen ontwikkeling. Dit is het resultaat van *gelokaliseerde, interactionele en belichaamde praktijken die positief zijn geladen met de onderling genereerde emoties en energie van de deelnemers*. Dit soort inzichten vindt te

weinig erkenning in de belangrijke instellingen die verantwoordelijk zijn voor begeleiding, onderwijs en welzijn van jongeren. Daarom zijn de implicaties van deze conclusie enorm. Zowel beleidscategorieën als populaire noties zijn teveel gebaseerd op (verbeelding over) etnische labels als het gaat om verwachtingen ten aanzien van waartoe mensen in staat zijn. Impliciet en ook expliciet koppelen we de waarschijnlijkheid van het succes van individuen aan de groep waarbij we hen plaatsen, veelal gebaseerd op externe, fysieke kenmerken. Maar culturele eigenschappen en etnische praktijken zijn slechts onderdeel van de dynamiek van interacties. Daarin kunnen deze zaken heel hoog opspelen of volledig op de achtergrond geraken. Ze bepalen niet het succes dat mensen ervaren en bereiken. Bepalend zijn hoe de routinematige interacties samengesteld zijn; hoe sterk daarin herstellende, animerende, en bevestigende dynamieken, danwel ondermijnende, afmattende en afleidende rituelen voorkomen. Deze bepalende invloed verklaart ook waarom financiële armoede of gebrek *op zichzelf staand* niet aanhoudende kwetsbaarheid hoeft te veroorzaken. Als de dagelijkse interacties op positieve manieren bijdragen aan het gemoed en de motivatie van jongeren, blijken ook zij succes te kunnen ervaren.

De focus op interactierituelen impliceert tevens een kritiek op de dominantie van de eenzijdige nadruk op cognitie als determinant voor succes. In jongerenwerkrituelen worden deelnemers cognitief, emotioneel en lichamelijk betrokken. *Boosting*, *elevation* en *grounding* hebben allen sterke emotionele en fysiologische aspecten. Maatschappelijk kwetsbare en benadeelde jongeren kunnen succesvol worden als ze toegang hebben tot positieve ervaringen die deze aspecten voeden. Jongerenwerkers zijn in die zin een voorbeeld voor andere professionals omdat ze (de een bewuster dan de ander) hun deelnemers toegang bieden tot en meenemen in versterkende interacties die ze op andere plekken te weinig vinden.

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Street corner work

De kracht van wij samen DOCK dock.nl

IJsterk Welzijn

welzijn Divers

contourdetwern

Combiwel

ROC TILBURG

ROC TOP

KRAJICEK foundation

Nederlands Jeugd instituut

WEST BEWEEGT

SiA Nationaal Regieorgaan Praktijkgericht Onderzoek

Socially vulnerable young people in Amsterdam and Beirut experience hardships, but also successes. This comparative study offers a new perspective on being underprivileged. It documents how young people overcome obstacles and what social professionals can do to foster such processes.

Success in this book is not a set of external criteria or an idea. It is an experience. Both in Amsterdam and in Beirut, Abdallah has followed young people for years in their education, work, sports, and creative activities. He came to characterize *constructive interactions* as a main context for young people to experience three components of success: *boosts, elevation,* and *grounding.* Combinations of these experiences have important restorative effects for young people who suffer from an abundance of adversity and discouragement. The analysis employs concepts of sociological studies of emotions, such as interaction rituals, emotion management, and embodied dispositions to clarify how emotion, experience and energy act as driving forces in young people's activities and development.

Sebastian Abdallah is a lecturer and researcher of social work and community development at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. He has years of experience in youth work and higher education.