VIOLENCE AGAINST REFUGEE WOMEN AND MITIGATION PROGRAMS:
HIGHLIGHTING THE PERSPECTIVES OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 2018

DEDICATION PAGE

This thesis is dedicated to my family: my wonderful parents, Nabil and Aline, my always
supportive and loving sister, Nicole and my partner in crime, my brother, Michel.

مهما كان الإنسان فقيراً فإن كانت لديه أسرة فهو غني

This work is also dedicated to all the incredible women and men who participated in my
research; this accomplishment is yours as much as it is mine.
I hope you find peace.

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ABSTRACT

Refugee women and girls are among those most vulnerable to violence. This thesis examines how Syrian refugees view efforts to prevent and address such violence in their host community. Through interviews with both NGO staff and Syrian refugees in Lebanon in 2017, the research highlights the context of violence against refugee women, examines what refugees consider violence against women to be, outlines services available, and discusses the views of refugees hesitating in availing themselves of the services such organizations offer, focusing on cultural norms, priorities, privacy, and lack of trust of the system. Nevertheless, this research shows that despite such hesitations, participants also recognize that these organizations are providing safe spaces for women and girls and contributing to changing patriarchal attitudes which are at the root of violence against women everywhere.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ABAAD	Abaad Resource Center for Gender Equality
CMR	Clinical Management of Rape
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
(S)GBV	(Sexual and) Gender Based Violence
GBVIMS	Gender Based Violence Information Management System
GoL	Government of Lebanon
ISF	Internal Security Forces
KAFA	Kafa (enough) Violence and Exploitation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGNs	Practical Gender Needs
PSS	Psychosocial support
RDFL	Rassemblement Démocratique des Femmes Libanaises
SGNs	Strategic Gender Needs
SLPS	Syrian Law on Personal Status
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAW	Violence Against Women
WGSS	Women and Girls Safe Spaces
WHO	World Health Organization

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my supervisor, Dr. Theresa Ulicki. Thank you so much for your constant support and advice. You were my anchor throughout this entire degree, and you were always there when I needed reassurance and encouragement. Thank you for your patience and wisdom and thank you for agreeing to be my mentor throughout this journey. I will be forever grateful.

To Dr. Ian McAllister and Dr. Pauline Gardiner-Barber. Thank you for being part of my committee. Your insightful feedback was crucial to the improvement of this thesis.

To Nicole Drysdale, the undergraduate and graduate secretary of the IDS Department. You were my first window into the IDS program at Dalhousie, and after the very first phone conversation we had, I knew that I had found an ally in you. Thank you for being patient with me through all of the paranoid inquiries I had about dealing with the registration and administrative processes, and for calming me down when I was panicking about my courses and research. Although I doubted my abilities many times throughout my time at Dalhousie, you never did. The warmth you bring to the department is unparalleled, and I hope you know how much every single student appreciates your kindness and all that you do.

Thank you to the IDS Department and the Faculty of Graduate Studies for the funding I was awarded. Completing my degree would have been a lot more difficult without it.

To my participants. Your resilience is an inspiration to everyone in this world. Thank you for trusting me with your stories; I hope I did them justice. Thank you to the staff of ABAAD, the Danish Refugee Council and KAFA for taking time out of their busy days to chat with me about their organizations. A special thank you goes to the wonderful staff of ABAAD who allowed me to observe the awareness raising sessions they offer and helped me get in contact with potential Syrian nationals to interview. Thank you so much to Roula El-Masri and Hala Jamil (Gender Program Coordinators at ABAAD); you are genuinely two of the most incredible women I have ever met, and the work you do is invaluable to everyone in Lebanon. Thank you for helping me with this project and for showing me that we can make a difference in this world.

To the friends I made on this journey. You all know who you are and know that I carry you in my heart. Completing this thesis would have been a lot less colourful and enjoyable without you there. I can't wait to see what all of you will accomplish.

Finally, the most important thank you goes to my family. Everything I have done in my life so far and will ever do, I owe to you. The love, support and guidance you show and give me every day is priceless. I hope you know how much I value it, and that I never take it for granted. Every day, in everything that you do, you show me what it means to be a positive force in this world. And I only hope I can make you proud. As an extension of that, I would like to send the biggest thank you to my mother who drove me all over Lebanon and acted as my unofficial research assistant while I was doing my field work. I would not have been able to do this without you. For everything you do, I will never be able to repay you.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The United Nations defines violence against women (VAW) as any act resulting in "physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women and girls" committed specifically because of the victim's gender. It includes physical violence (such as slapping, beating, kicking), sexual violence (such as rape, transactional sex, and sexual coercion), emotional abuse (intimidation, humiliation, insults, threats), and controlling behaviour (isolation of a person from families and loved ones, monitoring of movements, restrictions on employment, education or financial resources) (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017; United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2003). These different types of violence often co-occur. VAW can be committed by a partner, family members, or strangers and can be committed by both women and men. VAW falls under what is called gender-based violence (GBV). What distinguishes GBV from other types of violence is that it targets individuals specifically because of their gender (UNHCR, 2003). Although GBV and VAW are often used interchangeably, they are different. GBV targets can be men, women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community; VAW is a type of GBV and is specific only to women. VAW is one of the most prominent human rights violations affecting 1 in 3 girls worldwide (WHO, 2017). Although, it is widespread and exists across social, cultural and ethnic classes, female refugees are especially vulnerable to this type of violence, with research identifying high rates of VAW in refugee communities across the world (UNHCR, 2003). This is largely due to their displacement experience, which puts them in environments where a lack of respect for human rights exists. Moreover, as many studies have demonstrated, living in difficult circumstances (poverty, minority status, disruption of support systems and society, problems accessing food, water and shelter) is a stressor that contributes to VAW (Tappis et al., 2016). Programs have been implemented by various organizations to attempt to combat this violence; however, there is limited

information available regarding the perspectives of refugees themselves on these initiatives.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Lebanon is a small country in the Middle East hosting an estimated 1.5 million refugees (including Syrians, Palestinians, and others) – the highest per capita refugee population in the world (GoL & UN, 2017). Since coming to Lebanon, Syrian communities are seeing a significant increase in child marriage, sexual violence, and domestic violence (GoL & UN, 2017). Thus, in cooperation with the UNHCR, many NGOs working in Lebanon have implemented GBV programs that target Syrian refugee women in an effort to mitigate this pervasive issue. However, there has been a limited amount of studies conducted in the country that explore how Syrian refugees view these programs and whether they would utilize the GBV resources available to them or not.

1.2 RESEARCH GOAL

This study seeks to explore the perspectives that refugees have on VAW in general and their views on the existence and effectiveness of VAW intervention and prevention programs. The scope of this research is both narrow and broad. It is narrow as only one case study – that of Syrian refugees in Lebanon – is examined. However, it is broad inasmuch as it will raise broader questions about VAW programs that are aimed at refugees globally and why they might be underused by refugee populations.

1.2.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

Using the case study of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, my research will address the question: *How do Syrian refugees view efforts to prevent and address violence against refugee women in their Lebanese host community?*

Sub-questions:

1. What do Syrian refugees consider VAW to be?

2. What are the GBV programs available to Syrian refugees in Lebanon? Are they being used?

3. What are the factors that encourage/discourage Syrian refugees from resorting to GBV programs?

My research will try to argue that the Syrian nationals in Lebanon are trying to maintain their culture and hold on to their societal norms, even those that oppress women and restrict their ability to stand up to VAW. Moreover, worries that haunt all victims of VAW, not just refugee women, such as economic dependence, fear of retaliation and feelings of shame make them hesitant to report their situations and change them. However, due to their exposure to GBV programs, some members of the community are welcoming changes that promote a more equal society where women are not subjugated to men.

1.2.2 IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

The importance of this research lies in the fact that it gives refugees themselves, both women and men, a voice. It highlights the perspectives of people living in these conditions and, thus, potentially could help strengthen of programs to combat VAW. Intervention and prevention programs fighting against VAW, specifically aimed at refugees, do exist but they are underused. My research suggests why this is so and what could better help encourage women to utilize these facilities when they fall victims to violence. If this is achieved, these initiatives will become more effective, and funds will be used in a more efficient way by organizations and have more positive effects on the ground. Highlighting the perspective of individuals living in these conditions will help guide countries that are hosting them to understand the types of problems that exist in their

communities and the resources needed by refugees who are trying to start a new life. Conducting this study in Lebanon is appropriate due to the concentration of refugees in the country – the Lebanese government estimates that 1 million Syrian refugees were residing in Lebanon in 2017 – making it easier to get into contact with them and examine available programs first hand. Moreover, due to my Lebanese origins, conducting this research in Lebanon would be appropriate since I understand the language, customs, and culture of the country allowing me to communicate and connect with potential participants more readily.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 DATA COLLECTION

Research was conducted in Lebanon between June and August 2017, at NGO headquarters in Beirut, and in the villages of Bedias, located in the district of Sour (Southern Lebanon), and Aramoun, located in the district of Keserwan (Mount Lebanon). I utilized qualitative research methods, relying primarily on semi-structured interviews (Figure 1).

The research question seeks to understand the perspectives refugees themselves hold on various VAW programs. The research was thus separated into two different phases; the first involved interviewing staff members of organizations fighting against VAW, within the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon. I conducted semi-structured interviews with the GBV program coordinators at three NGOs: the ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality (ABAAD), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and KAFA (enough) Violence and Exploitation (KAFA) – each of which has implemented programs to help Syrian women experiencing violence in the country. I identified these individuals by emailing the directors of these NGOs who then put me in contact with the GBV program coordinators of their respective organizations. Although I would have liked to interview case workers from every organization as well, I was only able to interview a case

worker from ABAAD, as staff members of the other two organizations could not find a time to meet with me. In total, four NGO workers were interviewed: three program coordinators, and one case worker.
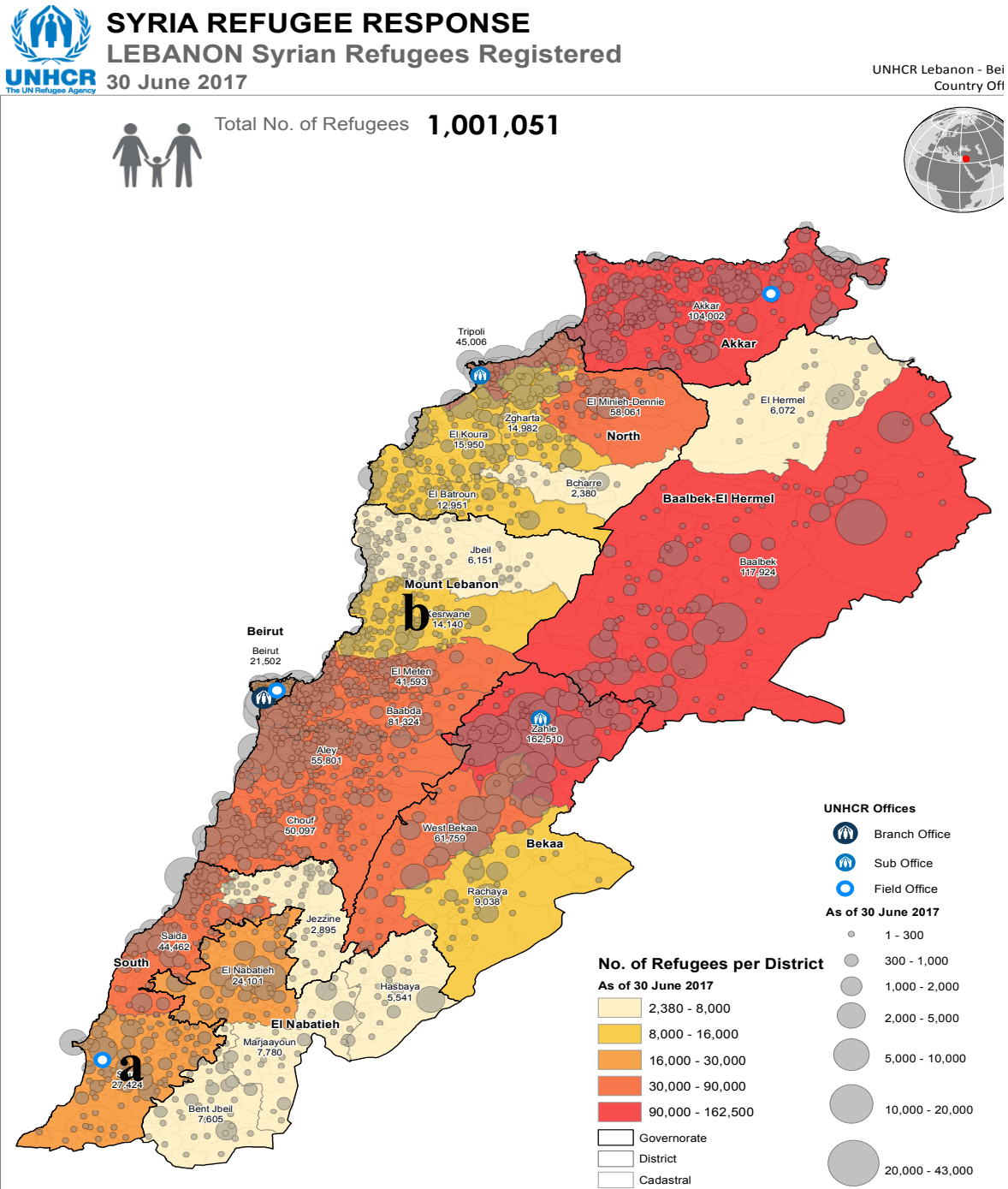
Figure 1: Concentration of Registered Syrian refugees across Lebanon and areas of Lebanon where interviews with refugees were conducted: a) Bedias, and b) Aramoun (UNHCR, 2017)

The second phase involved interviewing Syrian refugees. Twenty-one Syrian refugees – 10 men and 11 women – were interviewed ranging in age from 21 to 58 with an average age of 32 (Average M = 30; Average W = 35). All the names given to refugees in this thesis are pseudonyms, not the actual names of participants. For a detailed list of refugees that includes demographic data, please see Appendix A. According to the UNHCR, a refugee is "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group" (UNHCR, 2017). This definition was used to identify refugees residing in Lebanon. Due to limited time and resources available to conduct this research, this small sample size was used, as it is manageable and feasible. Moreover, a small sample allowed for in-depth analysis of each interview, which is necessary in order to understand participants' perceptions and understanding of VAW and the programs available to combat this issue.

Snowball sampling and convenience sampling were used in order to approach potential participants. When using snowball sampling, participants are accessed through information provided by a previous participant: "informants refer the researcher to other informants, who are contacted by the researcher and then refer her or him to yet other informants, and so on." (Noy, 2008, p. 330). Snowball sampling is the most popular method of sampling when conducting this kind of qualitative research (Noy, 2008). The Syrian refugee community is very diverse and includes individuals from not only various religious groups and social-economic classes, but also various ethnicities. Due to limited resources and the difficulty in identifying and accessing individuals who belong to one group or another, the research was unable to take into account all of these parameters in the study. Thus, convenience sampling was used. This technique involves collecting information from participants who are easily accessible (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Consequently, the final report cannot claim to be fully representative of the views held by Syrian refugees as a whole; rather, the research seeks to identify and explore a sample of perspectives that have been excluded in previous studies, in order to acquire at least some insights as to how Syrian refugees appear to view VAW and the services available to mitigate it. Previous studies similar to the one being conducted here have tended to focus on interviewing those responsible for the programs and those working with people utilizing them, but not refugees themselves who could utilize these programs.

The help of ABAAD, as well as local Syrians was enlisted in order to establish initial contact with potential refugee participants. Eleven women and five men were interviewed in the small village of Bedias before an awareness raising session conducted by ABAAD on VAW and VAW programs available to refugees in Lebanon. The interviews took place next to the community center where the information session was taking place. Of those interviewed, three women and three men were residents of Bedias, four women and one man were residents of Borj Rahhal, two women were residents of Tayr Debba, and two women were residents of Tebine. Borj Rahhal, Tayr Debba and Tebnine are villages neighbouring Bedias in the South of Lebanon. One Syrian man, who is an employee of one of the NGOs with which I did interviews, was also interviewed[1]; he is a resident of Beirut. Five men were interviewed in the village of Aramoun and were contacted using snowball sampling after a local Syrian refugee directed me to people that would be willing to sit with me. These interviews took place at the participants' homes. Interviews were conducted in Arabic when speaking with refugees and in Arabic and English when interviewing NGO workers. The social ecological theoretical framework used in this research involves the examination of individual, interpersonal, community, institutional, and policy levels of interaction

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[1] Similar to other participants, I will use a pseudonym instead of his real name when quoting him in the study.

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in the formation of perspectives; interviewing organization staff and refugees allows the exploration of all of these different levels of interaction.

1.3.2 PROFILE OF ORGANIZATIONS

ABAAD – Resource Center for Gender Equality (ABAAD)

ABAAD – Resource Center for Gender Equality (ABAAD) is a non-profit organization founded in 2011 by Ghida Anani.[2] The organization is not politically or religiously affiliated. The NGO's mandate is to address and mitigate GBV issues in Lebanon, as well as achieve sustainable social and economic development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region by promoting equality, protection, and empowerment of women, through legal, psychological, and social support as well as public advocacy (ABAAD, 2018b).[3] In 2012, when the high influx of Syrian refugees into the country began, ABAAD started targeting Syrian refugees with the programs it was already offering and introduced initiatives to reach larger segments of the population. Although the organization's head office is located in Beirut, it has 11 centers and works all over the country.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a non-profit non-governmental organization founded in 1956 in response to the European refugee crises, which began after the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Today, it works in over 30 countries around the world fulfilling its mandate by providing directly to conflict-affected populations including refugees, internally displaced peoples (IDPs), and host communities.[4] The DRC began operating in Lebanon in 2004 focusing on aiding

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[2] For more information on Ghida Anani, please visit http://whoisshe.lau.edu.lb/expert-profile/ghida-abdallah-anani
[3] For more information on ABAAD, please visit www.abaadmena.org
[4] For more information on the DRC, please visit www.drc.ngo

and protecting Palestinian refugees, Iraqi refugees, and migrant workers. With the influx of Syrians into Lebanon, the NGO expanded its mandate to include those refugees coming from Syria. The objective of its programmes is "to contribute to preserving the quality of asylum of the displaced populations in Lebanon and to prepare for durable solutions" (DRC Lebanon, 2016, p.2). This includes food distribution, non-food item distribution, cash assistance, as well as protection programming for children, persons with specials needs, and GBV cases (DRC, 2015); thus, unlike ABAAD and KAFA (below), the DRC does not work solely on addressing GBV, but includes it among other services it provides. The DRC's main office is located in Beirut, but it operates all over the country.

KAFA (enough) Violence and Exploitation (KAFA)

KAFA (enough) Violence and Exploitation (KAFA) is a Lebanese non-profit, secular, non-political civil society organization, established in 2005 by a group of human rights activists and multi-disciplinary professionals working in the country. KAFA's work aims at eradicating GBV and the exploitation of woman and children by advocating for legal reforms, policy changes, and empowering survivors through social, psychological, and legal support (KAFA, 2010).[5] When Syrian refugees began coming into Lebanon, KAFA opened up a second center in Chtaura (Beqaa Governorate), where most unofficial Syrian refugee camps are concentrated, in addition to its head office in Beirut.

1.3.3 ETHICAL ISSUES

Any research that examines gender issues and violence requires special efforts to ensure the comfort and well-being of participants. Due to the sensitive nature of these topics, special attention must be paid to the physical and psychological health of both the participants and the

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[5] For more information on KAFA, please visit www.kafa.org.lb

researcher. To minimize any risk to those participating in the study, the recommendations of the World Health Organization were followed throughout the research process (WHO, 2001). These briefly include: conducting the interview in private, framing the interview as one assessing women's health to avoid suspicion of potential abusers, interviewing only one person per household, changing topics if the interview is interrupted, maintaining confidentiality and avoiding writing any notes identifying the participant, stopping the interview if the participant is in distress, and referring women to GBV resources in the community (WHO, 2001).

The aim of this study was to explore refugees' views on violence against women and the programs that are in place to help women who have had such experiences. Participants who were interviewed may have experienced violence in their lives; however, I targeted the population at large, not specifically refugees who are survivors of violence. It is important to remember that at no point during the interview did I ask refugees about their personal experiences of gender-based violence. However, due to the nature of this research, information disclosing abuse was revealed to me. When this occurred, I made the participant aware of programs that work in addressing physical and emotional abuse, and, if she agreed, directed her to one of the NGO staff member present at the community center where the awareness session was taking place. No child abuse was revealed to me; however, if it were, I would have reported back to ABAAD – the organization through which I got in contact with participants – and consulted with them on how to proceed.

Some research has shown that many women find it useful to talk about their experiences with violence (WHO, 2001; Edwards et al., 2009). However, discussing sensitive topics such as VAW might make participants feel uneasy and might trigger some memories of violence that both the women and men have endured or someone they loved has endured. When participants were not comfortable answering a question, I did not pressure them or push them to get an answer, and

simply moved on to a question they were comfortable answering; this only happened once with one of the men who did not want to give me his definition of VAW. Moreover, if I had felt that the participant was on the verge of having an emotional or physical reaction to the questions that were being asked, I would have ended the interview immediately, but in a positive way; fortunately, this did not occur. I also made it clear to the participants that they have the right to end the interview at any time. I made counselling services available to all participants, as ABAAD employees were present in the town where I was conducting the interview. I also gave all participants a card with the number of ABAAD so they could call to discuss any issue they may be facing regarding GBV. All of this information was made clear to participants when getting consent from them to participate in the study prior to the interview. As recommended by the WHO, the questions were asked in a supportive and non-judgmental manner – see Appendix B for questions. Interviews were conducted in a private setting – next to the community center where the information session conducted by ABAAD was taking place, as well as in the homes of the participants. Confidentiality was continuously ensured throughout the interview process. Minimal risk was associated with interviews I conducted with staff of NGOs; however, confidentiality was similarly ensured for them.

1.4 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The thesis will be organized in the following way: this first chapter introduced the research, research question and the objectives of the research, as well as why this research is important. Then, it went through the methods used to obtain the data and the ethical issues that were taken into consideration. Chapter 2 goes over the two theoretical frameworks used to analyze the data, social ecological theory and gender and development theory. Chapter 3 is a background chapter that provides context by introducing the Syrian crisis briefly, giving an overview of the refugee

situation within Lebanon, the country's policies regarding refugees, and briefly exploring the conditions that refugees are living in in Lebanon. Chapter 4 provides the definition of GBV/VAW internationally and explores the laws associated with VAW within the Lebanese and Syrian contexts. Chapter 5 explores VAW in refugee settings, as well as VAW in Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon (including the perceptions refugees hold on GBV). Chapter 6 examines GBV programs that exist in Lebanon specifically, and Chapter 7 highlights the outlook Syrian refugee men and women appeared to have regarding these programs; finally, Chapter 8 summarizes the research and examines some of its limitations.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will look at the theories that I will use to examine the perspectives refugees hold on VAW and programs that are in place to help survivors. For this thesis, I will use a combination of the social ecological theory and gender and development theory in order to get a better understating of VAW within the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon. This chapter will outline what these two approaches are, why they are useful for this topic and will highlight the main criticisms of the theories.

2.1 SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL THEORY (SE)

In order to understand why people I am interviewing hold the views they do, I will draw on social ecological (SE) theory. SE theory, also called the socio-ecological framework (SEF), originated in science based ecological theories that state that an organism is affected by everything that is found and that is occurring in its ecosystem, and in turn, it can influence said ecosystem. From this theory, the SE model suggests that to best understand an issue, one must look at its influences within the different levels of its ecosystem. The theory was first used by Belsky (1980) to examine the etiology of child maltreatment and was later applied by many theorists such as Carlson (1984), Dutton (1988), and Edleson and Tolman (1992) to examine domestic violence. This approach describes people's behaviours and views as an amalgamation of different factors in their environment; individuals are influenced by the interplay of five different levels of their life. The first is the individual level; it refers to a person's sex, gender, age, social economic status, and personal history (Oetzel & Druan, 2004). For the purpose of this thesis when looking at perceptions on VAW, events, such as whether a person has been abused as a child or adult, or has lived in a violent environment or not, influence their views on the issue. The second is the interpersonal level, also called the family level, which includes an individual's social network and interactions

with family, friends, and peers (Heise, 1998; Oetzel & Druan, 2004). The power dynamics within these relationships and cultural practices within a family influence the way people view VAW and the programs aimed at ending it. The third is community or the societal level, which normally provides a support system and a sense of belonging to individuals and involves looking at a person's community and their culture (Heise, 1998; Oetzel & Druan, 2004). When the individual and their family interact with the community, they are affected by popular views, cultural beliefs, and practices that shape the way VAW is viewed, and by extension how VAW programs are seen. The fourth is the institutional level of analysis, and it involves looking at organizations and institutions in the country including religious institutions, schools, hospitals, NGOs, etc. For this research, the focus will be on organizations to which women who have experienced violence turn, the staff they employ, and the way these women are treated and viewed. I will also look at organizations that address women's rights and gender equality, and educate the public about VAW, women's issues and gender issues in general and how they interact with government bodies to promote gender equality. Finally, the policy level explores how policies and laws affect the community's view on VAW, which can translate into how organizations and individuals respond to it. These policies and laws can be at the local, state, national and global levels. The five levels of influence are equally important and act from the top down and the bottom up; they all interact and influence each other, thus are interdependent rather than independent from each other.

One concept that will be helpful when looking at the individual level of analysis is intersectionality. Intersectionality describes how gender, sex, ethnicity, age, class, education, religion, cultural background, etc. interact and affect a person's life and views (Moser, 1989). Since I will be looking at views held by both female and male refugees, intersectionality will be important in order to identify possible differences found in views held by men; women; and

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individuals of different religions, ethnicities, education levels, age and socioeconomic classes. Being aware of how these different factors work together to shape a person's life and beliefs is important when examining how refugees view programs aimed at helping women who have experienced VAW.

Critics of the SE theory cite the multiple levels explored by the theory as too numerous and too complex to be useful (Grzywacz & Fuqua, 2000). The subjectivity involved in each level and the amount of information that can be derived at each level risks making conclusions too numerous and too complex which may render them useless; this complexity makes it difficult to delve into each of the five levels of interactions in detail. These criticisms of SE theory are important to keep in mind, and I recognize their validity; however, I still believe that this model is the best one to follow in order to provide better programs for refugees as it highlights the different challenges that women face that could hinder their seeking help if they ever experience violence and provides a more holistic understanding of their experiences.

