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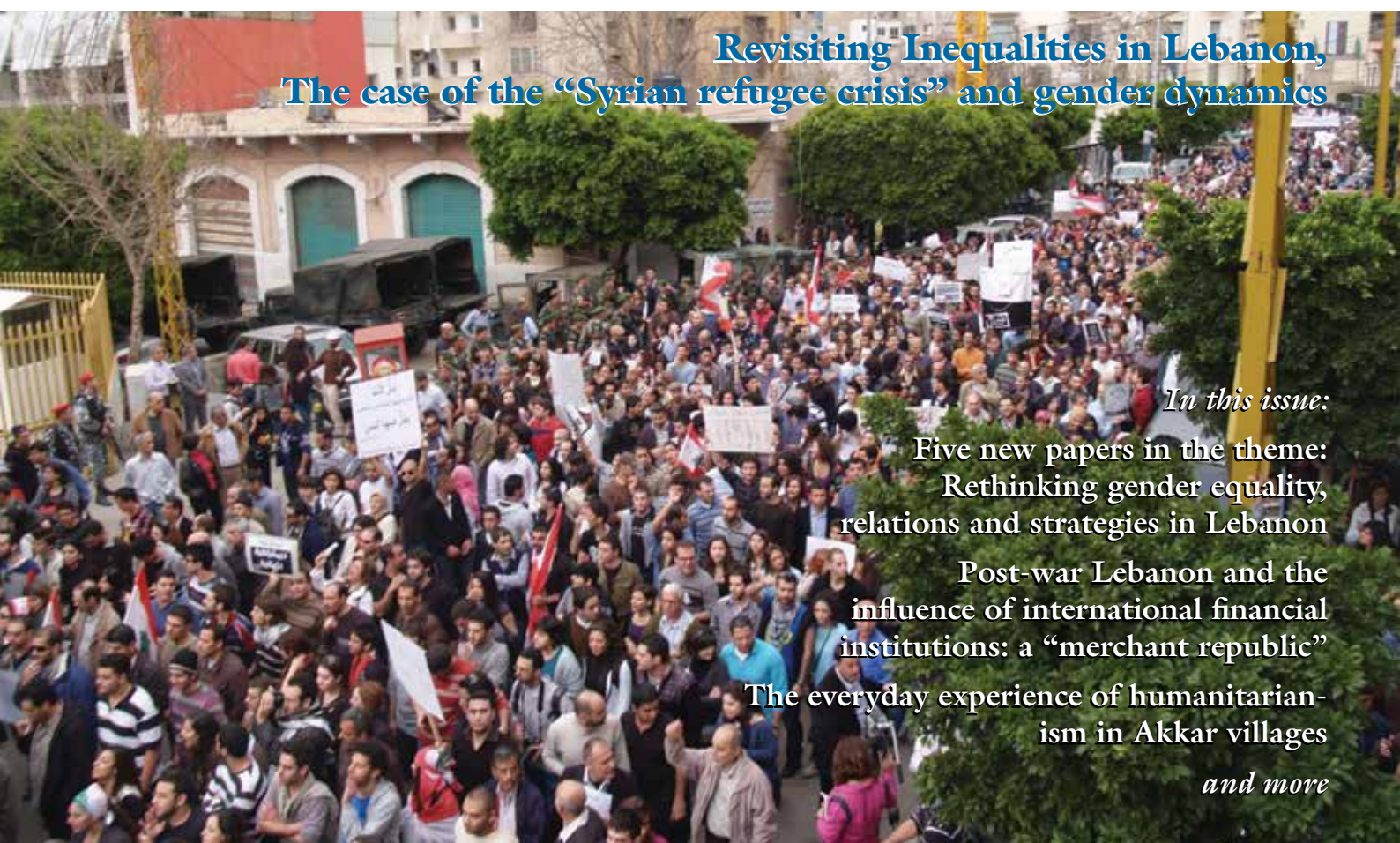
Revisiting Inequalities in Lebanon,
The case of the "Syrian refugee crisis" and gender dynamics

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Acknowledgements

About the Civil Society Review

Lebanon Support believes that a strong civil society is essential to bringing about an open and just society. Through its research programme and information and knowledge sharing platforms Lebanon Support focuses on supporting local and national civil society organizations, as well as informal campaigns and networks to gain, develop and share knowledge and expertise in order to enhance effectiveness of civil society work in Lebanon.

The objective of the Civil Society Review is to bring civil society practitioners, experts and researchers together to develop and disseminate knowledge, as well as to innovate new tools and practices so as to strengthen Lebanon's civil society sphere and voice.

The Civil Society Review produces evidence-based research and analysis and disseminates findings and recommendations to promote civic engagement, shape policies, and stimulate debate within civil society spheres in Lebanon.

In addition to Lebanon Support's multi-disciplinary team, the Civil Society Review draws expertise from practitioners, experts, researchers and policy makers.

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Introduction

This first issue of the Civil Society Review reflects the core of Lebanon Support's mission and mandate to create a space for reflection, collaboration and debate between scholarly research, expertise and activism in Lebanon. Its themes were informed by, if not imposed by, the current problematics that civil society actors have been facing in the past few years in Lebanon, and that are structuring their work. While we are aware of the fetishization of the concept of "civil society", our approach seeks to introduce a critical and distanced reflection to its underlying contents and implications, and to consider it as a social and political construct in the Lebanese context rather than a given.

The issue is the result of two successive calls for contributions relevant to two of the most widely discussed questions within civil society work in Lebanon. The first call stemmed from the necessity to reflect on the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, which acted as a magnifying glass of the structural shortcomings of the Lebanese state. Beyond considering "Syrian refugees" as a mere "category", the objective was to reflect on the crisis as part of the political, economic, social and security dynamics that affect the Lebanese society as a whole. Through the issue of Syrian refugees, it is also the mechanisms of the Lebanese civil society and state that we seek to discuss and explore.

The second call came from an increased attention articulated around gender rights mobilization and feminist organizations, from both scholars researching and reflecting on civil society in Lebanon, as well as activists struggling for the advancement of their causes and ideals.

By tackling such issues through innovative and original evidence-based research and literature, Lebanon Support's endeavour is to contribute to deconstruct social, economic, and political factors and structures fostering and sustaining gender inequality and gender motivated or based violence in its various forms and practices (discursive, physical, social, economic, psychological, among others). This is also a manner to reflect more generally on inequalities, discrimination and forms of exclusion that affect "minorities" in a society that is mainly characterized by patriarchal and social control structures.

Indeed, since 2011, the Syrian refugee situation had been an accurate gauge of the challenges faced by the state in terms of autonomy and its "leadership" role regarding international donors' policies and agendas. The crisis, that many agree to characterize as "unprecedented", contributed to introduce to the humanitarian "market" new actors with specific political agendas (see for instance the paper by Dalya Mitri on this issue). It additionally brought back to the forefront of the public scene the ever-recurring debate on decentralization and municipal capacities (as the article by Marwa Boustany shows). While the crisis showed the great solidarity of the Lebanese host community with the Syrian refugees (it is unprecedented to have a country of 4 million inhabitants host one million refugees without being on the verge of a social rupture or war), it also shed light, with great urgency, on the philosophy and practices of humanitarian actors. These have, on the one hand, contributed to a quasi monopoly on the coordination efforts and have ostracized the local actors who undoubtedly have a thorough knowledge of the local social fabric and context (as argued by Dalya Mitri); and on the other hand, have contributed, through a policy of "ethnicization", to further deepen existing cleavages and tensions along ethnic or confessional lines. By refusing to address the "politics" behind their interventions, humanitarian actors contribute to the emergence of a "humanitarian orientalism" that behind the displayed neutrality tends to fuel tensions and conflicts (as demonstrated by Estella Carpi). Moreover, the politics of labelling refugees as such contributed to prevent humanitarian actors from grasping the extreme diversity of their social and political backgrounds, their personal trajectories, their livelihoods, or their integration to the Lebanese job market (as illustrated by Guita Hourani and Sam Van Vliet).

The second theme was inspired by the questions posed by the transformations in the region in relation to gender and sexuality in the public space, from the question of sexual harassment to basic

civil rights. After revisiting the history of feminist movements and organizations in Lebanon since the nineteenth century, categorizing them in successive "waves" (Bernadette Daou's contribution to this issue), their modes of actions are examined (Riwa Salameh's reflexive perspective from an activist point of view is enlightening in that regard). The issue of their current strategies and discourses is raised with a particular focus on mobilizing structures and the questionable impact of achieving social change (as argued in Dalya Mitri's article). This thematic section also proposes a reflection on LGBT activism, questioning its mixed and sometimes conflictual relation with feminist organizations on one hand, and, on the other its contribution to the reinforcement of the dominant concept of "masculinity" (Anthony Rizk and Ghassan Makarem). Lastly, the case study (by Ahmad J. Saleh and Adriana A. Qubaiya) of transwomen in the carceral system in Lebanon sheds light on the increased policing and surveillance of bodies and sexualities considered as deviant and raises the intricate issues of moral panics at times of political and social unrest.

The contributions in this first issue of the Civil Society Review (that we intend to be an annual rendez-vous) demonstrate a variety of perspectives through dynamic, historicized, and processual approaches to reflections on civil society action, mobilization, and strategies in Lebanon. It offers a novel space where activist and academic spheres converge to discuss theories and reflect on practices. While we acknowledge the polysemy and sometimes controversy behind the term "civil society", and the "magical" and often illusive "opposition" it displays, we are committed to producing original literature that, both, offers a reflection on civil society, particularly its contentious role and autonomy, as well as creates knowledge products for what we hope can constitute tools for action and social change in Lebanon.

Meet the authors

Marwa Boustani Urban planning and communication officer at UN-Habitat Lebanon. She holds a B.F.A in Graphic Design and a Master's degree in Urban Planning and Policy from the American University of Beirut. Marwa is currently involved in policy analysis and research on housing, land and property rights for Syrian refugees, and regional planning in Lebanon. She has expertise in the field of urban planning in Lebanon on municipal governance and decentralization, the National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territory, urban heritage, and rural tourism for local economic development in the South of Lebanon. Marwa has also conducted extensive research on scenario planning and urban futures through her internship at the UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi in Kenya.

Estella Carpi PhD Candidate at the University of Sydney, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, and PhD Fellow at the American University of Beirut, Center for Social and Behavioral Sciences, researching the social responsiveness to humanitarian assistance from the 2006 war in the southern suburbs of Beirut to the current Syrian refugee influx in Akkar's villages. She worked at the Cairo-based United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Office (2008) for the Trade and Human Development Monitor Project meant to enhance small and medium enterprises in the Arab world. She also worked as a Research Consultant for the Cairo-based International Development Research Center (IDRC) (2009-2010) in a project aimed at strengthening social protection systems in Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Morocco and Algeria.

Bernadette Daou Feminist activist and researcher. She has been involved in various civil society organisations and political movements in Lebanon since the beginning of 2000. She holds a BA in Law from the Lebanese University and a Master's degree in Political Science from the Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut.

Guita Hourani A senior consultant with the Carthage Center for Research and Information (CCRI) of the Lebanese Development Network (LDN). She is also the Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU). She has been designated the Country Information Expert to the Fahamu Refugee Programme in Oxford, England. Dr. Hourani has co-authored a report on the Syrian refugees in Lebanon titled, 'Refugees of the Arab Spring': Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (April 2011-April 2012) in cooperation with the LERC at NDU. The Center for Migration and Refugees Studies (CMRS) at the American University of Cairo (AUC), Egypt, published the report. She has recently completed a co-authored field survey report for the International Labor Organization (ILO) titled, "Rapid Assessment of the Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Employment Profile and Implications on the Labour Markets."

Ghassan Makarem A civil society and political activist, who had been engaged in LGBT activism in Lebanon and the region since 2001. He is a co-signatory of Helem's establishment charter and as Executive Director from 2010 to 2011 and on the Board of Directors of the organization for several terms between 2004 and 2011.

Dalya Mitri Independent consultant based in Geneva working with various NGOs and think tanks focusing on humanitarian and development issues in the Arab world. She holds a Master's degree in political science from Sciences Po in Paris and her knowledge and experience stem from her long standing involvement in the activities, initiatives and programs of local and international agencies, including: the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), Mouvement Social Libanais, René Mouawad Foundation and Interpeace.

Maissam Nimer A rejoint le laboratoire « Printemps » à l'Université Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines en novembre 2011, où elle prépare une thèse sous la direction d'Élisabeth Longuenesse et d'Agnès Pelage. Employée dans le cadre d'un programme de promotion de jeunes de milieu défavorisés visant à leur permettre d'accéder à l'enseignement supérieur elle avait auparavant travaillé pour une ONG, Teach for Lebanon, qui en amont, travaillait à encourager des jeunes de milieux

populaires à s'investir dans les études. C'est à la suite de ces expériences, qu'elle a souhaité inscrire une thèse en sociologie pour comprendre précisément les mécanismes de sélection sociale et culturelle expliquant l'inégalité d'accès à l'enseignement supérieur.

Adriana A. Qubaia   PhD candidate in the department of Gender Studies in the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. Through ethnographic research in Beirut, she is exploring the mechanisms of gendering political activisms, including the interactions between politics of queer (in)visibility and sexual identity formations and negotiations.

Anthony Rizk   Has been involved in sexuality and gender activism since 2009 and served on the Board of Directors of Helem in 2010-2011. He works as a research assistant in medical anthropology and social epidemiology at the Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut.

Riwa Salameh   Feminist activist from Lebanon who has been involved in various collectives and NGOs.

Ahmad J. Saleh   Works in harm reduction and outreach at Skoun and is a longterm sexual rights activist and caseworker in Helem. He is currently finishing an MS in Epidemiology at the American University of Beirut.

Hassan Sherry   Research Assistant at Carnegie Middle East Centre (CMEC). His research focuses on social justice, citizenship, and education in the Arab region, post-uprisings. Previously, Hassan worked as a Research Officer at the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND). His areas of focus included monitoring trade, investment, and tax policies, tax policies, as well as the role of international financial institutions in the Arab region, assessing their impact on development and on economic and social rights of citizens and local communities of Arab countries. He co-authored a recently published study entitled "Arab Uprisings and Social Justice: Implications of IMF Subsidy Reform Policies," which was discussed during 2013 Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Hassan graduated from the University of Manchester (UoM), UK, with a Master of Science Degree in Development Economics and Policy. He has earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics from the American University of Beirut (AUB).

Sam van Vliet   Emergency Coordinator at Amel Association International, working on Syrian refugees in Lebanon in partnership with MdM, Medico, Save the Children, Oxfam, EU and UN agencies. Since the beginning of 2012, van Vliet has been engaged in research on Syrian refugees in Lebanon with the Carthage Center for Research and Information (CCRI) of the Lebanese Development Network (LDN). He has co-authored a report on the Syrian refugees in Lebanon titled, 'Refugees of the Arab Spring': Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (April 2011-April 2012) in cooperation with the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU). The Center for Migration and Refugees Studies (CMRS) at the American University of Cairo (AUC), Egypt, published the report. She has recently completed a co-authored field survey report for the International Labor Organization (ILO) titled, "Rapid Assessment of the Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Employment Profile and Implications on the Labour Markets."

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Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Challenges of aid coordination in a complex crisis: An overview of funding policies and conditions regarding aid provision to Syrian refugees in Lebanon
Dalya Mitri

The challenges of an unprecedented refugee crisis in Lebanon

The latest figures provided by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Syria Regional Response Plan (SRRP 6)I[1], estimate that the total number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon exceeds one million persons[2]. In addition to those who are accounted for, it is widely believed that another two hundred to three hundred thousand reside with Lebanese relatives or in rented apartments, without being registered. Another group of Syrians, whose numbers are difficult to estimate, spend more time in Lebanon than their usual short visits made to family, friends, and for medical or shopping purposes. A large number of Syrians, around three hundred thousand according to a common estimate, are the legal, illegal, or undocumented immigrants who brought their families into Lebanon and who considered themselves as refugees. They face problems related to shelter, health and education.

Understandably, more than 50% of registered Syrian refugees are scattered in North Lebanon, 243,106 according to the UNHCR statistics, and the Bekaa, where they add up to 278,296. In both regions, a greater concentration is found in areas close to Syrian-Lebanese borders. In Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with greater potential work opportunities, the figure is 192,956. However, less expected and often ignored is the presence of 104,881 persons in South Lebanon. The number of Palestinian refugees fleeing Palestinian camps in Syria to Palestinian camps in Lebanon has reached a little more than 15,000 persons. They are being registered, and offered some assistance, by the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA).

