



# Connected in Cairo: Growing up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East (Public Cultures of the Middle East and North Africa)

By Mark Allen Peterson

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For members of Cairo's upper classes, cosmopolitanism is a form of social capital, deployed whenever they acquire or consume transnational commodities, or goods that are linked in the popular imagination to other, more "modern" places. In a series of thickly described and carefully contextualized case studies?of Arabic children's magazines, Pokmon, private schools and popular films, coffee shops and fast-food restaurants?Mark Allen Peterson describes the social practices that create class identities. He traces these processes from childhood into adulthood, examining how taste and style intersect with a changing educational system and economic liberalization. Peterson reveals how uneasy many cosmopolitan Cairenes are with their new global identities, and describes their efforts to root themselves in the local through religious, nationalist, or linguistic practices.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"This book is... a valuable contribution for scholars in a variety of social sciences who have taken the wave of revolutions in the Arab world as their subject matter, and for those who will be paying close attention to how these elites in Cairo and elsewhere respond to existential threats to their structural privileges."

?Anthropological Quarterly

"Connected in Cairo provides scholars and students of globalization, class, and modernity with a timely and much needed glimpse of the struggles, negotiations, and challenges that face elite men and women in their attempts to materialize specific tastes, visions, and ways of being." ?Middle East Journal

"A beautifully nuanced account of the interpenetrations of global and local media practices, other consumption practices, and the people for whom they are relevant.... A model for the use of ethnographic work for understanding how and why media practices have the impact they do on the lives of their consumers, producers and critics. It is a very smart and sophisticated book." ?Bambi B. Schieffelin, New York University

"Connected in Cairo is not simply a surface examination tossed from an ivory tower in the clouds like so many recent news reports. Peterson explores multiple stratum of Egyptian society, from the cab drivers, to the half-Egyptians, to the college students paying thousands of pounds in tuition, to lovers of popular religious preacher Amr Khaled." ?Egypt Daily News

"Excellent... original... sophisticated." ?Christa Salamandra, City University of New York

"Overall, this book makes an important contribution to the growing literature on affluent class formations in the region and their particular role as mediators of both the discourses and the material circulation characteristic of globalization. It also brings a fresh perspective to discussions of mass media in the Middle East." ?Sociology of Islam

"[B]ecause of its clear writing and broad engagement with globalization, Peterson's book should appeal to a far-reaching audience including anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, and students of interdisciplinary, cultural, or gender studies." ?International Journal of Middle East Studies

"[T]he argument... is laid out here in a style so clear and unaffected that it might serve as a model for good academic writing...I would recommend the book for any general course in Middle East studies, anthropology, media studies, or globalization." ?Contemporary Islam

"There is much to this study that is enlightening. Peterson relates his points at the pace of an experienced lecturer cognizant of the degree to which his readers, especially undergraduates, require a steady dose of repetition. This would be an enjoyable book to teach, theoretically sophisticated, albeit a bit jargon-laden, but accessible." ?Intnl. Journal of African Historical Studies

"Starting from phenomena that are readily apparent to anyone visiting Cairo, Mark Allen Peterson applies an anthropologist's eye to scout out their dual link to globalism and contemporary Egyptian identity. His analysis is not restricted to the Internet and social media, but covers a range of commodities and activities." ?The Jordan Times

"Peterson offers a deeply engaging and timely analysis of the complex socio-cultural, religious and economic trajectories that have shaped young upper-class Egyptians in the decade prior to the 2011 uprising.... Peterson makes a unique and insightful contribution to Arab cultural studies and anthropology." ?Anthropological Notebooks

"Connected in Cairo provides an accessible and instructive reading of the everyday construction and negotiation of what is oftentimes glossed as globalization, and will be of value to students and academics interested in the importance of social imagination in the making of local worlds in global times." ?Journal of African History

"Offers a strong contribution to the anthropology of the Middle East, global studies, political economy of neoliberalism, and to scholarship on urban life and class and gender relations in the contemporary Global South.... [A] wonderful teaching tool." ?Paul Amar, University of California, Santa Barbara

About the Author

Mark Allen Peterson is Professor of Anthropology and International Studies at Miami University. He is author of Anthropology and Mass Communication: Media and Myth in the New Millennium and co-author of International Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Global Issues.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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