2.2 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT THEORY (GAD)

In the 1970s, the international community recognized the fact that women's experiences of development differed from that of men's and an approach called Women in Development (WID) was adopted for the implementation of development projects (Moser, 1989; Rathgeber, 1990). At its core, WID can be seen as an extension of modernization theory – the dominant development theory in the 1970s and arguably today – and saw women as an "untapped resource that can provide an economic contribution to development" (Moser, 1989, p.1800). WID "focused on how women could better be integrated into ongoing development initiatives" (Rathgeber, 1990, p.491). This approach highlighted what is called women's triple role in society: women hold a reproductive role (child bearing and caring), productive role (working for income, employment), and

community managing role (cleaning, cooking, caring for the elderly and the sick, managing resources properly) (Momsen, 2004; Moser, 1989). These three roles are also called the triple burden of women since they limit women's abilities and choices especially since reproductive and community work are not recognized or rewarded in society (Moser, 1989). Rathgeber described WID as a "non-confrontational approach [that] avoided questioning the sources and nature of women's subordination and oppression" (1990, p.491). As a response to and a critique of WID, a new approach called Gender and Development (GAD) emerged in the mid 1970s (Momsen, 2004). GAD's theoretical roots can be traced to socialist feminism, which "identified the social construction of production and reproduction as the basis of women's oppression and has a focused attention on the social relations of gender, questioning the validity of roles that have been ascribed to both women and men in different societies" (Rathgeber, 1990, p.494). Thus, GAD focuses on the underlying causes of women's subordination paying close attention to the gender relations that exist between men and women (and all other genders). One of the most obvious changes GAD introduced is the switch from using the word *women* to using *gender*. Gender is defined as the "socially acquired notions of masculinity and femininity… and is crosscut by differences in class, race, ethnicity, religion, and age" (Momsen, 2004, p.2). Important to note is that gender and gender identity do not simply refer to males and females as more than these two genders exist including transgender and non-binary individuals. Gender does not always correlate with the biological or assigned sex of a person at birth. Gender relations refer to the relationships and dynamics that exist between different genders – typically between women and men. This thesis is focusing on heterosexual partnerships; therefore, it will be referencing men and women when talking about gender and gender relations. The switch from *women* to *gender* was done to move away from the thinking that the issues faced by women are due to their biological differences with men (and more

recently, to be inclusive of non-binary gender identities). Biological differences between women and men often contribute to discriminatory social views that are then used to assign specific gender roles, such as that certain household tasks and types of employment ought to be assigned to women or men [6] (Kabeer, 1999; Momsen, 2004, p.2; Nilsson, 2013; Price, 2005). These socially constructed notions of women and men's roles are then taken to be fact or the natural order of things that can never be changed, hence are viewed as the only way of organizing society (Kabeer, 1999; Price, 2005). They become ideals of how the world should be and are used to discriminate against women and oppress them; for example, because women can physically have children, the assumption is that all women want and should have children, and should stay at home to raise them, and, therefore, do not need to get an education (Jaquette, 2017; Nilsson, 2013). GAD makes it clear that women's issues should be looked at in terms of gendered power relations, i.e. the socially constructed norms, roles and relationships between women and men that often systematically subordinate women in society (Moser, 1989).[7] Thus, instead of narrowly focusing on improving the access of women to resources like WID does, GAD recognizes gender inequality as a matter of structural inequality that can only be addressed if the patriarchal social and political structures constraining women are challenged and changed (Chant & Sweetman, 2012; Moser, 1989; Rathgeber, 1990). These discriminations are often translated into laws; "customary and statutory legal systems in many countries […] have been manipulated to disadvantage women" (Rathgeber, 1990, p.495), which is why a key focus of GAD is on strengthening the legal rights of women (Rathgeber, 1990). However, history teaches us that state intervention and bureaucracies cannot eliminate the causes of gender inequality because they are so embedded in culture, therefore

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[6] Gender roles are not consistent around the world and become flexible with the changes introduced by economic development (Momsen, 2004).

[7] Again, as a reminder, gender relations are not only those that occur between men and women and include LGBTQ+ relations, however, this thesis is looking at gender relations within heterosexual partnerships.

a bottom-up struggle through grassroots movements is also necessary (Jaquette, 2017; Molyneux, 1985). GAD does not focus on women specifically but on the "social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations to women and men" (Rathgeber, 1990, p.494). The theory promotes the inclusion of men in the process in order to engage them as allies and address the power asymmetry between women and men and the myth of male superiority (Jaquette, 2017; Rathgeber, 1990; Rowan-Campbell, 1990, p.25-30). It involves the exploration of social, economic, political and cultural forces that determine how men and women participate in, benefit from and control certain initiatives and activities. This approach also looks at oppression of women in the family and enters the private sphere to look at the assumptions on which relationships are based that result in subordination and abuse. For this thesis, GAD will be useful because examining societal and household structures and roles that are given to women and men and the cultural expectations present within the Syrian community in Lebanon will help me understand why Syrian refugees hold the views they do on VAW and on the programs that are being offered to them to prevent and address this issue.

As a response to the critique that WID imposes a universalist Western point of view and looks at women as a homogenous group, GAD emphasizes the participation of local women and stresses the importance of grassroots movements, not only because policy changes are not enough, but also because these movements reflect the specific gender needs of women in a particular community (Jaquette, 2017; Momsen, 2004; Nilsson, 2013). The concept of *women's interests* assumes that all women have the same goals or concerns because they are biologically the same (Moser, 1989). However, a women's position in society does not only depend on her being a woman, but also on her ethnicity, class, age, education, sexual orientation, etc. (Moser, 1989).

Gender interests[8] are interests that individuals have because of their position in their society; GAD classifies them into two categories: practical gender needs (PGNs) and strategic gender needs (SGNs) (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989). Women's PGNs are needs that are immediate necessities identified by women found in a particular context and arise out of women's subordinate position in society (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989; Pickup, 2001). Achieving PGNs tends not to challenge gender roles and gendered power relations and includes things like food, water, shelter, employment and medicine. SGNs, on the other hand, are needs that exist because of established unequal gender roles and gendered power dynamics (i.e. the power relations that exist between genders which influence who has access to and control over resources and decision-making capabilities within households); in a heterosexual partnership, across most societies, the unequal gendered power dynamics generally give most of the control to the man. SGNs relate to the disadvantaged position of women in society and fulfilling these needs would challenge social structures that favour men and unequal power relations. SGNs are identified needs that would overcome women's subordination and promote more equal societies (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989; Pickup, 2001). Like PGNs, they will vary depending on the cultural and sociopolitical contexts of women who identify them, but will affect all women in a given cultural or sociopolitical context regardless of age, education, economic status, etc. (Moser, 1989; Pickup, 2001). The removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination such as rights to own land, political equality, the alleviation of domestic burdens, and the adoptions of laws indicting male violence are all considered SGNs[9] and are necessary if gender inequality is to be eliminated (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989; Pickup, 2001). Gender equality is equality of rights, choice and opportunity

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[8] Gender interests include LGBTQ+ interests as well.
[9] PGNs are only considered "feminist" when they turn into SGNs (Moser, 1989).

including the ability to make decisions regardless of gender[10] (Momsen, 2004).

Looking at both PGNs and SGNs is important for my research because if refugees are just surviving day to day, they may not have the time to be concerned with programs that might change gender relations to reduce or even eliminate VAW. This is because in such conditions, VAW might not be part of their prioritized concerns, whereas more immediate basic needs such as shelter, food, and education for children will be. Identifying how Syrian women view violence directed at them will give insight into the types of programs that should exist to deal with the issue. If women are more concerned with their everyday needs than with addressing VAW, this might result in them not utilizing the programs available to help them if they are being abused. To address this and encourage women to ask for help, organizations need to find a way of combining the two and ensure that if a woman comes to them in times of trouble, her immediate needs (PGNs) will be provided for her and her children. Additionally, raising awareness into how achieving SGNs might contribute indirectly (or directly) to providing PGNs is similarly important – for example, when looking at VAW in general, allowing women to own land (SGN) would enable them to use it to start a business which would help them deal with financial burdens such as paying rent or buying food (PGNs) and in turn would give them the economic independence needed to escape an abusive relationship. Looking at VAW programs that are offered to Syrians in Lebanon will allow me to examine whether or not they are designed to simply answer PGNs or are working on changing the discriminatory ideas that exist in society and contribute to the existence of VAW.

By working on achieving SGNs and using participatory approaches promoted by GAD, women in the community may be empowered. Empowerment is a concept that emerged in the

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[10] It is important to remember that gender equality has come to include more than women and men and includes LGBTQ+ issues around the world. However, because this thesis only looks at heterosexual partnerships, LGBTQ+ issues are not mentioned; this does not mean that they do not exist.

1980s and is often included in development literature. One of the problems with the term "empowerment" is its transformation into a buzzword in the 1990s due to its overuse by organizations and development agencies that diluted the political perspective, i.e. "the political struggles that challenge not only patriarchy, but also mediating structures of class, race, ethnicity" (Batliwala, 2007, p. 558), from which the term emerged. This occurred because, although the term was present across NGO and IO reports, none of them explained what they meant by empowerment, often limiting it to women gaining economic empowerment, i.e. getting paid work (Batliwala, 2007). To understand the true meaning of term, the word *power* has to be examined first. Generally, discussions of power and the exercise of power assume a power whereby people have control or influence over others (power over) (Cornwall, 2014; Rai, 2007; Pickup, 2001; Rowlands, 1995). This type of power may be used by men over women (or other men) or by the dominant social, political, economic, or cultural groups over marginalized communities. It occurs in both the private and public spheres of life (Rowlands, 1995, p.101-102). As opposed to "power over", empowerment is the process that breaks apart social constructions that promote subordination in order to help people understand that they have the ability and the right to act and make decisions; it is about bringing people who are normally not involved in the process of making decisions and making them a part of it (Cornwall, 2014; Momsen, 2004; Pickup, 2001; Rai, 2007; Rowlands, 1995). Thus, empowerment can be viewed as "the process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless (a) become aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, (b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, (c) exercise this control without infringing upon the right of others and (d) support the empowerment of others in the community" (Kabeer, 2005; Rowlands, 1995, p.103). This process can occur at three different levels: the personal level otherwise known as "power within" (undoing

the effects of internalized oppression and developing a sense of self worth and confidence), close relationships or "power to" (having the ability to negotiate and influence decisions in a relationship), and the collective or "power with" (formation of groups that act locally and nationally to either support each other and educate each other or, on a larger scale, to influence structures and policy) (Cornwall, 2014; Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2009; Pickup, 2001; Rai, 2007). Empowerment is about allowing people to expand the opportunities they have despite the constraints of societal structures and increasing "one's ability to resist and challenge 'power over'" (Kabeer, 2005; Rowlands, 1995, p.102-103); it is "the task of 'transforming gender subordination' and the breakdown of 'other oppressive structures' and collective 'political mobilization'" (Cronin-Furman, Gowrinathan, & Zakaria, 2017). Instead of viewing power as taking it away from someone else and controlling someone else, i.e. "power over", "power to", "power with" and "power within" are non-dominating powers which means they "increase one person's power [without] necessarily [diminishing] that of another" (Pickup, 2001; Rowlands, 1995, p.102). Put simply, power is the ability to make choices and being disempowered means to be denied choice (Kabeer, 2005). Hence, empowerment is the processes by which those who are disempowered (i.e. those who have been denied the ability to choose) acquire the ability to make decisions and choices (Kabeer, 2005; Pickup, 2001). Thus, when I use empowerment in my research, this former definition of the term is what I will be referring to – women feeling like they are able to make choices and are able to negotiate with their partners.

Empowerment is an important concept when it comes to VAW because it allows women to have the confidence to stand up against violence and reject the abuse they are living with, eventually accessing the programs being offered to help survivors of VAW. It also enables them to realize that they have a choice and are able to reject violence. Whether a Syrian refugee living

in Lebanon feels empowered or not will influence her perception of programs being offered, and similarly, the effectiveness of the programs being offered will depend on if they are empowering the women that are relying on them. For example, if a woman goes to an organization and the programs she is exposed to make her feel like she does not have the ability nor the choice to stand up to her aggressor nor face what she has lived through, she might return to the abusive household or relationship she was in and accept her "fate".

One of the biggest critiques of the GAD approach is that it is difficult to implement when development projects are being designed since at its core it is about challenging the structures that exist in the world and is therefore a more theoretical rather than practical approach (Rathgeber, 1990). Thus, most of the projects that end up being implemented are WID projects that are appreciated by the women utilizing them and are shaped by these women over time to meet their needs. Another criticism focuses on GAD's inclusion of men into the field of study. The fear with bringing men in is that the limited ground gained by women will be lost since there already seems to be low-level action when it comes to gender and women when implementing development projects and adding another layer to this might allow men's issues to come to the forefront (White, 2000). Moreover, including men might turn pro-feminist men into anti-feminists if they are highlighted to be ignorant or guilty (White, 2000). Another fear is that if we start looking at the problems that men have, we might quickly assume that women have already been studied in terms of gender relations and should not be the focus anymore; consequently, we might resort to patriarchal strategies to deal with men's issues: reassert the status quo; blame women for men's issues, i.e. women are over-empowered; ask women to fix men's problems for them (White, 2000). Although these fears are valid, what is important to remember is that the problems that men have often result in problems for women; for example, in a refugee context, the perception that a man's

role is to be a protector and provider causes significant stress on refugee men who can no longer fulfill their roles which could result in them being violent towards their wives to reestablish their masculinity. Additionally, if we want to dismantle the patriarchal structures that exist and result in the subordination of women and minorities, those who benefit from the existence of the structures unknowingly (or knowingly) need to be included in the discussion as well for the exploitation of the system to stop.

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the two theoretical frameworks that will be used to examine VAW in Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon and the views held by refugees on the program offered to combat this issue. SE theory highlights five levels of interaction (individual, interpersonal, societal, institutional, and policy) that are interdependent and work and affect each other in shaping the ideas people have about VAW. GAD focuses on unequal power relations between women and men and emphasizes that to improve women's lives the unequal power relations between women and men have to be transformed at the national, community, and household levels. When looking at projects that aim to improve women's positions, GAD highlights the fact that projects most often focus on women's PGNs (i.e. immediate necessities). According to GAD, these projects are not effective because they do not address the root causes of gender inequality. Instead, GAD suggests that projects should be designed to tackle, along with PGNs, SGNs (i.e. needs that exist because of established unequal gender roles and gendered power dynamics) since fulfilling these needs would challenge social structures that favour men and unequal power relations addressing the root cause of women's disadvantaged position in society. From this, the concept of empowerment emerged which at its core is the process by which those who previously did not have the ability to choose are able to do so and are able to recognize the choices that they have.

GAD complements SE theory since it recognizes that the subordination of women is constructed at different levels "including the household, the community, and the state" which are all included in the five levels of influence highlighted in the SE framework. These levels of interactions will be examined from a GAD perspective when looking at VAW in refugee communities. In the next chapters, after giving some background on the Syrian crisis and examining the literature available on GBV in refugee settings, I will use these two theories to look at refugee VAW issues in Lebanon specifically, and the programs being offered in the country to help Syrian women affected by VAW.

CHAPTER 3: THE SYRIAN CRISIS IN LEBANON

This chapter is a background chapter that provides a brief overview of the Syrian crisis, how it started, what it has become, and the effects of the crisis on the Syrian people in terms of them becoming internally displaced and refugees. It then examines the situation of refugees in Lebanon focusing on the policies that are in place to deal with the refugee influx into the country, and, finally the conditions they are living under.

3.1 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS

In March 2011, protests erupted in the Daraa Governorate located in Southern Syria after a group of school boys from the city were arrested and tortured by government authorities for writing anti-regime graffiti on a school wall. Enraged, the people of Daraa took to the streets demanding reforms and were met with violence after security forces conducted mass arrests and fired at protesters (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017; Rodgers, Gritten, Offer, & Asare, 2016). The harsh response of authorities only added fuel to the fire; pro-democracy protests demanding the resignation of President al-Assad erupted all over the country, and all of them were similarly met with force. Eventually, protesters took up arms, and the violence escalated to a full-blown war with rebels fighting against government forces especially when, in July 2011, military defectors formed the Free Syrian Army whose goal is to overthrow the government (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017; Rodgers et al., 2016; "Syria's civil war explained", 2017). As the conflict progressed, it turned sectarian pitting the country's Sunni majority against the Shia Alawites who mostly supported the regime and were part of the government's military forces prior to the conflict. As an Alawite himself, President Bashar al-Assad generally had the support of Syrian Shia Alawites, and other minorities in the country since their rights to practice their religions were guaranteed under the regime through laws that were in place ("Syria's civil war

explained", 2017). The conflict was further exacerbated and morphed into a civil war when Islamist militant groups like Daesh (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and the Nusrah Front emerged. Moreover, the Kurds in Syria began organizing to create their own country, Hezbollah began fighting with the Syrian regime, and foreign powers like the United States and its coalition and Russia began taking a more active part in the conflict supporting rebels and the regime, respectively, while targeting Daesh strongholds (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017; Rodgers, et al., 2016). All of these factions continue fighting to control parts of the country (Figure 2).[11]
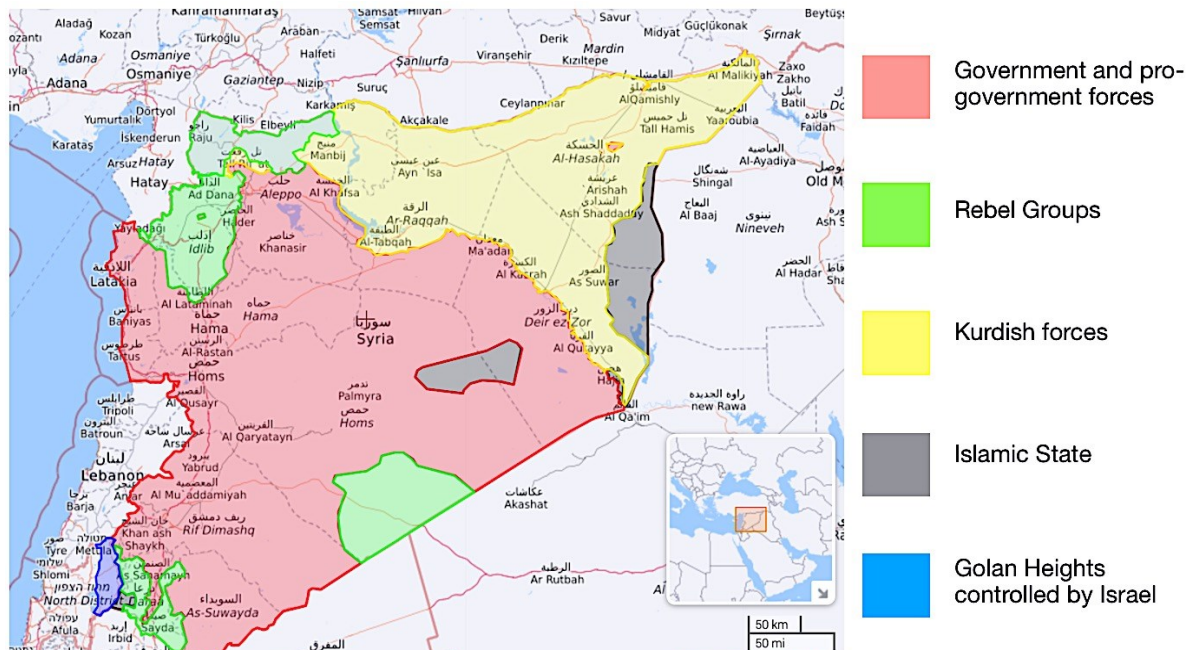
Figure 2: Map of Syria showing areas controlled by different factions involved in the conflict (Source: Syria Live Map, Updated: Dec 7 2017)

According to the latest unofficial UN estimate conducted in 2016, the death toll due to the conflict in Syria has reached 400,000 people. The UN stopped releasing an official Syrian death

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[11] For more information on the Syrian Civil War, please see Emile Hokayem's *Syria's Uprising and the Fracturing of the Levant* (2013) as well as *Encyclopedia Britannica*'s entry on the Syrian conflict and the BBC article "Syria: The story of the conflict" (2016) produced by Rodgers, Gritten, Offer and Asare outlining the most important issues surrounding the conflict.

toll due to uncertainties of the figures it was acquiring. The last official number was released in 2015 and estimated that 250,000 people had lost their lives to the Syrian Civil War (Hudson, 2016). The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are 6.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria, and that over 5 million people have fled as refugees to neighbouring countries, while 1.2 million are seeking asylum in Europe out of total pre-war population of 21.1 million (Garofalo, 2017; UNHCR, 2017b). Turkey hosts the greatest number of registered refugees with 3 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey, 1 million in Lebanon, and over 600,000 in Jordan. The UNHCR (2017b) defines a refugee as

> someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

3.2 REFUGEE CONTEXT WITHIN LEBANON

Lebanon is a small country bordered by Syria from the North and East – the Mediterranean on the West, and Palestine from the South – with an area of 10,425 km^2 and a population of 4.3 million when not counting refugees ("Lebanon's country profile", 2017) (Figure 3). Lebanon has always been a country that takes in refugees. During the Armenian genocide (1915-1927), many Armenians fled to Lebanon, and today the Armenians make up 4% of the Lebanese population (Minority Rights Group International, 2017). Similarly, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled to Lebanon during the 1948 war (*nakba*) that lead to the occupation of Palestine; although the exact number of Palestinians in Lebanon is unknown, it is estimated that there are 450,000 registered Palestinian refugees living in 12 camps throughout the country today (Issa, 2017). Since the Syrian Civil War began in 2011, there are around 1 million registered Syrian refugees in the country, with an estimated actual number of 1.5 million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2017b). Thus, around 1 in 3 people is a refugee, and 1 in 4 individuals is Syrian (Charles & Denman, 2013; Shen,

2017). In Lebanon, 76 percent of Syrian refugees live in poverty (UN Development Programme [UNDP] & UNHCR, 2017). Females make up 52.5 percent of the registered Syrian refugee population, and women (18-60) make up 24.3 percent of registered Syrian refugees as of June 2017; 19 percent of Syrian household in the country are headed by women (UNHCR, UNICEF, & World Food Programme [WFP], 2017).

Figure 3: Regional map showing countries bordering Lebanon

3.2.1 REFUGEE POLICIES IN LEBANON

Lebanon is not a signatory of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention nor the amendments made to the convention in the 1967 Protocol.[12] Thus, like most countries in the region, it has no domestic refugee legislation it can rely on to address refugee needs (Janmyr, 2017). The term "refugee" is not even used by the government which instead calls the Syrians in Lebanon "displaced persons"

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[12] For more information on the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, please see http://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html

since when an individual becomes a refugee, s/he becomes protected by international laws (Janmyr, 2016; Janmyr, 2017). Being a non-signatory of the 1951 Convention, the country has no obligation to address refugee needs (i.e. provide basic needs, shelter, education, etc.), which is why the UNHCR operates in Lebanon and plays an important role in ensuring the well-being of those seeking asylum. Nevertheless, the fact that Lebanon is not a signatory of the 1951 Convention prevents the implementation of durable solutions in the country making resettlement or voluntary repatriation the two long-term options for dealing with the refugee crisis. Local integration of refugees is not an option, nor is it constitutional since the Lebanese Constitution of 1926 (and its amendment in 1990) "prohibits any permanent settlement of foreigners" (Janmyr, 2017, p.3).

Entrance Policies

Despite being a non-signatory of the 1951 Convention, Lebanon embraced an open door policy for refugees for the first four years after the start of the Syrian Civil War which resulted in the entry of 1.5 million Syrian refugees into the country; this is due to the 1993 bilateral agreement for Economic and Social Cooperation and Coordination between Lebanon and Syria which allows "free movement of goods and people, and granted freedom of work, residence, and economic activity for nationals of both countries" (Janmyr, 2016, p. 65). Any Syrian citizen could enter the country and automatically obtain a six-month visa which could easily be renewed for an additional six months, after which an annual 200 US dollar fee would apply (Frangieh, 2015; Janmyr, 2016). However, in 2014, stricter policies were implemented, limiting the ability of refugees to enter and reside in the country legally. First, the Lebanese government decided to suspend UNHCR registration and introduced stricter policies because the number of refugees in Lebanon had become incomparable to anything any other country had ever seen; the large influx of people is not something a small country like Lebanon can handle in terms of its infrastructure and its size

(Frangieh, 2015; Rainey, 2015; Samaha, 2015). Moreover, many refugees began moving back and forth between Syria and Lebanon which, according to the government, demonstrated that they were not afraid of going back to their country and therefore were not real refugees (Frangieh, 2015; Rainey, 2015; Samaha, 2015). Second, 18 unofficial entry borders that had been previously tolerated were closed and a 200 US dollar visa fee was introduced for entering the country which would have to be renewed yearly if individuals had not registered with the UNHCR prior to 2015[13] (Dubin & Marsi, 2017; Janmyr, 2016; Meaker, 2017; Rainey, 2015). Only vulnerable and humanitarian cases are currently allowed entry into Lebanon without paying this fee (Dubin & Marsi, 2017; Janmyr, 2016; Meaker, 2017; Rainey, 2015). Due to this law, it is estimated that between 60 and 74 percent of refugees are residing in the country illegally with only 19 percent of Syrian households having residency permits for all members (UNHCR, UNICEF, & World Food Program [WFP], 2017). This prevents many refugees from coming forward if they have been abused or wronged out of fear that they will be arrested (Arkani & Kalis, 2014; Janmyr, 2016). Additionally, registration of marriages and births was found to be a problem amongst Syrian households leading to many children and unions being unrecognized by the state leaving women and children even more vulnerable to abuse.

Non-encampment Policies

When people started fleeing Syria and took refuge in neighbouring countries, the UNHCR and governments began establishing refugee camps for them. Today there are around 40 camps in Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, although only 10 percent of refugees inhabit them (Shen, 2017; UNHCR,

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[13] In Janmyr (2016), the detailed Visa categories are: "category one for tourism, shopping, business, landlords, and tenants; category two for studying; category three for transiting to a third country; category four for those displaced; category five for medical treatment; category six for an embassy appointment; and category seven for those entering with a pledge of responsibility (a Lebanese sponsor)" (p.66-67).

2017a). Unlike Syria's other neighbouring countries, Lebanon has not set up any Syrian refugee camps and did not allow the UNHCR to do so either (Charles & Denman, 2013; Shen, 2017). Instead, refugees live amongst the Lebanese population all over the country. The UNHCR defines refugee camps as

> … locations where refugees reside and where, in most cases, host government and humanitarian actors provide assistance and services in a centralised manner. The defining characteristic of a camp, however, is typically some degree of limitation on the rights and freedoms of refugees and their ability to make meaningful choices about their lives (2014, p. 4).

Although it gives refugees more freedom and independence, non-encampment makes it more difficult for the UNHCR to distribute aid in an efficient manner and reach everyone in need of assistance (Mourad, 2017). In fact, due to the country's non-encampment policies, the UNHCR currently has over 70 NGO partners in Lebanon working to provide aid to all refugees in need, and cooperation between these different factions often proves to be difficult and has mixed results (Mourad, 2017; Mitri, 2015). Non-encampment places a lot of pressure on local municipalities who have had to cater for a large number of individuals with their already weak infrastructures. Moreover, the intermingling of refugees and host communities has resulted in tensions between the two groups which have often escalated, posing a security threat to the Syrians and host communities in Lebanon. However, due to the Lebanese experiences with the militarization of Palestinian refugee camps (which was one of the factors that caused the 15-year Lebanese Civil War) having official camps seems to pose security risks that are more concerning for Lebanon.[14] Today, the many armed factions existing within the Palestinian camps have turned them into sites of militarization and radicalization that are inaccessible to Lebanese authorities. There is a fear

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[14] For more information on Palestinian refugee camps and their militarization in Lebanon, please see Hanafi and Long's "Governance, governmentalities, and the state of exception in the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon" (2010).

that a similar situation will arise with Syrian refugees should camps be permitted (Abouzeid, 2013; Dakroub, 2007; Janmyr, 2016; Terry, 2002). Nevertheless, when one looks at the Lebanese economy, it can be argued that the non-encampment policies were put in place not only to protect Lebanon from potential security threats, but also for economic reasons.

The most obvious reason for the UN to encourage non-encampment policy is that it is cheaper to choose that route (Seeley, 2013; Turner, 2015; UNHCR, 2014). According to the UNHCR, "the running costs for maintaining and operating these dedicated facilities and systems are also considerable and often must be sustained for many years or even decades" (UNHCR, 2014, p. 5). For example, the Zaatari camp in Jordan, which hosts over 83,000 people, costs around 500,000 dollars to run per day (Turner, 2015). Additionally, according to Turner (2015), the presence of Syrians within Lebanese cities and towns allows them to participate in the country's labour market which is of benefit to the Lebanese economy. According to the World Bank, over 47 percent of Syrian men in Lebanon are participating in the work force, compared to 28 percent in Jordan (Turner, 2015; World Bank, 2013). As per the *Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees* (2017), women who do work are mainly involved in the agriculture sector (49 percent) and in services (40 percent), i.e. working in stores or cleaning houses. Working women earned on average 115 USD per 13 days of work, while men earned 215 USD for 14 days of work (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP, 2017); ten percent of women between 15 and 64 years old are either employed or looking for work (UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP, 2017). With the influx of Syrians into the country, Syrians make up between 27 and 35 percent of Lebanon's labour force (Turner, 2015; World Bank, 2013). Even prior to the Syrian conflict, it was widely known by both the Syrian and Lebanese populations that Syrians who work in the construction and agriculture sectors are "willing to work for lower wages and longer hours" (Turner, 2015, p. 387). This is of great benefit to Lebanese land

and business owners – not to workers – since the presence of Syrians has caused a decrease of up to 60 percent in the wages of unskilled labour (Turner, 2015). After the end of Syria's military presence in Lebanon in 2005[15] which resulted in most Syrians leaving the country, there has been a need for unskilled labour. Syrians in Lebanon are now only permitted to work in three sectors based on these needs: construction, agriculture, and environment (cleaning) (Janmyr, 2016). According to Turner, any policy that would limit freedom of labour and movement would prove detrimental to the sectors that rely on Syrian work.