Lebanon is the most affected host country in the region. It has the highest number of refugees to the total population in the whole world. Its educational system is unable to absorb the very large numbers of Syrian school-age children, estimated at more than three hundred thousand (or nearly one third of the total refugee population). The Lebanese weak public health infrastructure is on the brink of collapsing. With a refugee population that accounts for mere than a quarter of its population, Lebanon faces an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The unexpected scale of the crisis and the somehow counter-intuitively weak Lebanese humanitarian community, which is poorly equipped to deal with massive emergency relief, have raised numerous challenges for aid donorship in Lebanon.

Before discussing these challenges in its second section, this paper will start by identifying the numerous actors, donors, and their funding mechanisms and implementing strategies, which constitute the very heterogeneous Lebanese aid landscape. It appears indeed that the traditional–mainly Western–humanitarian actors are now being challenged by so-called non-traditional donors–mostly from the Gulf States. This major switch in humanitarian aid has an important impact on most of the identified challenges and shortcomings.

First and foremost, there is the question of coordination. Indeed, the original day-to-day planning response revealed an almost complete lack of strategic and contingency planning. As highlighted by numerous actors in the field, the coordination platform led by UNHCR, which includes the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) as an acting agency representing the Government of Lebanon (GoL), does not appear to be able to handle the crisis properly.

Beyond the traditional problem of dealing with very heterogeneous actors within the humanitarian space, the issue of coordination happens to be strongly influenced as well by the specificities of the Lebanese terrain. The endemic weakness of the Lebanese State, the latest government crisis, and the somewhat fuzzy Lebanese open-door policy towards Syrian refugees, certainly do not help humanitarian actors in dealing properly with the Syrian crisis.

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1 UNHCR, *2014 Syria Regional Response Plan: Strategic Overview*, UNHCR, 2013, available at: http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/2014-syria-regional-response-plan-strategic-overview [last accessed December 21, 2013].
2 *Ibid.*

Last but not least, one of the main challenges underpinning the creation of a strategic, comprehensive, and effective common aid policy is what could be called the vicious circle of politicisation. It makes it impossible to reconcile between an approach based on the real needs of the refugee population and the host communities and the varying and sometimes divergent political agendas.

Coordination between traditional and non-traditional donors already constitutes a problem per se, since they do not operate in the same humanitarian forums and do not always share the same values toward humanitarian aid. In this specific case, the situation is dramatically made worse by the very fact that some donors have divergent political agendas that underpin the very efforts of coordination and the establishment of a clear common policy, when it comes to aid to the Syrian refugees and towards the Syrian crisis as a whole.

In the initial months of the crisis, a plurality of expressions of Lebanese solidarity with Syrian refugees could be observed. Family ties and communal and political affinities motivated people, mostly in villages, to host and help refugees[1]. While the commitment of many Lebanese to continue to support refugees to the best of their abilities has not waned, traditional forms of hospitality and solidarity do not seem to be sustainable. They have become very costly to large segments of the underprivileged population, socially disrupting, and, in certain cases, politically problematic.

In short, most of the assistance provided to Syrian refugees in Lebanon was conditioned by short term considerations and did not move much beyond a humanitarian emergency response. Development strategies, implemented in a coordinated manner, did not emerge. There was a failure to sufficiently take into account uncertainties about the evolution of the Syrian conflict and the specificities of the Lebanese host community. A difficult problem to be reckoned with is the high level of politicization of humanitarian work, more particularly in the case of non-traditional donors, and the divergence between their approaches and those of the traditional community of donors, whether UN-related, governmental, or private. At present, neither UNHCR nor GoL seems capable of addressing this problem in a palpable and durable manner. The increased levels of sectarianism of the conflict in Syria, as well as the political involvement of many refugees, adds to Lebanon's vulnerability as a host country deeply divided along communal and political lines.

The methodology used for this paper is research based on available donors reports, recent policy papers, and breakdowns of humanitarian aid figures. For a more accurate picture, interviews were conducted, based on a reputational approach for actor identification, analysis, and assessment. Semi-directive interviews on perception of the effectiveness of their work, relations to other actors, and their critical opinion on the challenges and shortcomings of the policy were conducted with representatives from three major international donors/actors–UNHCR, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UK's Department for International Development (DFID)–and three implementing partners/civil society organizations (CSOs)–Sakina, a faith-based organization working with non-traditional donors; SAWA, a Syrian-Lebanese joint initiative; and IOCC, a faith-based organization working with both traditional and non-traditional donors

Identifying actors and funding mechanisms: a blurred picture

As already mentioned, the once relatively-weak presence of western humanitarian agencies grew dramatically in recent times. As a middle-income country with a weak state, aid to Lebanon since the 1975-1990 Civil War has been mainly channeled through longer term development programs, implemented by various actors such as UN agencies, and International (INGO) and local NGOs. Thus, emergency relief had not been the main activity of humanitarian and development actors in Lebanon. However, in the aftermath of the Summer 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, there appeared a certain increase in humanitarian presence, with the implementation of humanitarian aid programs and the setting up of major humanitarian players in the country, such as the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

It is not an easy task to make a comprehensive presentation of or even grasp the humanitarian actors currently active in Lebanon. Donors, implementing partners, and coordinators constitute a vast group, ranging from traditional UN agencies to individuals driven by religious solidarity. But despite their heterogeneity, it is possible to classify them into traditional and non-traditional actors.

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1   Estela Carpi, "Assessing humanitarianism in Lebanon with a practitioner", *Mabisir: Views on anthropological, social and political affairs in the Middle East,* available at: http://mabisir.wordpress.com/2013/06/27/assessing-humanitarianism-in-lebanon-with-a-practitioner-by-estella-carpi-june-2013/ [last accessed March 10, 2014]; also, Estella Carpi, "The Everyday Experience of Humanitarianism in Akkar Villages," *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Lebanon Support, 24 March 2014, available at: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/everyday-experience-humanitarianism-akkar-villages [last accessed May 7, 2014].

Traditional and non-traditional donors

Until recently, it was assumed that support to crisis affected countries originated almost exclusively from the rich and industrialized world–mainly Western countries represented by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). However, a much more diverse range of countries have been engaged in humanitarian response for many years and outside the club of the DAC and other key forums. Often coined as non-traditional, non-DCA or emerging donors challenge the traditional approach to aid programs, even if they do not constitute a homogeneous group. Historically, the political foundations for aid programs of many non-DCA countries, such as China and India, could be traced back to the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the 1950's. Their original call for the respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity still informs, to an extent, the criticism of the adoption of humanitarian intervention as a Western tool of power and the need to strengthen South-South cooperation[1]. Beyond these origins, based on a sense of solidarity among NAM countries, non-DCA countries, such as the Saudi Arabia, seem to share a common understanding of humanitarian aid as closely related to foreign policy and economic and security matters[2]. In this context, the principles of conditionality and good governance are considered as less important. This is reflected by the selectivity of aid provision by non-traditional donors, which share a strong preference for bilateral aid over multilateral aid[3], as well as through national operational agencies like the Red Cross/Red Crescent societies.

This situation constitutes a clear challenge to UN humanitarian agencies, the traditional channel for humanitarian response in crisis situations. Although non-traditional donors currently represent only about 12% of official humanitarian aid, their politically selective engagement in crises can be significant. This is the case in the Syrian refugee crisis. As it will be discussed below, even if it is impossible to quantify aid from non-traditional donors in Lebanon, it appears that Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries play a central role as donors.In a broader context, January 2013 saw an attempt to bring together a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional donor, which included official, semi-official, and private bodies from the GCC. The International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, held in Kuwait, saw 43 UN Member States pledge US$1.5 billion towards humanitarian efforts, with NGOs pledging another US$182 million. However, the pledged funds were not disbursed in full and those which were made available for work with Syrian refugees in Lebanon did not adequately meet the needs, nor were they spent in a concerted manner according to clearly defined priorities. As the humanitarian situation in Syria and the conditions for refugees in neighboring countries continue to deteriorate, a second Pledging Conference was held on January 15, 2014 in Kuwait City, aiming to rally further international financial support to meet the basic humanitarian needs of Syrians.

In conjunction with the conference, Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization invited 235 international and local humanitarian organizations, charities, and philanthropists to attend an NGO conference to raise donations for Syrian refugees and US$400 million were pledged. The Second International Pledging Conference for Syria was able to raise US$2.5 billion, in response to the largest ever appeal for a single humanitarian emergency.

The traditional channel: donors, implementing partners, and funding mechanisms

It appears relevant in this paper to distinguish between traditional and non-traditional actors, as solid data only exists for the latter. Recent solid data generated by the OECD[4] and OCHA does not take into account unrecorded aid flows from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iran, although they appear to be the largest contributors according to many accounts from the field. As for the crisis inside Syria, OCHA is providing data, but it has not yet been consolidated. Even though Lebanon has a recent history of receiving more reconstruction and development than humanitarian aid, the core players have been the same since the 1975-1990 Civil War: the US, western donors (EU), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran, in addition to the key role of UN Agencies, INGOS, and a strong network of local NGOs.

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1 Peter Kragelund, *The potential role of non-traditional donors' aid in Africa*, Geneva: International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), 2010, available at: http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/handle/123456789/28195 [last ccessed December 20, 2013];

JulieWalz & Vijaya Ramachandran, *Brave New World: A Literature Review of Emerging Donors and the Changing Nature of Foreign Assistance*, Washington DC: Center for Global Development, 2010, available at: http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/ Files/ISN/134751/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/d8b79124-bd64-4f44-ae8d-1c427e4848c8/en/1425691_file_ Walz_Ramachandran_Brave_New_World_FINAL.pdf [last accessed December 20, 2013].

2 *ibid.*

3 *ibid.*

4 *ibid.*

The most recent data on official humanitarian aid (OCHA), donor contributions accounted for over US$427 million in pledges, commitments, and contributions, which makes up 98% of the aid received by Lebanon targeting the Syrian refugee crisis. Over a billion US dollars remain to be dedicated. The top funding contributors are the US (via UNHCR), Kuwait (via UNHCR), Unicef, the World Food Programme (WFP), ECHO (via UNHCR and Danish Refugee Council (DRC))[1]. Important bilateral donors include Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, the UAE, the UK[2], and the US. Major multilateral donors are the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund, the European Commission, ECHO, and WFP.

When it comes to how the aid is channeled, most of the official aid goes through UNHCR. However, it is worth mentioning UNRWA (for Palestinians refugees from Syria) and the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Among the traditional big humanitarian non-UN agencies, only ECHO and DFID[3] have a considerable presence in Lebanon. For example, the US' Development Assistance International (DAI) is almost invisible[4].Through a series of Syria Regional Response Plans (SRRP)[5], the leading role among international actors for dealing with the humanitarian crisis has been devoted to UNHCR. Officially, UNHCR does not act as a donor, but as a beneficiary of donor countries. Its role is to coordinate and implement the aid. These two functions are very distinct, and UNHCR has tried to avoid double hatting by creating a separate coordination team (in spring 2013) to ensure that UNHCR functions as a neutral coordinator. According to SRRP 6–the latest Regional Response plan–activities are divided into eight sectors[6]. SRRP 6 was launched as a concerted effort at the end of December 2013, with the participation of more than 60 partners including UN agencies, INGOs, and Lebanese NGOs. The total appeal was for $1.7 billion for interagency response and $165 million for the GoL.[7] Overall leadership went to the MoSA and UNHCR.

According to UNHCR, SRRP 6 should not be considered as an outline of Lebanon's needs to deal with the crisis, but as a strategic document, which includes both figures and the challenges ahead. With the collaboration of many humanitarian partners and the donor community (traditional and non-traditional), SRRP 6 was drafted in order to move beyond the day-to-day response towards a more engaged and proactive strategy. Due to the growing impact of the massive influx of Syrian refugees on Lebanon's economy, infrastructure, and society–the refugee population rose by 500% in 2013–all actors were aware of the importance of including host communities and implementing livelihood projects. According to the World Bank (WB)/UN economic and social impact assessment, 170,000 Lebanese could be pushed into poverty, and up to 340,000 Lebanese, mainly youth and low-skilled workers, could become unemployed by the end of 2014 as a consequence of the Syrian conflict. In order to take this situation into account, SRRP 6 projections for 2014 in Lebanon include up to 1.5 million Syrian refugees, 100,000 Palestine refugees from Syria, 50,000 Lebanese returnees, and 1.5 million affected Lebanese. The plan is also in line with regional priorities and targets assistance across all sectors; introducing new programming efficiencies; enhancing the capacity of government institutions, which are most affected by the refugee influx; supporting host communities; and prioritizing areas with both high concentrations of Lebanese poor and high numbers of refugees from Syria.

Non-traditional channel: many actors, little data

Contrary to traditional humanitarian actors, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to present a clear picture of so-called non-traditional aid in Lebanon. Even if many accounts seem to indicate that this kind of aid is extremely important–even greater than the traditional one according to some observers, it is difficult to evaluate its magnitude and impact, let alone its responsiveness to clearly assessed needs and the adoption of priorities defined accordingly. Whether through funding local groups or

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1 For recent detailed figures by donors, see Emilie Combaz, International aid to Lebanon, Birmingham: GSDRC (University of Birmingham), 2013, available at: http://gsdrc.org/docs/open/HDQ979.pdf [last accessed December 20, 2013].

2 The latest figure for UK in the region is £500 million ($841 million), which is the largest humanitarian aid contribution an EU Member state has ever made (DFID figures).

3 US$10.5 million were directly allocated by DFID, mainly food via WFP, shelter through UNHCR and partners (informal settlements), several NGOs for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), and International Medical Corps (IMC) and Médecins du Monde for health (DFID figures).

4 Except for a focus on Akkar and Wadi Khaled.

5 UNHCR website: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php [last accessed Decmber 8, 2013]

6 The sectors are Protection, Food Security, Non-food items (NFIs), Shelter; Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Public Health, Education, and Social Cohesion.

7 Another $80 million were presented by GoL with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WFP (SRRP 6).

distributing hand to mouth relief items, Gulf countries, local NGOs, and the constellation of philan-thropic associations and wealthy individual donors are in no position to integrate their work into the broader collective engagement of the international community or even ensure that there is neither duplication nor competition. Their political and religious motivation are undeniable. Their confessional or communal solidarity is likely to be a primary determinant in their engagement the refugees.

Even if the contributions of GCC states, let alone those of individuals, remains mostly undocumented, even if UNHCR and many other Western actors are eager to cooperate[1], the little available data sketches a picture of critical contribution to aid for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The Kuwait 2013 conference allocated $100 million to UNHCR regionally. As for contribution tracking, the FTS (Financial tracking system) indicates that a larger amount of funds were allocated directly to partners in Lebanon than through the Regional Response Plan.[2]

Non-traditional actors remain very scattered. But converging accounts have mentioned a loose estimate of $100 million in humanitarian aid to confessional groups coming from GCC countries since the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis in the country. It appears that these donors definitely work outside of the system. Thus, a significant part of the aid is channeled through the embassies of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE , and Qatar. Another case in point is Qatar's massive funding the Qatar Red Crescent, which covers health expenses bills that are not covered by UNHCR.[3]

Beyond the Gulf States, other players act as donors and implementing partners. A non-exhaustive list would include Islamic organizations; CSOs, Syrian refugee associations, Churches and other Christian faith–based relief (ACT Active Churches Together, IOCC International Orthodox Churches, Jesuit Relief Service, Caritas, IOCC, (DERD, GOPA (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East), Syrian diaspora (old and new), and pre-existing Syrian CSOs and networks.

Christian refugees only represent 5% of registered refugees and prefer to receive aid from churches and Christian organizations.[4] They are usually more concerned by resettlement, as some Western countries[5] have decided to prioritize Christians, gays, and political dissidents in their asylum procedures.

The faith-based Islamic networks are very active in many parts of Lebanon, but mostly in the north, where most Syrian refugees are based. Although the number of refugees has recently grown in the south of the country, they remain out of reach. Some Islamic relief networks appear to be closer to the Muslim Brotherhood (Sakina) and others to Salafi movements. A great portion of this aid comes from individual donors based in GCC states and part of the Syrian diaspora.

As the individual donors mostly give monetary donations, Islamic organizations activities are multifold and cover aspects such as reaching out to refugees, assessing the volume and the variety of aid needed, visiting refugees in their homes or shelters, and distribution of aid. Regarding funding, some organizations, such as Sakina, work with all types of donors (GCC, Arab, and Islamic associations) through a banking system. They justify their expenses through pictures, checks, and bills. Another Lebanese secular association, which includes Lebanese and Syrian volunteers, SAWA, does not receive funding from any traditional channel. They rely on individual donations (family, random donors, Syrian and Lebanese diaspora) and direct donations through their Facebook page.[6]
Such Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and NGOs generally do not receive funding from traditional channels for various reasons. Some mention the fact that international organizations hardly ever work with Lebanese organizations. Another reason is a certain distrust towards the Lebanese government and its Hizbollah component.[7]

Challenges and shortcomings

Dealing with such a critical humanitarian situation and an impressive array of different actors brings up its fair amount of issues, challenges, and criticisms. The impact of the crisis on funding policies and conditions regarding Syrian refugee aid provision in Lebanon can be best captured by three issues, which will be addressed in detail: strategic planning and coordination, the specificities of Lebanese terrain, and the dangerous politicization of humanitarian aid.

