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Egypt: “wasta” is like cred, if you have it, you can get stuff done

it’s all about who you know

the connections you have are important

if you don’t have a connection with somebody, might need presents

“Cairo is like Athens on acid”

One thing about Egypt, (sim. other Arab countries) people like to make you happy

people won’t tell you outright if something is not doable

learned to tell by the expression on faces something isn’t really doable but doesn’t want to say

also, very hospitable, but in a different fashion from what we’re used to

In Egypt, as in many other countries, considered more desirable to be paler

Egyptian military not too competent (thought Mexican tourists were ISIS, firebombed)

but other than that, Egypt is highly safe; “Cairo is safer than San Francisco”

Mubarak replaced by el-Sisi; as typical, likely a transition from dictatorship to dictatorship

(Abdel Fattah) el-Sisi seems to be good at putting people in prison

Generally, Americans will be followed to keep tabs on the safety of the American

Mostly problematic because the police escorts, on a power trip, would harass Egyptian friends