Although no official UNHCR camps exist on the Lebanese territory, the Syrians themselves have established over 4,000 tented settlements notably in Arsal and the Bekaa Valley (Tuner, 2015; Government of Lebanon & the United Nations [GoL & UN], 2017). These are usually small (less than 1,000 individual) and are several kilometers away from each other (Mourad, 2017); 17 percent of Syrians reside in these informal settlements (Ammar et al., 2016).

3.2.2 EFFECTS OF THE SYRIAN INFLUX IN LEBANON

Starting in 1975, Lebanon suffered a 15-year civil war resulting in the death of 150,000 people, the exodus of 1 million citizens or 25 percent of the Lebanese population, and the destruction of the country's infrastructure (Fisk, 2001).[16] Since then, Lebanon continues to be in turmoil with political assassinations, conflicts with the Israeli occupation forces, internal conflicts

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[15] Syria entered Lebanon in 1976 as a peacekeeping force almost a year after the start of the Lebanese Civil War. When the war ended, and as part of the Taif agreement which ended the conflict, Syria was supposed to withdraw its military forces from Lebanon, but more than 30,000 soldiers remained in the country and Syria controlled Lebanon's politics and its economy for 29 years. In September 2004, the UN passed a resolution calling for Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon, and after the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, allegedly ordered by the Syrian regime, international pressure, and anger from the Lebanese population, dubbed the Cedar Revolution, resulted in the withdrawal of the Syrian presence from the country. For more information, please see Jaafar and Stephan's "Lebanon's independence intifada: How an unarmed insurrection expelled Syrian forces" in *Civilian Jihad* (2009).
[16] For more information on the Lebanese Civil War, please see Robert Fisk's *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War* (2001).

with militarized factions occurring regularly and a corrupt government. With a 25 percent increase in population due to the influx of refugees, Lebanon's weak infrastructure is unable to cope effectively leading to added stress on refugees which could lead to an increase in GBV.

Education

According to the UNHCR, there are currently around 400,000 Syrian school age refugee children in Lebanon (Charles & Denman, 2013; Jesri, 2015); Syrian children can attend either private or public schools (Jesri, 2015). To attend private school however, the Syrians would have to be able to pay tuition and school supply fees which are usually high – some schools have lowered fees for Syria children, but it is on a school by school basis. For children in public schools, school expenses are being covered by the UNHCR (Charles & Denman, 2013; Jesri, 2015). The difficulty with providing education arises from the lack of ability of public schools to accommodate all of the Syrian children who should be in school due to limited resources – only 45,000 children were able to enrol (Jesri, 2015). In order to try and provide the opportunity for more Syrians to get an education, the Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced second shift school hours (from 2pm to 6pm) in 238 schools with over 300 students in each one (Jesri, 2015). If more financial support is provided to the MoE, more teachers could be hired, and more schools could be included in the "second-shift" program which would allow the accommodation of even more children. One of the barriers Syrians face within the Lebanese education system, however, is that the languages of instruction in Lebanon are French and English, whereas in Syria it is Arabic. This makes it difficult for refugee children who do not have these language skills to succeed (Charles & Denman, 2013; Jesri, 2015). Despite efforts made by the MoE, over half of the Syrian children of school age are not getting an education due to the lack of resources the country has, and its inability to

accommodate such a sudden increase in the number of students.[17] I will be highlighting the relationship between lack of education and GBV in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Health Care

The health care system in Lebanon is a public-private partnership (Ammar et al., 2016). The high number of hospitals belonging to the private sectors (80 percent) has led to an oversupply of technology and hospital beds in the country (Ammar et al., 2016), which proved useful, though not sufficient to accommodate a sudden 25 percent increase in population with the arrival of Syrians in Lebanon. The non-encampment policy allows refugees to integrate into the nation's health care system which is problematic for the host community due to the high number of hospital beds being used by refugees, overcrowding, and increased waiting time (Ammar et al., 2016; APIS Health Consulting Group [APIS], 2016; Cherri, Arcos Gonzalez & Castro Delgado, 2016; Cousins, 2015). In 2014, 35 percent of beneficiaries of primary health care in the country were Syrians (Ammar et al., 2016). If refugees are registered with the UNHCR, the international organization (IO) will cover 75 percent of the cost of childbirth, and 85 percent of laboratory tests and diagnostic tests for children younger than five, people older than 60, those who are disabled, and pregnant women; the rest has to be paid by refugees who often cannot afford to do so (Cousins, 2015). Due to limited funding, the UNHCR cannot afford to cover costs of complex and urgent cases and surgeries. A UNHCR spokesperson has said that the country cannot deal with the "increasing demand on the already weak infrastructure" (Cousins, 2015, p. 934). Public hospitals are most impacted by this, accumulating a 15 million dollar deficit by the end of 2016 since the onset of the Syrian crisis as they continue to treat refugees even when they are unable to pay (APIS, 2016);

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[17] Syrian-run schools – schools established by Syrian refugee teachers and administrators – and NGO/Community schools are also an option for the Syrians; however, the problem is that they are informal, and their certification is not recognized neither in Lebanon nor in Syria (Jesri, 2015)

despite this, in 2017, 11 percent of Syrian refugee households in Lebanon that required health care services were unable to access them, mainly due to costs (UNDP & UNHCR, 2017).

Water, Sanitation and Energy

Lebanon's energy, water and sanitation infrastructure has not been ideal with power outages lasting between three and 12 hours in some areas, and many regions having to buy water as the water they get in their taps is not safe to drink. In fact, the Lebanese population relies heavily on expensive and environmentally unfriendly generators, one in five homes still lacks water connection, and only eight percent of sewage is treated effectively (Advance Engineering and Management Services [AEMS], 2017; Fardoun et al., 2012; GoL & UN, 2017). Households that are not connected to wastewater networks use cesspits and septic tanks which risk leaking into the environment and contaminating groundwater resources (GoL & UN, 2017; World Bank, 2013). This is the result of the civil war that ended in 1990 and resulted in great damage to these sectors. It is also due to the continuous negligence of the electricity, water and sanitation sector infrastructures of the country (AEMS, 2017; Fardoun, Ibrahim, Younes & Louahlia-Gualous, 2012; GoL & UN, 2017). With the arrival of Syrians, these already fragile infrastructures are being challenged further. Twelve percent of displaced Syrians live in non-residential accommodations such as unfinished buildings, garages and shops, which are often overcrowded and lack basic sanitation and water services (GoL & UN, 2017; World Bank, 2013). Moreover, 57 percent of those living in informal settlements lack toilet facilities. Municipal spending on waste disposal has increased all over Lebanon on average by 40 percent, especially in Akkar and the Bekaa where Syrians are most concentrated. According to the Ministry of Energy and Water, two thirds of resources received through appeals to the international community since 2015 have been spent on "water trucking, latrine construction and desludging for families displaced from Syria living in

temporary shelters and informal settlements" (GoL & UN, 2017, p.158). Moreover, the electricity gap in Lebanon has doubled with the influx of refugees into the country. According to the UNHCR, 45 percent of displaced Syrians have set up illegal connections to the national grid which result in damages to the grid, increasing maintenance and reparation costs and additional losses to the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Energy Sector (GoL & UN, 2017). The fees collected for electricity in Lebanon do not cover operation and production costs which prevents any real rehabilitation to the grid; moreover, the illegal grid connections, i.e. unpaid connections, further exacerbate the problem (AEMS, 2017; GoL & UN, 2017). The increase in demand has significantly impacted the quality of the supplied power and voltage drops across the country.

3.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a brief overview of the conflict that drove Syrians to leave Syria, and briefly highlighted Lebanon's policies surrounding refugee entry and stay in the country. The chapter then highlighted what the effects of a 25 percent increase in population with the arrival of Syrians means for Lebanon and its weak infrastructure that has still not recovered from its 15-year civil war. The apparent strain that refugees are putting on Lebanese resources has led to hostility within host communities which can be manifested as violence and discrimination. Moreover, lack of education; the limited ability of refugees to work and access health care; the monetary burden refugees face in order to pay for their visas every year, let alone buy food for their families, and pay rent; and the poor conditions they are living in (in terms of electricity, water and sanitation) creates a great amount of pressure and stress which contribute to the increase in the prevalence of GBV, specifically VAW which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. Now that some background on the Syrian crisis and the refugees' status in Lebanon has been presented, I will explore the issue of VAW in Syria and Lebanon.

CHAPTER 4: LEBANON, SYRIA AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This chapter will examine the issue of violence against women in both Syria and Lebanon. It is important to understand the institutional and legal contexts of VAW in the settings from which refugee communities have come and also in which they currently live in order to better understand their views on the issue. This chapter will start by examining VAW in general and then focus on Syria and Lebanon as a whole.

4.1 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As recently as 40 years ago, VAW was not deemed an issue worthy of discussion or concern for governments or the international community as a whole; it was considered to be a private matter when occurring between partners and a non-gendered issue when looking at crimes in general (Alhabib, Nur, & Jones, 2010). This began to change in the 1980s when women mobilized to demand the attention of the international community on VAW (Alhabib et al., 2010). Today, VAW is considered a human rights violation and is an important part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the objectives of SDG 5 is to "eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres" (UNWomen, 2015). Although we have come far in the way we perceive it when compared to the 1980s, VAW remains one the most prevalent human rights violations today, affecting 1 in 3 women worldwide (WHO, 2017). As was stated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, VAW is any act of "gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (WHO, 2017; United Nations International Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2003). This encompasses physical violence (slapping, beating, hitting, kicking, etc.), sexual violence (rape, sexual coercion/assault), emotional abuse (intimidation, humiliation, insults,

verbal abuse, psychological and physical threats), and controlling behavior (stalking, isolation of a person from families and loved ones, monitoring of movements, restrictions on employment, education, or financial resources, forced marriage, child marriage, forced labour) (Alhabib et al., 2010; Camarasa & Heim, 2007; Campbell, 2002; Jewkes, 2002; Pickup, 2001; Price, 2005). These different types of violence often co-occur. VAW is present across all cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes, and ages. Most often, the perpetrator of such crimes is someone the victim knows, and the predominant perpetrators are men. The most common type of VAW is what is called intimate partner violence (IPV) (Pickup, 2001; WHO, 2017), which is one aspect of domestic violence; domestic violence is any form of abuse perpetrated in the home by any family member – this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. On average, 38 percent of women murdered every year are killed by their intimate partner and 52 percent (up to 70 percent in some national studies) of women are subjected to physical and/or sexual violence from their male partners (Pickup, 2001; WHO, 2017). Globally, 35 percent of women are sexually abused (either by an intimate partner or a non-partner), around 34 percent of women become child brides (pressured/forced to marry before the age of 18), and over 70 percent of people trafficked into prostitution, forced labour, slavery and servitude are women and girls (Kidman, 2016; UNWomen, 2017; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). VAW remains one of the most underreported crimes both due to under-recording by police and underreporting by women (Alhabib et al., 2010; Pickup, 2001; UNICEF 2000).

Some of the literature indicates that VAW should not be restricted to direct acts of violence such as the ones listed in the definition above. Instead, it argues that VAW should include the aspects of society that contribute to the legitimization of patriarchal ideologies and the maintenance of hierarchies which often result in VAW including the failure to intervene against

perpetuation of actions that harm women. This could include things such as: lack of access to safe abortions or contraception, discriminatory food allocations, lack of laws in a country that criminalize domestic violence or rape, etc. (Pickup, 2001; Price, 2005; UNICEF 2000). Having such a broad definition of VAW would be positive since it links this issue to the "broader economic, social, and political context in which it occurs" (Pickup, 2001, p. 13). The downside is that this makes the definition too difficult to quantify.

When conducting interviews for the purposes of this thesis, questions to participants were mostly focused on the more narrow definition of VAW – acts that directly cause women physical, sexual, or mental anguish – and especially IPV. However, systemic VAW will also be discussed.

The injuries, stress, and fear associated with VAW, especially with IPV, can result in chronic health problems including chronic pain, physical disability, fainting, seizures, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and drug and alcohol abuse (Alhabib et al., 2010; Campbell, 2002). Abused women have double the number of medical visits and 8-fold greater mental health care usage (though numbers vary depending on where the women are from, the culture and society they live in and if they are able to access this type of care), suffer isolation, an inability to work, and a hesitation and limited ability to participate in regular activities (Alhabib et al., 2010; WHO, 2017). In the United States, between 35 and 40 percent of battered women attempt suicide (UNICEF, 2000). Research indicates that women who have experienced more than one type of VAW experience high rates of mental disorders (77.3 percent), substance abuse problems (56.2 percent) anxiety disorders (52.5 percent), and mood disorders (47.1 percent) (Stark & Wessells, 2012). Although not all women experience VAW, fear of being subject to it influences all women's actions and thoughts "from the most intimate aspects of life at home, to participation in public, political, and economic activities" (Pickup, 2001, p.5). This is called self-policing and exemplifies

internalized violence whereby women restrict themselves and conform to patriarchal gender norms without anyone directly forcing them to (Charles & Denman, 2013).

When feminists began looking at violence in the 1980s, what became apparent is that it is gendered; this means that there is an obvious gender division when one looks at those who commit violence and those who suffer it (Price, 2005). Statistics on "personal" violence – such as rape, sexual harassment, battering, stalking, etc. – indicate that overwhelmingly the perpetrators of these crimes are men and the victims/survivors are women and girls (Price, 2005, p.11).[18] In popular culture, many excuses exist to try and explain VAW. The most common ones include: men who abuse women are a minority and are psychotic; poverty and war lead to VAW; and, drugs and alcohols cause VAW (Pickup, 2001). The danger of these mainstream ideas about VAW is that they paint a simplified and wrong picture of this human rights violation; they make one believe its occurrence is rare since the majority of the population does not fit the descriptions listed above. This is not the case as 33 percent of women are subjected to VAW in their lifetime. Blaming psychosis and substance abuse for VAW makes it appear that the abuse is only committed by sick individuals, which basically relieves men from taking any responsibility for their actions as all of these mentioned supposed "causes" of VAW are factors outside of their control. Although studies have shown that around 50 percent of men in batterer intervention programs are alcoholics or drug addicts, correlation does not equal causation, and the theory does not consider the remaining 50 percent of individuals who are sober (Bennett & Bland, 2008). Some researchers have argued that abusive men are those who have grown up in an abusive household, which results in it being likely that individuals who were exposed to violence as children – either they were abused themselves or they witnessed someone else being abused in their household – find this method a normal one

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[18] This does not mean that women are incapable of this type violence or that men are never its victims.

for resolving conflict and for treating others (Pickup, 2001). The problem with this explanation is that it fails to consider the role of gender inequality and the gendered effects of witnessing violence as a child. Violence is not as simple as "if one sees or experiences violence as a child, one will in turn abuse others" (Pickup, 2011, p. 18). This can be demonstrated by the fact that although girls are on average four times more likely to be sexually abused than boys, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by male adults, not females (Pickup, 2001). The same principle applies when looking at war and poverty as many studies have demonstrated that they are two of the many factors that can exacerbate already existing violence but do not necessarily cause it and are not the reason it exists (Jewkes, 2002; Pickup, 2001). Exaggerating the role of poverty and conflict negates any agency people have in how they respond to factors that they cannot control (Pickup, 2001).

When looking at this issue from a GAD perspective, we can say that VAW is rooted in socio-cultural norms of gender inequality (Table 1). "Women's inequality, divorce restrictions for women, and the presence of male authority in the home have been shown as strong predictors of partner violence" (Maziak & Asfar, 2003, p. 314); these factors reflect the unequal power relations that exist between men and women that ensure male dominance, i.e. patriarchy, which are at the heart of VAW. In *Ending Violence Against Women* (2001), Pickup states that VAW "has been termed one of the six structures of patriarchy which control women and consolidate men's political, economic, and social dominance (the others being household, employment, the State, sexuality, and culture)" (p. 19). In our patriarchal societies, masculinity is associated with stoicism, physical strength, toughness, virility, conquest, power, and domination (Donaldson, 1993; Price, 2005); this includes the subordination, control and domination of women (Camarasa & Heim, 2007; Donaldson, 1993; Price, 2005). Intimidation and fear are instilled in women using violence and are a way for the perpetrators to tell them to stay in their place and to remain compliant, thus

maintaining and reinforcing the hierarchical structures of patriarchy which put men at the top and women at the bottom. It allows men to remain in control of resources and decision-making.[19] The article written by Helen Moffett, "'These women, they force us to rape them': rape as narrative of social control in post-apartheid South Africa" (2006), examining GBV in South Africa exposes this phenomenon quite clearly. From interviews conducted by Moffett, one can see that the targeted women are ones that demonstrate confidence, that show that they are independent, and the ones that are not intimidated; these women were described as "asking for it" – "It's the cheeky ones – the ones that walk around like they own the place, and look you in the eye" (Moffett, 2006, p.138). Again, this shows that any woman who tries to break and rise above the status quo is seen as a threat and is threatened and punished to remain compliant with social norms established under patriarchal structures:

> Women are widely accepted as having equal political status, even within structures like parliament, as long as they remain subordinate in the private and domestic realms. It is entirely possible that rape covertly performs the function of policing this fault-line
> (Moffett, 2006, p.143).

These explanations demonstrate that VAW is not only personal or cultural. Ending VAW "necessitates challenging the unequal social, political, and economic power held by women and men, and the ways in which this inequality is perpetuated through human institutions at all levels of each society" (Pickup, 2001, p.20).

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[19] Men who fall prey to GBV are often those who do not fit into the patriarchal concepts of masculinity either in the way they act, dress, or in their sexual identity and sexual preference. They thus become targets of hate crimes. Through these horrendous acts, perpetrators who, for example, target members of the LGBTQ+ community are "teaching" their victims a lesson, punishing them for not fitting the hetero-normative mold, and putting them in their "place" thereby maintaining the status quo and their own higher social status.

Table 1: Factors That Perpetuate Domestic Violence (Source: UNICEF, 2000, p. 7)

Cultural	• Gender-specific socialization • Cultural definition and expectations of appropriate sex roles • Belief in inherent male superiority • Family as the private sphere that is controlled by the man • Acceptability of violence as a way of resolving conflict
Economic	• Women's economic dependence on men • Limited access to money • Discriminatory laws regarding inheritance, property rights • Limited access to employment and education
Legal	• Lesser legal status of women • Discriminatory laws regarding divorce, child custody, inheritance • Negative treatment of women by law enforcement
Political	• Under-representation of women in power, limited participation of women in civil society • Family is within the private sphere so beyond state control

4.2 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN SYRIA AND LEBANON

One of the problems in Lebanon and Syria is that VAW does not merely exist as a societal issue; in a way, it is legislated through various laws that discriminate against women. This reflects the fifth level mentioned in the SE framework that outlines the fact that when looking at an issue and how it is approached, one needs to examine the policies surrounding it. These policies are very important factors that determine how individuals respond to VAW and how they view it and reflect the systemic patriarchal nature of society highlighted by GAD theory. It is especially important to look at the laws in Lebanon because they also apply to the Syrian refugees living in the country. Taking a brief look at what the situation was like in Syria prior to the war is also important since it will help illuminate some of the perspectives Syrian refugees in Lebanon hold on VAW. For the purpose of this thesis, laws surrounding domestic violence, rape, and child marriage will be discussed.

4.2.1 Syria

Although Syria is officially a secular state, religious courts that handle cases of family disputes exist in the country whereby each religious community – mainly the Muslim, Christian,

and Druze community – is governed by different laws and regulations on certain issues (Van Ejik, 2013); these laws are dubbed personal status laws. According to Article 306, the dominant Syrian Personal Status Law (SLPS – based on Muslim regulations) applies to all Syrians. However, the two subsequent articles stipulate that Christian, Druze, and Jewish communities are exempted from several of the SLPS's provisions and can apply their own regulations on certain issues (Kelly & Breslin, 2010; Van Ejik, 2013); the only religious minority that was able to obtain complete independence from the SLPS was the Catholic community in 2006 (Van Ejik, 2013). Personal status laws deal with issues of marriage, divorce, maintenance of relatives, guardianship, and inheritance (Kelly & Breslin, 2010; Van Ejik, 2013). The Druze community in Syria is "explicitly exempted from those provisions that run counter to their beliefs" (Van Ejik, 2013, p.58) and Christians and Jews can apply their own religious regulations "in matters of betrothal, marriage, wife's obedience, maintenance of relatives, divorce and [since 2010] inheritance" (Van Ejik, 2013, p.58). This is important when it comes to VAW for many reasons, although, as previously mentioned, I will only discuss issues surrounding domestic violence, rape, and child marriage. First of all, across all confessions in Syria, religious courts do not respond to domestic violence as being a sufficient reason to end a marriage. For Christians, ending a marriage for both women and men is difficult; in terms of IPV, an annulment can be obtained only in cases of life-threatening harm, i.e. a woman (or man) has to prove that her partner was trying to kill her in order to be granted the divorce (Kelly & Breslin, 2010; OECD, 2018b; UNWomen, 2016b; Van Ejik, 2013). Although divorce for a Muslim is easier to obtain, domestic violence is similarly not a sufficient reason for a woman to get a divorce. In fact, whereas a man does not need a reason to file for separation from his wife, a woman can only file for divorce according to a narrow set of criteria none of which is abuse (Kelly & Breslin, 2010; OECD, 2018b; UNWomen, 2016b). A study

conducted by Maziak and Asfar about "Physical Abuse in Low-income Women in Aleppo, Syria" (2003) found that 23.1 percent of the 411 surveyed women were physically abused at least 3 times in the last year, though regular abuse was only reported by married women. The study found that married women were three times more likely to be abused than unmarried ones. A 2011 joint study by the government and the UN Population Fund reported that one in three women in Syria suffers domestic violence (El-Masri, Harvey, & Garwood, 2013). Maziak and Asfar (2003) also reported that physical abuse was more prevalent among country residents (44.3 percent) compared with city residents (18.8 percent); this is a common occurrence all over the world since a bigger percentage of women living in the country are less educated, unemployed and more dependent on their spouses compared to their counterparts living in the city which makes them more vulnerable to IPV (Ajah, Iyoke, Nkwo, Nwakoby, & Ezeonu, 2014). Another survey of 1,891 families conducted in 2005 found that 67 percent of women in Syria had been "punished" either through verbal insults, economic deprivation, and/or, in 87 percent of cases, through physical beatings throughout their lifetime (Kelly & Breslin, 2010); eighty percent of the women who were physically abused were beaten by their husbands or their fathers (Kelly & Breslin, 2010). Legally, women have the right to seek redress in court under Article 53,[20] which deals with physical assault, though they rarely do as families discourage women from pressing formal chargers to avoid making the incident public (Kelly & Breslin, 2010). Moreover, survivors have reported sexual harassment, and verbal and physical abuse by police officers when trying to file complaints (US Department of State, 2016).

In Syria, Article 489 of the Penal Code defines rape as "he who forces sexual intercourse [against someone] who is not his wife by violence or threat" and punishes it with 15 years of prison

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[20] For more information on the penalties that would be suffered for physical assault, please see the Personal Injury section of the Syrian Penal Code.

("Syrian Arab Republic Criminal Code", 1949). The definition of rape used in that Article explicitly denies the existence of marital rape and even legislates it.[21] Article 192 and Article 508 of the Syrian Penal Code respectively decreases an individual's sentence if what he committed was an "honour crime" and only punishes rapists with two years in jail[22] if they marry their victim ("Syrian Arab Republic Criminal Code", 1949); at least 200 women are killed every year in honour crime cases (Kelly & Breslin, 2010). The government did not keep statistics on sexual abuse prior to the conflict.[23] Advocates state that there were only 1,300 reported cases of rape in Syria emphasizing that the actual numbers are significantly higher due to underreporting (Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic [HRGJ], MADRE, & Women's International League for Peace and Freedom [WILPF], 2016; UNWomen, 2016b).

The legal age of marriage for girls is 17 years old in Syria (Kelly & Breslin, 2010); however, with the permission of male legal guardians, girls younger that 13 can be wed. Prior to the conflict, between 13 and 17.7 percent[24] of girls in the country were married before the age of 18, and 3.4 percent of girls were married before the age of 15 (Kelly & Breslin, 2010; OECD, 2018b; UNWomen, 2016b). The fact that the law that limits early marriage can be ignored if a male guardian allows the union to occur shows that a change at the policy level is not enough and reinforces the argument made by GAD theory highlighting the importance of grassroots movements. The policy level is important; however, if no change occurs at the societal level, the effectiveness of laws is limited, and laws will not be reinforced and will not be enough to create

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[21] The definition of rape in Article 489 is also problematic because it limits rape to sexual assault committed by men against women

[22] The law initially exempted rapists from punishment entirely; however, in 2011, the law was amended (UNWomen, 2016b).

[23] Rape is being used as an instrument of war; in 2013, the UN treated 38,000 survivors of sexual violence in Syria including women, men, and children (HRJG et al., 2016).

[24] Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 who were married or engaged before their 18th birthday.

change (Jaquette, 2017; Momsen, 2004; Nilsson, 2013). Since the war began, child marriage has increased dramatically among the Syrian population. This will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent chapter.

The only official women's organization in Syria is the General Union of Syrian Women (GWU), which is affiliated with the Baath Party and gets state funding (Kelly & Breslin, 2010). Several domestic violence centers existed in Damascus – no government-run centers existed outside of the capital – but no longer operate due to the conflict (US Department of State, 2016). However, a small number of independent groups such as the Syrian Women's League, which was established in 1948 and calls for reforms in the Syrian legal system, and the Syrian Family Planning Association, established in 1974, also exist but run programs only in Damascus (US Department of State, 2016). Since the start of the war, women's international organizations have started working in Syria such as the Sisters of the Good Shepherd who run a 24-hour emergency shelter and hotline for victims of domestic violence (US Department of State, 2016).

4.2.2 Lebanon

Lebanon's political system is based on confessionalism which is a system that extends to personal status laws. Therefore, much like in Syria, Lebanese citizens belonging to different religious groups are not subjected to the same laws when it comes to marriage, divorce, alimony, custody, and inheritance (Harb, 2006); there are 15 different religious personal status laws in Lebanon. Much like in Syria, domestic violence is not a sufficient reason to end marriage according to religious courts; Christians can obtain an annulment in cases of life-threatening harm, and Shia and Sunni men have the right to "discipline" their wives effectively legislating IPV.[25]

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[25] Many lawyers and judges use loopholes or nepotism to grant abused women annulment or divorce; this is not enough as it leaves women at the mercy of the judge and helps only those with powerful acquaintances or resources.

Forty four percent of Lebanese citizens know someone who is a victim of domestic violence (Fadel, 2016). In a study conducted in Lebanon by Usta, Faverb, & Pshayana (2007), out of 1,418 women interviewed, 35 percent reported experiencing domestic violence with the most common type being verbal abuse (88 percent), followed by physical violence (66 percent); in 65 percent of cases, the offender was the husband, 18 percent involved the victim's father or other male family member, 13 percent were being abused by more than one person, and in 8 percent of cases the mother or mother-in-law was the violent one. Of those abused, 49 percent told a family member or a friend, and only 8 percent reported the violence to authorities (Usta, Faverb, & Pshayana, 2007). This is due to feelings of shame, fear of retaliation and rejection; the idea that the incident is a private issue; a belief that the police will not be of help and might victimize the survivor again; and a lack of resources that would allow them to leave the home or change their situation (Pickup, 2001; Usta, Faverb, & Pshayana, 2007). Eighty percent of domestic violence victims are also victims of marital rape (Kelly & Breslin, 2010). Women's NGOs report that their hotlines receive more than 2,600 cases of domestic abuse per year, and reports indicate that between 2014 and 2016, 14 women were reported killed by their intimate partner (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Moussawi & Yassin, 2017; Najjar, 2017).[26] Although laws criminalizing assault exist in Lebanon, and men were prosecuted for abusing or murdering their partners, the procedure stalled; thus, civil society began pushing for a law to protect women and every family member from violence.[27]

The first law criminalizing domestic violence in Lebanon was introduced in 2014. This law, called the Law on Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence (Law 293), defines domestic violence as "every act of violence, abstinence or threat thereof committed

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[26] Of note is that no official national statistics are available in Lebanon on physical and/or sexual IPV (include sexual violence), or non-partner sexual violence.