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1 A certain diplomatic and lobbying activity took place, before the January 2014 Kuwait II Conference, in Doha and Riyadh through the embassies, in order to strengthen GCC countries commitment.
2 For example, this kind of tracking enabled to notice a raise of activity with in-kind assistance from Saudi Arabia and UAE after the last winter storm.
3 Interviews with DFID, 23 December 2013 and OCHA, 17 December 2013.
4 According to cross-checked information from interviews with Christian relief organisations, December 2013.
5 Germany wants around 5000 people for a resettlement of 3 to 5 years, giving priority to Christians. The same goes for Canada (for Syriacs), Australia, Norway, and Sweden.
6 Interviews with Faith-based Muslim NGOs. 12 December 2013 and 5 January 2014.
7 *Ibid.*

Strategic planning and coordination: UNHCR on the line

As already mentioned above, the donor community in Lebanon is weak.[1] Before the crisis, a lot of work was done directly from the embassies, referring to their capitals for decision-making. Unsurprisingly, this kind of setting inhibited any kind of strategic planning beyond day-to-day response. In order to tackle the challenge constituted by multi-partnerships and inter-agency coordination, UNHCR was appointed as the leading organization, with the succeeding SRRPs as a strategic framework. The choice appeared as a surprise to some observers, who would have expected OCHA to play to part. Thus, two important shortcomings in UNHCR's leadership have been identified.

First, and despite its efforts to avoid the situation, UNHCR became triple hatted. The UN refugee agency acts as a donor, a coordinator, and an implementing partner, which is problematic given the enormous scale of the crisis and the amounts requested ($1.7 billion for SRRP 6).

Therefore, there is a widespread concern among the humanitarian community in Lebanon about UNHCR's ability to lead and coordinate, although coordination and the humanitarian response in general had been scaled up in the past six months. UNHCR has often been depicted as having no experience with a crisis of this scale and particularly in the coordination and leadership functions (despite the creation of a separate unit dedicated to coordination).

Another identified issue lies in the lack of strategic planning, which could be attributed to UNHCR's tendency to consider the crisis as a refugee rather than a humanitarian crisis. This can be attributed to an inclination to see the situation only through UNHCR institutional lenses, which hindered the full and timely acknowledgement that the crisis has spilled-over to Lebanon's economy, infrastructure, and social cohesion. Although SRRP 6 clearly considers the impact of the crisis on Lebanon, for example through the implementation of livelihood projects, some mistakes have been made in putting up this more inclusive institutional setting.

Taking into account the transition between emergency response and the reaction to a protracted long-term crisis implies an emphasis on development agencies, in order to target host communities in an efficient manner. In that sense and according to many stakeholders, UNDP–which is well established in Lebanon–should be encouraged to draft an Early Recovery Strategy. Assistance is necessary in such a protracted, but more cost effective solutions should be found for longer-term projects. UNDP failed to do so partly because UNHCR inexplicably failed to ask for it. The issue generated a systemic failing in the strategic documents now being produced. Even INGOs sometimes feel excluded from the decision-making process, but cannot oppose UNHCR. According to converging sources, it is not clear whether it is a strategy that comes directly from the UN headquarters in New York. However, no one had the courage to stand up to UNHCR.[2]

The sidelining of UNDP appears even more surprising as UNHCR's mandate does not cover host communities. An important consequence of this situation lies in the lack of trust from donors. Nonetheless, UNHCR appears to be dealing with the situation. OCHA pointed out gaps and coordination problems and was asked to act as a balance and ask UNDP to handle development projects.[3]

This shortfall in inter-agency coordination led to poor exchange of information. As there is no official census in Lebanon[4], numbers and figures are different for each survey. Data collection in the country is difficult and does not fit the standards (60% accuracy only). Accordingly, WFP's Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) was conducted–too late–at the beginning of 2013, in order to improve beneficiary targeting, as there was a need to identify vulnerabilities, not only by sector but also through a more comprehensive overview. The survey concluded that 12% of the refugees were severely vulnerable and 65% moderately vulnerable, which meant that approximately 35% should get less emergency assistance, such as food distributions. Another finding was that 85% of registered refugees live in 182 localities, as do 67% of the vulnerable Lebanese population.[5]

Originally, the WFP conducted this survey on targeted assistance, to assess and verify refugee registration. But UNHCR asked them to only focus on food assistance. This meant that despite the VASyR study being based on a complicated formula, it was derived from inaccurate indicators from UNHCR.

Beyond UN interagency cooperation shortfalls, some major actors still fall outside of the scope of

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1 Except for DFID and ECHO, who had a strong presence since 2006, in addition to the relative absence of a US donor agency, despite the US being the most important bilateral donor.

2 This section is based on many testimonies coming from both well established INGOs and Lebanese local NGOs. The latest are particularly put to the side when it comes to coordination efforts.

3 Interviews with OCHA, 17 December 2013; and a local NGO (SAWA), January 5, 2014.

4 Since 1932.

5 Since aid should provide half of monthly expenditures, which are estimated at $350-400 (food and shelter), there is an urgent need to enhance cash transfers.

UNHCR's action. Thus, ECHO–as one of the main but also the most outspoken and opinionated donors–is drafting a parallel plan. ECHO's representative complains about the lack of clear policies from donor countries, for example, when it comes to including newcomers who do not fall under the UNHCR mandate and the day-to-day policies that seems to be applied to this crisis. The European donor agency is currently elaborating a strategy for 2014, based on lessons learned, clear prioritization of needs, and the identification of gaps and how to fill them in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Non-traditional donors also represent a coordination problem. According to several actors, it is very hard to meet with GCC representatives or their associates. They do not attend any of the coordination meetings, although they are invited through their respective embassies personnel. Nevertheless, the Saudis have been recently attempting to cooperate more with UN agencies, the UAE established a development agency, and Kuwait replied to SRRP 5 and hosted the SRRP 6 conference (January 2014). However, Lebanon's specific political dynamics make a Saudi neutral position seem unlikely. According to some interviewees, Saudi Arabia cannot properly answer the SRRP, as this would constitute an endorsement of GoL in which Hezbollah is active.

The Specifics of the Lebanese terrain

It is today widely acknowledged by the humanitarian aid community that the Syrian crisis has important regional implications. The scope of the refugee flow started to have consequences for Syria's neighboring countries. Lebanon is by far the most affected country, with a dramatic impact on its economy, infrastructure, and social cohesion. Therefore, aid response must therefore move from day-to-day aid relief to a more long-term response. It appears central to analyze the influence of the Lebanese context and its specifics on funding policies. A few elements are key to understand and assess the challenges and shortcomings facing humanitarian aid actors in Lebanon: the particular legal and practical status of Syrian refugees, the subsequent impossibility to build refugee camps and shelters, the high pressure on the Lebanese infrastructure, the impact on social cohesion, the question of cash assistance, and GoL's weakness.

Being a Syrian refugee

Even if we keep mentioning the issue of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, their practical and legal status vis-à-vis the Lebanese state and society is quite different from the other neighboring countries. The choice to come to Lebanon, beyond geographical and cultural proximity, is highly influenced by the fact that Syrian citizens do not need a visa or even a passport to enter or cross the border. An ID card automatically grants a 6 months visitor pass (iqama) to enter Lebanon, as opposed to Turkey and Jordan, where a passport-less Syrian citizen will automatically have to register in a refugee camp. Furthermore, due to very bad accounts about the conditions of refugee camps in other neighboring countries, Lebanon appears to be more attractive, with the possibility of a normal life. However, the GoL allows the 6-months iqama permit to be renewed only once for free. As a consequence, many Syrian refugees in Lebanon cannot afford the renewal fees or fear for their safety if they have to go back to Syria to renew the permit. This generates a complicated legal and practical situation, as Lebanon is not signatory to the 1951 UN convention (and its protocol) relating to the status of refugees[1]. In that case, these refugees would automatically become "illegal immigrants." This situation, particular to Lebanon, favors refugees who are unaccounted for or who have a very "weak" status (i.e. having a UNHCR certificate).

The quest for shelter

Even if Lebanon could not close its borders or prevent the entrance of Syrians, allowing an influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon has been a politically divisive issue. In this context, the proposal of establishing camps could not be approved. For a number of political forces, influential in governmental decision-making, such a move might evoke a sense of permanence that may be comparable, in their eyes, to the camps that are populated by Palestinian refugees since 1948. The GoL is still firm on refusing camps for Syrian refugees[2]. Thus, shelter becomes a crucial issue. Very few efforts have been made in that sense by the GoL; MoSA offered 4000 pieces of public land (but with unclear topography), granting permission to establish tented settlement of up to twenty tents. Many of such small settlements appeared in Bekaa. MoSA also permitted formal three months settlement called "transit sites" of 100 tents in Ersal. The Swedish furniture company IKEA, in partnership with

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1   As a consequence, High Relief Committee became irrelevant as a Lebanese partner.
2   Interviews with OCHA, December 17, 2013; and UNHCR, December 14, 2013.

UNHCR, offered easily deployable solar-powered shelters and sponsors another settlement initiative. The question of shelter became even more important with the second refugee wave in 2013. Informal tented settlements in Lebanon are estimated at more than 300.[1] Naturally, the shelter crisis has had an impact on rents. In Beirut, it became impossible to find a place for less than $300 (aid only covers 150$). Additionally, shelter issues caused problems of social cohesion with host communities. Increasingly, Lebanese residents started complaining against Syrians benefiting from shelter programs at the expense of local Lebanese workers. Lebanese authorities are also starting to react in the same direction. For example, DRC implemented a vocational training program for Syrian women, but MoSA strongly opposed it, because Lebanese women in the host communities could not benefit.

This pressure on shelter demonstrates that the solution to the refugee crisis is not merely through humanitarian assistance and should include longer-term development as well. SRRP 6 shows signs of improvement on that matter. UN Habitat has launched a series of initiatives: locating buildings to be used as large collective shelters and helping host municipalities with the housing infrastructure, in addition to the sewage system and power and water supply. These types of initiatives would not only provide help to the most vulnerable refugees, but also to the deprived host communities.

Infrastructure under pressure

Many other (often already weak) Lebanese infrastructures are being put under pressure by the crisis. Public health is on the brink of collapse. Hospitals in certain regions cannot handle the load. The lack of hygiene in settlements (sewage system, water) favors the outbreak of epidemics (especially in tented settlements in the Bekaa). Education is also on the line, as 300,000 school-age Syrian children are enrolled in public schools with another 300,000 Lebanese children. Difference of educational levels, especially in foreign languages, increases difficulties to adapt. Some children are schooled in schools run by NGOs and associations, which use various curriculums. Educational deficit "threaten to foster an entire generation of illiterate or semi-literate kids."[2]

Cash assistance

As for shifting to cash aid, donors had decided at the end of 2012 that in-kind donations (NFIs) should be converted to cash interventions. A cash expert would recommend applying cash interventions to all sectors. But GoL fears the negative impact on the Lebanese economy and losing grip on how this money circulates (weapons, sending back to Syria, etc.). However, no actual research on the impact of cash donations on the Lebanese economy has been conducted so far. However, in August 2013, MoSA authorized cash assistance for winterization programs, in the form of a single-ATM card.[3]

A weak State

Since the GoL had not been playing his executive role since 2013, possible negotiations about shifting stances on topics such as the settlements, refugees status, or even more concrete operational steps such as cash assistance have come to a halt. The overall weakness of Lebanese political institutions also impacts the very capacity of Lebanon to receive funds. On that matter, the recent call from the Lebanese authorities at the UN General Assembly to share the burden of Syrian refugees has led to the establishment of a Multi Donor Trust Fund by the World Bank. This fund brings together various aid donors, to the great relief of GoL, as it would compensate governmental expenditures. However, this type of fund, by putting Lebanon under international financial supervision, is also problematic, as it epitomizes the lack of trust of the donors towards the Lebanese government.

Needs vs politics: two irreconcilable agendas and the inescapable politicization

The classical issue of coordination in the context of a complex refugee, crisis such as the one affecting Lebanon, is eclipsed by the existential challenge of politicization at the foundations of humanitarian aid. Since its inception during the nineteenth century, with the creation of the Red Cross and the so-called Dunantian approach[4], humanitarian action has been grounded on the three principles

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1   *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*
2   Based on interviews with OCHA, *Ibid.*; and DFID, December 23, 2013.
3   Interview with OCHA, *Ibid.*
4   As opposed to the Wilsonian approach that aims at tackling the root causes of conflicts through a more transformative agenda (peace building, rule of law, etc.).

of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality.[1] They provide an ethical framework, defining and delineating the humanitarian space in which relief agencies are supposed to operate. Yet the very existence of this space and the strength of the humanitarian cannon–i.e., ensuring the vital recognition of need-based, independent, and impartial humanitarian aid–has always been challenged, sometimes with political objectives, which endangered the effectiveness of humanitarian aid. Humanitarian workers are accustomed to deal with this constant struggle against the organizing principles of their mission. This transformation of humanitarian practice is often coined as the questions of politicization and institutionalization.[2]

However, the autonomy of the humanitarian space seems to be even more at stake today in Lebanon. Humanitarian aid appears to be caught in a vicious circle, which exacerbates and feeds politicization in a historically unrivaled manner. Thus, the usual issues of politicization within the practice of traditional humanitarian space, such as independence towards donors political agendas, is worsened by new emerging actors that do not share the same humanitarian values. Even if we draw on the traditional distinction between Dunantian and Wilsonian approaches to humanitarian aid, a certain understanding of staying out of political issues prevails among humanitarian practitioners. The belief in a profession grounded on universal values (inspired by Wilsonian human rights) presents the image of a homogeneous profession.[3]

By not sharing values, it is implied here that non-traditional donors have not been socialized by decades of humanitarian work, which has become a densely institutionalized field. This lack of shared values–with the arrival of "too many" newcomers–therefore impacts the very efficiency of aid, by raising the costs of coordination.

Presenting this issue brings into perspective the practical implications of a heterogeneous humanitarian community dealing with a complex emergency. It appears, therefore, that the important weight of non-traditional donors worsens an already over-politicized humanitarian arena since the end of the Cold War, which keeps drifting away from humanitarian aid's historical cannon.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It remains to be seen if the SRRP 6, which is the most comprehensive and strategic document to date, will succeed in bringing more coherence to humanitarian work among refugees and displaced people and host communities, contributing to need-driven aid policies rather than perpetrating the present practices, ideologically, religiously or politically motivated.

Shifting from a state of emergency response to a development-based approach to a protracted refugees crisis took too much time and solutions were not creative enough; the day-to-day management of the crisis proved inefficient, more strategic planning and contingency planning are necessary, as well as crafting the aid in order to fit the real needs of the refugees, including the needs of the host communities.

There is an urgent need to adapt to a longer-term crisis and to prevent the host country from collapsing, by strengthening the infrastructure and empowering the leadership of the GoL and its different institutions.

The GoL should be taking the leading role in the process of elaborating a strategy and coordinating efforts. Its capacity to manage the response to the crisis should be strengthened. A national ownership should ensure the participation of the host communities (including the Palestinians).

As for the donors, they should be on the same page, with a clear understanding of the plea, and enhance the coordination in order to include the newcomers (actors) and to accept their unorthodox ways of working in this field, even if this means an acknowledgment of the unfortunately inevitable politicization of the crisis. It is a way to track and estimate the input of non-traditional donors who are often non-predictable and also to see an opportunity to break the traditional barrier between donors, INGOs, and local NGOs who have a wider experience of the field and know how to deal with its specificities.

1 Nicholas, Stockton, "The changing Nature of Humanitarian Crises," in *The Humanitarian Decade: Challenges for Humanitarian Assistance in the last Decade and into the Future*, Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance, New York: United Nations Press. Vol.2, 2004, pp. 15-38.

2 Michael Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed," in *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol.3 (4), 2005, pp. 723-740.

3 *Ibid.*

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The Everyday Experience of Humanitarianism in Akkar Villages
Estella Carpi

It is very common nowadays to come across reports discussing the negative impact of the Syrian humanitarian crisis on the Lebanese economy as a whole. On one hand, there have been several attempts to focus on the victims and their plight, rather than looking at the complex dynamics of humanitarian intervention in the country. On the other, many organizations tend to disguise or justify their own political agenda in their impact assessment reports and fieldwork analyses,[1] which in turn are mostly quantitative, with little focus on the qualitative impact of their projects.