[27] For more information on the penalties that would be suffered for physical assault, please see the Personal Injury section of the Lebanese Penal Code, Articles 554-559

by one family member against one or more members … the consequences of which may cause death or physical, psychological, sexual and economical injury" (KAFA, 2014a). The law applies to everyone living in Lebanon, regardless of nationality. It states that when the internal security forces (ISF) receive a call informing them of a possible domestic violence incident (by the survivor, family members, neighbours, etc.), the Public Attorney shall be immediately informed and officers will arrive at the scene taking the victim to the hospital to be examined by a doctor and/or, if the survivor consents, to the police station to give a statement in the presence of a social worker; a statement is also taken from everyone living in the home (KAFA, 2014b). The abuser will then be jailed for 48 hours after which a restraining order (also called a protection order) will have taken effect which forbids the abuser of approaching the survivor, her family, and anyone else who might have helped her; depending on the survivor's request, the abuser can be prevented from coming close to the family home. This document also prevents the abuser from accessing any joint bank accounts or selling and making decision regarding joint properties. The protection order mandates that the abuser is financially responsible for his victim and children in terms of the costs of food, clothing, school, rent (if the survivor decides to leave the family home and go somewhere else), and all medical expenses that resulted from the abuse. If the abuser fails to comply with any of his obligations decreed in the protection order, he will be jailed for up to four days. The length of time this protection order is effective depends on the type and intensity of the abuse that took place (KAFA, 2014b). If a similar incident occurs again, the same rules apply; however, the penalties are increased according to guidelines found in the Lebanese Penal Code (KAFA, 2014a). Law 293 also states that if a police officer coerces the survivor to drop the charges

she is making, they will be penalized and jailed.[28] Law 293 did not replace the assault laws that exist in the country which still apply to domestic violence; however, it allows women to be safe until the judicial process begins. Although a great step forward, the Bill falls short as it does not criminalize marital rape and does not allow the mother to take custody of her children depending on custody laws which vary according to the individual's religion. NGOs are working on drafting a Bill to amend these shortcomings in Law 293 in the hopes that they will replace existing laws. Since the law was passed in 2014, the women's NGO KAFA has reported that the number of women reaching out to the organization for protection has more than doubled (Fadel, 2016); moreover, up until the end of 2016, over 350 protection orders had been issued all over Lebanon (Obeid, 2017).

In 2011 and 2017, Article 562 and Article 522 of the Lebanese Penal Code, which respectively mitigated punishment for honour crimes[29] and exempted rapists from punishment if they married their victim, were scrapped[30] (OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index [OECD], 2018a; Najjar, 2017). Although a victory, Articles 505 and 518 that "stipulate that the rape clause [mitigating punishment] would still apply when sexual assault is committed against a girl between 15 and 18, and there is consent or a prior promise to marriage" have not been amended (Najjar, 2017). Women's rights activists and groups are pushing for these remaining Articles to be altered, for a clause that includes divorced couples to be added to Law 293, and for the definition of sexual assault in Article 503 to be expanded to include "any sexual

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[28] To examine Law 293 in detail, please see "The Bill for the Protection of Women and Family Members Against Domestic Violence" and "Zalfa's Questions on the Law to Protect Women and Other Family Members from Family Violence" published by KAFA (2014a and b).
[29] There have been 66 reported deaths in Lebanon due to honour crimes between 1999 and 2007 (Human Rights Watch, 2011).
[30] Less than one percent of the Lebanese population knew that these laws existed (Najjar, 2017). Although judges did not always apply these laws, the fact that they exist puts women in a dangerous position.

act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object" (Obeid, 2017; WHO, 2017). Currently, Article 503 defines rape the same way the Penal Code defines it in Syria – "he who forces sexual intercourse [against someone] who is not his wife by violence or threat" (UNODC, 2018) – thereby legislating martial rape. A national survey conducted by the NGO ABAAD and published in 2017 indicates that 25 percent of women in Lebanon have been raped and less than a quarter of them have reported it (Francis, 2017).

Currently, a strong campaign to criminalize child marriage is underway in Lebanon and a draft law was introduced to parliament in March 2018 seeking to set the minimum marriage age to 18. Legal age of marriage also varies across the different personal status codes but starts from as young as 9 for Sunni and Shiite girls[31](OECD, 2018a); UN reports indicate that six percent of women in Lebanon aged 20 to 24 were married or in union before the age of 18 (UNWomen, 2016a). Although a law does not exist in Lebanon, the occurrence of child marriage is much rarer than in Syria due to communities rejecting this practice. As previously stated, this demonstrates the importance of societal change, as policies are not enough to end harmful practices.

Many organizations that fight against VAW exist in Lebanon; 24-hour hotlines that allow for victims to report their abuse and receive counselling exist, awareness raising campaigns, and access to shelters, free legal advice and counselling are also available for women.

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[31] Of note is that the marriage age for men is 18 years old, although permission can be given for younger boys (OECD; 2018).

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has illustrated examples of the discriminatory laws against women that exist in Syria and Lebanon. Although they vary between religious communities, some religious courts also discriminate against women in terms of inheritance, and some civil laws, including the ability of a woman to pass her nationality to her children, also exist. However, as we saw in Lebanon, changes and introduction of laws that protect women from domestic violence reflect societal shifts in how VAW is viewed – especially since these were advocated by local organizations and civil society. Because they are residents of Lebanon, these laws also apply to refugee women and men in that country and will affect how they choose to respond to instances of violence. In the next chapter, I will examine VAW specifically in refugee settings, after which I will highlight the situation of Syrian refugee women in Lebanon.

CHAPTER 5: REFUGEES AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This chapter will examine VAW in Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon. To do this, I will first briefly present available literature on VAW in refugee settings before looking at VAW in Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon, specifically highlighting the views of the individuals I interviewed. Since my research question seeks to examine the perspectives refugees hold on VAW programming, it is important for me to understand the context they are living in and their exposure to this human rights violation. Moreover, how they view the issue of VAW itself will influence whether or not they feel VAW programming is useful.

5.1 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN REFUGEE SETTINGS

Although VAW cuts across all divisions of class, ethnicity, religion, and culture and is present in all areas of the world, some factors make women more likely to be subjected to it. Refugee women are one of the most vulnerable groups as they are more likely to be exposed to violence due to their displacement experience: violence during conflict prior to flight, violence during flight, violence by authorities in host country, violence at refugee centers by NGO and government workers, violence by fellow refugees including family members, etc. (Table 2) (Pickup, 2001; UNICEF, 2003). This is due to the fact that they live in an environment where a lack of respect for human rights is generally present, exacerbating an already existing problem (UNICEF, 2003). Moreover, studies have cited difficulties in accessing food and water, extreme poverty, minority status, and the disruption of support systems and communities as stressors that contribute to VAW (Table 3) (Charles & Denman, 2013; Tappis et al., 2016).

Each of the factors listed in Table 3 falls into at least one layer of the SEF. While individual registration and identity cards fall into the individual level of analysis, lack of food, fuel, and work as well as the collapse of the family support structures fall into the interpersonal

Table 2: Violence Refugees are Exposed to (Source: UNHCR, 2003, p.20)

Displacement Phase	Type of Violence
Prior to flight	Abuse by persons in power; sexual assault; abduction by different parties involved in conflict
During flight	Sexual attack by smugglers, bandits, border guards, fellow refugees; capture for trafficking by smugglers
In the asylum country	Coercion and sexual attack by persons in power; domestic violence; sex for trade; resumption of harmful traditional practices
During repatriation	Sexual abuse of women and children separated from their families; abuse by persons in power

Table 3: Factors that Contribute to VAW in Refugee Settings (Source: UNHCR, 2003, p.22)

Social	• Collapse of social and family support structures • Predominantly male camp leadership: gender-based decisions
Environment	• Geographical location and local environment (high crime area) • Design and social structure of camp (overcrowded, multi-household dwellings, communal shelter)
Resources	• Unavailability of food, fuel, income generation • Lack of police protection and hostility • Lack of UNHCR/NGO presence • Lack of individual registration and identity cards • Hostility of local population

level of the SEF. The collapse of social support structures, male camp leadership, geographical location and local environment, and the hostility of local populations all fall into the community level of the SE framework; the design and social structure of the camps, lack of police protection, and IO and NGO presence fall into the fourth level of analysis which is the organizational level. Finally, lack of registration and identity cards can also fall into the policy level of analysis due to the rules put in place that make accessing legal documents difficult. The fact that stressors contributing to VAW are all part of the SEF demonstrates the importance of looking at these five levels of analysis to understand the prevalence of this issue in refugee communities.

Poverty is an important factor when discussing VAW for two reasons: it is a stressor for

men as it might make them feel inadequate – this will be discussed at a later point in this chapter – and it limits women's choices in terms of resisting violence and being exposed to it for various reasons.[32] First, women living in poverty tend to have limited access to institutions that might provide them with the help they need including health, education, legal services, social services, etc. (Pickup, 2001). The costs of facing violence might be both financial and even social in terms of disapproval from family members for example, or even the way they are treated if they seek help: "of those who seek support against violence, those from higher economic strata are more likely than women living in poverty to be shown respect" (Pickup, 2001, p. 26). Second, economic deprivation or need may compel women to take part in economic generating strategies that could make them targets. For example, in a society where women are expected to stay at home, breaking that gender norm could make it more likely for a woman to encounter violence, either physical or sexual, as a kind of retaliation by men to assert control over her; finally, and this is more related to economic dependence than to poverty, if a woman has no means of supporting herself financially, she could accept the violent situation she is living in as she could view the alternative and repercussions of her leaving as worse than what she is going through (Pickup, 2001). In Lebanon, women's centers receive many victims who "have endured years of violence by their husbands but have not contacted the police, since they are economically dependent on their husbands. Sometimes the trigger for a woman to come to an advice center is the husband becoming violent towards her daughter" (Pickup, 2001, p. 26). This is important to note since most refugees live in economic deprivation. As previously mentioned, in Lebanon, 76 percent of Syrian refugees live below the poverty line (UNDP & UNHCR, 2017).

The stress associated with being a refugee is also an important factor when studying VAW

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[32] It is important to note that correlation does not equal causation, i.e. poverty does not cause VAW.

in refugee communities; "the loss of previously established family and societal roles, forced dependency, high levels of physical and psychological pain, impotence and frustration may lead to significant levels of domestic violence and non-consensual sex following resettlement" (Pickup, 2001, p.165). Examining these factors through a GAD perspective tells us that the increased VAW is a way for men to re-establish some of their "masculinity" which they feel they have lost due to their refugee status. In this way, poverty might be one of the stressors that could lead men to become violent towards their partners and families. An article published by Friedman (1992) introduces the notion of refugee men suffering from "heightened male vulnerability" – feelings of failure for not being able to protect their families – due to the horrors they could have witnessed during their flight and the psychological and emotional trauma they could have experienced which, combined with the factors mentioned above, could result in men resorting to violence as a way of re-establishing control and of expressing their masculinity to counter the feelings of victimization they have that come with being a refugee (Anani, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013).

Research examining VAW in refugee communities focuses primarily on IPV as it is the most common type of VAW in refugee camp settings (Horn, 2010; Rothkegel et al., 2008). Khawaja and Barazi (2005) found that 44.7 percent of Palestinian women in refugee camps experienced physical violence, while Al-Modallal et al. (2015) found that 78 percent of Palestinian women in Jordanian refugee camps were survivors of at least one kind of VAW with the most common type being controlling behavior. In Al-Modallal's study, only 23 percent of women reported being survivors of physical intimate partner violence. Tappis et al. (2012) and Feseha, and Gerbaba (2012) conducted a study on the prevalence of physical VAW amongst Iraqi refugees in Syria and refugees living in the Shimelba refugee camp in Northern Ethiopia, respectively; their studies showed that intimate partner physical violence was at 30 percent in both cases.

Notwithstanding the ability of studies to report the percentage of women who have survived VAW, actual reporting by survivors to NGOs, IOs, and authorities is rather low, and when it does occur, the problem is often not dealt with, discouraging other women from reporting their own experiences. One report recounted the story of a Syrian refugee in Germany who tried to file a complaint against her husband who had raped and beaten her and was completely ignored by the refugee support systems that were available to her (Freedman, 2016). Additionally, lack of awareness of available resources might leave women feeling like they have no one to turn to. An inter-agency assessment in the United Nations in 2013 found that 83 percent of Syrian refugees in Jordan are unaware of available resources dealing with GBV (UNWomen, 2013). Other deterrents to reporting are not unique to the survivor's refugee status and include feeling ashamed, feeling that VAW is acceptable, fearing revenge from the perpetrator, wanting to keep the issue private, wanting to protect the perpetrator, justifying the violent behavior, and fearing being separated from the family (Freedman, 2016; Khawaja, Linos & El-Roueiheb, 2008; Lewis, 2005).

5.2 VIOLENCE AGAINST SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN LEBANON

Despite the fact that in Lebanon Syrian refugees do not reside in refugee camps, the exacerbated socio-economic vulnerabilities they experience, which were mentioned in Chapter 3 – poverty, minority status, difficulty accessing health care, financial pressures, etc. – are being translated into an increase in levels of GBV (GoL & UN, 2017). According to UN reports, 90 percent of SGBV incidents reported by Syrian refugees in the country occurred after arrival to Lebanon. Those who are most at risk include underage mothers, child brides, unaccompanied children, disabled women and girls, and female heads of households (GoL & UN, 2017). Between 2014 and 2017, some 90 percent of reported SGBV cases involved women and girls (GoL & UN, 2017). Although no statistics are available on the percentage of Syrian women in Lebanon who

are victims of GBV, the assumption is that they are high. According to the NGO staff I interviewed, more than half of reported GBV cases in the country are reported by refugees. The most commonly reported types of violence according to UN and NGO documents include physical violence (domestic violence), sexual violence (sexual assault and rape), and forced/early marriage.

Before examining VAW amongst Syrian refugees in Lebanon, it was important for me to get an idea of how Syrian refugees themselves define VAW. Some seventy five percent of participants[33] defined VAW as verbal, psychological, and physical violence. It is interesting to note that most women cited verbal abuse to be on the same levels as getting hit in terms of how much damage it could cause:

> Violence is not only hitting, and physical violence. Violence is even when he hurts your personality, he harms your soul with something he says. It's not only when someone hits that he harms. When someone says something harsh to me, that's violence according to me (Sabah, Jul 2017).

> I'll tell you something [about what VAW is]. Sometimes harsh words in front of people, and your husband not respecting you and talking to you in a harsh way in front of people hurts more than getting hit. You prefer him hitting you rather than talking to you in that way (Mayse, Jul 2017).

Out of the five individuals who defined VAW differently, two men and one woman limited VAW to physical abuse. Walid, a 24-year-old Syrian refugee stated:

> I consider violence to be first of all hitting. When you say violence, it means that there's hitting. I consider that with everything else other than hitting, people talk and could come to an understanding. But the word 'violence' implies physical contact which means there's hitting (Jul 2017).

The remaining two men avoided answering the question. One of them specifically asked to move on to another question, while the other began relating to me that when he registered with the

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[33] Ten out of 11 women, and six out of 10 men.

UNHCR, agents asked to speak to his wife; although he did not object to this, after she came out of the interview room, he asked her what the UNHCR agents had discussed with her and when she revealed a card providing her with a number to call in case he was violent, he threw it in the trash. As he told me, his reasoning for doing this focuses on privacy, as no one should get involved between a man and his wife.

The Syrian refugees I interviewed focused on IPV when discussing VAW; when defining VAW and giving me examples, all of them – both men and women – referred to husbands abusing their wives. There was no mention of abuse from parents, in-laws, authority figures, nor strangers. Moreover, all of them focused on abuse by men. When asked to define VAW, one woman even said, "violence is equal to men. Men are the definition of violence according to me" (Layla, Jul 2017). When I asked specifically about other forms of VAW, a few discussed general racism against Syrians in Lebanon (rather than VAW specifically). However, no significant mention of sexual assault was made, although one woman mentioned harassment. This could be due to the fact that sexuality in general is a taboo topic in conservative cultures like those of the Middle East, which means that people tend to avoid the topic when discussing any issue.

In the next section, I will examine the different type of VAW present in Syrian communities in Lebanon as well as the perceived changes in frequency and levels of VAW when comparing life in Syria and Lebanon.

5.2.1 Domestic Violence

As previously mentioned, domestic violence is any form of abuse, i.e. any behavior that can cause physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behavior, perpetrated in the home by a family member; IPV narrows this definition down and refers to abuse committed by an intimate partner or ex-partner

(WHO, 2017). As per the *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020*, the majority of reported GBV cases in Lebanon are domestic violence incidents (GoL & UN, 2017); this is consistent with the fact that family violence is the most pervasive and the most common form of GBV across the globe. According to the Gender Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS),[34] 71 percent of reported GBV incidents in Lebanon are perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member: 47 percent by a current or former partner, 14 percent by a primary caregiver, and 10 percent by another family member (GBVIMS, 2016). GBVIMS data in Lebanon state that 79 percent of incidents occurred inside the home, and that one in three survivors of IPV reached out to service providers more than one month after the abuse occurred[35] (GBVIMS, 2016; GoL & UN, 2017). Studies have shown that IPV has increased in Syrian households since arrival to Lebanon (Anani, 2013; Charles & Denman, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013; Friedman, 1992; International Rescue Committee [IRC], 2012). Eighty one percent of the women and 20 percent of the men I interviewed believe IPV has increased in their community since coming to Lebanon: "We hear about people abusing their wives more since we've come here because there's more of it. Since the war began, you hear a lot of stories because of the pressures each person is living under"

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[34] The GBVIMS is a multi-faceted initiative that allows organizations working on and responding to GBV to store, analyze, and share the data they collect through UN platforms. It is used in 25 countries around the world and allows for a global harmonized system. In Lebanon, 6 organizations utilize the GBVIMS. For more information on the GBVIMS, please visit www.gbvims.com

[35] The data quoted above is only from reported cases and does not represent the total incidence or prevalence of Gender-Based violence (GBV) in Lebanon. These statistical trends are generated exclusively by GBV service providers who use the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) for data collection in the implementation of GBV response activities across Lebanon and with the informed consent of survivors. Six organizations contributed to the trends. As per the instructions of the GBVIMS coordinator, this data should not be used for direct follow-up with survivors or organizations for additional case follow-up. This information is confidential and must not be shared outside your organization/agency. Should you like to use this data or access more information on GBV IMS, please contact the inter-agency GBV IMS Coordinator; **Dana Dib** (dib@unfpa.org) and/or the SGBV Task Force Coordinator; **Lorenza Trulli** (trulli@unhcr.org).

(Miriam, Jul 2017). Lower self-esteem among men due to the stigmas that go along with being a refugee, i.e. heightened male vulnerability, as well as the loss of their roles as protectors and providers, lead to a negative expression of masculinity, which, as previously mentioned, is associated with domination and an attitude of "what I say goes", as an attempt to re-establish the power they feel they no longer have when they lost the roles that shape their identity as men: "I don't feel that I am a real man after what has happened to me now, and to be honest, I can't handle it anymore…When my wife asks me for vegetables or meat to prepare food, I hit her. She does not know why she was hit, neither do I" (Anani, 2013, p.76). Roula El-Masri, the director of program at the NGO ABAAD, conveyed these same dynamics to me:

> We observe a shift in how a refugee man is viewed in times of war and conflict; because he is a refugee, society's view of him is one that says, "you fled instead of defending your land". Therefore, we have here the first "shake-up" of a man and the way he views himself. How this gets translated on the level of the family is "you are no longer the protector, and you are no longer the provider for the family" so the two things we say to a man – your only roles in society are to be a protector and a provider – he no longer has them, so his entire manhood is affected and the perception towards his masculinity is affected. For him, this feels like a sort of psychological castration; so, to prove his manhood in a way, he vents his frustration on the people closest to him who are his family or more specifically the women [in his family]. Thus, we see a significant increase in domestic violence among refugees. Of course, I'm not saying that it was not present before, but we see a huge increase in IPV in refugee populations when compared to before (Jun 2017)

Mayse, a 31-year-old Syrian woman who has 6 children, talked about this exact phenomenon saying "their father wasn't finding a job, so he would get bored, frustrated and yell. He would relieve his frustration on the kids and on me because he felt like he wasn't able to live, he didn't know how to pay the rent or buy food and stuff like that" (July 2017). Due to the breakup in communities that results from conflict, gender practices that promoted hetero-normative roles and dominant codes of behavior for women and men begin falling apart. The collapse of these patriarchal structures results in changing behaviours and changing gender norms and roles (Anani

2013; Charles & Denman, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013; Friedman, 1992). Syria was a country where people typically maintained traditional gender roles: women were responsible for household chores, and only 15 percent of working age women were employed or looking for work prior to the conflict (World Bank, 2017). However, reports indicate that since becoming refugees, women are increasingly taking decision-making roles and are informally employed and paid, while men remain underemployed (El-Masri et al., 2013). In fact, 71 percent of the refugees I interviewed said that men in their families were either unemployed or informal contract workers. Thus, since coming to Lebanon, men's workload has decreased, especially when they do not participate in housework or taking care of their children despite being unemployed (Charles & Denman, 2013). This leaves them feeling bored and disempowered and disrupts gender dynamics as women begin having a more active role in providing for the family financially, either by working or by actively reaching out to organizations for support (Charles & Denman, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013). These changes can be interpreted as women "ignoring familial responsibilities and [losing] respect for her traditional role" (Friedman, 1992, p. 72) and trigger "hyper masculine associated codes" of conduct (Charles & Denman, 2013, p.104) in men in an attempt to reassert normative hegemonic patriarchal gender norms and recover some power and control (Friedman, 1992). These behaviours are most often directed at women (and children) since they are the ones traditionally subordinated under these patriarchal structures. The disempowerment of women that comes along with violence re-establishes and reinforces these structures.

Interestingly, two of the women I interviewed said that in Lebanon, they feel free and empowered, and that IPV is becoming less of an issue because they feel confident enough to fight back due to this shift in gender roles:

> To be honest, here in Lebanon I feel so much better, because I've discovered my personality, who I am. I feel like I can be who I am a little bit more; I've flourished. My

husband relaxed with me a little bit. He lets me go out. [In Syria] everything was forbidden; no neighbours, no nothing. And that affected me a lot (Noor, Jul 2017).

Mayse expressed the same sentiment as Noor and explained that because women are working, men see women as equals which decreases violence in the household:

Here in Lebanon, women got some freedom. Even men notice this. Sometimes, a man fights with his wife, my husband for example, and he says, "in Lebanon, you got a big head". I'll tell you why that is. In Syria, it's forbidden for a woman to go out; she's not allowed to work. If she works, it's a big deal. If she goes out alone, it's a big deal. They start saying "where is she going, how is she going by herself, someone has to be with her so there's a witness to where she is going, what she is doing". Here, there's freedom. A woman can go work like a man. He's not spending money on her anymore; she's providing for herself, and her kids, and him, and he's not doing anything. You know what I mean? When a man wants to disrespect and put his wife down, he feels ashamed of himself because she's working. Even if he's working, it's the same. They are both working, and both come home tired…we are both in the same situation. Or if a man isn't working, and his wife is working, he says "my wife is providing for me. It's her right to leave me. Who's going to raise my kids if she leaves". So he stays quiet. Not like in Syria. In Syria, he spends money on everything, he buys everything. If she needs anything, he goes and gets it. Even if he's tired from work, he has to go get it. So that's why he felt he could do anything and had a big head. Now, he's just like his wife. He has no reason to have a big head (Jul 2017).

Women's extended roles allows them to have more influence over household decisions shifting power dynamics that, to some women, could never be re-established:

Yes, men feel that women have become stronger than them. He is the weaker link. If things go back to how they were in terms of security, we can never go back to how things were before in the couple. Women feel stronger. Have the men become weaker? No, but men are noticing that we [women] have become stronger. He asks her "why are you changing like this?" He thinks that she is being influenced. He doesn't understand (Keedi, Yaghi, & Baker, 2017, p. 27).

Although some women view these changes in gender roles as positive, others feel as though they are losing their femininity and feel threatened by these changes preferring that things remain the way they were:

I rarely take my kids out to be honest with you. Their dad goes out. Even I don't go out. We were like this in Syria, and we decided to not change things here (Aya, Jul 2017).

> They say, "the man is the builder and the woman is paradise". I'm "paradise" at home, and my husband is the provider…I do the dishes, cook, clean, do the laundry, and all of this I do by myself. I work 100 things, and my husband does one thing. That's true, but this is how it is. These are our duties. If you don't want to do these things, don't get married (Sabah, Jul 2017).

The fact that some women do not seem to be in favour of the changing gender and power dynamics might be due to them wanting to retain some normalcy during this abnormal time they are going through. Having lost their homes, their families, their friends, their communities, and everything that is familiar to them, retaining their culture and so-called societal roles could be the only thing they have left. Sabah, a Syrian refugee woman I interviewed, even expressed the opinion that a woman having to work outside of the home is somehow unacceptable:

> I see women working on fixing her house with their husbands. She works with rocks and sand. For us there's no way that would happen. If there's work inside, you can help, but outside, there's people coming and going seeing you, no way. Here, there are Lebanese women who go out and work…even them they envy us. They tell us, "you sit in your house, and we have to go to work" (Jul 2017).

Due to the hetero-normative patriarchal environment she grew up in, Sabah views traditional gender roles as being the right way to act and be. A woman going to work or doing a "man's work" (for example construction work or in some cases any work outside the home) is unacceptable to women in her eyes. According to Sigel (1996) "[s]tating that women as a group are disadvantaged, however, does not mean that the women involved necessarily *view themselves* as disadvantaged…Much of any actor's perception is probably also influenced by her expectations for the self and by the person or group she chooses for comparison" (p. 18). I will discuss this further when discussing cultural dogma.

The disadvantaged position of Syrian women in Lebanese communities, specifically because they are Syrian, was also cited as a reason for the increase in VAW:

> My mother is an example of a woman who's being abused because she's married to a

Lebanese. He knows her situation is difficult, and he knows that she needs him for her papers, so he takes advantage of her. He says to himself "no matter what I do to her, she'll have to stay". And this is something very atrocious. And it's happening to a lot of women…I know one woman who is married to a Lebanese man who took her papers (Layla, Jul 2017).

Here we see the importance of intersectionality as Layla's mother is victimized in two different ways and for two different reasons. The first is that she is a refugee; she is not in her country, she is away from her support system and is in an unfamiliar environment. She is part of the minority group in the country and cannot obtain legal residency without her husband; moreover, she is married to an individual who is more powerful than her since he is a Lebanese citizen, thus part of the majority group, which elevates him into a higher position socially. Second, she is a woman, which automatically subordinates her to her husband due the gender dynamics and the patriarchal culture she comes from and is living in.

Interestingly, 80 percent of the men I interviewed said that they think the amount of violence in their communities has not changed since coming to Lebanon the reason being that just because the area in which people live has changed, does not mean that the way they behave will as well: "The issue of VAW goes back to your ethics and how you are raised, not to the country or where you are" (Walid, Jul 2017).

When I asked my participants whether a man has the right to abuse a woman, seven out of 11 women and six out of 10 men said that a man should never abuse his wife no matter what: "Even if she does something wrong, there's nothing she can do that gives him the right to abuse her" (Noor, woman, Jul 2017); "let's say she doesn't fulfill her duties, one should deal with it through guidance and conversation; you should never abuse your wife" (Fadi, man, Jul 2017). Three women said how tolerant they are towards the abuse depends on how abusive the man gets:

Now there's a difference between beatings. For example, if the beatings cause damage to her eye or ear or if he cuts her head open, here, he's crossed the line…some men are

lunatics…some people burn their wives with cigarettes…that's unacceptable" (Sabah, Jul 2017).

Lama, a 37-year-old woman from Daraa expressed similar sentiments saying that a slap or push is alright, but if it gets excessive, it would not be acceptable. One woman and the remaining four men said that a man should only hit his wife when she does something wrong, and that men in general would not hit their wives if they have no reason to: "There are people who hit their wives over anything. If she went to their neighbours without telling him for example. But with us, this doesn't happen. If there isn't a big problem, there won't be violence; this is what I know" (Sami, man, Jul 2017); Youssef, a 23-year-old man from ar-Rastan, expressed the same sentiments as Sami saying "if I hit her, it's for a reason because she's done something wrong. So, when I have to hit her, I hit her. But hitting her whenever she says something for example and when it's not necessary, it's wrong for sure" (Jul 2017).[36] The concept of abuse being a normal response when a woman does 'something wrong' is an issue that was discussed by the NGO worker at KAFA whom I interviewed; she referred to it as cultural dogma:

> There are a lot of [Syrian refugees] who think that [violence is normal]. They don't feel it's abuse because it's something that exists generation after generation, so it becomes normalized, and the women doesn't feel like it's her right to defend herself (Jul 2017).

This was also expressed by Kareem who told me:

> We have our traditions and our way of living in Syria. Most women won't, how can I tell you this; it's normal for them. In Lebanon, it's something, and in Syria it's something different. I'm telling you in Syria it's a very normal thing (Jul 2017).

Alhabib, Nur, and Jones discussed this in their article "Domestic violence against women: A systematic review of prevalence studies" (2010) and said:

> in classifying respondents as victims, a particular interpretation is placed on these

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[36] Blaming women for the violence they endure and excusing men for the abuse they instigate is called relativization and will be discussed shortly.

responses, which may ignore important differences in the interpretation of 'assault' and of behaviours which constitute violence. However, not all women who suffer abuse identify with the socially constructed image of a 'battered woman (Mahoney 1991). It is not only important to learn whether respondents have experienced any of the particular behaviours that we define as violent or abusive, but also to understand to what degree they share these labels with us (p. 374)

Normalization of violence reflects the dominant patriarchal hierarchy discussed before which subordinates women to men; thus, instead of being equals and partners in a marriage, a woman is seen as less than, as something that exists to obey, serve, and satisfy the man which gives him the right to "discipline" her if she goes against his will or displeases him:

> In our society, a woman has to be a "woman" and a man a "man". It's wrong for her to talk back or yell. And he's allowed to be angry all the time, and she has to tolerate his anger and be the scapegoat of his anger. She's not allowed to get angry…my husband gets angry very quickly, and he would tell me "even if you're angry, no matter what you're feeling, when you're in front of me, you have to smile, you have to be something else". But why? I have a personality and a nature, I can't hide what I'm feeling. If I'm sad, I'm going to look sad; if I'm happy, I'm going to look happy. He would tell me even if someone in my family died, you have to be something else when you're facing me. So that's not a way to be. They make you feel that a woman is like a thing in the house. You're like an object; he can control you like a doll, he can control you in any way he wants (Noor, Jul 2017).

These attitudes of proprietariness and objectification are a symptom of the patriarchal cultures that exist in the world; objectification is "the process through which the person on the bottom of the hierarchy is dehumanized, made less human that the person on the top of the hierarchy, who in turn becomes the standard of what human is" (Price, 2005, p. 33). The transformation of a woman to a thing makes her controllable, like objects are controllable, and intended for specific reasons, i.e. reproduction and traditional domestic chores, and, much like objects, it makes her disposable and replaceable (Price, 2005). With objectification comes the idea of proprietariness which makes women something that can be owned; hence, once a woman gets married, she effectively belongs to her husband which gives him the right to release his frustration and anger on her whenever he

pleases:

> I went through this in Syria when we were living with his parents, his three brothers and their wives. He would hear a word from his mother, one from his sister-in-law, one from the other one. He can't hit his mom, he can't hit his sister-in-law, so he hits his wife. (Mayse, Jul 2017).

This pattern exists even in the absence of conflict but is exacerbated by the increase in stresses that comes with being a refugee. Two of my participants, one man and one woman, linked the acceptance of VAW to education: "in the ignorant and uneducated class, it's normal [for a man to hit his wife]. But for the educated class, no. When ignorance is present, everything is acceptable" (Layla, 30yo, Jul 2017). "There are illiterate people who don't understand. If they ask their wife to bring them something and she doesn't, they hit her…a person who is educated and understands knows that if you hit your wife, you're not really gaining anything" (Kareem, Jul 2017). Studies have shown that GBV decreases with the education of both men and women (Kundapur, Shetty, Kempaller, Kumar, & Anurupa, 2017; Nilsson, 2013). The decrease in violence with increased education is due to women having the confidence to seek help and navigate the systems that allow her to find appropriate resources (Nilsson, 2013).[37] As for men, higher education seems to be indirectly associated with a decrease in violence as it usually correlates with better employment decreasing some of the previously mentioned stressors that could make men feel the need to prove their masculinity in a negative way (WHO, 2017); moreover, with higher education, individuals are usually more exposed to awareness surrounding gender issues and issues of VAW which also contributes to mitigation of this human rights violation (Kundapur et al., 2017; WHO, 2017). Nevertheless, as previously noted, higher education and class do not make people immune to

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[37] The relationship between VAW and education will be discussed in more detail in the section on child marriage in this chapter

domestic violence.

Despite most women rejecting violence, excusing men for their behaviour is a common response when discussing VAW. Charles and Denman (2013) refer to this as 'relativization' "whereby the criminal act is not judged in isolation but relative to perceived behaviour and expectation of the victim" (p. 104). Relativization makes the perpetrator's actions understandable. The study conducted by Oxfam and ABAAD showed how women expressed empathy for men due to the stress their husbands are under stating that because of this, women should tolerate violent behaviour (El-Masri et al., 2013): "You can't judge a man. Each man has a reason. He has no right, but it happens" (Mayse, 31yo, Jul 2017). The problem with excusing violence is that it allows gender hierarchies to be sustained and reduces the effectiveness of any actions taken to prevent abuse (Charles & Denman, 2013). Moreover, it promotes self-policing (monitoring one's behaviour) and self-blaming (and the blaming of women in general) which allows for men to carry on abusing, and for women to perpetuate their own abuse and discrimination: "I never say to my son-in-law don't hit my daughter cause there's a possibility that my daughter is aggressive with him, there's a chance that she talks out of order, there's a chance she says rude things, there's a chance she's provoking him" (Sabah, Jul 2017).[38] Even Noor, who said that violence is never acceptable, blamed her friend for provoking her husband when she was recounting that woman's story to me:

> I had a friend in Syria and [her husband] would really hit her and hurt her…But she was in the wrong because she didn't say anything to anyone and accepted the violence. And her way and attitude would make him angry and he would hit her. Of course, he shouldn't no matter what, but at the same time, some people get angry and don't know what they're doing anymore. So if she adds fuel to the fire, he'll blow up. So when you want to be rude to your husband and yell at him, and you know how he will react if you do, of course he won't know what he's doing anymore and will hit you (Jul 2017).

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[38] I will discuss self-policing and victim-blaming in more detail in Chapter 7.

5.2.2 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting" (WHO, 2017) and ranges from sexual harassment to rape. For Syrians, sexual violence – and the threat of sexual violence – was one of the reasons[39] that made families seek refuge in Lebanon according to a study conducted by the IRC in 2012. Focus group participants recounted how armed actors would break into homes and specifically target women and girls in order to "dishonour" and coerce the men in the family (IRC, 2012). This victimizes the women two times over: first, they are victims because of the rape; second, the women are objectified which lowers their status even more as they become tools used to "humiliate" men, families, and an entire culture:

> Research findings suggest that sexual violence in times of armed conflict reflects issues of power asymmetry, patriarchy, masculinity, and the devaluation of women that are pervasive even in settings not affected by armed conflict. In this respect, sexual violence in conflict settings is best viewed not as something completely new and extraordinary but as an extension of universalized power dynamics, gender norms, and discrimination against women that harm survivors on a large scale even in presumably peaceful situations (Stark & Wessells, 2012, p. 677).

Sexual violence during conflict is meant to weaken the social fabric of communities and disempower men by humiliating and abusing women. Sexual violence can also be seen to be a "hyperexpression of machismo and gendered norms", as a way for soldiers to bond and to relieve tensions, as a prize or "spoil of war", and as a cheap way of targeting populations (Maciejczak, 2013; Stark & Wessells, 2012, p. 677).[40] Often, survivors are rejected by their societies, stigmatized and isolated from their communities (Maciejczak, 2013; Stark & Wessells, 2012).

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[39] The other reason was due to lack of resources for families (IRC, 2012).
[40] For more information on sexual violence in times of conflict please see Stark and Wessells' "Sexual violence as a weapon of war" (2012) and Maciejczak's "Sexual violence as a weapon of war" (2013).

Women survivors of rape in Syria are being increasingly forced into marriage to avoid honour killings (HRGJ et al., 2016), although some Syrians report that due to the frequency of these incidents, family are becoming more understanding: "rape has become so widespread in the Syrian conflict that many families will 'accept' their daughters and not blame them for the incident" (IRC, 2012, p. 8).

Unfortunately, when they arrived to Lebanon, Syrians did not completely escape sexual violence. According to the *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020*, 18 percent of reported SGBV cases in Lebanon (by both Lebanese citizens and non-nationals) are sexual violence incidents, seven percent of which are rape [41] (GoL & UN, 2017); women and girls are disproportionately affected by SGBV as an average of 90 percent of reported incidents involve women and girls (GoL & UN, 2017). Many refugees are living in unplanned refugee settlements, unfinished or abandoned public buildings, or small rooms, all of which are overcrowded which minimizes privacy and compromises safety leaving them more vulnerable to sexual violence from fellow refugees, as well as the host community (Anani, 2013; IRC, 2012). Sexual harassment by Lebanese men is a common occurrence for Syrian women in Lebanon with some making sexual advances towards them, some suggesting financial assistance in exchange for sexual favours, and some threatening them with weapons (Amnesty International, 2016). A report by Amnesty International told the story of a woman who reported the death of a relative to the police. Officers recorded her personal details, and, after a while, they would pass by her house and call on her and her sister to go out with them: "it was the same three police officers who took our report. Because we don't have legal [residence] permits, the officers threatened us. They said that they would imprison us if we didn't go out with them" (Amnesty International, 2016, p.7). Women often talk

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[41] Eighteen percent of rape victims are men and 20 percent of SGBV cases involve children (GoL & UN, 2017).

about sexual harassment by government employees responsible for renewing residency permits, police officers, strangers on the street, and bus and taxi drivers:

> Just because I am a woman living alone, if I get into a cab, the driver will try to touch me and I will hear a lot of verbal harassment. Most of the time, I try not to ask for help from anyone. But sometimes I need help, like with carrying a gas bottle. If I ask any man for help with carrying a gas canister, or any other kind of help, he will indirectly feel like he has the right to interfere in my life. But harassment [of women] is not only restricted to Lebanon. It's not a problem that only occurs to us because we are refugees here in Lebanon. It can happen in Syria and in Lebanon and any other place (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 46).

Another Syrian woman related an incident she had while on a bus from the Bekaa to Beirut:

> There was only one other man apart from the driver on the bus and I was alone with my daughters. The bus driver started doing abnormal things to try and harass me. The first thing he did was take his gun and place it next to him, so I would know that he had a weapon with him. My eldest daughter who is 16 was really terrified. But I had to tell her not to be scared and promised her that I would manage the situation. How do you think I was able to get off the bus? I had to promise to come back to him and told him, "As you like, I will first just take my daughters home". I took his phone number and his name because this was the only chance for us to get out. I gave him my phone number and smiled a lot so he would believe my lie and told him I would call him back. He said he'd call me "Princess" and I said, "OK, you can call me whatever you like". I even thought to myself that, if things went to the extreme and I wasn't able to get away, I would just give him whatever he wanted as long as he didn't hurt my daughters (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 46).

Layla, one of my participants, told me that her husband's employer asked them to find him a Syrian wife. When asked why, his answer was "I heard they are cheap and easy…they are satisfied with as little as 100 USD to live off of" (Jul 2017). Layla expressed how horrible this makes her feel and how much it harms the self-esteem of Syrian women in Lebanon: "We've reached a point where if someone asks if I'm Syrian, I say that I am not. It bothers me and makes me feel less-than" (Layla, Jul 2017). Mayse recalled an incident where a man asked her to leave her husband for him: "You get exposed to things. Sometimes, you can go clean someone's house and his wife

isn't home. And he says to you, 'you don't have to clean houses; leave your husband, come back, and I'll marry you, I'll take your kids too'" (Jul 2017). Roula El-Masri, the director of program at the NGO ABAAD, affirmed Mayse and Layla's sentiments when she told me that Syrian women frequently report harassment by Lebanese men: "we hear a lot about verbal harassment of communities by society where people on the street would ask refugee women 'how much do you cost'" (Jun 2017). The threat of harassment also exists when applying for jobs, which makes it difficult for women to find employment:

> There is a big difficulty living here in Lebanon because of the society and the men. If I want to search for a job, a man would always ask for something – an exchange. I went to one place to apply for a job there. It was a clothes shop. The employer asked to have a coffee with me, but I refused. I had doubts because of the way he was looking at me and I thought he wanted something beyond coffee (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 35).

This is again a demonstration of the intersectionality I mentioned before as, due to their minority status, Syrian women are viewed as easier targets for Lebanese men. Widowed and single women are particularly fearful of being harassed with some reporting hiding the fact that their husbands have been killed and pretending to receive phone calls from their spouses when in public to protect themselves from harassment (Anani, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013). This behaviour arises because traditionally, men are thought to provide safety and security for women (El-Masri et al., 2013). This is an embodiment of gender roles where the male is the protector and the female needs protecting. Moreover, if a woman is married she is thought to be protected from harassment because she is already linked to a man so should not be targeted; she is assumed to belong to one man – as opposed to potentially any man – and is therefore off limits for others who would not harass nor assault nor come close to an "object" that has an "owner", again highlighting the attitude of objectification and proprietariness. To guard themselves from harassment, women monitor their own movements and parents restrict their daughters from leaving the home: "In Syria, [until the

war started], I allowed my daughters to hang out with their friends, with their brother until 1AM. In Lebanon, I can't let them go outside the building alone because there is a lot of sexual harassment, especially against the Syrian female refugees" (El-Masri et al., 2013, p.18). Although staying at home is an effective way of reducing one's exposure to sexual violence, self-policing is a form of internalized violence where women believe that they are to blame for the assault: "This continuous blame of the victim…proliferates the violence and means that the abusers' actions become normative, whilst the victims continue to suffer the consequences, be that early marriage or a burden of guilt and self-blame" (Charles & Denman, 2013, p. 107). As previously mentioned, I will discuss self-policing in a subsequent chapter.

Reported incidents of sexual exploitation and survival sex[42] are on the rise in Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon as well.[43] This is due to the dire socio-economic conditions with which refugees have to live making those who are in a higher position than them feel that they are able to take advantage; greater dependency on sponsors, landlords and aid providers contribute to the increase in exploitation of all refugees, but particularly the most vulnerable – especially women and girls (Amnesty International, 2016; Anani, 2013; Charles & Denman, 2013; GoL & UN, 2017; Jones & Ksaifi, 2017). According to Jones and Ksaifi (2017), women engaging in survival sex are earning between 13 and 450 USD per client depending on their working arrangements. Reports also indicate that Syrian women are being coerced to provide sexual favours in return for food, employment, or rent; when this occurs, perpetrators are most often landlords or the shawish[44] who might broker the deal for themselves or someone else (Jones & Ksaifi, 2017), although Syrians

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[42] Survival sex is the exchange of sex for food, a place to sleep, or other basic needs (Jones & Ksaifi, 2017)
[43] There is little information about the level of coercion that is imposed on Syrian refugee women to engage in survival sex or transactional sex, i.e. whether they are able to negotiate the terms or not (Jones & Ksaifi, 2017). Transactional sex refers to sexual relationships established for material gain. Hence, it is important to note that not all sex for food, employment or rent is coerced as some women will be making a choice.
[44] The shawish is the "camp" or community leader.

have reported this behaviour from NGO workers as well: "And if you want help from other NGOs you should send your daughter or your sister sometimes your wife…with full make-up so you can get anything…I think you understand me" (Anani, 2913, p. 76). Sexual exploitation has been reported on an individual level, family level, and through organized networks[45] (Charles & Denman, 2013). A report by the UNDP and the UNHCR (2017) showed that "'men with money' [are] coming to locations in which refugees are living 'looking' for women and girls" (p.7) in exchange for payment to cover typically the costs of rent. Sex trafficking has also been reported by various sources including the media, organizational reports, and refugees themselves (see also GoL & UN, 2017; Jones & Ksaifi, 2017; Shaheen, 2016; UNHCR, UNICEF & WFP, 2017). In a report published by Jones and Ksaifi (2017), one interviewee revealed that Syrian women are being trafficked into the sex industry all over the country by Syrian men,[46] some even selling their wives to agents in trafficking networks. The traditional constructs of femininity and masculinity, highlighted by GAD theory, puts women in a subordinate position to men and makes them more vulnerable to any kind of harassment including sexual violence and exploitation.

5.2.3 Child Marriage

Early marriage or child marriage is the formal or informal union of boys or girls before the age of 18, although girls are disproportionately affected by this phenomenon (UNICEF, 2011). As previously mentioned, early marriage existed as a cultural practice in Syria prior to the conflict (Anani, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013; Mourtada et al., 2017). In fact, the average age of marriage of women who participated in this study is 17 years old with the marital age ranging between 13 and

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[45] Sexual exploitation of vulnerable groups occurs all over the world, however the risk is exacerbated in times of conflict and humanitarian crises (El-Masri et al., 2013)
[46] This should not be taken to mean that the Lebanese are not also guilty of this, as many reports indicate that both Lebanese and Syrian men are acting as pimps (Jones & Ksaifi, 2017).

24 years old. Layla married at 16 after the death of her father and stated that "in Syrian culture, if a girl doesn't get married before the age of 20, she's too old to get married" (Jul 2017). Sabah told me that she got engaged when she was 12 years old, and got married at 13, becoming a mother when she was 14 years old. She said that this was a common practice in her family: "We were eight girls in my family. All of us got engaged when we were 11 or 12 and got married a year later" (Jul 2017). Since the crisis began in 2011, the prevalence of early marriage is increasing particularly in refugee communities outside Syria. As per the *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, between 20 and 27 percent of Syrian girls in the country aged 15 to 19 are married or in union, of whom 18 percent are married to men more than ten years older than them (GoL & UN, 2017; UNHCR et al., 2017). This is particularly prevalent amongst refugees residing in the Bekaa Valley in Northern Lebanon (Jones & Ksaifi, 2016). A study conducted by Amnesty International (2016) showed that young Syrian women agreed that the minimum age of marriage should be 20 for women despite their displacement; this sentiment was not echoed by parents of current adults who stated that although they are against early marriage in principle, it should occur in the context of displacement (around 16 or 17 years old) with fathers saying women should start getting married when they turn 15. This difference may be indicative of young women's perceptions changing regarding what is expected of them and how their lives should be and rejecting gender norms and roles:

> It's the biggest mistake for someone to marry their daughter off like that when she's young. It's a type of violence, because she's a child, and she'll have to raise a child. They're taking her to her husband's house and she's still playing with dolls…this little girl, she doesn't understand anything. Where are her rights? Her rights as a child. You want to marry her off? Who's responsible for her? Her mom or dad? She has no rights of her own. Maybe the mother doesn't want to marry her off, but even the mother has no right to express her thoughts and refuse to marry her daughter off at that age (Noor, Jul 2017).

Research has found that the practice of early marriage is being used as a coping mechanism

to protect girls and to alleviate financial burdens (Amnesty International, 2016; Anani, 2013; Charles & Denman, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013; GoL & UN, 2017; HRGJ et al., 2016; Jones & Ksaifi, 2016; Spencer et al., 2015; The Political Science Institute at Saint Joseph University, 2015). Living in an unfamiliar environment exposes girls to gossip, harassment and rape. Refugee families believe that marrying their daughters will protect them from sexual harassment and abuse since it ensures that they will be "protected by a man" (Anani, 2013). According to a study by Mourtada et al. (2017), some parents are also concerned that their daughters will be influenced by the culture, social norms and marriage practices in Lebanon which are viewed as more liberal than Syrian ones: "There is a change in the values of young women. They are imitating Lebanese women with the way they dress. They are interacting with men. This did not exist in Syria" (p. 58). The concept of *al sutra* which means protecting a woman's honour and reputation, or not exposing her to anything that could harm her, is one that comes up over and over again when discussing the advantages of marriage. Marriage is seen as a way of protecting girls from the unknown: "…they are marrying them young to protect them. The parents no longer guarantee that they will live long, so they say let's just *nustur*" (El-Masri et al., 203, p. 19). In this context, reputation and honour is linked to a young woman's virginity and maintaining it until she is married (El-Masri et al., 2013; Mourtada et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2015). In many cases, survivors of rape are married to an older family member to "save their honour" (Anani, 2013; Charles & Denman, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013; IRC, 2012; Mourtada et al., 2013). As one Syrian refugee stated

> Fear of insecurity is a major factor. They are marrying early because of *al Sutra*. We have war. Many women are afraid of being raped, and if a married woman is raped, she is more likely to be forgiven by her husband but if an unmarried woman is raped, it will destroy her life (Mourtada et al., 2017, p. 58)

Much like the idea of "women's place is in home" that I discussed in the domestic violence section,

the belief that once married a girl will be protected from sexual harassment and will be "forgiven" if raped is a patriarchal one. If a woman is raped, she will be seen as impure; her life will not be "destroyed" because of the traumatic experience and the crime that was committed against her but will be destroyed because society will view her as forever unclean, and no other man will want her as his wife because she was touched by another before him (Spencer et al., 2015). Males are viewed as guardians, and a husband's job is to protect his wife from other men; parents are thus compelled to marry their daughters in order to provide them with a protector. Again, this reflects a type of objectification and proprietariness. Similarly, conservative gender norms dictate that the end goal of any woman is to become a wife and a mother, and once this occurs, she will be responsible for household chores and will not be working outside the home; thus, whether this marriage occurs earlier or later is of no consequence to the end result. In refugee contexts, women's choices seem to be even more limited. With difficulties accessing education, the only possible path seems to be marriage. It is also possible that marrying off their daughters out of fear that they will be influenced by the more open Lebanese society is a way for Syrians to hold on to their culture in an attempt to remain connected to it. In her book *The Power to Choose* (2002), Naila Kabeer explored how the approach to labour of Bangladeshi women differed in Bangladesh and the UK; her research found that when in Britain, a secular society that is accustomed to the presence of females in the public sphere, Bangladeshi women held on to the purdah norms, i.e. female seclusion, they practiced in their native country. In Bangladesh, however, where these norms originated, women appeared to have let go of this practice when opportunities of employment presented themselves. Culture is not static; it evolves and changes with time, but when people are surrounded by a seemingly foreign or "other" culture, they may hold onto theirs and follow it even more closely.

Moreover, marriage is a way for the family not only to ensure future economic security for

their daughters, but also to ease economic pressures that exist within the family itself (Amnesty International, 2016). Once a daughter gets married, she moves in with her husband who becomes responsible for providing for her, thereby reducing the number of people the family, more specifically the father, has to provide for. A study at the University of Saint Joseph in Lebanon found that "some refugees talk about marriage of Syrian young girls with Lebanese adults in exchange for payments of 300CAD to the girls' parents" (The Political Science Institute at Saint Joseph University, 2015). Other reports cite cases where girls marry men with an agreement that he will also support her family (Charles & Denman, 2013; El-Masri et al., 2013; IRC, 2012). "The economic situation made some people sell their girls under the cover of marriage, because they can't raise them anymore and because they need money to survive" (Keedi et al., 2017, p. 36). Although this exists in Syrian communities in Lebanon, studies have shown that child marriages are more commonly brokered for commercial profit among some Syrian refugees in Jordan (Jones & Ksaifi, 2016).

The negative effects of child marriage are both social and physical. First, girls who get married early often are not able to finish their education or pursue vocational opportunities as they are expected to start a family and fulfill their obligations at home due to social and gender norms and expectations (Charles & Denman, 2013). Nine out of the 11 women I interviewed stopped their education when they got engaged or married. Although most did not feel like they were forced to discontinue their schooling and stopped because "it's what happens when you get married" (Aya, Jul 2017), some were told to. Sana, a 21-year-old woman from Damascus said: "Honestly, my fiancée didn't want me to go. The school was mixed so he didn't let me finish" (Jul 2017). Early marriage is not the only reason why some of these women stopped going to school. The absence of fathers and difficult financial situations – circumstances that become more common in

refugee communities – also drove people to abandon their schooling which is what happened with Noor. Noor, a 36-year-old woman from rural Damascus, said that after her father's death it was difficult for her to continue her schooling:

> Well, I only got to grade seven. I passed, and then I left. There were situations. My father passed away when I was in grade 3, and you know how it is. A mother can't raise 4 children when she's in that situation. I'm the youngest so it was decided that I would stop going to school and stay at home to help my mother (Jul 2017).

According to studies by The Political Science Institute at Saint Joseph University (2015) and Charles and Denman (2013), education is one of the most important factors when addressing the issue of early marriage; more specifically, data has shown that the mother's education has a bigger impact than the father's on limiting child marriage. Therefore, the fact that less than 20 percent of Syrian children are going to school in Lebanon today could have grave consequences on early marriage in the future and on the lives of women and girls, and society in general:

> Uneducated or poorly educated women tend to marry younger and are less likely to send their female children to school. This leads to a vicious cycle of poorly educated women in society. As a result, women are not able to attain financial independence, leading to a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. Women's decision-making ability is also affected by a lack of education. They tend to be less likely to make decisions that affect themselves and their children and thus determine the course of their lives. This then translates into less decision-making participation in the public sphere. Poorly educated or uneducated women are less likely to make decisions and hold positions of responsibility within government, greatly affecting their society and gender equality (Charles & Denman, 2013, p. 101).

We can thus see that the benefits of education are not only economical, in terms of women having the ability to become financially independent. Education, which is often cut short due to child marriage, can help tackle gender issues and SGNs by dismantling power relations especially when school curricula are used to promote more equal notion of gender and embrace women and men as equal decision makers in both the private and public sphere. It can show children that the gender norms and roles dictated by patriarchal societies can be challenged and overcome.

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Although schools have the potential of helping women achieve SGNs by empowering them and challenging societal norms, they can also reinforce hetero-normative behaviour and dominant ideas of masculinity, femininity and gender roles, which are present in everyday practices in society, including at schools.[47] In Syria for example, despite the fact that 69 percent of girls and 70 percent of boys were enrolled in secondary education prior to the crisis, less than 20 percent of women participated in the labour force, compared to 80 percent of men.[48] Moreover, only 13 percent of judges and public prosecutors in Syria are women, and women held 12 percent of seats in the lower house of parliament (UNICEF, 2011). Nevertheless, discontinuing education is often a consequence of child marriage and leads to feelings of disempowerment in girls and young women especially when they had to discontinue their schooling by force. Layla demonstrated this when she explained that after her husband made her stop going to school, she felt like she was worthless and unable to control anything: "I would see my friends that were graduating and studying and becoming lawyers or studying English literature…I felt I was nothing. I was sitting doing nothing" (Jul 2017). Noor expressed similar feelings:

> I was very sad because I didn't finish my education, and I was affected by that a lot; it made me feel less than. I wanted to be a doctor or a teacher…but you know, different situations didn't allow for this. And at the time, I wasn't strong enough to stand against these situations" (Jul 2017).

The detrimental effects of child marriage do not stop there. Child brides are at a greater risk of experiencing complications during pregnancy and childbirth resulting in higher infant and maternal mortality; research has shown that complications are more likely to occur in girls under 20, and that 90 percent of early first births occur in the context of child marriage (Jones & Ksaifi, 2016; Mourtada et al., 2017). These girls are also at a greater risk of contracting sexually

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[47] Even if schools (institutional level) are trying to dismantle gender norms and power relations, cultural expectations could be reinforced at home (interpersonal level) and in communities (societal level).
[48] The proportion of the working-age participation working or looking for work.

transmitted infections, including HIV; this is due to their physical immaturity, and their limited power to negotiate safer sex with their partners which extends to their limited ability to negotiate when they will have sexual intercourse (Jones & Ksaifi, 2016; Kidman, 2017; Mourtada et al., 2017; Nour, 2009). Finally, girls who marry early are at a greater risk of experiencing domestic violence and may not be able to negotiate what their role will be in the relationship (Jones & Ksaifi, 2016; Kidman, 2017; Mourtada et al., 2017; Nour, 2009; Speizer & Pearson, 2010). All of these risks are due to the power disparity present within these kinds of unions which further promote inequitable gender norms and perpetuate the cycle of abuse. The responsibilities that these child brides must face often result in severe mental distress which is why early marriage is also associated with higher rates of depression (Nour, 2009). This story was related by Sabah about one of her younger sisters:

> She got married when she was 12. They put her on the chair during the wedding [the bride and groom sit on chairs facing the guests] and she started playing. She stayed five days at her husband's home a virgin. Even her father-in-law asked her what kind of food she likes. She told him bananas and chips, and he brought them to her and said that he would give them to her under one condition. He said: "You have to listen to your husband and go into the room with him". She's 18 years old, and she has two kids and a husband now. She thought about committing suicide. She said, "I'm 18 years old, I have responsibilities that I cannot handle (Jul 2017).