This report attempts to advance a grounded analysis of the social situation, as developed by the author, based on how people speak of and express their everyday living in times of emergency.

For such reasons, this paper should be read without confusing between, on one hand, the professional choices and humane intentions of humanitarian workers and, on the other, the reasons behind the shortcomings and failures of humanitarianism on the field.

1. Brief overview of Akkar's socioeconomic conditions prior to the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

The humanitarian needs in Lebanon today are undoubtedly huge, for both Syrian refugees and the Lebanese host communities. With the increasing influx of Syrian refugees, particularly from August 2011 onwards, Akkar's community, which is known to be one of the poorest communities in Lebanon, has largely felt the pinch.

Akkar's families, of which the average size is 4.7 individuals (higher than the national average), constitute 20.5% of the entire Lebanese population. They maintain a traditional sociocultural structure,[2] which engendered a Lebanese – and not only foreign – stereotype that the region is "primitive."

For example, Akkar has the highest poverty rate in the country, amounting to 63.3%[3] of its population. The region has been historically neglected and registers the worst household conditions in Lebanon after Hermel. The majority of Akkar's villages receive electricity from Electricité du Liban, but not all houses are connected to the electricity grid. In addition, the region ranks last in residential accessibility to the public water supply, despite its natural water resources; running water is taken from artesian wells or private water networks. There are many solid waste burning sites and dumps in the public environment, given that, in some towns, there is no garbage collection system provided by the municipality or private contractors. Public transportation is lacking and car ownership is very low. This renders schools, hospitals, and basic services difficult to access. Local inhabitants, hence, say that political candidates buy votes by promising new roads, which are rarely maintained.

Health insurance is predominantly accessed through people who decide to join the army, which is the most stable source of income for a large part of the population. In fact, those employed in the military sector (14.8%) constitute a larger number than those employed in the trade sector.[4]

The economic and employment conditions of Akkar have further worsened after the 2006 Israeli

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1   Too often, humanitarian workers tend to respond to critical analyses in a highly defensive manner, and, thus, resorting to mere ethical apology of their projects. This is a reminder of how humanitarianism, as Didier Fassin has noticed, aprioristically legitimizes itself (Didier Fassin, Richard Rechtman, 2009, *The Empire of Trauma. An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press). The rare exposure of the humanitarian apparatus to external criticism is due to the infrequent negotiation of its presence in a given territory or the implementation of its programs, in that it takes for granted that intervention possesses a moral rationale per se.

2   Roula Abi-Habib Khoury, *Rapid Assessment on Child Labour in North Lebanon (Tripoli and Akkar) and Bekaa Governorates*, Beirut, USJ and ILO, 2012, p. 25.

3   It is worth recalling here that 28% of the Lebanese population is considered poor and 8% extremely poor; please see Aicha Moushref, *Forgotten Akkar, Socio-economic Reality of the Akkar region*, Mada Association, UNDP, Handicap International and EU Humanitarian Aid, January 2008, p.5.

4   Roula Abi-Habib Khoury, *Rapid Assessment on Child Labour in North Lebanon (Tripoli and Akkar) and Bekaa Governorates*, Beirut, USJ and ILO, 2012 p. 25.

war on Lebanon and later due to the destruction of the Nahr al-Bared [Palestinian refugee] camp in 2007. The battle between *Fatah al-Islam* and the Lebanese Army resulted in many casualties and injuries among civilians and army members, causing several disabilities.[1]

The effects of both wars had a big impact on revenue in the region. Businesses recorded a 91.5% reduction in income due to closures or damages to shops. This has led to decreased productivity and reduced purchasing power of consumers.[2]

In general, Akkar was largely excluded from most national and international emergency funds donated to rebuild and rehabilitate the war-stricken areas.

Transportation costs have also been widely underestimated by humanitarian entities working in Akkar to provide aid to the Syrian refugees. In interviews conducted between August 2012 and February 2013,[3] many newcomers, despite the introduction of home-deliveries of food and other relief items by NGOs, were still complaining about their inability to pay for their own transportation and mobility, and, hence, to reach the offices of such organizations. According to the accounts collected for the present research, this often prevented them from getting oil, food kits, medication, and other help they are entitled to receive. Local families and long-time Syrian migrants with vehicles often provide the service informally.

The downturn in the area is mainly a result of by the closure of the Lebanese-Syrian borders. This put an end to the option of getting cheaper goods from Syria, through the long-lasting tradition of smuggling, which had already been restricted by the previous conflicts of 2006 and 2007. In addition to this, the presence of Syrian workers in dire need of work was used as a pretext by most local and national employers to push for lowering the wages of the local workforce.[4] According to some Lebanese political leaders,[5] this "worsened the security situation," without actually specifying how and why.

In addition to these socioeconomic conditions, there is also a political context for the region which comes into light. Hamed, from the village of Bellanet al-Hisa, describes the days of liberation from the "Syrian unjust oppression" (to use his own words) in April 2005. One month after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the so-called "Cedar Revolution" (14 March 2005) broke out, leading to the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanese territories. The statue of Hafez al-Asad, erected in the 1990s in the main square of Halba, got demolished by the local population. "I had never seen the people of my town so relieved before", said Ahmed, from Halba. Likewise, a couple of elderly men indicated the place where the center of the Syrian secret services used to be located (*markaz al-mukhabarat as-suriyya*). This shows a noticeable political weight and history of the Syrian regime's presence in the area, which adds more layers to the social context of Akkar.

The current economic deterioration of Akkar and all of Lebanon, either ascribed to external powers or to internal factors, has often been used by NGOs to shake off criticism of their operations, as well as a self-legitimizing tool to intervene.

2. The emergence of humanitarian structures in Akkar

The majority of the interviewed faith-based NGOs, which had been operating in Akkar, were mainly Sunni Muslim. They focused on the provision of charity services to orphans, low-income recipients, the disabled, and other vulnerable categories. Today, 22 Islamic NGOs are part of the Islamic Coordination Unit (*I'tilaf*). They use a a faith-based approach to the provision of services, for the most part, and have been known to be working in the region for a long time (mainly since the 1990s).[6] For them, aid provision to Syrians becomes "just one event in the history of their social services in the country."[7]

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1 FAO, *Damage and Early Recovery Needs Assessment of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry* , 2006.

2 Moushref, 2008, *op. cit.*, p.18.

3 Note: all personal names have been changed to comply with privacy protection policies.

4 With Syrian migrant workers being an easy scapegoat for generalized social distress, impoverished Lebanese say they are obliged to "secure protection" by themselves, by often making the nature of personal matters confessional. Likewise, raids by security forces, curfews, and micro-level violence against Syrians are on the increase.

5 This thinking is easily identifiable in former Energy Minister and current Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil's public speeches; for example, https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/commentaryanalysis/ racism_and_indifference_bassil_as_an_example_.

6 The director of the coordination unit of the Islamic NGOs called *I'tilaf* was interviewed in Tripoli on February 3, 2013. More information can be found here (link last accessed on February 21, 2014): http://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/show-news/17676/المتاحة-الامكانات-ضمن-ونعمل-التوقعات-فاقت-اعدادهم-السورين-النازحين-غاثة-جمعيات-تلاف-تقرير[Syrian Refugees Relief Colaition Report: Their Numbers Exceeded Expectations and We Are Working Within Available Means].

7 Interview conducted by the author with the Kuwaiti Education Association in Tripoli, January 14, 2013.

For example, the head of an Islamic NGO[1] complained about the fact that international organizations always had more resources, but did very little in the area, compared to the constant domestic efforts to improve the region in non-emergency times as well.

Apart from the absence of systematic literature around Akkar, municipalities are never mentioned by the local community, in relation to provision of basic services. In contrast, the actions of the central state are often invoked in everyday accounts. While some of the present needs are not preventable, dismal lawlessness and widespread insecurity stem from the structural weakness of the Lebanese state in asserting its presence in the region. Such feelings of abandonment, lack of control, and economic precariousness are generally considered to contribute to feeding the militia culture and, thus, engendering recurrent outbursts of violence.[2]

Many humanitarian organizations have therefore abandoned previous local development projects in the Lebanese areas less targeted by the Syrian migration flow,[3] and switched their operational agenda from development to humanitarian efforts, in order to "neutrally" engage with the Syrian crisis.[4]

In order to help the area sustain the influx of refugees, some of the first measures used by NGOs was cash payments to local families and the refurbishment and improvement of housing to enable them to host newcomers and provide free accommodation to refugees. Similarly, NGOs started providing relief supplies such as mattresses, heaters, and other winterization kits to local households, insofar as they were hosting Syrian refugees. Thereby, they were aiming at empowering both the new inhabitants of Akkar and the old ones, in a bid to compensate for past state and non-state neglect suffered during peace time and the absence of political interests in this region, unlike the south of the country (that had been occupied by Israel between 1978 and 2000).

The sudden proliferation of NGOs in the area, while conceiving of themselves as socially necessary, is a matter of controversy in the local community. "I think they all came here now because they're going to increase their funding thanks to the war in Syria. They would have not moved a single finger for us otherwise. Have you ever seen them around before?!" said Ghassan, who owns a car repair garage in Halba, with resentment.

The goal is not to generate resentment in the local community, declares Ana in the interview conducted at the UNHCR Protection Section in Qobaiyat in December 11, 2012. "To be honest," she added at that time, "the number of programs addressing both groups are still few, but we are making progress." By contrast, War-Child Holland, interviewed in October 2012, had mentioned several schools and programs addressing both Lebanese and Syrians, in operation at that time. Despite these controversial opinions, past neglect should carefully guide humanitarians in the planning of the ongoing programs.

To their credit, NGOs have increasingly channeled resources through Lebanese public services. For example, healthcare has seemingly improved for both Lebanese and Syrians. Amal, from al-Raqqa, who was resettled in al-Bahsa, says: "After two years in this tent, there is finally a mobile clinic I can benefit from." Nonetheless, according to the interviewees, aid was initially allocated only when the Syrians arrived, especially from early March 2012. However, the Lebanese residents felt, once again, that they were not the humanitarian priority. The local community's disaffection and mistrust towards the institutions, which had been developing throughout the past decades, cannot be eradicated now. The humanitarian industry cannot certainly sweep away years of state neglect. Nonetheless, it could at least avoid drawing up its plans, as though it was operating in a social void, empty of past and present frictions, which, in turn, are materially fueled by the way aid itself is distributed and people get selected.[5]

The humanitarian response has apparently failed to alleviate tensions. Rather, it initially inflamed them, with the allocation of the most visible part of aid (household items, food vouchers, survival

1 Interview conducted by the author at Dar al-Fatwa, Halba, November 21, 2013.
2 Despite the clearly deteriorating security situation in Lebanon, it is noteworthy that Akkar villages are historically less exposed to violent clashes, if compared to the reality of Ersal or Tripoli, which are highly affected by the Syrian conflict in terms of security.
3 Among them, Taiba Association, a Saudi NGO in Halba, which reformulated its programs under a new name to meet Syrians' needs (Interview conducted on December 14, 2012). The majority of the faith-oriented organizations based in Akkar, previously addressing orphans and the vulnerable in the area, stopped most their programs for the Lebanese community, to cope with the expenses needed to finance aid to Syrians, whose cause is the priority on the political agenda of their foreign donors (mainly Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia). Several of them have been created *ad hoc*, with the only goal of providing support to Syrian refugees, in their wait for the Assad regime's departure.
4 This often happens owing to the way donors channel funds, showing the perpetual priority of emergency plans in relation to more challenging development programs.
5 *Al-Akhbar English*, Beirut, available at: http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/17538 [last accessed on January 13, 2014]

kits) exclusively to Syrian refugees. In the initial stage, some NGOs even denied aid to Palestinians, who had mainly fled the heavily bombarded Yarmouk camp, under the pretext that they are usually covered by UNRWA services. As a result, a practitioner working for an international NGO in Tripoli maintained having been witness to tensions arising between Syrian Palestinians and Syrian citizens.

While ending the violence is not one of the principles of humanitarian organizations, their intervention should at least not fuel tensions. In this sense, partially because of the high turnover of humanitarian workers and the scarce attention in maintaining records in an already unstable and ephemeral social environment, NGOs have been historically unable to identify local capacities for peace[1] and draw on them to trigger betterment, as it will be shown later.[2]

In this regard, eligibility criteria have been a moot point. Newly designed programs, both for Syrians and Lebanese, as indicated by a UNHCR Protection Officer interviewed on February 6, 2013, are increasingly reflecting the moral logic of humanitarianism, according to which the beneficiaries would be addressed through assigning a single victimized moral identity. Nonetheless, even homogenized categories of beneficiaries would still give birth to internal frictions, which carry the diversified weight of social abandonment, war trauma, and deprivation. But according to internationals and locals witness to the Syrian humanitarian crisis, practitioners ignore such a diversification.

3. Local hospitality: a controversial issue

Lebanese host communities are said to be no longer able to absorb new flows of refugees in their homes. According to field observations, hospitality is mostly provided when relying on financial assistance in the form of remittances or cash payments by NGOs. "I think it has not been a good move to pay families to host Syrians," says Sarah, who works for an international secular NGO based in Qobaiyat. "We basically made them dependent on people that are not independent themselves and we can only arrange the accommodation for them just for one year. What are they going to do next? What have we changed by doing so?"

Walid, in Halba, during a field visit in November 2013, says that he is fed up with the worsening economic situation, and that the impact of NGOs has not changed the direction of the crisis, as it was not even initially meant to do that. "It is not like before. There used to be empathy (*ta'atuwf*), now it's disappeared. Everyone wants just to get rid of all them." Najwa, a baker in Halba, even thinks that Hafez al-Asad's times were better on the whole. Past regional misery always tends to be experienced as more tolerable than the ongoing one.

Syrian refugees are not living in official and logistically organized refugee camps – whose implementation has so far been refused by the Lebanese government[3] – and are therefore scattered across different regions in Lebanon, either as guests of households or as rent payers. It is generally widespread among Lebanese to sometimes use the idea of hospitality as a moral tool to exhibit the dignity of Akkar's people and their great values. A segment of Syrian refugees see hospitality as a expression of the great empathy of Akkar's people towards the Syrian cause, which had deep historical roots in the years of Assad's military presence in the region.

According to some people in al-'Abdeh, Bebnin, Wadi Khaled, Halba and al-Bahsa, local hospitality can be depicted, instead, in terms of greediness *tout court*, as it ends up being an economic opportunity for local families. In this way, they tend to represent this Lebanese region as bearing such an inherently negative view towards Syrians. They are said to take advantage of the displacement of new refugees to increase the housing market prices and exploit cheap workforce, expressing their racism and moral superiority towards Syrians in this manner and taking revenge of the past years of Syrian oppression.

A further tension emerges between the newly arriving refugees and the Lebanese communities. While the latter consider themselves as hosts, the former develop a sense of conditionality of their presence, as long as they are willing to get exploited by local people. The common feeling that can be deduced after field research is that the Syrian newcomers relate differently to the determinism

1 Such an issue has first been foregrounded by Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm. How Aid can support Peace or War*, Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1999.
2 The approach of international NGOs providing services to refugees in North Lebanon to the whole issue seems to be the following: treating the country as a mere satellite of the Syrian events, rather than as a longtime theatre of buried tensions that would just find their way to come to the fore and renew their modalities and fields. This idea is suggested by the description of the Syrian crisis in official discourses as merely "imported" or as an external "spillover" troubling Lebanon.
3 The Lebanese government refuses the construction of refugee camps, as it does not desire to generate the same dreadful situation of Palestinians, whose right to return is still denied; their naturalization is opportunistically denied as well, in the name of the ideological refusal of conceiving Palestinians in Lebanon as permanent citizens. Needless to say, the naturalization (*tawtin*) of Palestinians would trigger further demographic issues within the country.

of getting humiliated and objectified, in being passive beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance and cheaper workers. Taking livelihoods from outside and resettling outside their country still seem to represent factors of flawed moral dignity, which, to them, is currently difficult to rehabilitate. Among them, frustration is the tangible consequence.

Either way, through media representations and NGOs' reports, hospitality has become the demonstrative tool *par excellence* conveying an ethical judgment: Akkar as greedy or bountiful.

It is hard to draw clear lines around the theme of hospitality and ascertain how many families host for free and how many of them, instead, get money to host – these finances are mostly granted by international NGOs (like the Saudi Taiba Association located in Halba). This is the reason why it is much more important to consider what the idea of hosting produces in Lebanon's everydayness and how it has changed people's daily interactions. This is an aspect the mass media has focused on the least.