5.3 CONCLUSION

Although violence against women is present across socio-economic classes and cultures, refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to VAW due to the fact that they are living in a highly stressful environment that does not prioritize human rights. Unfortunately for Syrian refugee women, domestic violence, sexual violence, and child marriage are becoming more and more common since their arrival to Lebanon. Due to men losing traditional gender roles as protectors and providers and women taking up more decision-making roles in the household,

the power dynamics between men and women have changed resulting in some women feeling more empowered and willing to fight back against violence. However, in an attempt to regain some of the control and power they feel they have lost when they became refugees, men utilize violence in the household due to the dominant ideas that link masculinity with physical strength and domination. Although domestic violence is the most common type of abuse, sexual violence is also an issue within refugee communities in Lebanon with reports indicating that sexual exploitation and sex for trade are on the rise due to the difficult financial situation most refugees find themselves in. In order to protect their young girls from sexual violence, Syrian families are using child marriage as a coping mechanism which reflects the gender dynamics and gender roles highlighted by GAD theory since the idea is that a husband would be able to protect his wife from sexual abuse due to his role as protector. The United Nations along with many international organizations, governments, and NGOs have established programs to both prevent and deal with instances of VAW within refugee communities; these, along with refugee perceptions of them, will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 6: INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

In this chapter, I will outline the GBV intervention and prevention programs offered in Lebanon to help Syrian refugee women. The research question seeks to understand the views refugees hold on GBV programs and in order to fully understand my participant's perspectives, it is important to outline the programs themselves since they help shape society's views on VAW.

6.1 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PROGRAMS IN LEBANON

In order to respond to the SGBV needs of Syrian women and girls, the UNHCR has partnered with 23 organizations in Lebanon working across the country to provide different resources for those who wish to utilize them (Figure 4). As mandated by the GoL, all programs – not just GBV programs – started by the UNHCR and other organizations to respond to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon have to target one Lebanese national for every four Syrians targeted (GoL & UN, 2017):

> There shouldn't be a difference between the services we offer when we are dealing with refugees and when we are dealing with the Lebanese population. According to the national response plan to the Syrian crisis, for every 4 or 3 Syrian refugees, one Lebanese person should be benefiting… the government will pass or agree to no project unless it meets these standards (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017).

Since all GBV programs share similarities, I will look at the programs offered by ABAAD, DRC, and KAFA. I will divide this section according to two different strategies NGOs are utilizing to mitigate GBV (although there are overlaps between the two): 1) direct response programs; 2) indirect response (and prevention) programs. As previously mentioned, VAW falls under GBV, therefore, any preventative or intervention measures targeting GBV include VAW.

Organizations per district

The achievements described in this dashboard are the
collective work of the following 23 organizations:

ABAAD, Al Mithaq, AVSI, B&Z, Beyond, CONCERN,
Danish Red Cross, DRC, Heartland, Himaya, IMC,
Intersos, IR Lebanon, IRC, KAFA, Makhzoumi, MAP-UK,
Mercy Corps, mosaic-mena, OXFAM, RET, SAWA, TdH - L

Tripoli
ABAAD, CONCERN, DRC,
Heartland, Himaya

Akkar
ABAAD, Beyond, CONCERN,
Danish Red Cross, DRC, Heartland,
Himaya, IMC, IRC, MAP-UK

El Minieh-Dennie
Beyond, CONCERN,
Danish Red Cross, DRC,
IMC, IRC, MAP-UK

El Hermel
Danish Red Cross, IRC

El Koura
Beyond ,
CONCERN,
IRC

Zgharta
Himaya ,IRC

El Batroun
Beyond ,IRC

Bcharreh
IRC

Jbeil
ABAAD ,Intersos

Baalbek
ABAAD, Al Mithaq, Beyond,
Danish Red Cross, DRC, Himaya,
IRC, MAP-UK, Mercy Corps

Kesrwane
AVSI ,Himaya

Beirut
ABAAD, Himaya,
IRC, KAFA, Makhzoumi,
mosaic-mena

El Metn
Himaya ,IMC ,Intersos ,mosaic-mena

Zahle
ABAAD, Beyond, DRC,
Himaya, IMC, Intersos,
IRC, KAFA, MAP-UK,
Mercy Corps, OXFAM,
SAWA

Baabda
ABAAD, B&Z, Himaya, IMC, Intersos, MAP-UK

Aley
ABAAD, Himaya,
Intersos, Makhzoumi

Chouf
Danish Red Cross, Himaya,
Intersos, IR Lebanon,
MAP-UK

West Bekaa
Beyond, DRC, Intersos,
IRC, KAFA,
Mercy Corps,
OXFAM

Jezzine
Mercy Corps, RET,
TdH - L

Rachaya
Intersos

Saida
DRC, IMC, Intersos,
IR Lebanon, MAP-UK,
Mercy Corps, TdH - L

El Nabatieh
AVSI, Intersos,
Mercy Corps, TdH - L

Hasbaya
AVSI, Intersos,
Mercy Corps

Sour
ABAAD, Danish Red Cross,
IMC, Intersos, MAP-UK,
Mercy Corps, TdH - L

Marjaayoun
AVSI ,Intersos ,
Mercy Corps

Bent Jbeil
ABAAD, AVSI,
Intersos, Mercy Corps

Number of partner per district
- 1 - 2
- 3 - 4
- 5 - 6
- 7 - 8
- 9 - 12

Note: This map has been produced by UNHCR based on maps and material provided by the Government of Lebanon for UNHCR operation-
al purposes. It does not constitute an official United Nations map. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map
do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of
any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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**Figure 4: Organizations partnered with the UNHCR working on SGBV across Lebanon (Inter
Agency Information Management Unit, 2017a)**

6.1.1 DIRECT RESPONSE PROGRAMS

According to the UNHCR guidelines for SGBV response and prevention published in 2003, four key elements are needed to effectively respond to VAW: medical response, psychological treatment, legal response, and protection (UNHCR, 2003). For the former three initiatives to be sought and used by any survivor of VAW, the survivor's security must be ensured, and she should have confidence that if she seeks medical, psychological, or legal help, she will not be in danger of retaliation for doing so.

Protection

Direct protection of refugee women survivors of VAW is achieved in two different ways in Lebanon: women's centers, and shelters. The women's center program offers women and girls a safe space where they can go and take advantage of the multi-sectorial holistic services as well as the referral services offered by organizations; these include case management, therapy (including family therapy), legal consultations (as well as representation in court), medical services, awareness raising sessions and skill training (for example sewing classes, languages classes, computer classes, etc.). ABAAD, the DRC and KAFA have all opened up such centers to welcome women and children of all ethnic and national backgrounds living in Lebanon.[49] Thirty-four UNHCR supported community centers exist in the country; the specific services mentioned above will be discussed in more detail in upcoming sections.

In partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and UNICEF, ABAAD established women and girls safe spaces (WGSS) in eight existing community centers affiliated with the MoSA in 2015. These eight specific locations were chosen after the NGO conducted an

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[49] Although most of these services are offered by ABAAD, DRC and KAFA, not every service mentioned above is provided by each organization; for example, the socioeconomic empowerment activities are not offered at KAFA's support centers.

assessment and found that the regions where the centers are located – as well as the centers themselves – have a deficit in response to and management of GBV cases (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017); over 50 percent of the women who use these centers are Syrian (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017). Similarly, the DRC established four Women Resource Centers across Lebanon (DRC, 2014). The organization is also partnered with NGOs that provide GBV programs, such as the Rassemblement Démocratique des Femmes Libanaises (RDFL) and refers GBV cases to them depending on the specific needs of the survivor and what services each partner provides (DRC Program Coordinator, Jul 2017).[50] KAFA has two of these centers – KAFA calls them support centers – in Lebanon, one in Beirut and one in Chtaura. According to the program coordinator at KAFA, 50 percent of the women that utilize the services in Chtaura are Syrian nationals. These community centers fall under both GBV protection and prevention strategies due to the wide range of services they offer. As an extension of the services offered in the community centers, both ABAAD and KAFA have set up hotlines that link women with a social worker directly who is then able to respond to the caller's needs; the hotline number is written on all resources and advertising materials made available to the public including posters, brochures, cards, billboards, etc.

Long before the refugee crisis, organizations such as the Maryam and Martha Association,[51] ran safe houses (or long-term shelters) for women facing difficult family and social situations in Lebanon; depending on the organization, women in need of support (teenage mothers, prostitutes, abused women, homeless women, ex-prisoners, etc.) would be able to resort to these shelters where they would be provided with rehabilitation services tailored towards their needs, similar to those present at the community centers. However, an assessment conducted by ABAAD revealed the need for an emergency/immediate shelter for GBV survivors because the majority of

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[50] The DRC case worker was not able to share what percentage of beneficiaries are Syrian refugees
[51] For more information on the Maryam and Martha Association please visit www.maryamandmartha.org

organizations working in Lebanon that provide shelter services do not host emergency cases, due to the fact that the admission procedure might take up to two months to be completed:

> All of them have criteria so they need to meet the woman or the girl once, twice, or three times to assess her situation and see if she is eligible based on the criteria they have and the services they offer…for example how old her kids are, her mental state, her physical and psychological health (ABAAD Case Worker, Jul 2017).

Thus, the idea emerged for a mid-way shelter to host any woman at risk of or survivor of GBV; the difference between these mid-way shelters and long-term shelters is the admission to the former is immediate. In 2013, with the support of the UNHCR and UNICEF, ABAAD started three mid-way transition houses in different regions of the country where unaccompanied girls and women, and their children (boys not older than 12 years old) can be hosted between one day and up to three months.[52] Although the age restriction for boys is based on cultural and religious sensitivities (for example, if there is a boy in the shelter, a veiled woman would not be able to remove her hijab), this causes issues since a mother would have to leave her male child behind, most likely with his father (in most cases the abuser) in order to escape the violence; it can also be seen as a lost opportunity to sensitize and train male children not to grow up to be abusers. Moreover, tensions might arise between residents of the shelter based on differences in nationality, political affiliations, cultural practices, etc., although many intercultural activities and bonding activities are run in the shelter in order to minimize these tensions as much as possible (ABAAD Case Worker, Jul 2017). Much like at the community centers and long-term shelters, a holistic case management approach is adopted for every woman at the midway shelters that includes medical follow ups, psychological follow ups, legal counselling, and psychosocial support (PSS) activities. As a result, all services made available at the community centers are also provided at

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[52] Of note is that the women are not told to leave the shelter once the three months are over if an alternate situation has not been found as the safety of these GBV survivors is the organization's priority.

the safe houses.[53] During her stay, the woman is given the safe space she needs to increase her self-esteem and her confidence, and she is able to work with a case worker to put together a plan that lays out her next steps. Moreover, each woman is assigned chores based on a schedule the residents put together with a staff member which allows them to feel like the safe house is their home. Paralleling that, staff work with organizations, including long-term shelters, that provide specific services these women need to help them achieve their goals. Four staff members are employed at every shelter which accommodate between 18 and 25 women each: a director, a GBV case worker responsible for case management, a social worker/counsellor, a child care attendant, and a night care attendant; a psychiatrist is also on-call every night in case of emergency (ABAAD Case Worker, Jul 2017). As of July 2017, the shelters were consistently at full-capacity with women rotating in and out. Over 65 percent of women in these short-term shelters are Syrian refugees (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017). Referral to and protection of the shelters is done through interactions at the institutional and the community levels. When a safe-house is established in a town, ABAAD finds the key stakeholders in that town and in neighbouring towns – for example a politician, the municipality, the police station – who are then approached to form a partnership with the organization in order to refer women who experience GBV to ABAAD and in order to protect the shelter[54] and the women living in it:

> For example, one of the shelters is located on the road that leads to the house of a political leader so there are cameras on the road and they contact us to say that there are unusual activities around the shelter…another example is if a woman goes to the police, she is referred to ABAAD (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017).

Similar to how refugees are made aware of the services provided at the community centers, social media and awareness raising sessions are used to let Syrian women and girls know that they can

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[53] The legal, therapeutic, and health services are subcontracted.
[54] The specific locations of the shelters are not disclosed to the public to protect GBV survivors.

resort to safe houses if they ever need to by talking to someone at a community center or by calling the hotline. On a larger scale, the GBV taskforce in Lebanon under the UNHCR (made up of 23 organizations in total) is aware of the shelter services ABAAD provides and refers any emergency or eligible GBV cases to the organization. This referral strategy applies to all programs made available to survivors of GBV not just the shelter program ABAAD provides, for example the centers discussed above, and is also utilized by non-GBV organizations working with refugees: "the referral pathway between GBV players and even non-GBV actors occurs because of the relationships that exist between civil organizations in Lebanon" (Roula El-Masri, 2017). When an emergency case is referred to the emergency shelter, either by another organization or by the survivor calling the hotline, ABAAD utilizes the safe-transportation network it has established to help the GBV survivor reach the shelter safely:

> It's first used to ensure the woman's safety, and second if someone follows her – the location of the shelter is supposed to be secret – we have different stations. So, if a woman is referred from the South of Lebanon to a shelter in Northern Lebanon, one of the drivers would pick her up from the South and drive her midway to Jounieh for example, where she would switch vehicles and another driver would take her up to the shelter in the North. Since the drivers have up to now been men, a female attendant is always present in the car whenever a survivor needs to be picked up (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017)

Refugees are made aware of these services thanks to the outreach done by the UNHCR. Moreover, the centers and services they provide are often promoted by local municipalities, by organization representatives going from door to door, registered refugees getting texts about programs and events, through the media, and through social media. Additionally, the awareness raising sessions conducted by organizations, which will be discussed in more detail in the upcoming sections, promote the GBV protection services available in Lebanon.

Medical and Psychological Response

As part of their direct response programs, organizations offer medical assessments to every

VAW survivor who visits the community centers or the shelter. The survivor is taken to a health center where a comprehensive health check, including clinical management of rape (CMR), is performed by a health care professional. In partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health (MoH), ABAAD conducted CMR and GBV training at 14 hospitals and health care centers across the country reaching a total of 223 medical staff members, 81 percent of whom are women (ABAAD, 2018a). GBV organizations are partnered with hospitals and other health centers that are able to fulfill the medical needs of the survivors, including any required follow-ups as well as regular check-ups. During a survivor's stay at the shelters, these check-ups do not only involve medical issues caused by the violence, but range from tooth aches, to pregnancies, to any emergency surgeries, as well as check-ups for the survivor's children, etc. (ABAAD Case Worker, Jul 2017).

The health of GBV survivors is not only limited to their physical well-being, but to their emotional and mental well-being as well, which is where the therapeutic services provided at organizations come into play. NGOs utilize a variety of methods including one-on-one therapy session,[55] group discussions, support groups, group therapy sessions, family sessions, and PSS activities; PSS activities include recreational activities, educational sessions (parenting skills, literacy classes, etc.), empowerment classes, life skill classes, as well as emotional support groups. These therapeutic services allow survivors to meet in a safe space to talk about their shared experiences, make friends, and expand their social network and their support network. Emotional support sessions include things such as drama therapy, art therapy, and music therapy. Moreover, social workers are constantly present at the centers and shelters and are able to work together with the survivor to put together an action plan; every action plan is different depending on the woman,

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[55] For one-on-one sessions, psychotherapists come to the centers on particular days of the week at which point women with appointments and walk-ins are able to sit down and talk to them.

and what she needs and wants.

In June 2012, ABAAD opened up the first Men Centre in Lebanon: "this center is a facility for men with abusive behaviour, men who are under a lot of stress in their lives, or they have a distorted view of their manhood, or they have a sexual identity that they haven't shared" (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017). The center employs three psychotherapists who have a background in gender and mainstream it into the therapy sessions they provide: "in our sessions, we try to break society's expectations of what a man should do and be" (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017). In terms of GBV, the center provides anonymous services, PSS sessions, phone counselling, group therapy, and anger management workshops (ABAAD, 2015).

Legal response

As part of the holistic care offered to GBV survivors, organizations provide women with legal consultation and representation in court if they choose to pursue legal actions against perpetrators of abuse, which is something that happens very rarely according to all NGO staff members I interviewed. Lawyers have the responsibility of outlining the rights of the survivor, the actions that can be taken against the abuser, and the timeline of the legal process. The most common legal action that takes place is filing for divorce; rarely do survivors file criminal lawsuits – "some take legal action if we're talking about divorce. But not all file a restraining order for example. The percentage of people that do is very low because they don't trust that this will actually protect them and are afraid of it provoking the man even further" (ABAAD Case worker, Jul 2017). Of note is that not all legal consultations have to do with abuse:

> It's a much-needed service for the women because they can ask about birth registration and marriage registration, which are two very big issues right now for Syrian refugee women…there are a lot of hurdles to registering marriages and births; some of those hurdles are social and cultural and some are bureaucratic. Not having legal documentation

doesn't help because to register you have to move around, you have to go to the *nufous*[56] and interact with government officials; moreover, many women have very restricted freedom of movement. So, our lawyers can support in providing information and facilitating access to these services (DRC Program Coordinator, Jul 2017).

In fact, one of the most important aspects of the legal services offered by organizations is legalization of documents for refugees: "we noticed that Syrians don't understand the importance of marriage and birth registration. If we get a GBV case and she doesn't have her marriage registered, we cannot go any further because she has no document proving that she is married" (KAFA Program Coordinator, Jul 2017). Much like the offered medical services, each organization works with lawyers who drop into the centers a few times a week. For example, the DRC works with two lawyers in each governorate who move around the different safe spaces in the area (DRC Program Coordinator, Jul 2017).

6.1.2 INDIRECT RESPONSE (AND PREVENTION) PROGRAMS

The UNHCR guidelines for prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence committed against refugees published in 2003 identifies six prevention strategies that should exist to effectively mitigate GBV: 1) Transforming socio-cultural norms, with an emphasis on empowering women and girls; 2) rebuilding family and community structures and support systems; 3) working with formal and traditional legal systems; 4) assessment, monitoring, and documentation of GBV; 5) designing effective services and facilities; and 6) creating conditions to improve accountability systems. I will be looking at how all six of these prevention and indirect response mechanisms are being applied in Lebanon by reorganizing them as strategies occurring at three different levels of the SE framework: the first two can be viewed as interventions at the community level, the third, fourth and fifth strategies are interventions that occur at the

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[56] The *nufous* is equivalent to the vital statistics birth, death, and marriage records.

institutional level, and the last approach tackles the policy level. It is important to remember that one program can be working on more than one level since, as previously mentioned, the different levels of the SEF are interdependent rather than independent.

Community Level

Since VAW (as well as other forms of GBV) is rooted in social structures and norms, targeting and changing those structures requires influencing the attitudes that perpetuate the views that lead to VAW, such as the notion that women are inferior, unimportant, the property of their husbands, etc. As previously mentioned, due to their displacement and the disruption of their normal social interactions and social environment, refugees experience changes in traditional gender roles, such as men becoming more responsible for watching their children, women assuming traditionally male roles because they are separated from their husbands or male relatives, etc. Although these changes can be seen as positive, they can also have negative effects. Male refugees can develop feelings of incompetence as their role as protectors and providers is disintegrates, which can translate in them releasing their frustration on the women in their lives and expressing their masculinity in violent ways (Anani, 2013; El-Masri, 2013). Thus, the UNHCR suggests activities such as information sessions, also called awareness raising sessions, that will support such shifts while discouraging their negative effects. It also suggests encouraging changes in knowledge, community attitudes, and behaviour that lead to the transformation of social-cultural norms (Table 4) (UNHCR, 2003). Moreover, recreational programs, the resumption of spiritual activities, and developing a social circle in their new home allows refugees to re-establish their sense of self and community. This may alleviate stress, which could translate into a decrease in violence as some kind of normalcy is recovered and a form of community support is regained (UNHCR, 2003). Finally, involving refugees in implementation of projects that target them will

help restore their self-esteem and boost their confidence. In Lebanon, organizations are engaging with the refugee community to try and mitigate GBV by implementing these UNHCR recommendations through information sessions, recreational activities and involving Syrians in community research, outreach and project implementation.

Table 4: Changes targeting knowledge, behaviour, and community attitudes in refugee communities to transform socio-cultural norms in an effort to prevent VAW (UNHCR, 2003)

Knowledge	Understanding human rights; appreciating reproductive responsibilities and domestic work; accepting alternative gender roles; using non-violent methods to express anger and frustration; being aware of services and support available for victims/survivors and perpetrators.
Community Attitudes	Believing in equal human rights for all at both the community and the individual levels; respecting the worth of each individual's contribution to the community; involving all in decision-making processes; being supportive of victims/survivors of sexual and gender-based violence; showing zero tolerance for persons who abuse their power.
Behaviour	Solving problems non-violently; treating all persons, regardless of their gender or gender roles, with respect; reporting all incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, denouncing both the perpetrator and the act, and supporting the victim/survivor.

Information sessions and recreational activities occur mainly at community centers across Lebanon. The UNHCR has supported the development of 34 community centers in the country where women and men have access to the variety of activities discussed above, such as: awareness sessions on birth registration, prevention of child labour, prevention of SGBV, laws surrounding SGBV in Lebanon, parenting skills, anger and stress management activities; learning activities including basic literacy and numeracy, language and computer classes; life skill sessions on self-esteem, communication skills, and decision making; support groups; and skill building; and recreational activities (Lilleston et al., 2016; NGO Staff, Jun 2017). Within the community centers, women can seek updated information on services, programs, and activities which are available to every woman and man regardless of their nationality. For women inquiring about GBV assistance (or other specific assistance needs), staff on the front desk are able to refer them to specific case

management services. Between January and May 2017, more than 40,000 people – half of whom were Lebanese and refugee women and girls – had accessed these centers and taken advantage of the provided activities (NGO Staff, Jun 2017).

Due to the scattering of refugees across the country, compounded with restrictions in movement for security reasons, Syrian nationals in Lebanon living in particular areas find it difficult to access services they require; hence, several NGOs have established mobile services in order to reach out to those who are not able to access community centers. These involve NGO staff travelling across Lebanon, mainly to the unofficial Syrian camps, and after getting approval from the camp leaders, delivering information sessions. One of the notable mobile services that targets refugees living in hard to reach Lebanese communities is provided by ABAAD. The NGO calls its mobile program *Jina al Dar* and, through it, it is spreading awareness about VAW in remote villages and regions of Lebanon. *Jina al Dar* is a mobile bus service that tours throughout the country reaching out to local municipalities who in turn reach out to residents of neighbouring villages informing them about when and where the session is going to take place. On the day of the session, the bus goes to the different towns where interest was expressed and picks up all those who are interested in participating in the session bringing them to the village where the event is occurring. At the end of the day, that same bus takes the participants back to the villages from which they came. Throughout the day, participating women receive awareness, education and information sessions on the legal rights of women and girls; on their sexual and reproductive rights and health; and they participate in discussions on GBV and child marriage. Moreover, they are made aware of the GBV programs offered throughout the country and are able to get referrals to the relevant PSS, legal and medical services provided by ABAAD, as well as other organizations, according to their needs. Women are also able to bring their children with them who in turn

participate in PSS recreational activities promoting gender equality. At the end of the day, families (women, men, and children) participate in recreational activities that convey messages on women's rights and equality between the sexes; these activities include interactive theater, puppetry, and screening of documentaries (ABAAD, 2016). In 2016, 55 percent of women and 78 percent of men who participated in these sessions were Syrian nationals (ABAAD, 2016). Everyone who participates in the activities provided by the mobile services or at the community center has access to resources such as cards and brochures that provide the numbers for emergency hotlines, as well as information on the services provided by organizations, VAW, women's rights, legal rights of women in Lebanon, child marriage, and reproductive health. In 2017, over 97,000 individuals accessed the PSS activities in both the static and mobile services (Inter-Agency Information Management Unit, 2017b). Across all programs, 61 percent of individuals indicated increased knowledge and attitudes about SGBV, about what their rights are, and about accessing required services (Inter-Agency Information Management Unit, 2017b).

One of the most important ways of empowering women in the Syrian refugee community is to include them in the process of project implementation and in some cases design. This is important for two main reasons: first, the GBV (and non-GBV) programs and projects designed by the UNHCR and other organizations in the country are targeting refugees, therefore their opinions and ideas should be heard and included. Second, including refugee women and girls shows them that their opinions are valuable and will help with their individual empowerment. This direct engagement with Syrian women in Lebanon is accomplished in several ways: protection monitoring, validation sessions, and working groups.[57] Protection monitoring is a strategy used to identify protection risks and human rights violations of displaced populations by observing trends

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[57] Of note is that depending on the program and the organization, men and children are also included.

in protection concerns over time. In Lebanon, the DRC is one of the organizations that provides this service. The process involves sampling individuals from the community on a monthly basis acquiring information on the protection concerns they are facing including legal stay, health care, education, child labour, early marriage, GBV and VAW, etc. (UNHCR, 2006). This allows the organization to observe changes in the responses of individuals overtime and track trends in the population. Moreover, it helps staff identify persons of concern and incorporate trends into the GBVIMS. Validation sessions are used to better tailor resources towards targeted groups, in this case Syrian refugees. They can occur in two different ways. The first involves the activities and services organizations are providing; after receiving a service, women are asked what they liked, what can be improved, and what else they would like to see to better fulfill their needs. The second way has to do with the material resources, i.e. booklets and pamphlets, given out to the community and making sure people can relate to the information in the way it is represented:

> We usually get girls between 12 and 15 years old and there's usually a sketch artist in the room with them. We can ask them, for example, if you see an image of a woman who has been abused, what do you imagine she looks like. They can say, I prefer this woman to be darker or to have a bruise on her eye or to have a hijab. If we say, there's a man who can potentially be violent or who will marry a child, how do you imagine him to be, how do you imagine the girl to be, her brother, etc. If I show you one of our animations, it is done in the Syrian dialect for example (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017).

Finally, working groups and mobilizing individuals is an important aspect of fighting GBV and building capacities within the refugee community. The UNHCR has supported the development of over 13 women's group comprising over 150 refugee and Lebanese women; women are also members of other community structures (45 percent participation rate) including neighbourhood groups, older person's groups, and parent's groups. Women and other group members support information dissemination, attend relevant trainings to build their capacity, and are empowered to be part of the decision-making processes and community problem solving (NGO Staff, Jun 2017).

One such group is made up of Syrian women who participated in awareness raising sessions on GBV were trained and go around refugee communities in Lebanon conducting information sessions with women and girls (Cherri & Champagne, 2018). The DRC is one of the organizations that works with women in the community to establish working groups with specific mandates:

> …we work with community-based groups. So, these are members from the community that either have participated in other activities that we provided or have demonstrated a willingness and capacity to be focal points or leaders or active members in their community. A group of normally 10 women, and these women are trained; we help them set up a mandate. So, for example what do you want to work on. So maybe in their village, the issue is very particular to their village. Maybe it's about, for example, advocating for building public latrines because there are reports of harassment or abuses in the camp because there aren't enough latrines or there aren't women specific latrines. So, you know we help them set up a mandate, a work plan, and they also have to include sensitization. So, in that way, they are working on prevention and a little bit of response whereby they have to conduct a few events a year where they sensitize the community on issues that are relevant to this specific community, for example GBV (DRC Program Coordinator, Jul 2017).

Moreover, during events such as International Women's Day and 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in Lebanon, refugee and Lebanese women participate in planning for and conducting empowering activities on leadership and positive community role models within and outside the community centre (NGO Staff, Jun 2017). An example of this occurred at the end of the 16 Days of Activism in 2017 when the Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence Task-Force organized an advocacy event that highlighted the talents and skills of refugee and Lebanese adolescent girls. The event involved the exhibition of pictures, videos and drawings produced by the girls showing how they want to be recognized and valued in their communities (Inter-Agency Information Management Unit, 2017b). Another example of this was the three-day exhibition of jewellery and crafts organized by ABAAD and the Ministry of Tourism. The exhibited objects were created by more than 100 Syrian and Lebanese community members who took part in a three-

month workshop that aimed to enhance economic and social participation of women (ABAAD 2015). All proceeds from the exhibition went to support the women who created the pieces (ABAAD, 2015). Other awareness raising strategies rely heavily on the media and include things such as billboards, documentaries, public service announcements, social experiments, protests, vigils, appearances on TV shows, etc. (Figure 5):

> So we produce animations, sketches, storytelling, photo story, etc. Here we also have a hidden objective and it's to be as diverse as possible, because not everyone can read, not everyone has a TV, not everyone can see, etc. so we try to diversify the resources we share as much as possible (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017).

The programs offered to refugee women mentioned above (both the direct programs and the indirect ones) are trying to target PGNs as well as SGNs.[58] The shelter, mobile and static centers, recreational activities, support groups, vocational training, etc. help women achieve their PGNs because they allow them to more easily meet their basic needs, get information, get educated, and allow them to express their frustrations and escape their day to day problems and issues. On the other hand, participating in focus groups, support groups, and vocational training are empowering women and improving their status, confidence and decision-making capacity all of which contribute to SGNs. Due to the power dynamics and gender roles that exist in society, a women is expected to stay with an abusive husband despite the violence fulfilling her role as a care giver; therefore, the instant she leaves and/or becomes employed (two things she feels more confident doing due to the services organizations provide), she is challenging the gendered power dynamics that exist in the Syrian refugee society (or Middle Eastern society in general).

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[58] PGNs are the immediate needs of women, for example food or shelter. SGNs are needs that relate to the disadvantaged position of women in society and fulfilling them would overcome women's subordination and promote more equal societies.

Figure 5: Example of a billboard found across Lebanon advocating for a minimum marriage age of 18 (Source: Kafa.enough, 2017)

Institutional Level

Much like targeting communities will help challenge gender norms and result in reduction of VAW, working at the institutional level, which reflects the patriarchal ideas of the culture they exist in, can also help challenge the power dynamics that subordinate women. In Lebanon, changes at the institutional level are occurring through GBV organizations training hospital staff and security forces on how to respond to SGBV incidents, but also working to mainstream gender equality into school curricula and cooperating with religious authorities to mitigate GBV and promote equality between women and men. Moreover, organizations are cooperating with each other to develop better services and responses to GBV.

Much like the CMR training ABAAD gave to hospital staff, the organization is training and working with ISF, the High Judicial Council, front-liners and educators of NGOs, the MoH and social workers from the MoSA on the core concepts, preventions, and responses to GBV issues and SGBV cases; 82 percent of those who were trained demonstrated increased knowledge on the discussed topics of SGBV (Inter-Agency Information Management Unit, 2017b). As previously mentioned, GBV organizations are also working to change discriminatory laws in the country; this

will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Although organizations have been pushing to add gender sensitization into the school curricula, little has been accomplished on that front though NGOs continue to campaign for the mainstreaming of gender equality in schools in cooperation with the MoE (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017). One of the important ways women's rights organizations are working in Lebanon is by cooperating with the clergy:

> Ninety-eight percent of the Lebanese population follows 18 religions, 15 of which have religious courts. If a woman wants to get a divorce, she needs to go through them and her rights are compromised because of them. The clergy in Lebanon is very strong and has great influence in society. This is why it is important to engage with religious authorities, and when we say to them we want to have a conversation about their role in ending violence against women they are receptive. So here, we are welcoming everyone who has the potential of being a change maker or even norm setters in our society with open arms (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017).

This involves the coming together of women's organizations and religious leaders from Lebanon (and from the MENA region in some sessions) to discuss ways of combatting VAW together; discussions highlighted the forms of GBV encountered by religious leaders within their communities and opened up dialogue between civil society and religious institutions on how they can best work together to end GBV. The work team that was established as a result of these sessions is now looking to engage broader society through TV appearances, retreats for youths, and cooperation with municipalities. Despite cooperation by some members of the clergy, opposition to reforms and to the promotion of gender equality is still articulated by others, especially when civil organizations lobby for the introduction of laws that ensure the rights of women. This will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

As previously stated, GBV and non-GBV organizations cooperate with each other by referring refugees to NGOs that provide services they need and by organizing events with each other. Another way of doing this is by sharing data with each other through the GBVIMS. The

GBVIMS was developed in 2007 after the UNHCR evaluated GBV programs in Tanzania and found that different NGOs and UN agencies were utilizing different terminology and classification systems when documenting the GBV cases they saw (GBVIMS, 2018). The GBVIMS allows participating organizations to share GBV data they collect – leaving out confidential information – to a harmonized database through UN platforms which allows for consistency and comparison of trends across the country as well as worldwide. Today, it is used in 25 countries around the world.[59] In response to the Syrian crisis, this system was first piloted in Lebanon in August 2012 and became available all over Lebanon in 2014. As of October 2017, six organizations in Lebanon utilized the GBVIMS: ABAAD, Caritas, DRC, INTERSOS, International Medical Corps, and IRC. Once a month, the steering committee, made up of representatives from each organization as well as UN bodies, come together to discuss challenges, examine analyzed data, and raise concerning trends to relevant stakeholder which can include the Lebanese government, UN agencies and even the communities themselves. This information is then used for advocacy, to produce reports, conduct analysis sessions, and shed light on reasons behind GBV survivors declining certain services (GBV IMS Coordinator, personal communication, Sept 2017). It also allows cooperation with those using the GBVIMS system all over the world to establish new international policies and standards for mitigating GBV, which overlaps with the SEF policy level discussed next.

In order to effectively respond to the Syrian crisis in 2017, Lebanon required USD 2.75 billion; by the end of 2017, NGOs and UN agencies in the country reported receiving a total of USD1.24 billion, i.e. 45 percent of the required funds (Interagency Information Management Unit [IIMU], February 2018). Of that USD1.24 billion, USD112 million (the UNHCR appealed for

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[59] For more information on the GBVIMS, please visit www.gbvims.com

USD164 million) was allocated to the protection of refugees which includes general protection (USD 64/99.5 million), SGBV (USD 18.8/32.3million), and child protection (USD 28.9/32.1 million) (IIMU, March 2018). Moreover, donor restrictions (tied aid) constrain when and how NGOs can spend the money they are given. These funding gaps and limitations cause service interruptions and can prevent the implementation of certain services which prevents GBV programs from being fully effective.

When tackling any kind of humanitarian crisis – whether it be the aftermath of a natural disaster, a war or a refugee situation – NGOs operating in the area need to cooperate with each other, with governmental institutions and with potential beneficiaries coordinating their activities in order to help people in need in the most effective and efficient way possible. As was mentioned above, in Lebanon, cooperation between NGOs occurs under the umbrella of the UNHCR; however, two main difficulties seem to arise when looking at organizations working together. The first has to do with funding since tensions do arise between organizations whose mandate focuses on GBV due to limited financing – which makes civil societies feel the need to compete with each other in order to demonstrate that they are worthy of more financial support without which they would not be able to exist:

> We have a sustainability burden. I worry especially about the shelters because if they are not funded properly, we can't keep them open. We can't say to a woman after she comes to the shelter for a week for example 'oh, we have no more funding, goodbye, go find somewhere else to stay.'" (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017).

The second difficulty goes back to NGOs agreeing on what their priorities should be and what strategies should be used to promote gender equality and mitigate GBV:

> It's very difficult to get everybody to agree on what the priorities are. It's also very difficult to standardize actually because a lot of NGOs have their own tools, their methodologies, their own standards, even if you have global guidance or international standards, you have to contextualize this guidance to Lebanon and this contextualization will happen a little bit differently in each NGO (NGO Staff, Jul 2017).

Policy Level

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, organizations have been campaigning to introduce and alter certain laws in the country in order to improve accountability systems in Lebanon and penalize abusers. The first few battles were won in 2011 and 2017 when Article 562, which softened sentencing for honour crimes, and Article 522, which exempted rapists from punishment if they married their victim, were scrapped respectively, and in 2014 when Law 293 – the Law on Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence – was passed. Three years after Law 293 was passed, in April 2017, the Ministry of Justice and KAFA held a press conference during which they issued a draft to amend Law 293. The main amendments include, but are not limited to, redefining the family, so as to include the couple not only during the marriage, but also after its dissolution because this disintegration does not prevent the perpetrator from committing the offense; redefining family violence to reflect the abuse of power within the family by utilizing physical force or other means including seizure of liberty, and moral and economic harm; protecting children from the abuser regardless of their age and what custody laws apply to them; and, including a special text on penalties that avoids returning to the provisions of the Penal Code (KAFA, 2018). Currently, organizations are working on introducing a law to limit the age of marriage to 18 for both women and men. KAFA has been a key player in actually working with ministries and the government on drafting all of the laws mentioned in this paragraph (KAFA, 2018).

In order to push for these laws to be implemented or changed, organizations rely on mobilization of the public by raising awareness on the issue throughout the country using adds, documentaries, appearances on TV shows and seeking support from both public and private institutions like ministries and schools, i.e. all the methods mentioned in the previous two sections.

Thus, we see here an interaction between the policy, institutional and community levels of the SE framework as the methods utilized to shine a light on these different laws that result in the desired changes in policy rely on raising awareness in the community which then puts pressure on institutions to actually alter legislation.[60]

One of the difficulties in Lebanon lies with the inefficiency of government entities in terms of the amount of time it takes to implement new policies and rules; this is due to the frequent parliamentary and policy paralyses that have been plaguing the country since the civil war: "We had a meeting with the MoE to say that these issues [GBV issues] should be addressed in schools but you know with [the system in Lebanon], it takes 20 years [a long time] to change anything" (NGO Staff, Jun 2017). This push-back against change in the country and resistance to cooperation between the government and civil society is at its peak when proposed changes challenge and undermine existing power structures such as religious institutions. An example of this was illustrated by how long it took for Law 293 to pass – the law was first drafted in 2008 and passed in 2014 with significant amendments, as discussed in Chapter 4. Resistance to this new bill was shown particularly by religious authorities in the country whose power was, to a certain extent, diminished when the law was passed since it took away the religious courts' sole authority on domestic issues:

> Earlier this year [in 2011] Dar al-Fatwa, the Sunni Muslim governing body, released a statement describing the law as a 'Western idea' that would 'undermine the position of the man in his family'…Khaldoun Oraymet, secretary general of the Higher Sharia Council in Lebanon, said the council could not countenance anything that 'curbs our already extremely limited jurisdiction' ("Lebanese split over draft law on violence against women", 2011).

Here again, we see how the work of organizations in Lebanon is trying to achieve SGNs by strengthening the legal rights of women and attempting to remove institutionalized forms of

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[60] This is not to say that governmental institutions are always opposed to these changes.

discrimination. They are not only content with achieving individual empowerment for women (which can also be an SGN as I mentioned previously) but are tackling the patriarchal structures in the country directly. Despite the struggle and resistance to change, things are moving forward:

> It's difficult because you are challenging value systems and cultural norms, and when religion falls into the mix, you hit a wall… If we wanted to do this [GBV programs] in 2005 for example, we would have had no one to support us. But now, we are feeling that people are more likely to respond and are responding because we see the beginnings of a shift in gender roles in the country (Roula El-Masri, Jun 2017).

6.2 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the direct and indirect GBV programs that exist in Lebanon to help women suffering from GBV and demonstrated how organizations are trying to fulfill SGNs in the hopes of mitigating VAW and all other forms of discrimination against women – both refugee and non-refugee women – living in Lebanon. The next chapter will outline my participants' views on these programs, why they find them useful and what they think should be changed to more effectively tackle VAW in the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon.

CHAPTER 7: SYRIAN REFUGEE PERSEPCTIVES

In this chapter, I will outline the perspectives refugees hold on the GBV programs available in Lebanon and the different resources organizations are utilizing to mitigate this type of violence. Despite the difficulties that come with having limited funding and trying to cooperate with other institutions in the country, staff from the three organizations I visited highlighted societal attitudes as the most important aspect of combatting GBV, since they determine whether or not people will take advantage of the resources NGOs are offering. The 21 Syrians I talked to during my fieldwork expressed both approval and disapproval of the GBV programing I described in the previous chapter. Their responses revolved around four main themes: cultural norms, privacy, priorities, and trust in the legal system. I will explore each of these themes below.

7.1 CULTURAL NORMS

Traditions, cultural norms and stigma often create barriers to women seeking help no matter the kind of abuse to which they have been subjected. In cases of sexual assault, women and girls are reluctant to disclose rape as they fear they will dishonour their families, will incite more victimization and, in some cases, might even risk getting killed (Anani, 2013; IRC, 2012). In some conservative patriarchal cultures, a family's honour is associated with the reputation, virginity and sexual modesty of female members of the household (HRGJ et al., 2016; Maciejczak, 2013; Stark & Wessells, 2012). This often makes women hesitant to come forward in cases of sexual assault because they risk both dishonouring their families and being seen as unclean. These views, which victimize the survivor even more, make the social costs of being raped much more important to women than receiving treatment or even seeking justice against the rapists: "Honour is everything to my family. One day, my brother brought all the females in the family together and told them, 'I will kill all of you before I let anyone touch you. I promise I will do this for you to protect you'"

(IRC, 2012, p.8). The fear of retaliation is not only limited to sexual assault but extends to cases

of IPV; in fact, two of my participants, Sabah and Aya, expressed anxiety that if a woman talks

about her abusive relationship, she could be exposed to retaliation from her husband:

> There are men that do not accept anyone getting involved in their life. If they get divorced, he might attack her on the street or kill her or kidnap her and no one will know what happened to her. Some men have very murderous minds… some men like revenge. If they get divorced, he could kill her (Sabah, Jul 2017)

> I wonder if she'll be exposed to some retaliation from her husband [if she reports him]. Like revenge for example. He might take revenge even after a while. I'm not saying it's not good [to report him or go to the organizations], but it might cause a bigger problem if there aren't hard assurances. If the state isn't strict. It's not just about "oh we took the woman and cared for her." He's still there and there's still something in his head. The man doesn't think like the woman. There are a lot of men who are not easy going about the issue. The issue has to be stricter (Aya, Jul 2017)

The fears expressed by these two women are very legitimate. Studies have shown that a woman is

at her most vulnerable when she leaves an abusive relationship (Campbell, Glass, Sharps,

Laughon, & Bloom, 2007; Wilson & Daly, 1993). Here, we can revisit the concept of women as

property; proprietary men feel entitled to everything their wives have to offer and believe that their

partners are theirs exclusively, even after a union ends (Serran & Firestone, 2004; Wilson & Daly,

1993). Therefore, when abusers lose their wives, they often escalate the abuse and even kill their

spouses with the mindset of "if I can't have her, no one else can" (Serran & Firestone, 2004; Price,

2005). Partner homicide can also be seen as punishment for the woman who dared to challenge

the power dynamics that existed in her relationship by reporting and/or leaving her abusive partner.

None of the refugees explicitly expressed objections to the messages being delivered by

the awareness raising sessions and by GBV programs; instead, what they did object to was women

leaving their husbands, an action that they saw was being encouraged by the programs. Ten out of

the 11 women I interviewed said that a woman should stay with her husband unless he is truly

threatening her life and cannot be managed; otherwise she should try not to provoke him. The main

reasons women cited for staying in an abusive relationship are the societal consequences that come

with being a divorced woman in a Middle Eastern community:

> Now look, your neighbour comes to see you and ask you 'how can you stand your husband, he's abusing you, you should leave him', etc. But if your family is destroyed, will she open her door and tell you 'come stay with me'? If she sees your kids on the street will she take them in and feed them? If you're on the street she won't invite you in because she'll be scared for her husband from you because you're a divorced woman. She won't even invite the kids in because their mother is divorced. I'm not for violence, but I'm against women taking a decision without thinking of the consequences. If a woman goes out to work, people start talking. If the husband works, no one can say anything. If she goes out and works as a maid for example, they say that she's loose, if she works in a supermarket, they say clients flirt with her, so no matter what they talk about her. I really feel that women's defenses are weak. I really feel weaker in this life…I need my husband to protect me from this society. As long as you have a man, no one dares say a word to you… Our society is very difficult, harsh, and we have some degeneration in the way we think (Sabah, Jul 2017).

Sabah's comments reflect the stigma of the divorced woman (and the working women) in some

Middle Eastern societies, but also show how helpless women can be made to feel without their

husbands, which again paints the man as the protector and the woman as the one who needs

protecting from the world. When I asked Sabah if her answer would be different if society

protected women's rights and would not stigmatize and blame a woman if she left her husband,

she answered, "Exactly". This reflects the oppression of women on a societal level, which is the

third level of interaction outlined in the SE framework. It explains that the outlook a community

has on a topic affects how individuals behave when they are part of that community and how a

society/culture as a whole can perpetuate oppressive and discriminatory ideas. Instead of praising

the woman for leaving an abusive husband and encouraging her to pursue her goals, for example

finding employment, society judges the woman who leaves and labels her a bad and ungrateful

wife or mother, leaving the man blameless for the abuse. These views are some of the patriarchal

social constraints described by GAD that limit women, even when they are not being directly abused, affecting their behavior on the interpersonal level:

> While only some women actually experience violence, the fear and threat of it is common to all women, influencing their thoughts and actions at all levels: from the most intimate aspects of life at home, to participation in public political and economic activities. (Pickup, 2001, p. 5).[61]

This does not mean that every Syrian woman who is a victim of IPV accepts her situation and is not supported by her family. Aya told me the story of her sister who was abused by her husband while they were still living in Syria:

> She lived with him for 38 days. He started hitting her when they first got together. My parents were not okay with her living like this. She was pregnant, but my parents told her to leave, and they raised her daughter, because if he hit his wife, he'll do the same to his daughter (Jul 2017).

This shows the importance of the interpersonal level or family level highlighted by the SE framework. Aya's parents challenged the beliefs expressed at the societal level and the more this happens, the more society will become encouraging of VAW survivors changing the dominant culture to one that neither judges a divorced woman nor puts her down.

In a preliminary study conducted by Usta and Masterson (2012), many Syrian women suffering from IPV said that they would not report their situation for fear of being sent back to Syria by their husbands. This fear is a result of the hierarchical relationships that exist in patriarchal societies between men and women reflected in formal institutions, which again legitimize these abusive behaviours. In Syrian law, married women are not allowed to travel outside the country if their husbands forbid them (Charles & Denman, 2013); this law is entrenched in my participants' way of life, so even when they are in Lebanon, it contributes to the patriarchal control husbands

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[61] This is self-policing which I will discuss shortly

have over their wives and the fear women have of being sent back to Syria (Charles & Denman, 2013). Even though Sabah recognizes that this way of thinking is wrong – "we have some degeneration in the way we think" (Sabah, Jul 2017) – she conforms to and sanctions hierarchies that put men in charge of not only protecting women, but also of telling women what to do. Women frequently do not challenge accepted oppressive norms of female behaviour because of the fear of being punished for doing so, but also because they may see them as legitimate (Alhabib, Nur, & Jones, 2010; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Telling a woman she is 'destroying a family' when leaving an abusive husband shifts the responsibility away from the man and places the burden on the woman to learn how to live with and manage the abuse. It is interesting that a woman leaving her abusive partner is what is considered the act that causes the breakup of a family and the act that is looked down upon in society to such an extent that being abused is seen as a better alternative to being divorced. This reflects the importance of maintaining the marital union at all costs, and the gender norms that say that a woman should be obedient and docile sacrificing herself for the sake of her husband and her family and prioritising the well-being of others before her own (Charles & Denman, 2013; Jewkes, 2002). It also demonstrates the sanctity of family in the Syrian culture:

> Many cultures condone the use of physical violence by men against women in certain circumstances and within certain boundaries of severity. In these settings, so long as boundaries are not crossed, the social cost of physical violence is low. This tolerance may result from families or communities emphasising the importance of maintenance of the male-female union at all costs, police trivialising reports of domestic strife, or lack of legislation to protect women (Jewkes, 2002, p. 1426)

Even those who had stated that a woman who is being beaten should revolt against the abuser at an earlier point in the interview expressed reservation and hesitation when I asked them if a woman should report her abusive husband or leave him. Noor is one of these women who

completely rejected the concept of a woman being a victim of VAW; but when I asked her if she would advise one of her friends who was in this situation to leave her husband, she hesitated and said, "I would tell her that it's not okay for him to abuse you, and you have to figure out what the problem is together so you can be together. But [my friend] had a problem, she used to tell me that she would talk back to him and he doesn't like that" (Jul 2017). This duality expressed by most of my participants is the manifestation of the internal conflict they are facing due to the new society they are living in and the ideas they are being exposed to through the awareness raising sessions and the activities they are taking part in. Also reflected in Noor's comment is the blaming of women for their abuse; by saying that her friend's problem was that "she used to talk back" to her husband, Noor is explicitly saying that her friend's actions are responsible for the abuse, i.e. that it was her friend's provocations that made her husband hit her. Victim-blaming is not a surprising response to any form of VAW; in fact, Waltermaurer (2012) published a review of 23 studies which found that in 61 countries – low-, middle- and high-income countries – society blames women, at least partly, for any violence her partner committed against her. Reasons varied from burning a meal, neglecting children, refusing to have sex, talking back, infidelity, provocative behaviour, and the woman generally "asking for it" (Waltermaurer, 2012). Such attitudes of victim-blaming contribute to the legitimization of VAW; they partially absolve the perpetrators of violence, normalise their actions and even reinforce their behaviour since they are not concerned about the social costs of abuse (Garcia, 2014; Waltermaurer, 2012).[62]

Other than legitimizing hierarchies and detrimental gender norms, putting the responsibility of abuse on women leads to self-policing whereby women monitor their own

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[62] Victim-blaming is not only limited to physical abuse committed by a partner but also applies to all different types of VAW including rape (George & Martinez, 2002; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Hayes, Lorenz & Bell, 2013; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010).

behavior to minimize the violence (Charles & Denman, 2013): "If a woman knows that her husband gets angry quickly, she could just avoid him. Even though she's doing nothing wrong. As much as she can, she has to make sure he has nothing to complain about" (Aya, Jul 2017). As I mentioned in Chapter 5, self-policing is a form of internalized violence which makes women believe that they are experiencing VAW for something they did and are thus to blame for the assault; this also applies to cases of sexual assault where refugee women do not walk on the streets to avoid confrontation with men, and to cases of women not engaging in the economic sector because 'people will talk'. Self-policing is a form of "power over" whereby the victim of VAW no longer needs someone to exert power over her and force her to limit her actions and repress herself; instead, she does it herself and believes she is to blame if she goes against societal norms and suffers because of it. Though self-policing can occur across cultures and socioeconomic classes, in more patriarchal and conservative societies where social issues such as divorce and sexual violence (and sexuality) are taboo, women become more afraid of fighting back against VAW and are more likely to resort to self-policing and relativization, i.e. making excuses for the perpetrator (Charles & Denman, 2013). However, no matter how women alter their behaviours, beatings and sexual assaults continue because the problem is with how men perceive women, not women's actions (Camarasa & Heim, 2007; Donaldson, 1993; Pickup 2001; Price, 2005).

Layla is the only woman who encouraged victims of abuse to leave their relationship and encouraged GBV organizations to empower women to do so. Layla is a 30-year-old woman who is herself a survivor of VAW, more specifically of IPV. The first time she got married, Layla was 16 years old and her father had just died:

> I wanted to marry a man that was older than me so that he could make up for the love and care of a father. He promised me so many things when we were engaged. He said that I would be able to finish school and work, and I would be able to do what I wanted. He showed me a completely different side of himself before we got married. After we got

married, I lived through a lot of cruelty and injustice coming from him. He imprisoned me in the house, no school, no work; he would beat me and abuse me sexually. He wouldn't let me go to my parents' house. He would say that if they want to see you, they come to the house. I had an internal struggle for a while and was questioning if I could get divorced, if I could face society… my father was dead, so my family's situation was difficult. Mom was married to a Lebanese man so she had gone to Lebanon and I was the only girl and had three brothers and my little brother lived with me so I was carrying responsibilities that were too big for my age. I stayed patient until my brother grew and left through the UN to continue studying in Germany. I was only patient for the sake of my brother…I stayed for 10 years. Ten years, but they had a very negative effect on me. I would see my friends graduating and studying and becoming lawyers or studying English literature. I would see them happy. They would post pictures on Facebook and it would bother me. I felt like I was nothing. That I was sitting not doing anything (Jul 2017)

Layla told me that because of what she experienced, she knows that no matter what a woman does, nothing will change if she stays in an abusive relationship; she should therefore have the courage to stand-up for herself and leave regardless of society's judgments.

Interestingly, 60 percent of my male participants suggested divorce as a solution to the abuse with most of them using the sentence, "they can just go their separate ways if they are not happy together". This could be because it is the woman who bears the brunt of society's judgment when a husband and wife separate, not the man. Therefore, for most men, divorce is an option with very slight social consequences, which is why it is a conceivable option for them, unlike my female participants. They did say though that women would most likely prefer to stay married and live with the abuse. However, as I will discuss later, all of them, except one,[63] showed reservation about women resorting to organizations to obtain help if they get a divorce; instead, they suggested that the couple separates without involving anyone else from outside to maintain the family's privacy: "she can go her way and he can go his without involving anyone else" (Fadi, Jul 2017). I will

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[63] The one man who was completely in support of a woman's right to divorce and involve lawyers and organizations in the proceedings in order to protect her rights is the Syrian national working for a GBV organization in Lebanon

discuss this in more detail at a later point in this chapter.

When discussing the Men Centre, both my female and male participants said that having it is essential. However, when I asked the men if they think abusers (and male victims) actually utilize its services, 70 percent said no; in 2016, only 190 men[64] took advantage of the services specifically provided at the Men Center (ABAAD, 2016). This could be the manifestation of two phenomena: first, abusers could see their actions as completely normal and acceptable therefore they do not try to change their behaviours. Second, in patriarchal cultures, stigma surrounds men showing emotions and expressing their frustrations, especially to therapists and mental health professionals, which makes abusers less likely to seek help; similarly, male victims of abuse struggle with stigma more so than women which means they are less likely to ask for help (Tsui, Cheung, & Leung, 2010).

Despite most of my participants rejecting the concept of divorce, which they associated with VAW services, they recognized that it is through GBV programs that cultural norms that oppress women will change:

> Today, I feel that there is hope. With the knowledge and awareness that we are gaining, we can trigger change, and can protect ourselves from the patriarchal society we live in (ABAAD, 2016, p. 31)

> They are educating the public about this issue that still exists in society. They educate us about what our rights are, and what we can do to get out of a bad situation. Even if we are not affected by the violence, by learning about it, we can spread the information to the people who are, and this is important. At least they spread awareness and women will know that they shouldn't stay quiet and don't have to be victims (Layla, Jul 2017)

Thus, all of my participants recognized that the services offered at the community centers are positive because not only do they contribute to changing patriarchal attitudes, they provide women

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[64] This number includes all nationalities, not just Syrian refugees

with a place to go outside of the home and feel safe while gaining new skills. Since over 60 percent

of individuals using the shelters are Syrian,[65] women are finding the courage to go against

oppressive norms and are leaving abusive relationships. This could be the manifestation of the

beginnings of a shift in cultural norms.

7.2 PRIVACY

Syrian culture is a conservative and private one where family problems are rarely, if ever,

discussed outside the familial home; whatever the conflict may be, it is never shared in public as

a way of protecting the sanctity of the family. Privacy is an issue that was brought up by all of my

participants and was seen as a barrier to seeking help in cases of VAW, especially IPV since it

occurs in the private sphere. Thirty-eight percent[66] of refugees I talked to advised going to either

the abuser's parents, the victim's parents or a religious authority to resolve an IPV situation in

order to protect the family from scandal, leaving organizations and programs as the last resort:

> His parents have the rights to get involved first… if his parents are not able to get involved for some reason, her parents should. But the last option is the court or an organization because it turns into a scandal (Sabah, woman, Jul 2017)

> I think family should get involved first, and if things don't get resolved, they should go to the sheikh who can give them advice because Islam didn't leave anything to chance when it comes to these things and defended women when it comes to many things and gave her freedom of course within limits. But when things get really bad, the organization should get involved to get them away from each other (Walid, man, Jul 2017)

> First, the parents have to be involved. The siblings, the parents, the mother and father. Of course, her parents and his parents, not just her parents. And if that doesn't work, then go to the organizations. So, one step at a time. If the problem isn't resolved, one tries as much as they can to not air dirty laundry but if that doesn't work, air the laundry and be done with it (Fadi, man, Jul 2017).

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[65] According to the program coordinators I interviewed.
[66] Eight out of 21; three women, and five men.