In this respect, it is worth noting that many, in fact, spoke "unwilling hospitality", as put forward by scholar Jacques Derrida,[1] stemming from official discourses that portray the Syrian refugees' presence as an "existential problem for Lebanon."[2] The unintentionality of coping with those people who have "overstayed their welcome" is slightly compensated by services provided to the local community, in addition to the increased financial income that a small segment of the Akkar community is able to gain, due to the presence of refugees and aid actors.[3]

Hospitality, for example[4], now increasingly coexists with insecurity. "I don't let my child play in the street with others. I don't know who they are, and who can see them. I'm afraid he's gonna get kidnapped or raped. We don't feel free and safe. I got a dog to watch out for my tent because I mistrust everyone here," says a Syrian woman resettled in Bebnin.

4. Approaches to programs implementation as seen by people: emerging rifts between the beneficiaries and the providers

About the people

"Ethnicization" of needs and services is the approach according to which beneficiaries need to fit into specific categories in order to qualify for services and goods. In this sense, the way humanitarian programs have been implemented has ethnicized the human needs of such areas. The fact that every kind of assistance is provided according to the "ethnic category" – or, in any case, the specific social group – an individual is said to belong to, has made eligibility a watershed between those who are entitled to be helped and those who are not.

Khaled from Sudan, located in al-'Abdeh, clearly expressed the feeling of being part of a moral taxonomy of legitimation of rights:

"To satisfy the Lebanese citizens should be the first step taken by the Lebanese state… But there is a cruel hierarchy in Lebanon… the Lebanese come first, then the Palestinians, and finally the Iraqis and the Sudanese. Nothing of all this aid coming in is for us. And we have been here for a longer time, still in the same horrible conditions."

Again, Manal, from Yarmouk camp, tells that she was bounced back twice when she asked for assistance from some international NGOs: "I have lived like any other Syrian citizen, working for the government in Baramke. And now I'm treated as though my identity is not worth a single cent. I have also survived bombings like all other Syrian citizens. What are they waiting for before addressing us?"

A Lebanese secular NGO, while stating its desire to become the "house of human rights," implicitly recognizes the ethnicization of human causes that they tend to carry out aprioristically.[5] "We have a different agenda for Iraqi refugees, Syrians, and Palestinians. We treat them as diverse issues," as an official from the NGO explained. The approach of dealing with these causes, each based separately on the "ethnicity" of every group, has revealed its weakness in this latest humanitarian crisis, with a massive flow of Palestinian refugees coming into Lebanon from Syria, turning them into long time asylum seekers and "second degree refugees."

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1   Jacques Derrida, Anne Defourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, Stanford, USA, Stanford University Press, 2000.
2   Talk held by Lebanese Ambassador to the United States Antoine Chedid at the Wilston Center in Washington DC, October 29, 2013. Available online at: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/humanitarian-crisis-impact-syrian-refugees-lebanon [last accessed on January 13, 2014].
3   For instance, aid providers usually need local drivers, housing structures for themselves, retailers selling goods to be distributed, and other working staff employable in their field.
4   This is an aspect also highlighted by the Lebanese NGO Alef. For more information consult: Alef-Act for Human Rights, *Two Years On: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, IKV Pax Christi, 2013.
5   Interview conducted by the author on October 17, 2012, Wata al-Mossaitbeh, Beirut.

Hence, the humanitarian programs address the beneficiaries by labeling them in a unilateral manner, ignoring the variegated spectrum of experiences of deprivation and neglect. In other words, the complex process behind the attribution of social labels to potential beneficiaries goes unheeded. Beneficiaries are therefore condemned to survive within the space occupied in the taxonomical pyramid of aid for Syrians, Lebanese affected by war, Palestinians, Iraqis, Sudanese, and so forth, and, thus, only receiving the services provided within that pre-established space.

In light of this consideration, particular humanitarian programs end up feeding into already existing cleavages, by establishing who is entitled to what and, consequently, engendering further tensions along ethnic or confessional lines.

About NGO practitioners

The generalized approach to aid provision, adopted by some interviewed humanitarian staff, can be called "humanitarian orientalism." This attitude can be attributed to both international and local actors. So to speak, humanitarians advance the idea of the "necessity" of their intervention in the targeted areas. Their intervention in the field is legitimized by the fact that it is supposedly neutral and impartial, and, therefore, incomparably fair.

As evidence of such socially risky attitude among humanitarian practitioners, an international practitioner working for an international NGO presently located in Qobaiyat expresses her conviction that "*we have to* be there, since the local people, particularly if affiliated to other confessional groups, won't do anything for the others. There would simply be a huge void of help in the places where we're currently intervening." This statement does not take into account the fact that, probably, if that position was not occupied by an allegedly impartial foreigner, it could have been taken up by a local, who may want to challenge her/his system of values and beliefs to take part in this social endeavor. As evidence of this, Mariam, a Lebanese social worker, complains how little paid is her job:

"I studied social work as I thought I would find work easily here. I was quite disappointed to find out that all well-paid positions are already held by temporary staff, international or trained overseas. I think it's nonsense: what if I have no funds to study overseas? We're doomed to unskilled labor, and to leave Lebanon in the hands of foreigners."[1]

Likewise, international NGOs are aware of their material supremacy in terms of resources and funding, even if they are increasingly cooperative with local actors. To work with local partners seems to be, in fact, the last trend to discard the image of humanitarianism as a disguised form of colonialism. Nonetheless, local partners do not become stronger out of such collaborations,[2] let alone the Lebanese state, which, on the contrary, faces more competition and has no interest to fight.

To this end, some local NGOs working in the southern suburbs of Beirut said they cooperated with bigger international organizations during the 2006 July War. The only choice they had was to do the same now:

"We basically served the international NGOs as a guarantee that they are relying on internal forces, offering a local perspective and a fine-grained knowledge of the territory. In some cases, they also bank on us to implement projects on the ground, since locals, in time of conflict, are said to be at lesser risk in terms of safety," according to a Lebanese practitioner working for a small refugee center."[3]

Additionally, international volunteers working in the same entities often complained about the opportunistic partnerships between international and local NGOs, especially within short-term projects. "Even if a local NGO becomes temporarily able to attract more funds by collaborating with a bigger one for a given humanitarian cause, when there's a new emergency crisis, their support stops. Lots of projects died out because of this," said another practitioner working in Tripoli.[4]

About the social structure of the addressed villages

Both official permits and informal access to resources are sometimes guaranteed by *makhatir* (literally elected individuals, responsible for local administrative affairs) and local authorities. This strengthens the old tribal-like system of Akkar and the *wasta* system - network of connections to help access services - although several NGOs claim to be aiming at "modernizing" the area administratively.

A cleavage between the central state and pseudo-feudal decentralization of administrative power

1   Conversation with Mariam: ash-Shiyyah, Beirut, September 10, 2013.
2   Three local NGOs have made the same declaration in the interviews conducted by the author in January 2013 in Halba.
3   Interview conducted on September 10, 2013, Beirut.
4   Interview conducted on September 8, 2013.

and resource management is also identifiable among the side effects of how humanitarian assistance is implemented at the local level. Administrative decentralization is certainly not leading to major coordination or better resource management in Lebanon. In order to operate, humanitarian agencies working in the North have to comply with the regulations imposed by local leaders and intermediaries, who usually are the people in charge of managing all local affairs.

This off-the-cuff cultural respect for the local structure of Akkar's villages, in some interviewees' perception, ends up legitimizing dusty patterns of pseudo-tribalism and nepotism. However, criticism of the apparent depoliticization of humanitarian actors towards conflicts is answered by implicitly blaming internal actors for not having been able to dismantle the pseudo-tribal social structures of several Lebanese rural towns. These structures are still impinging on the humanitarian dynamics proposed by the internationals, which, from the perspective of the latter, would surely run smoothly after a renewal in the local commnuity. On this issue, Rania, who works for an international NGO based in Halba,[1] says: "At the end of the day, what can we be criticized for as humanitarian workers? We haven't made Lebanese history and we can just patch up the fragments of a part of society that has not modernized itself yet."

Such a type of transnational governance, implemented by the humanitarian apparatus in conflict areas previously neglected by the state, allegedly conveys, in the form of assets, both neutrality and institutional modernization. It behaves as a the ethical actor, able to reform the agenda of a misbehaving central state, and, paradoxically, becoming the rival of the state, as time passes. In this sense, non-state actors with major interventions in voids of public action, purport to be the "modernized alternative" to collapsing and corrupted states.

In light of this, non-state actors are not seen as supporters of reformist internal tendencies. Rather, they are winking at old local leaders that have all interests in monitoring the aid distribution process, in some cases. Thereby, small Lebanese villages are thrown into a sort of bipolar schizophrenia. On the one hand, they think they can get the desired administrative modernization in marginalized contexts not addressed by the Lebanese state by offering their territory to the international humanitarian apparatus. On the other, external actors have sometimes relied on the corrupted traditional structures to guarantee their territorial access, the same structures, which, in some cases, local people would like to liberate themselves from.

Frederik,[2] who works for UNICEF, said: "I was provided with the list of people that were entitled to get financial support for kids' schooling material by the local authority. After the distribution, several people came to me complaining that they hadn't even heard about this possibility of help."

Humanitarian actors explain such a tendency by highlighting that they cannot access particular areas except through local mediators, whom, in turn, the local community does not always appreciate. In this sense, international actors feed into internal cleavages while advocating for their elimination.

5. The social responsiveness to the NGOs' modalities of implementation

- *Hostility between Lebanese and Syrians was initially fueled by aid agencies through the already mentioned ethnicisization of needs.* The shared *de facto* nationhood between the Akkar region and the Syrians of the neighbouring area got overlooked by aid agencies, ever since the beginning of their intervention, as such agencies are often unaware of local capacities for peace. This cleavage that humanitarianism is reproducing is therefore stigmatized in a "national" – increasingly portrayed as "ethnic" – opposition between Syrians and Lebanese.

- *Politicization of aid*: The accountability of all NGOs (also supposedly apolitical and secular) is gained or maintained through provision of services to their – potential or regular –constituencies. A consequent decrease in universal social protection is identifiable, as aid paradoxically joins the other defining categories in reinforcing community identity and social divisions. In this regard, non-beneficiaries of aid in Akkar often complained about *wasta*[3] and described as "corruption" the whole mismanagement of resources with no distinction of cases. Politics, hence, emerges from such a disenchanted common imaginary as a mere negative factor to be avoided.

As the July War seemed to be the opportunity for the March 8 coalition, similarly, the March 14 coalition is believed to be the political entity mostly involved in the aid industry to Syrians because of its political agenda.

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1 Interview conducted on September 26, 2013.
2 Interview conducted in Qobaiyat on February 7, 2013.
3 Wasta, in the Arab world, literally meaning "mediation", generally refers to the network of connections that one can benefit from in order to cover a particular professional position or simply get resources and services.

Aid, this way, becomes merely a strategy to show the impartial humanness of political parties or confessional groups, which try further to hide their well-known political agendas. Humanitarianism is therefore used by political parties to neutralize their ideological stance in the other's eyes.

At the outset of the Syrian influx into Lebanon, the political use of the Syrian cause to promote a certain "humanitarian image" and credibility, gave rise to big concentrations in particular areas of the country like the North, where refugees, mostly coming from the areas bombed by the regime, say they feel more comfortable with the surrounding environment. Nevertheless, according to updated interviews, things seem to have slowly changed with respect to 2012. The Bekaa Valley, where Hezbollah occupies a large presence, is now hosting the largest number of refugees in Lebanon.[1] Needs pushed people to populate the southern region of Lebanon also, although the number is still incomparable to that of refugees in the North. This phenomenon of refugee movements around areas that do not reflect their confessional and, above all, political identity, may generate new demographic configurations in Lebanon, in the coming years.[2]

- *Refugees are frustrated about what they consider to be international inaction.* Emergency relief is aimed to alleviate people's suffering, while no *de facto* political or military intervention in Syria has been pursued. Althoughhile this observation does not certainly aim at encouraging particular ideological perspectives, it is noteworthy that Akkar's inhabitants view the international community as a hypocritical capitalistic entity boasting absolute neutrality.

In the fishermen's reality of al-'Abdeh and the rural villages of al-Bahsa and Bellanet al-Hisa, the interviewed refugees said they were fooled and disturbed by such apparent depoliticization of aid, often recalling the disengagement of the international community since the outset of the Syrian protests.

The alleged ethical purity of "humanitarian governance" is therefore source of harsh comments and distress. Even if humanitarians want to stay out of politics, they have to be aware that their actions do, in fact, have political effects on people's lives.

On this issue, the words of Ahmed, living in Bellanet al-Hisa, are meaningful: "You're all convinced that you'll have to just reconcile Syrians among themselves. We'll need to reconcile ourselves with the international community, instead, which betrayed us. We don't want food and shelters to survive in Lebanon, we want you to help us to stop all this".

These thoughts undermine the cornerstones of humanitarian neutrality, the alleviation of suffering, and their implementation as a successful strategy.

Refugees said they feel being used to make the humanitarian market viable, while humanitarians care about reaffirming their neutrality in doing their job. The frustration of some refugees in feeling passivized, despite some programs aiming at integration and self-empowerment, and their anger towards a detached international community, often described in terms of betrayal,[3] are key emotional factors that stem from such a brand-new proliferation of humanitarian programs in North Lebanon.

- *Refugees' perception of getting forcibly depoliticized by NGOs* stays in stark opposition to politicization of aid. Regardless of how empirically grounded all these expressed feelings actually are, refugees seem to highlight their loss of mobilization and self-reconstruction perspectives. The everydayness of Syrians living in Akkar therefore implies the constant frustration of being considered homogeneous refugee entities, ready to accept any kind of basic help. Thus, they develop a sense of insecurity and disaffection towards local, international, secular, and faith-based providers, without distinction.

As evidence of this, Haytham, a 47-year-old engineer from the Hama region, said he usually sells the food vouchers he receives from UNHCR, to make donations in medical and financial support for the Free Syrian Army. Wael, 38 years old from Bab 'Amr, points out the need for creating external spaces for them, like discussion areas.

"With three people, we started gathering once a week to exchange the news about our villages of

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1   Consult UNHCR's website here: https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122.
2   This "revolutionary" demographic tendency is often boasted from Lebanese institutions and analysts as empirical sign of outstanding hospitality of refugees not necessarily belonging to the same confessional sect. This interpretation seems to argue that, at the end of the day, a much worse scenario would have been likely in Lebanon nowadays in terms of mutual frictions The author's interpretation of this phenomenon, instead, suggests that necessary hospitality is opportunistically mistaken for voluntary and unconditioned hospitality.
3   Farah, from Homs, interviewed in al-Bahsa on December 2, 2012: "The West and a part of Syrian society have betrayed, that's the only reason why we are still dying everywhere!".

origin and to discuss the political perspectives in our country. Nearly all organizations want to give us food and mattresses. It's easier. That's also true that many people wouldn't survive without that, but they cannot reduce their action to that. We need more help for rent and medicines, for a package of bread I would pay just 2,000 Lebanese Lira. It's not the priority for most of us. They just pretend to listen to our requests. They see that we take whatever they give us and they think they are addressing the biggest needs. Of course we take if they give! Maybe should we start refusing to make our real needs emerge? We do need a safe space to meet each other, not just a shelter".

A municipality of Akkar, in fact, is said to have denied extra house-space requested by refugees. Most of the interviewed Lebanese community, comprehensibly caring for local stability, were in support of this decision by the municipality, fearing the political presence of Syrians, who might not simply be displaced people who need to survive, as humanitarians tend to approach them.

Diana, working in an international NGO in Qobaiyat, points out that, most of the time, donors refuse to fund projects that address people directly connected to armed groups in Syria. "This is hypocritical, as everything right now is connected to weapons. Some people who are based in these areas risk starvation because of this choice, which is still political. You cannot really distinguish the kind of beneficiaries you've got in front of you. So, sometimes, they don't just finance the whole project."

Foreign powers still hold political sway in the domestic scenario, while apparently preserving the neutrality of humanitarian aid. Although such politicization is hardly ever reflected by the acts of humanitarian workers, this disguising mechanism wants to give birth to an apolitical image of the foreign humanitarian market, while the latter is not marginal at all to local political realities.[1]

6. Findings to be taken into account
Alleviation of suffering and attempts of depoliticization:

The old humanitarian principle of alleviation of suffering is therefore questioned in a political environment, which is denied for reasons of security and stability. The NGOs' ethical attempt to hold up the image of apolitical actors, representing the whole international community to the refugee community, is at odds with the refugees' desire to stop the war in Syria and to claim their right to being political subjects, in the host country as well. Explicit requests for political space for debate are obviously advanced by a segment of the refugee community in Akkar, who are mostly male and come from opposition areas in Syria.