Three individuals recommended a religious authority for two reasons. First, the community's sheikh would be Syrian which means that he is one of them and understands their culture and way of life. Second, religious authorities are respected in the community in general; therefore, people will listen to what he has to say and hold his opinions in high regard. In fact, one of my participants informed me that that when he was in Syria, before the war, he would participate in discussions about VAW given at his local mosque:

> [We used to have these sessions] in mosques and in cultural centers. We had a cultural center in Daraya where they had conferences and different sessions about different topics including VAW so that whoever doesn't go to the mosque can go to the cultural center and participate in a session…They used to take a religious approach [when talking about VAW and why it should not occur]. God revealed to us a complete chapter on women; He called it Sūrat an-Nisā. A woman is protected through Islam from everything.
> (Fadi, Jul 2017).

This religious approach to explaining issues of VAW demonstrates an interaction between the institutional level and societal levels of the SE framework. Eighty seven percent of Syrians are Muslims; therefore, spreading awareness and promoting gender equality through mosques, the culturally favoured means, makes the message more likely to be accepted by the community.

It is interesting to note that the reasons for leaving the organizations as a last resort is partly to try and prevent the breakup of a family, but mostly to protect it from scandal. Moreover, my male participants recognised shame as something that would prevent women from coming forward:

> As refugees, I think the woman would still be ashamed to talk about these things no matter how much she was being abused…She thinks of her parents and the people around her. Maybe everyone would blame her even though it's her right (Walid, man, Jul 2017)

> No one would set a foot there [in an organization]. No one goes because of the whole situation and people involved would become a laughing stalk. A woman would never go. I'm 26 years and I've never heard of a woman reporting her husband, no. If anything, they just separate. I have parents, and you have parents so just be on the way (Issa, man, Jul

2017)

> There are women who have the courage to go report to the police. But most of them prefer not to, because then people talk. If they get hit, they take it and stay quiet (Kareem, man, Jul 2017)

Around a quarter[67] of my participants said that a woman should not talk about anything that happens at home with anyone, not even family members:

> Between a man and his wife, no one should get involved. No matter who it is. Her mother and father, my mother and father, it's no one's business. What happens is between you and him only. And you would come and get between us, no. That's not something that should happen. Am I right? (Youssef, man, Jul 2017)

> …I'll tell you something, in my life, neither his parents nor mine. They never get involved in anything. It's no one's business…whatever happens between me and him, should remain between me and him (Sabah, women, Jul 2017)

These individuals recommended going to the family if the problem between the couple was extreme enough; going to the organization was not an option for them because it would result in strangers getting involved in something that does not concern them. When I discussed this with Noor, her comment on this was, "[the organization] is not getting involved [between a man and his wife]. The organization doesn't involve itself by force, but only when [the woman] brings it up and that's her right because it's about her" (Noor, Jul 2017).

Some 40 percent[68] of my participants recommended relying on GBV organizations their main reasons being that organizations are used to dealing with all types of GBV, so they are aware of the best way to proceed; additionally, they expressed concerned that conservative family and community members might blame the woman instead of supporting her:

> She can bring it up to their parents but there are a lot of parents who say no, and you have to stay, and you're the one who did something wrong, and she hasn't done anything. So

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[67] Five out of 21; three women, and two men.
[68] Eight out of 21; five women, and three men.

they break the girl even more. They destroy her personality (Noor, woman, Jul 2017)

I think the programs are really good. And at the end, if there aren't any solutions between the two of them, the other solutions provided by the organization are better. Women are 50 percent of our society. She has her rights, she has her role, she has everything. So these organizations should exist to preserve and protect her rights and at the same time, the rights of men [because some women don't treat their men right]. (Maher, man, Jul 2017)

I think the organizations should exist. Because if people can't solve the issue between them, they need a third party. If they were on the same page, the woman [would never have gone to the organization in the first place] (Sami, man, Jul 2017)

All of my participants were focused on IPV and never brought up utilizing the programs as a way for women to cope with sexual violence; as I mentioned previously, this is probably due to the stigma surrounding rape and the fact that sexuality is a taboo subject in conservative Syrian culture.

Three out of the eight people who recommended GBV programs, however, stated Syrian women in Lebanon would be unlikely to say anything to anyone (even to their families) if they find themselves in an abusive relationship because of their minority status and because of more pressing issues and priorities which I discuss in the next sections. Moreover, their extended family would likely not be with them as most families have been dispersed as a result of the conflict.

7.3 PRIORITIES

Once again, despite not objecting to the GBV programs directly, many participants brought up the idea that they have more important issues to worry about before they can focus on VAW. These include PGNs such as food and shelter, and even education:

[VAW awareness raising sessions] are useless. They should give the money they are wasting on this to the people, so they can eat, which would be a million times more useful…the programs including the men's center are also useless. They should not be spending money on them. I make 500 dollars a month. I pay 200 or 250 dollars on rent when I take into consideration power and water, and I need to send 100 dollars to Syria because I can't abandon my parents…I'm left with 150 or 200 dollars to make due with and live on…so I don't want an awareness raising program or anything. Not me and not

anyone else (Issa, man, Jul 2017).

> We have priorities now too [other than VAW]. I think food, rent and education should be the priorities…The topic of violence, I've seen I don't know how many sessions on it…The money is not being managed well unfortunately…Education is the most important thing. I deprive myself to educate [my children]. This is the third year my children are in school and they excel. People envy me now. They say to me you won your kids' future. We pretend that the 100 dollars I get for food isn't there. I take that money to pay for their school. This year, people felt that their children are lost and that their [children's] future is lost (Aya, women, Jul 2017).

This observation was also made by GBV program coordinators who said some refugees told them that they are not really gaining anything from the sessions and would rather obtain more essential services such as money for food:

> We are finding it difficult to bring groups of Syrians together when we want to conduct our sessions because they think we are here to give them financial aid or give them something else so they are bored of awareness raising sessions. When we finish our sessions, sometimes we get the response of "we are getting nothing from you" (KAFA Program Coordinator, Jul 2017).

In the direct onset of a crisis, often the focus is on the physical survival of affected individuals, i.e. PGNs (Moser, 1989). However, Syrian refugees have been in Lebanon for over five years, therefore organizations have to look at long-term needs which are just as important as PGNs since an individual's well-being is not only measured by their physical needs (Roula El-Masri, Jul 2017). Interestingly, 70 percent men and 54 percent women highlighted priorities over VAW. Although my sample size is small and the difference between the two is not statistically significant, this trend could be due to the fact that men feel that they are not directly affected by VAW therefore more of them see it as a trivial issue. The perception that VAW is not a primary concern could result in some women not seeking appropriate services nor reporting the abuse when it happens, be it economical, emotional, verbal, physical or sexual in nature.

Another priority for women specifically were the children; even women who approved of

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GBV programming were afraid of losing their children in a hypothetical scenario where they stood up against an abusive partner and resorted to the organizations: "[a woman] can't leave her kids and resort to the law" (Mayse, Jul 2017). Moreover, due to cultural norms and under the personal status laws discussed in an earlier chapter, if a divorce takes place, the father will get custody of the children if no proof that he would harm them is brought forward. This creates another obstacle to a woman leaving an abusive relationship (Harb, 2006). Here again, we see how policies contribute to the protraction of VAW.

Even though over half of my participants thought that VAW is not a priority, some of them recognized GBV programs as priorities for several reasons: the resources offered will also help achieve PGNs and the skills obtained, empowerment achieved, and well-being women feel thanks to the programs should be and is a priority; the programs highlight societal issues, which, like the empowerment of women, are important; sessions help Syrians build networks and support systems in Lebanon and release frustration; and, finally, the sessions and activities organizations provide are good distractions from the problems and stresses of being a refugee:

> [Many refugees] don't realize how much this issue is a priority. Women's well-being and empowerment is a priority in every society, and not only because women's rights are human right but also because they can help with so many other things. For example, in terms of work, there are a lot of communities, refugees and non-refugees, that look at work as something that women should not do. These programs try to change this way of thinking to encourage girls to pursue their education, and eventually she can help support her family financially (Chadi, man, Jul 2017).

> These programs are very useful. And things like workshops are amazing because they take your mind off of your situation, and it's a fun distraction. For example, I went knitting and chocolate decorating, and baking. I was great. So, raising awareness is good, but fun activities are also good (Sana, woman, Jul 2017).

Going forward, nine out of 11 women and two out of 10 men suggested that awareness raising sessions should be aimed at men, not only women, because they are the ones perpetrating

the abuse: "if they have awareness raising session for men, it might be more useful because it's the men that are doing the abusing not the women" (Sana, Jul 2017). Of note is that although 60 percent of women made this observation, only 20 percent of men did. When talking about VAW and gender relations, my male participants always framed VAW as purely a woman's issue. Although four of the men looked at equality between sexes as a positive outcome of GBV programs, some of them expressed reservation saying that the programs are "going to make the women stronger than us" (Maher, Jul 2017). This reflects the hegemonic gender norms that say women should be dominated and should obey men. It is because of this narrative that engaging men and boys to end VAW is necessary. VAW is due to toxic masculinity and the inequality between men and women (Camarasa & Heim, 2007; Donaldson, 1993; Flood, 2011; Minerson et al., 2011; Price, 2005); thus, to make progress, we must change these hegemonic ideas surrounding masculinity. However, changing these gender norms and roles will not only benefit women. It will also increase men's well-being by freeing them from conforming to the dominant definition of masculinity which represses their actions and relationships (Flood, 2011).

7.4 TRUST IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Although most refugees felt that GBV services I discussed with them as well as awareness raising sessions detailing rights of women in Lebanon are positive, 90 percent of them were not sure if service providers could be trusted, especially when it comes to applying the law. Their fears were mainly (but not exclusively) based on their nationality[69]; this highlights the intersectionality of VAW, since a person's ethnicity in a certain setting plays a role in how people respond to them:

> Hopefully the things they are saying are true, not just talk. Because some people just talk and when you go and ask for help they do nothing (Layla, Jul 2017)

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[69] Lebanon was occupied by Syrian forces until 2005 and a lot of resentment still exists between the two populations often embodied through racist attitudes

I asked them in the morning if the woman is Syrian, can she go to the police and they said yeah, it's normal. But, then I said if she went to the police, the policemen will say to her that's what I needed, the Syrians. I have enough trouble with the Lebanese. He might not really be thorough with it… There's a lot of racism. Even our kids. If they go out to buy something, anyone might get in their way. I'm the weak one here…Maybe the organizations can help her but I don't think she can rely on the law. There are a lot of issues that happens with our men in our town (Syrian men get attacked), and no one does anything. A lot of men don't get paid for example […] This is the simplest problem. So how can we solve a bigger problem like a problem within the family. So, I think you can't rely on them. (Aya, woman, Jul 2017)

A Syrian woman will be afraid [to report anything or go to the organization] because she's a stranger. She's not in her country. Maybe the Lebanese woman has more of an impulse to do this than a Syrian (Walid, man, Jul 2017)

Hesitation to seek the assistance of the police and utilize services is exacerbated because over 75 percent of Syrians in Lebanon are in the country illegally which makes them afraid of getting deported if they make themselves known to any Lebanese authority figure (GoL & UN, 2017). In fact, the program coordinator at KAFA informed me that the vast majority of the Syrians that utilize their services are in Lebanon legally whereas those who do not have residency permits rarely follow-up on any of the services KAFA provides. Only two women expressed trust in the system stating that GBV organizations would not share information that is not accurate:

I don't think being refugees makes us more hesitant to fight back against violence if we are being abused. When you're here and you see how much help they are giving you. What would you do? On the contrary, she can be rid of violence here because she reached development; she reached a phase where she has rights…Of course [I trust that the law would be applied]. They wouldn't talk about it if we can't trust it. They wouldn't encourage us to do this. They're not encouraging us to be rude with our husband or not respect our husband or be aggressive with them. But they're teaching us how to preserve our rights, how not to let anyone harm us even verbally (Noor, Jul 2017)

Now the law is above everyone [so we can trust the law in Lebanon], Syrian or not. Of course, they will protect her. And if not, these organizations wouldn't be promoting this as a solution (Miriam, Jul 2017)

We can see that both Miriam and Noor feel that their presence in a place where laws that protect women exist is a factor that would encourage individuals to seek help and escape an abusive relationship. Instead of seeing their presence in Lebanon as a hindrance, they see it as an opportunity for women to change their lives for the better specifically because they are living in an environment different than the one they lived in prior to the conflict; an environment that seemingly provides women with more freedom and agency.

One thing that is important to note is that none of the individuals I talked to in Aramoun, the village located in Mount Lebanon was aware of any of the GBV programs available to refugees in the country. Mount Lebanon, which includes Keserwan and Jbeil, is the area of Lebanon that houses one of the lowest concentrations of Syrians. Although my population sample is small, and I only interviewed people in one town, this trend suggests that despite organizations operating in the area, more awareness raising sessions should be done throughout areas of the country where the concentration of refugees is scarce. Thus, in addition to all the reasons mentioned above, lack of knowledge of the available resources appears to be a contributor to refugees not utilising the resources of an organization.

7.5 CONCLUSION

Despite being in favour of the GBV programs offered in Lebanon, the majority of Syrian refugees I interviewed cited conservative cultural norms, priorities, privacy, and distrust of the Lebanese legal system as barriers to resorting to GBV organizations. The stigma of the divorced woman, who is viewed as someone who neglected her duties and betrayed her husband and family, as well as feelings of shame and fear of retaliation from family, is a very strong barrier preventing women from leaving their abusive relationships. However, data shows that women are utilizing both the center services and the shelter services. This shows that Syrians are challenging cultural

norms. Priorities such as food, shelter and education are also aspects of the refugee's life that make social issues like VAW a secondary thought. The majority of both female and male participants felt that instead of spending money on GBV programs, organizations should focus on helping them meet more short-term needs. Despite these barriers, my participants recognized the positive effects GBV programs are having namely: providing someone for victims to talk to and a place for them to go, enlightening people about their rights, teaching them new skills, providing a form of escape from their daily lives, and changing oppressive cultural norms in the Syrian community in Lebanon.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have tried to examine *how Syrian refugees view efforts to prevent and address violence against refugee women in their Lebanese host community*. I divided my research into two phases: first, I conducted semi-structured interviews with employees at NGOs that have GBV programs working in Lebanon – ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality (ABAAD), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and KAFA (enough) Violence and Exploitation (KAFA). I was able to interview one program coordinator at each organization and one caseworker at ABAAD. The discussions we had revolved around the GBV programs the NGOs offer, cooperation between NGOs, and their experiences with Syrian refugees specifically. Then, I interviewed 21 Syrian refugees – 10 men and 11 women – ranging in age from 21 to 58 years old with an average age of 32.

In order to examine VAW, I relied on two theories: the first is SE theory which highlights five levels of interaction (individual, interpersonal, societal, institutional, and policy) that shape the ideas people have about different issues in society; thus, in order to understand VAW in the Syrian refugee community, one must look at all these different levels. The second is GAD theory, which states that to improve women's lives, the unequal power relations between women and men have to be changed at the different levels of interactions of the SE framework. GAD suggests that GBV programs and projects should be designed to tackle and challenge unequal gender roles and power dynamics, thus addressing the root causes of GBV.

In Lebanon, VAW is becoming more and more common among refugees with UN reports indicating a dramatic increase in child marriage, IPV and sexual violence in the Syrian communities across the country. Refugee women are one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to VAW due to their displacement experience. Difficulties accessing food, poverty,

minority status, and the collapse of communities and social networks – all of which are present in refugee communities – are stressors that exacerbate VAW in society. When they became refugees, many Syrian men lost their traditional gender roles as protectors and providers. To try and regain some of the power they feel they have lost, some men appear to utilize violence in the household due to the dominant ideas that link masculinity with physical strength and power. Sexual violence is also an issue within refugee communities in Lebanon – with reports indicating that sexual exploitation and sex for trade are on the rise due to the difficult financial situation most refugees find themselves in and the power asymmetry that exists between them and Lebanese men which makes Syrians even more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and harassment. In order to protect their young girls from sexual violence, Syrian families are using child marriage as a coping mechanism due to the dominant cultural idea that as a protector, a husband would be able to shelter his wife from sexual abuse. Under the umbrella of the UNHCR, NGOs established GBV programs to mitigate these problems in Lebanon. The programs work at the five levels of interaction outlined by the SE framework in an attempt to challenge social structures and norms that perpetuate VAW. This includes providing refugees with medical, psychological, protection and legal services, as well as support groups, workshops and educational activities, and case management services targeting them at the individual level of the SE framework. Family therapy sessions, information sessions, recreational programs and involving refugees in designing and implementing GBV programs work to combat violence at the societal level. The training of hospital staff and legal and security forces on responding to GBV cases, and mainstreaming gender equality into school curricula, with the cooperation of religious institutions, target institutional roots of VAW. Finally, amending and introducing laws in order to improve accountability in the country and penalize abusers are some ways GBV organizations are targeting the policy levels of the SE framework in

Lebanon to mitigate GBV.

The majority of my participants showed hesitation when I asked if they would utilize GBV services specifically as a way of ending the cycle of violence. They associated relying on GBV services with leaving their partners. Syrian women and men cited cultural norms, priorities, privacy, and distrust of the Lebanese legal system as reasons why abused women would not resort to NGOs for help. The majority of women and men I interviewed rejected VAW and recognized that it is a human rights violation (depending on the nature of the violence as outlined above). Nevertheless, existing cultural norms and stigmas, reflecting the community level in the SE framework, make women feel that the social costs associated with speaking out against abuse are too great. Moreover, many Syrian refugees hold on to cultural norms – even oppressive ones – in an attempt to stay connected to their homeland in some way. Although all victims of VAW hesitate due to culture norms and feelings of fear and shame, these factors are exacerbated in refugee situations. After losing so much – their culture, way of life and family, even an abusive partner – are familiar things they have to hold on to. Moreover, their minority status in the country makes them vulnerable to exploitation by people in positions of power hired to deal with VAW cases and provides them with fewer choices. When conducting my interviews, I sensed an internal conflict occurring – especially in women who said they rejected violence entirely. The conflict stemmed from recognizing that victims of VAW should speak out, but also realizing that by speaking out, they are going against societal norms and rejecting a part of their culture. The only woman who encouraged victims of violence to leave an abusive partner was a refugee who had taken this step herself which might explain why she was showing such courage as she had already faced society through her actions.

The internal conflict that I sensed can be viewed as a positive because it means women

appeared open to embracing changes that counter oppressive traditions – thanks in part to their exposure to GBV programs in Lebanon. Despite considerable hesitation, all of my participants acknowledged the importance of GBV services in the country as contributing to changing patriarchal attitudes at the community and interpersonal level through the awareness sessions, therapy sessions, and activities they offer. Moreover, my participants highlighted the value of the spaces the community centers provide for women to feel safe and gain new skills.

Despite the information I was able to acquire, one of the limitations of my research is that I was unable to get my Syrian participants to talk more openly about sexual violence and their response if it occurs; the majority of them kept bringing the conversation back to IPV. Although this could be indicative of the taboo surrounding sexuality, as I mentioned in previous chapters, it is also a limitation. More data on sexual violence would have made my research more complete and would have allowed me to examine how refugees are dealing with it.

Due to the limited time I had in Lebanon and the small scale of this project, I was only able to interview people using convenience sampling; this means that the majority of the refugees I interviewed were of similar ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels and religious background. Moreover, I was only able to interview people living in two regions of Lebanon, and all the women I interviewed lived in the same region of the country; interacting with a more diverse group of people living in different areas of Lebanon might have yielded different findings and different responses to VAW giving us a glimpse on whether these parameters mentioned above affect how refugees view and respond to VAW. In the future, research should try to take these parameters into account.

My thesis supports previous work done by Freedman (2016), Khawaja et al. (2008), Lewis (2005) and others who show that refugees are deterred from reporting VAW and even asking for

help due to feelings of shame, cultural norms, justifying the behaviour, fear of revenge from perpetrators, and feeling that the issue is private. Looking at VAW through the lens of GAD and SEF allowed this thesis to examine the systemic and societal roots of all GBV, which is a necessary step in the struggle to end VAW. This work is significant because it outlines in detail the GBV programs available in Lebanon, something that has not done before. The fact that an exploration of the major programs now exists should make it easier for future researchers to study this issue. Finally, the fact that I highlighted the perspectives of individuals whom the programs target is vital. Without the input of potential recipients, the evolution of programs to better serve their intended beneficiaries appears unlikely be effective. In terms of Syrian refugees in Lebanon specifically, this thesis shows that funding going to GBV programs is having some positive impacts on these communities and is surely challenging oppressive societal norms that are at the root of VAW and gender inequality

Further research should have a broader focus by examining all aspects of GBV, not just VAW, including gender violence experienced by men and by members of the LGBTQ+ community. Moreover, researchers should interview female and male survivors of GBV who have utilized the GBV programs mentioned in the thesis. Doing this would allow us to examine the effects these programs actually have on GBV survivors and if their lives changed for the better after using the NGOs to escape violence. Their voices are critical in order to assess and improve the services currently offered in the country. Finally, there is currently no disaggregated data that looks at GBV in the country according to nationality, which makes it difficult for us to get an accurate estimate of how common VAW is across the Syrian community in Lebanon. Going forward some research should assess the prevalence rate of GBV specifically in the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon.

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APPENDIX A – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table showing basic demographic data for my female refugee participants

Pseudonym	Age	Years Married	Years in Lebanon	Kids	Education	From	Living in	Work in Syria	Work in Lebanon
Sabah	44	30	4	5	Grade 6	East Syria	Borj Rahhal	None	None
Nour	36	12	1.5	2	Grade 7	Damascus Countryside	Tayr Debba	None	None
Mayse	31	14	4	6	Grade 6	Damascus	Tayr Debba	None	Retail/ Cleaner
Layla*	30	2 months	< 1 year	None	Grade 12	Damascus	Tebnine	None	Shop keeper
Sarah	58	2	7	4	Grade 12	Damascus	Tebinine	None	None
Aya	35	15	3	3	Grade 12	Daraya	Borj Rahhal	None	None
Miriam	29	11	5	3	Grade 12	Damascus	Borj Rahhal	Teacher	None
Sana	21	2.5	6	1	Grade 9	Damascus	Borj Rahhal	None	None
Sahar	21	4	5	1	Grade 6	?	Bedias	None	None
Mira	39	19	5	6	Grade 9	Damascus Countryside	Bedias	None	None
Lama	37	17	3	6	Grade 9	Daraa	Bedias	None	None

* Layla has been divorced twice: the first time after 10 years of marriage and the second after 2 years.

Table showing basic demographic data for my male refugee participants

Pseudonym	Age	Years Married	Years in Lebanon	Kids	Education	From	Living	Work in Syria	Work in Lebanon
Chadi	32	0	5	None	Banking Insurance Degree AND Disaster/ Emergency Project Management Degree	Damascus	Beirut	Humanitarian and Dev. work	Humanitarian and. work
Maher	40	17	4	6	Grade 9	Daraa	Bedias	Worker	Worker
Sami	26	6	2	4	Grade 8	Aleppo Countryside	Bedias	Work in the Land	Worker
Walid	24	0	5	None	Grade 12	Aleppo Countryside	Bedias	Student	Worker
Fadi	38	12	4	3	?	Daraya	Borj Rahhal	Embroidery	Construction
Khaled	36	13	6	4	Grade 6	ar-Rastan	Aramoun	Taxi driver	Mason
Raja	29	7	1	2	Grade 6	Idleb	Aramoun	Shoemaker	Worker
Issa	26	3	4	1 (2) *	Grade 7	ar-Rastan	Aramoun	Taxi driver	Concierge
Youssef	23	1	5	(1) *	Grade 7	ar-Rastan	Aramoun	Taxi driver	Concierge
Kareem	25	3	1	1	University Student	ar-Rastan	Aramoun	Student	Construction

* Expecting a baby

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions for NGOs

1. What can you tell me about your organization?
2. Where are you from?
3. What are your responsibilities in this organization?
4. How did you start working for the organization?
5. Have you worked with refugees before?
6. How long have you worked here?
7. What sort of programs does your organization have dedicated to prevention and intervention in cases of violence against refugee women? Does your organization assist both Lebanese and refugee women? Where are the refugee women from? (Palestine, Iraq, Syria)
8. Can you walk me through what happens when a women walks in?
9. How long have these programs existed?
10. Do you feel your programs are welcomed by refugees? How is your organization received by the refugee communities?
11. In your opinion, what prevents refugees from using your services if they experience violence?
12. Are there differences in the ways women and men react to your programs? How? Why do you think?
13. Are your resources being utilized by the refugee population?
14. Who is utilizing them the most? Young? Old? Education level? Economic status? Which refugees? Palestinian? Syrian? Lebanese?
15. How many people a week/month use your facilities?
16. Can you tell me about the circumstances of violence? Domestic violence? Rape? Beatings? Economic violence? By whom?
17. What are the different cases of violence that you encounter the most?
18. The UN defines violence against women "*as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm, or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life*". This can include physical violence (slapping, beating, hitting, kicking), sexual violence (rape, sexual coercion), emotional abuse (intimidation, humiliation, insults, psychological and physical threats), and controlling behavior (isolation of a person from families and loved ones, monitoring of movements, restrictions on employment, education, or financial resources). Do you see all of these types of violence?
19. What happens to the refugee women who seek your help? Do they go back to their communities? What happens then? What happens when women don't want to go back? What are the resources available?
20. How are you ensuring that refugees are aware of the programs you are offering?
21. What do you think is working? What things need to be improved?

22. Where do you get funding? Is it adequate funding? What resources do you need as an organization?
23. Do you get some opposition from different organizations or individuals?
24. Is there collaboration between organizations? What are the strengths of that? What are the disadvantages?
25. Are the programs making positive differences in your opinion? In what way?
26. Besides improving your programs, what do you think needs to be done to prevent violence against refugee women?
27. Do you have anything else you want to tell me about this issue? Is there anything I might have missed?
28. Do you have any questions for me?
29. Do you mind if I have more questions if I could follow up with you?

Interview questions for refugees

1. How are you today? How are you feeling?
2. How long have you been in Lebanon?
3. Where are you from in Syria? When did you leave your home in Syria?
4. Is your entire family here with you?
5. Are you married? Do you have children? How old are your kids? Are they in school? How long have you been married?
6. What did you do in Syria? Did you work? Where?
7. Are you working now? Are you working in a field in which you were trained or educated?
8. What is the highest level of education you have received?
9. How old are you?
10. Are you a religious individual? Do you mind if I ask what religion you practice?
11. In different countries and different cultures around the world, violence against women is defined in different ways. What do you think violence against women is?
12. The UN defines violence against women as physical, emotional, economic, and sexual violence. Do you agree with this definition? Why or why not?
13. Do you believe violence against women is an issue that should be addressed? How? By whom? NGOs? Government? Organizations? Should there be programs or addressed within the community?
14. Do you think violence is something that Syrian refugee women experience in Lebanon? By whom?
15. Did people discuss violence against women in Syria?
16. Is there a difference between violence against women in the home and in the public sphere?
    a. Do you think it should be treated differently?
17. Were there resources available in Syria that deal with violence against women? what resources were available in Syria?

18. Have you noticed any changes regarding violence against women since displacement? Why do you think this has occurred?
19. Are you aware of any programs that have been established to prevent and intervene in cases of violence against women in Lebanon?
20. Some programs have been established by the UNHCR, and other organizations that deal with these issues. These include: **[list some of the programs mentioned by staff of organizations].** Do you know of these programs? How do you know about these programs? What do you think of these programs? In your opinion, are they helpful?
21. In your opinion, what could be helpful when dealing with this issue? What resources would you like to see?
22. If you knew a woman in your community who was experiencing violence, what would you encourage her to do? Would you encourage her to seek help?
    a. Where? Religious figure? Organizations? Elders in the community?
    b. Where would you seek help?
    c. Why would you not use these organizations for help? What things would you worry about?
    d. What would encourage you to use these programs?
    e. Do you think women are less likely to see help here [Lebanon]? Why?
23. Who or what do you think is the most important organization or authority to deal with violence against women? Police? Organizations? Religious groups? Leaders? Community leaders? Elders? Family?
24. Do you know someone who has experienced violence against women? Did she seek help? Why or why not? What happened? Would you be able to tell me about this?
25. What more could be done for refugee women with respect to violence against women?
26. Do you have anything else you want to tell me about this issue? Is there anything I might have missed?
27. Do you have any questions for me?