Chronic problems still engendering dissatisfaction:

Moreover, chronic poverty and lack of a *de facto* citizenship, able to meet the basic needs of local people and protect them on a daily basis, are still partially ignored by donations-driven NGOs, adding to the government's abandonment. An increased sense of undergoing injustice among the unaddressed population and a renewed sense of victimhood are feeding community oppositions and, therefore, increasing the possibility of outbursts of violence in the area.

As a result of the described scenario, increased disaffection towards governmental, non-governmental, local, international, faith-based, and secular structures of assistance and emergency relief can clearly be identified. People tend to equalize these categories of action, to a greater extent, with respect to the past. An environment of existing - and sometimes just perceived - insecurity and mutual mistrust between the various sides eventually stemmed from the dissatisfaction.

7. Recommendations on the basis of the fieldwork findings
To NGOs:

- Revise the basic principles of the standardized humanitarian approach, such as the alleviation of suffering and the efficiency of political neutrality. NGOs need to deal with the fact that their political agendas are inevitably known to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. This is hard to be recognized and implemented, as it often jeopardizes the very existence of some NGOs in Lebanon, which need to abide by the political interests of their donors.

- Ensure that NGO actions do not further isolate some segments of the residents and the aid beneficiaries and try to give more room for human understanding and debate, going beyond the simple provision of emergency relief and basic assistance. Staff workers must become individuals to speak

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1 For example, the same NGO can look for state approval to intervene in particular areas of Syria, while, outside the country, mostly cooperating with Syrian opposition's actors.

to, not merely providers (and here emerges the importance of recruiting people who know the language and are willing to work in the same place for the long run).

- NGOs should demonstrate their policies of inclusiveness on a practical level by ascertaining the prioritization of needs and by working for the reinforcement of the state and encouraging its assertion of power, rather than competing with it or taking its weakness for granted in an opportunistic manner.

To the Lebanese municipalities:

- Protect security in the discussed areas while avoiding the securitization of groups whose selection is carried out according to their ethnic and confessional "belonging" (i.e. establishing curfews for Syrian citizens in some municipalities, as it has already happened).

- Engage with long-term development plans to a greater extent. Indeed, emergency knowingly pays more than development and this is a matter of fact used opportunistically by state actors to refrain from asserting their factual presence.

In a nutshell, while humanitarian workers, complying with an emergency logic, address affected subjects and areas, the very nature of social injustice and old-date chronic poverty are seldom addressed by the state and by non-state structures, which usually replace state inefficiency.

Therefore, donors and practitioners should care less about how humanitarianism can contribute to progress and rather focus on how to make progress in humanitarianism itself, by further questioning the logic underlying it.

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Regional differences in the conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon
Guita Hourani and Sam van Vliet

By the end of 2013, Lebanon is hosting around 1.3 million Syrian refugees scattered across more than 1,500 municipalities.[1] A recent World Bank study projects the Syrian presence in Lebanon to reach 1.6 to 2.4 million refugees in 2014. These population increases area result of push factors (the situation in Syria) and pull factors (the level of assistance in Lebanon and the border policy of the Lebanese Government).[2] Various assessments, conducted in 2012 and 2013, show that these pull factors also relate to levels of security, livelihood, and socio-political structures within Lebanon. The more than one million Syrian refugees, including minority groups, Lebanese returnees, and Palestinian and Iraqi refugees from Syria are scattered around the country and within host communities. This makes it very difficult for humanitarian agencies, government planners, and researchers alike to have a full understanding of their numbers and needs. However, lessons learned – in two years of Syrian refugee humanitarian programming and preliminary assessments – point out to the existence of different categories of Syrian nationals and to the regional particularities of their conditions in Lebanon.[3]

Despite the lack of quantitative data on regional particularities of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, aid agencies have developed their programs in accordance to the realities of the area of implementation. National programs on health and education for Syrian refugees have shown different success rates per area of implementation. Exemplifying this reality, UNHCR has announced a decentralization policy starting in 2014, where field offices in Mount Lebanon, the North, Bekaa and the South will have full authorization to manage their respective areas. However, the many international agencies intervening in the Syrian refugee crisis show little compliance to the different reality of intervention between Tyre and Tripoli, for example.

How do Lebanon's regional differences affect the living conditions of Syrian refugees? And to what extent do humanitarian interventions take these realities into consideration? This study intends to: a) illustrate the legal and political environment of the regions in Lebanon where the Syrian refugees reside; b) identify differences in needs among Syrian refugee communities in these regions; c) highlight whether or not these differences are taken into consideration in aid interventions; and d) synthesize the possible risks and challenges to aid provision in light of these differences.

1. Realities on the ground

The security situation in some areas of Lebanon, specifically in the North and border regions, is volatile and security incidents regularly restrict access. Repercussions of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon's internal affairs and on the region has a direct impact on the living conditions of both Lebanese communities and Syrian refugees in the country. In addition, economic decline related to security deterioration and the Syrian conflict affects livelihood opportunities in the various hosting areas. It should be noted here that the Lebanese economy is traditionally characterized by long duration unemployment. Even in times of economic prosperity, Lebanon was not able to produce enough jobs to its own population.[4] The political and socio-economic situation of Syrian refugees in Leba-

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1 UNHCR data registration statistics count 842,540 Syrian refugees, registered or awaiting registration with UNHCR as per December 12, 2013. The Lebanese Government puts the figure at2 million, but both parties agree that "there is no way of verifying the full scope of Syrian presence in Lebanon since the political upheaval in Syria in March 2011" (Oxfam/ Beirut Research and Information Center, November 2013, Survey on the livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, p.7).

2 Syria Needs Analysis Project (SNAP), "Regional Analysis Syria, Lebanon", September 23, 2013.

3 Mona Alamy, "Averting a crisis", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2013, "the impacts of the crisis and the pressures between host communities and refugee populations [...] is essentially due to geographic and religious particularities and the dynamics between host communities".

4 World Bank, *Good Jobs Needed: The Role of Macro, Investment, Education, Labor and Social Protection Policies (MILES)*, February 2013. It is estimated that over the next decade, there will be 23,000 new entrants to the labor market each year, meaning that the economy needs to create six times the jobs it is currently creating in order to absorb them. This is without consideration of the Syrian refugee influx.

non varies significantly between geographic districts. As a result, a needs assessment in one area is not representative of the situation in another. First of all, governance structures are not harmonized in all parts of Lebanon. Apart from the fact that the Lebanese Government has been in deadlock since March 2013, the long-standing ineffectiveness of government structures on the central and governorate levels have led to the proliferation of local actors providing services to the population. As such, primary law and order in certain areas is undertaken by political groups or tribal networks, rather than the state apparatus.[1] The uneven capacity of Social Development Centers (SDCs) run by the Ministry of Social Affairs throughout Lebanon and their widely varying financial and human resources are another example of inconsistent state capacity, especially in relation to social services delivery and poverty reduction.[2] The various contradicting local governance structures in relation to each area in Lebanon influences the possibility of effective needs assessment and assistance delivery.

Furthermore, Lebanon shows significant regional inequalities in terms of access to public services, employment and infrastructure. North Lebanon and the Bekaa, the primary destinations for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, are characterized by poverty and underdevelopment. Many Syrian refugees have settled in historically marginalized regions of Lebanon and are placed in direct competition for resources and jobs with struggling Lebanese families. The most vulnerable areas include the highly impoverished North, the Bekaa, the South and the Palestinian refugee camps across the country.[3] The perception as to whether the impact of refugee presence was positive or negative differs between regions. Reports note that in some areas, such as Sidon and North Baalbek, municipal respondents considered the impact neutral, as Syrian refugees accepted jobs that Lebanese were not willing to perform.[4] However, other reports stress the frustration among host communities about the decreasing wages and job competition following the influx of Syrian refugees.

Syrian refugees have settled in areas where they felt secure and their political views are shared with the hosting community. Since 2013, movements of Syrian refugees to other areas have pointed to a break in this trend.[5] The latter is related to saturation of public services, shelter, and employment in the primary host area. Furthermore, Syrian refugees face very different reactions in the different localities of displacement and their encounters are in many cases subject to their political stance.[6] Recent studies confirm that the sectarian background of the Lebanese hosting area affects the level of receptiveness towards Syrian refugees. The sectarian dimension also informed the choice of residence of certain families, with pro-regime Syrian families more prone to moving to the Hermel or Baalbek regions. The South appears to be somewhat different, with saturation in other Lebanese regions resulting in the movement of both regime loyalists and pro-rebels Syrians into that area. Studies also note that large cities and their surrounding suburbs, like Beirut or Sidon, are attracting Syrian refugees due to greater work opportunities especially in construction.[7]

Other factors, such as proximity (in border areas) or presence of Syrian migrant workers (Lebanese being accustomed to Syrians) influence the level of hospitality per region.[8] Four locations in Lebanon have been selected as samples for a descriptive analysis. The rationale for this selection is based on the following criteria: a) the clustering of the refugees in these geographic locations; b) socio-economic status of the location; c) socio-economic status of the Syrian refugee community in the locations; and d) governmental structure characterizing the location. Available field data and secondary information from prior assessments and reports about these areas serve as background analysis for this paper in addition to extensive media review, as well as the authors' extensive personal contacts with the refugees.

2. The legal and political environment of Lebanese regions hosting Syrian refugees

South Lebanon

South Lebanon has only recently seen an increase in the presence of Syrian refugees, with 102,955 Syrian refugees officially registered by the UNHCR office in Tyre.[9] The area is considered to be controlled by Hezbollah to a large extent, except for the Sidon area, which generally falls under

1 SNAP, Lebanon Baseline Information , October 10, 2013.
2 World Bank, *Economic and Social Impact assessment of the Syrian Conflict*, September 20, 2013. The most disadvantaged North and Bekaa regions are only served by 75 SDCs out of the 212 SDCs in 2013.
3 SNAP, 2013, *op. cit.*
4 Oxfam/BRIC, *Survey on the livelihoods of Syrian refugees in Lebanon*, November 2013, p.40.
5 "Syrian refugee head to Lebanon's Shia South", *IRIN Middle East*, January 29, 2013.
6 Nora Berneis and Julia Bartl, "Understanding the heightening Syrian Refugee Crisis and Lebanon's Political Polarization", *Carthage Research and Information Center*, June 2013, p.11.
7 Oxfam/BRIC, 2013, *op. cit.*
8 *Ibid.*
9 UNHCR, Data registration statistics , December 12, 2013.

the patronage of the Future Movement. Although refugees who are close to the Syrian regime have moved there, the traditional concentration of Syrian refugees in Sidon has been diversified by refugees moving from the Bekaa to the South, attracted by milder winter, cheaper rent, and job possibilities related to the size of construction taking place in the region, mainly by affluent Lebanese emigrants.[1] South Lebanon is also considered to be one of the safer areas of Lebanon, so far excluded from internal strife, kidnappings, and explosions.[2] The small number of Syrian businesses opening up in Sidon and Tyre has been welcomed by local Chambers of Commerce, as they compete with Palestinian businesses more than with Lebanese enterprises.[3] However, host communities are said to feel uncomfortable with the growing number of refugees due to the lack of governmental economic development plans, resulting in unlawful job competition and the increase of insecurity in the area.[4]

Although humanitarian programs responding to Syrian refugee needs in the South began only recently, compared to the Bekaa or North Lebanon, the experiences of NGOs working there already note great differences. The administrative structure, civil society capacity, and security situation are facilitating a more efficient and locally embedded humanitarian response than in other areas. Local and international NGOs have built presence in South Lebanon, owing to Israeli invasions and the presence of UNIFIL and its development projects. Additionally, education structures in the area allowed for a more successful integration for Syrian students than in Bekaa, for example.

Mount Lebanon and Beirut

The area encompassing Mount Lebanon and the capital Beirut has also seen a high increase of registered Syrian refugees, amounting to 219,532 in December 2013.[5] The urban setting of this hosting area is characterized by a high degree of socio-political diversity, ranging from upper class Achrafiye to poor suburbs of BourjHammoud, Tariq al-Jadida, and Dahiye. With the strong impact of political affiliation on a street level, Syrian refugees have settled in urban areas where they feel protected by sectarian ties. In addition, the economic situation in Beirut attracts more wealthy Syrian refugees. This explains why this is the only area where Christian refugees appear more at ease registering with UNHCR in Beirut/Mount Lebanon, representing 4.5% of the registered refugee population.[6]

On the economic level, Syrians located in Beirut traditionally own capital. With the new influx of Syrian refugees, many have been able to enter the workforce with initial capital. Beirut and Mount Lebanon governorates report hosting a high number of informal Syrian businesses, amounting to 28.8 percent of the total established Syrian businesses in the country.[7] Syrian workers, traditionally working in Beirut construction sites, have been joined by newly arriving Syrian refugees of poorer categories, attracted by higher work opportunities in Beirut and surrounding areas. Urban areas with high low skilled economic activity, such as Dahiye and the eastern suburbs (Dora, Burj Hammoud, and Furnel-Chebbak) are the main hubs for Syrian refugees, offering suitable livelihood and shelter conditions.

The Mount Lebanon area is characterized by urban settlements; the fact that Syrian refugees have found shelter in collective shelters and apartments has made it challenging for humanitarian programs to target them and for Syrian refugees to find their way to the available services in the urban jungle.

North Lebanon

North Lebanon, ranging from Tripoli to Wadi Khaled, was the first area to host Syrian refugees, as early as 2011. The North was one of the first locations where Syrians took refuge in 2011, while the area is currently hosting more than 257,000 refugees. The largest host areas are the city of Tripoli and the Akkar region, Wadi Khaled in particular[8]. Relations between Wadi Khaled residents and Syrians have always been strong, as many are connected by family and tribal ties. This relation has nonetheless come under pressure in the last year with the arrival of an additional 20,000 refugees. Most households now host large numbers of Syrians. Sources say that there is an average of nine refugees living with each local host family. Skirmishes between Lebanese residents and the Syrian army

1   Berneis and Bartl, 2013, *op. cit.*, p.18.
2   *IRIN*, 2013, *op. cit.*.
3   Soha Shamas, "Unlicensed Syrian businesses Target of Ministry Plan", *Al-Akhbar*, November 7, 2013, available at: http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/17542 [last accessed on March 21, 2014].
4   Alamy, 2013, *op. cit.*
5   UNHCR, Data registration statistics, 2013, *op. cit.*
6   SNAP, 2013, *op. cit.*
7   Shamas, 2013, *op. cit.*
8   Berneis and Bartl, 2013, *op. cit.* p.16.

have impacted the security situation in North Lebanon. There are reports of Syrian refugees being exploited or humiliated due of their refugee status.[1] Other reports note the specific burden Syrian refugees pose to the economic conditions of host communities in North Lebanon.

Traditional UNDP development programs targeting the impoverished area (for example on agriculture, waste management, water systems, or infrastructure) have been diverted to emergency response to Syrian refugees. In addition, it is estimated that the influx of Syrian refugees caused an increase in Lebanese family expenditures in the area, while their income has decreased due to perceived competition of Syrian workers, deteriorating security conditions, and decreased smuggling activities.[2] The establishment of Syrian businesses (about 8.9 percent the national percentage) has resulted in negative prejudices, because of the visibility of their presence and the frustration of Lebanese entrepreneurs from the economic decline in the region.[3] The particular nature of the security situation in the North has hampered many agencies from developing their programs in response to the increasing needs of Syrian refugees, leaving many refugees strained of access to humanitarian programs. NGOs have also reported the high mixture of political and humanitarian motives of many local service providers, complicating the response and humanitarian transparency.

Bekaa Valley

The Bekaa Valley hosts the highest concentration in Lebanon; 275,040 Syrian refugees currently live in the Bekaa. The proximity of various sectarian communities with different political affiliations has resulted in tensions, which victimized some Syrian refugees. The close relationship between Lebanese and Syrians in this region dates back to the Ottoman era, when the Bekaa was governed by Ottoman Wali of Damascus. Relationships were strengthened during the 2006 Israeli War on Lebanon, when many Lebanese found refuge in Homs.[4] Recently, the north Bekaa town of Ersal received more than 20,000 Syrian refugees in less than two weeks, as a consequence of the Qalamoun fighting on the Syrian side of the border. The Syrian population of 40,000 in Ersal now outnumbers the Lebanese population of 35,000.[5] Ersal and other villages are considered to be of possible threat to Syrian refugees because of their proximity to the Syrian borders, as well as to the risk of sectarian conflicts between adjacent Shia and Sunni villages.[6]

Similar to North Lebanon, a 60% wage reduction has been reported in the Bekaa as a result of competition from Syrian labor and reduced border trade activities. In Baalbek for instance, daily wages for unskilled labor dropped from LL 20,000 to LL15000 or LL10000.[7] It should be noted, however, that wage reduction is not implemented by Syrian nor Lebanese workers, but by Lebanese employers. But for the Lebanese workers affected by this wage reduction, it is Syrian refugees rather than Lebanese employers who are to blame for this.

Bekaa was the first region where the Lebanese government closed down Syrian businesses. According to the Economy and Trade Ministry's survey, 54 percent of the informal Syrian businesses are located in the Bekaa.[8] The region is characterized by poor developed infrastructure, remote areas, and a relatively weak local civil society structure, compared to South Lebanon or the urban coast areas of Mount Lebanon. The thousands of Syrian refugees streaming into this region since late 2011 have found shelter in the urban areas of Baalbek, Zahle, and Taanayel, because of the availability of shelter. However, since 2012, tented settlements have been erected in various areas, increasing the visibility of their growing presence. The Bekaa area has been hit hard with the reduced economic border trade with Syria, deteriorating security in many areas, and the enormous pressure of Syrian refugees on the host communities. This situation has tempted some local authorities and stakeholders to be less receptive of assistance for refugees or even evicting them from the area.

3. Needs particularities among Syrian refugees according to geographical areas

In addition to differences between the various hosting areas, assessments have also pointed to the

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1 Alamy, 2013, *op. cit.*

2 Fares el-Zein (ed.), *Rapid Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Crisis on Socio-Economic Situation in North and Bekaa*, Development Management International, August 2012, p.5.

3 Shamas, 2013, *op. cit.*

4 Alamy, 2013, *op. cit.*

5 UNHCR, "Arsal influx inter agency update", December 3, 2013.

6 Berneis and Bartl, 2013, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

7 International Rescue Committee/Save the Children, *Livelihood Assessment- Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. Bekaa Valley and North Governorates*, Lebanon, October 2012.

8 Shamas, 2013, *op. cit.*; according to Elie Chalhoub, Head of the Zahle Chamber of Commerce, in the article, "the shop closures in Bekaa were merely a farce, since most of the shops reopened two days later".

high needs differences within the Syrian population. The financial characteristics of the Syrian refugee population are diverse. Where many Syrian refugees are obliged to occupy empty buildings or share apartments because they cannot afford renting, other Syrian middle class families rent and buy houses or stay in expensive hotels enjoying a tourist life in Lebanon.[1] Another group of the Syrian refugee population is composed of Syrian migrants working in Lebanon prior to the Syrian conflict who brought their families and adapted to the increasing living costs in Lebanon.[2] Finally, many Syrians have relatives in Lebanon, either through kinship or marriage, especially in the border communities, enabling them to settle with their Lebanese relatives and benefit from their income generating connections within the Lebanese job market. However, most of the Syrian refugee population lacks the luxury of continuing business in Lebanon or local connections for housing or work and is obliged to seek a completely new livelihood in the country.

Studies show a major discrepancy between the different regions, with Syrian refugee incomes ranging from averages of $86 in parts of Akkar to about $547 in parts of Beirut. There are broad regional disparities in this regard, with some regions receiving substantially more aid per household than others, mainly as a result of an apparent pattern of larger households in those areas. The highest average spenders (Beirut) spend about $580 a month while the lowest average spenders (Akkar) spend roughly $359 per month.[3] A majority of Syrian refugees (between 50 and 90 per cent) is believed to rely on aid, a percentage that also varies from one area to another. Syrian refugee income studies pointed to the 'non-existent' role of the state in all areas where the studies were conducted.[4]

4. Analysis of risks and challenges to aid provision in light of regional differences

Analysis and Recommendations

Based on the analysis of regional differences between Lebanese hosting areas of Syrian refugees, several recommendations can be drawn for a proper intervention in the respective areas.

First of all, external interventions should take notice of the local particularities of the setting in which they intervene. Syrian refugees are not living in a political or socio-economic vacuum. Every area in which they reside is subject to international, national, and local dynamics, in which not only Lebanese but also Syrian refugees have started to play a role. Even the humanitarian intervention itself affects the socio-economic conditions of the area, as has been shown above.

Humanitarian organizations are called upon to be fully aware of the historical background of the specific area and the traditional relations between Syrian refugees and host communities to tailor each intervention accordingly. National harmonized emergency programs, targeting Syrian refugees in general without taking notice of their particular setting or the different categories of the Syrian population, risk doing more harm than good. As the above situation analysis also demonstrates, Syrian refugees choose to settle in a certain area for specific reasons, related to previous migration flows, family or kinship relations, shelter or employment conditions, or the political-sectarian characteristics of the area. Furthermore, the level of current assistance is herein important, be it from state, NGO, UN, or political entities. This is a dynamic refugee motive, which is subject to change according to the development of the setting. This multi-dynamic situation should be taken into consideration while intervening in any Lebanese area.

Second, a trend is showing that the hospitality of the Lebanese host community is rapidly changing, following the continued presence of Syrian refugees and increased concerns. Even in areas where Lebanese communities where traditionally closely linked to (the cause of) Syrian refugees, the receptive attitude is decreasing. The Lebanese population, especially in the poorer and undeveloped areas, is increasing wary about the presence of high numbers of disadvantaged people. The sudden

1 Karim Talbi, "In Lebanon, summer resort an unlikely refuge for Syrians", *Agence France-Presse*, July 24, 2012, available on ReliefWeb: http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-summer-resort-unlikely-refuge-syrians [last accessed on February 22, 2014]; Mohamed el-Amin, "Influx of Syrians breathes life into tourism sector", *Daily Star*, July 23, 2012, available at: http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Lebanon/2012/Jul-23/181563-influx-of-syrians-breathes-life-into-tourism-sector.ashx [last accessed on February 22, 2014]. Although middle class Syrians have more work and travel opportunities, they do not feel safe in Lebanon; see Alison Takhmizian Meuse, "Middle class Syrians in Limbo in Lebanon", *Agence France-Presse*, August 19, 2013, published on ReliefWeb, available at: http://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/middle-class-syrians-limbo-lebanon [last accessed on February 22, 2014].
2 Guita Hourani and Sam Van Vliet, "Refugees of the Arab Spring, Syrian refugees in Lebanon", *Carthage Center for Research and Information*, August 2012. See also Bjorn Zimprich, "The Heavy Burden of the Open Borders policy", interview with Dr. Guita Hourani, *Qantara.de*, August 2013, available online at: http://www.ndu.edu.lb/lerc/mustknow/QantaraInterview.pdf [last accessed on February 22, 2014].
3 Oxfam/BRIC Survey, 2013, *op. cit.* p. 21.
4 Oxfam/BRIC, Survey, 2013, *op. cit.* p. 39.

presence of refugees, relief resources, and aid workers in the concentrated areas of Syrian refugee settlement created both positive and negative opportunities for local hosts. Economic activities on the local level increased dramatically, as refugees represented both a large consumer market and a source of cheap labor. The refugee presence however, is increasingly associated with important problems, including labor competition, infectious diseases, environmental degradation, increase in crime and insecurity, and so on. These changes are not evenly distributed over Lebanon and vary across geographic areas and among social groups. The combined effects of socio-economic disadvantages that existed prior to the refugee crisis and the ramifications of the settlement of the refugees and their needs have only further widened the gap between the various geographical areas. Humanitarian agencies should be aware of this development and be flexible to shift their focus to both Syrian refugees and the Lebanese host community, who are now showing similar vulnerability characteristics. International organizations could make more use of the local understanding of national organizations in this matter.

Finally, external NGOs intervening in the current Syrian refugee crisis should be aware of previous humanitarian programs running prior to the arrival of Syrian refugees. Lessons learned of support to Lebanese communities during the various emergencies (Civil War, Israeli invasions) and Palestinian and Iraqi refugee migration waves are useful for humanitarian design and programming. In this regard, a shift from an emergency "Refugee-Centric Mandate"[1] to development Programs is advisable: the Lebanese government and international organizations could cooperate to create development programs in light of the national development goals, creating new jobs in the country's labor market and invigorating the economic cycle in the country.[2]

By including regional differences and the above-described local particularities in refugee policies, humanitarian programs will set the foundation for a more effective approach. The current dynamic security situation in Lebanon further confirms the need for a different intervention approach per area; Syrian refugees and their aid providers are not acting on an island but are both subject and object to their own local setting.

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1 Guita Hourani, "Protecting the Lebanese Labor market while aiding the Syrian refugees: A policy brief", Lebanese Development Network/Carthage Research and Information Center , December 2013.
2 *Ibid.*, p.6.

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Enhancing Municipal Capacities: From Emergency Response to Planning
Marwa Boustani

The turmoil in Syria led to the highest number of simultaneously displaced persons in history[1], with the highest percentage of refugees residing in different areas in Lebanon, mostly in the North and the Bekaa[2]. The crisis poses a high level of uncertainty rendering the response more difficult to organize, as Mr. el-Daher, advisor to the Prime Minister on Economic Affairs and Development, stated: "The nature of the crisis is different, as we cannot predict how long it will last."[3]

At the beginning of the crisis, Lebanese communities were glad to host the first wave of refugees. The prolongation of the crisis, however, exerted pressures on host communities, due to the enormous increased demand on basic services and lack of central and local government capacities, in addition to insufficient support from humanitarian actors. Pressures on the already weak infrastructure, limited access to services, decreased safety, and competition in the labor market contributed to reduced willingness to host refugees and the escalation of tensions.

Weak governance in the country and the large-scale nature of the emergency suggested the need for a well-researched and more responsive Lebanese strategy. However, the country "lacks the requirements for shaping consistent and comprehensive policies in accordance with the needs of public interests,"[4] ultimately resulting in the adoption of the "disastrous policy of no-policy."[5]

The lack of a national response strategy made it more difficult to contain the impact of the crisis on Lebanon and address the needs of almost one million refugees. While estimates by the Lebanese government point to 1.5 million Syrian refugees, The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) maintains that the number is closer to one million[6] registered refugees or persons from Syria awaiting registration in Lebanon, as of April 2014.

The response – coordinated by UNHCR – targeted the host population to a small extent. However, it did not systematically include local authorities in planning and coordination, although most agencies involved in the response consider municipalities and Unions of Municipalities (UoMs) to be relevant and reliable local partners.

However, with minimal capacities, lack of national response strategies, and limited finances, municipalities and UoMs were constrained in their approach to the optimal provision of solutions for better living conditions of both Syrian refugees and host communities. The following sections expand on relief efforts addressing Syrian refugees in Lebanon by focusing on the role of local authorities in order to propose recommendations for better future responses.

1. Key Actors in the Emergency Response

The government drafted a response plan on December 3, 2012, dividing up responsibilities between the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Higher Relief Council. Yet, the plan was never adopted, due to the resignation of Prime Minister Najib

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1 UNHCR, "2014 Syria Regional Response Plan", 2013, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/docs/Syria-rrp6-full-report.pdf [last accessed on February 20, 2014].

2 Regions that are historically characterized by widespread poverty and chronic neglect of the Lebanese state. This has been the object of several publications undertaken by NGOs or academics. To read more see: Aicha Mouchref, "Forgotten Akkar. Socio-Economic Reality of the Akkar Region", Mada Association, Beirut, 2008; Éric Verdeil, Ghaleb Faour, Sébastien Velut, *Atlas du Liban : Territoires et société. Nouvelle édition*, Beyrouth, Liban, Presses de l'Ifpo. [Ed.], 2007.

3 Samir El Daher, "The Impact of the Syrian Conflict on the Lebanese Economy", Roundtable at Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Beirut, December 2013.

4 Karim El Mufti, "Official response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, the disastrous policy of no-policy", *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Lebanon Support, 2014, available online at: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/official-response-syrian-refugee-crisis-lebanon-disastrous-policy-no-policy [;ast accessed on January 24, 2014].

5 *Ibid.*

6 UNHCR, *Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal*, 2014: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122. [last accessed on April 3, 2014].

Mikati and the long delays in forming a new cabinet[1]. Currently, the UNHCR and other UN agencies are coordinating the humanitarian response of international and national agencies[2], co-led by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

On the level of public institutions, the Directorate General of Urban Planning (DGUP) and the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) – the institutions responsible for planning and large-scale development projects in Lebanon – remained passive in their response to the crisis, with the absence of a national policy urging them to intervene. However, the two public institutions possess key policy-making and planning capacities and responsibilities, which could be the foundation of sound solutions on the national level.

Consequently, municipalities and UoMs were left to deal with the fate of Syrian refugees in their localities, taking responsibility for hosting and extending basic urban services, with the financial support of international and national NGOs and agencies.

2. Role of Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities

Weak governance and the unstable political situation in Lebanon, rendering decision-making very difficult at the national level, caused the breakdown in public trust. In this context, Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities became the most active public institutions in responding to the Syrian refugee crisis, as they are "working on the ground and eager to intervene."[3] UN agencies such as UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UN-Habitat and international NGOs such as Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), consider UoMs and municipalities to be among the most appropriate local partners in the emergency response.

The Decree-Law no.118 of 1977 entrusts municipalities with a broad range of tasks and provides them with financial and administrative autonomy. In reality, however, the administration and finances of municipalities are constrained, since 70% of the 1,100 municipalities in Lebanon are small and with limited capacities for service provision, in addition to being highly dependent on the irregular payments of the Independent Municipal Fund.

Around 750 municipalities (2/3 of the total) have jointly formed 51 Municipal Unions, enabling them to act on a larger scale and increasing their capacities. However, UoMs continue to face several challenges, such as weak administrative capabilities, inability to collect membership fees, high dependence on the Independent Municipal Fund for revenues, and overlapping competencies with individual municipalities.

The respective strengths of the UoMs, on the other hand, include the appropriate spatial representation, a good combination of tools and human capacities, exchange of experiences and competencies, a strong network which has a greater power to influence, the opportunity for smaller municipalities to grow with the support of the larger ones, and increased feasibility of developmental projects.

To build on the strengths of UoMs and municipalities and enhance their capacities, UN-Habitat established and funded Regional Technical Offices (RTOS) at the level of the Unions. Through these RTOs, UN-Habitat implemented its emergency response to address the July-2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, as well as the Syrian crisis, empowering UoMs to coordinate the response.

The RTO model is based on the "Municipal Act," specifically Article 122 of Decree-Law no. 118/1977, which specifies that the UoM's Engineering Body shall be in charge of certain tasks on behalf of the member municipalities. This includes assisting in approving applications for construction permits, preparing required technical studies and consultations, setting specifications for supplies, works, and services, and developing plans. As mentioned above, mainly fiscal challenges resulted in under capacitated and under staffed technical units within UoMs.

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1   Rabih Shibli, "Reconfiguring Relief Mechanisms: The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon," *Refugee Research and Policy in the Arab World Program*, Research Report, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut, 2014, available online at https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/public_policy/pal_camps/Documents/research_reports/20140224ifi_pc_unrwa.pdf [last accessed March 10, 2014]; a "Roadmap of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from The Syrian Conflict" has been adopted by the Lebanese Government with the support of the World Bank and UN in late 2013. For more information, please refer to UNHCR, "2014 Syria Regional Response Plan Lebanon", 2013, *op. cit.*

2   To read more about the coordination mechanisms: Leila Zakharia, Sonya Knox, "The international aid community and local actors: Experiences and testimonies from the ground", *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Lebanon Support, 2014, available online at: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/international-aid-community-and-local-actors [last accessed on June 25, 2014].

3   Interview with Dr. Mona Fawaz, 20 January 2014.

3. Regional Technical Offices (RTOs) within Unions of Municipalities

Establishing RTOs within municipality unions guarantees their involvement in emergency response and lays the foundation for RTO support in the recovery and planning phases. RTOs promote an integrated approach by collaborating with local, national and international actors in shelter, infrastructure, and community support projects. Thus, they assist municipalities in conducting rapid technical assessments, collecting data, technical support, implementation of development projects and eventual contribution to planning at a local and/or regional level. The RTO team is made up of qualified local engineers, field workers, urban planners, social workers, architects, administrative assistants, and so on.

In response to the July-2006 war, UN-Habitat established three RTOs in the UoMs of Tyr, Bint Jbeil, and Jabal Amel. The RTOs were supported by UN-Habitat from 2007 till 2009. They were later adopted by the UoMs and two – Bint Jbeil and Jabal Amel – are still functional today. In 2013, UN-Habitat replicated the model and initiated two RTOs in the UoMs of Sahel al-Zahrani and Iqlim al-Kharoub to respond to the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis in those areas. Both RTOs are implementing rehabilitation works to support Syrian refugees, in addition to community support projects and coordinating with municipalities, international and national NGOs, and UN agencies for a better response.

The experiences Jabal Amel RTO and Sahel El Zahrani RTO are presented below.

3.1. The UoM of Jabal Amel:

Jabal Amel is considered by UN-Habitat to be an exemplary case of how an RTO contributed to efficiently enable and support a UoM in emergency response through a process of recovery and planning. The RTO of Jabal Amel was set up in response to reconstruction needs in the South after the July 2006 War, to support the rehabilitation process and introduce data management tools to UoM. In 2007, the RTO was supplied with a Geographical Information System (GIS) and initiated a surveying process with the support of UN-Habitat.

The outcome of the process was the development of a detailed database and mapping of the geographical area of the UoM, which is continuously updated and currently used to guide present and future projects. Today, the RTO consists of a surveying engineer and two agricultural engineers and Jabal Amel UoM is planning to employ an urban planner. The office relies on galvanizing and engaging local expertise, a major contributing factor to the RTOs success.

The RTO is supported by UoM staff in various planning, data management, and municipal service activities. The unit managed to expand its scope of work from physical development to community development, data management, project implementation, monitoring urban sprawl/development, follow-up, and planning. Today, the UoM is focused on agricultural development and addresses educational, cultural, and social development. In terms of agricultural development, the RTO gathered data on the agricultural sector, which served as a basis for the Union to provide local farmers with incentives to invest in the agricultural sector.

Jabal Amel UoM is currently developing a strategic plan. According to the mayor, this will not be a difficult task since information available in the database developed by the RTO will provide them with the necessary knowledge. With the RTO's support, the UoM also coordinates the role of international organizations active in the area. Another key RTO function is providing assistance to municipalities in conducting studies for municipal projects to be presented to the relevant ministry, in order to receive funds for implementation and development. The UoM considers the RTO unit to be a major support system for technical and well-informed, sound decisions.

3.2. The UoM of Sahel Zahrani:

Through the UN-Habitat program responding to the Syrian refugee crisis, the Sahel Zahrani RTO has been supporting the UoM in the area since its establishment in October 2013. The office is involved in data collection, mapping, conducting studies, and monitoring. It also responds to the needs the municipalities and provides input regarding proposed projects, as well as being the coordinator of implementation of UN-Habitat projects related to shelter and infrastructure. The RTO currently consists of a head of RTO, Engineer, Engineering assistant, surveyor, and monitor.

According to the mayor, the office has been busy focusing on the rehabilitation of houses for Syrian refugees and implementation of UN-Habitat's project. Thus, it has not yet used its full capacity in planning and supporting municipal projects. The office has proved to be efficient, namely due to the great support of the mayor, and because the RTO team members are from the community. As

one stated: "I am from the area and know it by heart."[1]

Although the RTO is now playing an important role in emergency response through the rehabilitation of houses and infrastructure, the UoM is laying the foundation for its long term role and functions as a strategic unit for planning, through proposing a strategic vision for the area, in partnership with local universities and UN-Habitat. Furthermore, the RTO contributed to strengthening the role of the union in coordinating international and national organizational response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Bi-weekly coordination meetings ensure that interventions are in line with the UoM vision and that projects do not overlap. The mayor maintained that the RTO will still function as an intrinsic unit within the UoM after the UN-Habitat project ends.[2]

4. Assets and Challenges

UN-Habitat's experience of working through Unions of Municipalities since 2007 demonstrates the great potential of UoMs in supporting development on the regional level – as in the case of Jabal Amel and Sahel Zahrani. However, key challenges remain and could be summarized as follows.

Data Management and Consultation: The lack of detailed and updated data in public institutions and governmental agencies in Lebanon is an obstacle to guiding sustainable development projects. Thus, supporting UoMs in data collection is key to guiding any intervention and lays the foundation for future planning. The introduction of the GIS Mapping at the level of municipal unions through RTOs proved to be vital to data collection and updated information. Furthermore, supporting unions with technical units and qualified experts is important to guide municipalities with limited financial and human resources on project planning and implementation.

Financial Capacities: UoMs usually have limited financial capacities. Their resources are often drained by responding to the basic needs of the local population, in terms of service provision and basic infrastructure provision. Hence, financial support to UoMs to maintain a level of qualified experts and increase their planning capacities is key.

International Organizations' Interventions: The Syrian emergency response encouraged various international donors to respond through UoMs and individual Municipalities in Lebanon, especially with the lack of trust on the level of the central government. Operational RTOs provided a key contribution to UoMs in coordinating the humanitarian intervention of international and national organizational – through bi-weekly coordination meetings, among other measures.

Lack of Long-term Visions: Many RTOs are constrained in their scope of work, especially with the lack of long-term visions and plans at the UoM and municipal levels. Through UoMs, RTOs have the capacity to contribute to planning and decision-making at a regional level. However, as the mayor of Sahel al-Zahrani stated: "RTOs are confined at times to responding to the Unions' decisions and immediate needs, when the RTO should be playing a key role in guiding the Unions towards planning for the future."[3]

Community Integration and Municipal Engagement: RTOs work closely with municipalities and communities for data collection and project support. This allows the unit to create strong and sustainable relationships with the community, facilitating the work of UoMs. The unit consists of local staff, which facilitates community integration. For example, the RTO engineer in Sahel Zahrani highlighted that being from the area facilitates his work, especially since he knows the area "by heart." While the top-down approach in decision making on the level of the UoM could be a challenge for community participation, still, RTOs have the potential to link the community with the UoM.

Management and Human Resource Capacities: Ensuring efficient management of the technical unit within UoMs is necessary to ensure its sustainability. This should be addressed in the introduction of any unit at the level of the Union. Furthermore, UoMs operate on a large regional scale and have thus shown the need for qualified experts to guide their work and interventions.

Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities in Lebanon have proven to be active local authorities, with key assets to tap into towards contributing to long-term planning on a regional and national level. However, they possess limited financial and administrative capacities, which restrain their potential to respond to large-scale emergencies or to plan for the future. This is particularly evident today with the Syrian refugee crisis, where several unions and municipalities were suddenly faced with the urgent demand to assist refugees, who sometimes constitute more than half the local population.

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1   Interview with Technical Director of RTO, February 2014.
2   Interview with Mayor of UoM of Sahel El Zahrani, February 2014.
3   *Ibid.*

Mayors and communities were perplexed and torn between the needs of the local population and the emergent needs of refugees. Unions and municipalities were overwhelmed with responding to the health, education, infrastructure provision, security, and livelihoods of a new population, on top of addressing the rising tensions between host communities and refugees.

Most international donors considered unions and municipalities to be among the best local partners in their intervention to support the crisis, which shows the potential of these local authorities to address semi-urban and urban issues and plan for the future, despite the lack of a national policy

The RTO model presented in this paper provides an example of the importance of working in a strategic manner to enhance capacities at the municipal level to respond to emergencies, in addition to planning and community development. This model could be more efficient with more detailed follow-up and training of UoMs in terms of planning. Thus, support should be provided to UoMs as well as enhancing their capacities to respond to emergencies and eventually plan for the future, especially in a context where the government remains arguably passive in responding to a crisis, which impacted Lebanon on every level.

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2.

Gender Equity

Rethinking gender equality, relations, and strategies in Lebanon

Feminisms in Lebanon: after proving loyalty to the "Nation", will the "Body" rise within the "Arab Spring"?
Bernadette Daou

Today, women's rights and violence against them are mobilizing new sectors of society, while feminist movements in Lebanon emerge in a particularly restrictive context: a patriarchal and segmented society characterized by sectarianism.[1]

The confessional system sees society in the form of specific groups, (in this case, the confessions, but also extended families) reducing individuals to their "primary" identity and undermining or making the process of individuation and the development of other identities more problematic, on one hand. On the other hand, the personal status laws are particularly discriminatory against women (divorce, inheritance, guardianship laws ...).

At a first glance, it can be said that a section of Lebanese women enjoy a margin of freedom not found in some neighboring countries. Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997 (though with reservations on Articles 9, 16 and 29). Experts maintain that some progress was made in the field of education, particularly higher education. Article 562 of the penal code regarding honor crimes was abolished in 2011, and lately, in 2014, the Lebanese parliament legislated the protection of women from domestic violence.

However, Lebanon was ranked 123rd out of 136 countries, according to the global report on the gender gap published in October 2013 by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Geneva.[2] Discriminatory legal provisions against women persist in the religious laws of personal status and the Lebanese Penal Code – the acquittal of a convicted rapist if he marries the victim is an example (Article 522). Domestic violence and marital rape are a nationwide problem; according to a study by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), more than two thirds of women in Lebanon suffer from some form of domestic violence.[3] Moreover, the Lebanese law forbids a woman to pass on her nationality to her children or her husband, which raises the intricate and interrelated issues of citizenship, identity, sectarianism, and personal status.

In this context, this paper examines the nature of mobilizations initiated by feminist movements in the country, as well as the structure and trajectory of their feminist activists. Here, a broad definition of feminism is adopted, which includes movements that do not necessarily claim an affiliation to a feminist philosophical school of thought. Moreover, philosophical affiliation is a central issue facing feminist movements in Arab countries in general and Lebanon in particular. In fact, they are accused of being vectors of Westernization, while feminist movements were born and developed in the context of the struggle for independence. The paper proposes to extract this polemic from the essentialist differentiation between western feminism and eastern feminism, to study the historical context in which each movement emerged and developed.

While this paper delineates the study to organized women movements in a timeframe starting from the formation of the Lebanese state, it argues that the feminist movement in Lebanon is organized in waves, as other feminist movements around the world.[4]

These waves are often born in response to a specific "event"; in fact, these "waves" could be analytically compared to the concept of "cycle of mobilizations" developed by Sidney Tarrow, who defines them as just a "growing then decreasing wave of collective actions and reactions closely linked to

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1 Hisham Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy. A theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, London, Routledge, 1988, p. 212; Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1993, p. 348; Suad Joseph, *Gendering Citizenship in the Middle-East*, New York, Syracuse University Press, 2000, p. 400.

2 World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report*, 2013, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf.

3 UNFPA and Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research, Situation Analysis in Gender Based Violence in Lebanon, 2011, http://www.unfpa.org.lb/Documents/1-Situation-Analysis-of-GBV-in-Lebanon.aspx

4 On the successive waves of feminism, read the first chapter of the book: Charlotte Krolokke, Anne Scott Sorensen, *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses From Silence to Performance*, SAGE Publications, Inc., 2005, p. 208.

them"[1], which includes three phases: the "ascending phase of revolt, that of the 'moment of madness' when everything seems possible, a zenith phase marked by the radicalization of actions, and a downturn, itself punctuated four times (the creation of new organizations, the routinization of collective action, the satisfaction even if partial of the demands, disengagement)."[2] This paper opts to use the term "waves"[3], because it is generally used to account for women's movements around the world.

While this paper investigates the capacity of feminist organizations to attain social change, it also looks into their ambivalent relationship with the Lebanese patriarchy, their proximity to the dominant players in the political field, and their difficulty to distance themselves from the hegemonic structures. These feminists tend to censor themselves when it comes to talking about their own bodies and their sexuality, although oppression is based on their essence as women and the control by men and by patriarchal society of the same female body. I argue here that the feminist movement in Lebanon has two main characteristics; its matrix is a national movement from independence to the liberation of the south, not a movement for civil rights, like the one studied by Tarrow. Furthermore, feminist claims are appropriated by men instead of a more radical distinction.

This research proceeds from a socio-historical analysis of discourses and agendas of women's organizations in Lebanon. It attempts to analyze the dynamics of the feminist movement in a historical perspective and measure the social, cultural, and political factors that facilitate or hinder the historical development of this movement. The empirical research was based on a survey of seven feminist organizations and campaigns: The Lebanese Council of Women (LCW), *lajnat hukûk al-mar'at* (League of Women's Rights - LWR), *al-tajammu' al-nisâ'i al-dimucratî al-lubnanî* (Democratic Gathering of Lebanese Women - RDFL), *al-lajnat al-ahliat li-mutaba'at qadâya al-mar'a* (the National Committee for the Follow up of Women's Issues - CFUWI) *Nasawiya, Kafa 'onf wa istighlal* (Kafa enough of violence and exploitation), *Jinsiyati haqq li wa li ousrati* (my nationality is my right and my family's).

Observations were also made in the cited associations (observation of meetings, conferences, etc.). These active observations' objective was to better understand the structures of these associations, to identify activists' profiles, and to understand key issues taken up by these associations. A series of interviews (semi-structured) were also conducted with women activists in the ten aforementioned associations (fifteen interviews in all). They aimed at better understanding the disposition of activists towards feminist commitment, the meaning they give to their activism, the causes they defend, their positioning within the Lebanese patriarchy, etc. The purpose of these semi-structured interviews was to better understand feminist activism in Lebanon. By allowing an in-depth look into the discourse of those surveyed, delivering more information about their history, their experiences, their perception of feminist activism, their motivations, hesitations and ambiguities, this method allowed an understanding of the subjectivity of social actors, and their own point of view of their action and events in which they participated, their worldviews, etc.

The presentation of the findings is organized into two parts. The first section highlights the conditions of the chronological emergence of the various feminist waves in Lebanon; the second section discusses the distance between feminist actions in Lebanon and the confessional and patriarchal system.

1. Feminist waves in Lebanon in a historical perspective:

The first section will focus on tracing the history of feminist movements in the Lebanese local context, on the one hand, and by highlighting the continuities and ruptures, which existed with movements or organizations that preceded them, on the other hand. Thus, four "waves" of feminist movements were identified since the independence of Lebanon: the first, was founded in 1943 with independence. The second wave appeared following the "disappointment" engendered by the Arab defeat of 1967 and the rise of a "new left".[4] The third wave was established in the context of post-civil-war Lebanon, which pointed to the particular rise of NGOs[5]. Finally, the fourth wave appeared with the anti-war and anti-globalization movement in the early 2000s.[6]

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1   Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.
2   Isabelle Sommier, " Cycle de mobilisation", in, Olivier Fillieule, Lilian Mathieu, Cécile Péchu, *Dictionnaire des mouvements sociaux*, Paris, Presses de Science Po, 2009, p. 173.
3   Term used in the early 1990s in the United States to highlight the evolution of feminist thought.
4   On the "new left" of the 1960s, please refer to the doctoral thesis of Agnès Favier: Agnès Favier, *Logiques de l'engagement et mode de contestation au Liban. Genèse d'une génération de militants intellectuels (1958-1975)*, PhD thesis, Paul Cézanne University, Aix-Marseille III, 2004.
5   On this point, please refer to Karam Karam, *Le mouvement civil au Liban. Revendications, protestations et mobilisations associatives dans l'après-guerre*, Paris, Karthala, 2006.
6   On this cycle of mobilization; Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi, *L'altermondialisme au Liban : un militantisme de passage. Logiques*

A short historical overview

Most studies take the early nineteenth century as a starting point for the examination of social movements and especially women's movements in the Arab world, particularly in Lebanon (even before its formation as an independent state). This period began with the "Egyptian campaign" led by Napoleon Bonaparte, and later, the rise of Arab liberalism, also called the "Arab Cultural Renaissance" (*al-Nahda*). In fact, the issue of women became of central importance toward the mid-nineteenth century:

> "The pioneers of the Nahdah regarded women's inferior status as the basic cause for the backwardness of the Arab and Islamic societies, and were unanimous in affirming that there will be no renaissance for Arabs and Muslims without the renaissance of Arab women."[1]

These were men and a minority of women of the educated elite who contributed to the emergence of a movement for the "renaissance" of "the woman", as explained by Caroline Sukkar in her research on the women's movement in Lebanon. The pioneers of this movement, Butros al-Bustani, Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, Gamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abdu, Qasim Amin, Jubran Khalil Jubran, Amin al-Rihani, and May Ziyadeh, all contemplated the education of women of aristocracy, or a bourgeoisie – confined to her home to better educate her children.[2]

An exception to this dominant view in relation to the education of women is personified by Nazira Zein el-Din who confronted religious traditions. She opposed the veil and defended the right of women to participate in power and contribute to the explanation of religious texts. Her critique of the law against the veil led to a violent reaction on the part of the clergy, who accused her of atheism, mobilizing demonstrations against her.[3]

The claim to women's right to education was pursued with the emergence of female journalists. In fact, with the expansion of education for girls of the upper classes, especially from the Christian community, they began to form their organizations and publish their activities in their newspapers. While the organizations were based on humanistic and altruistic motives, pioneer women also had individual motivations "in order to use the new skills they have acquired, expose and refine them at the same time."[4]

Hence the 1920s witnessed a proliferation of women's organizations and magazines; Minerva (1917) founded by Marie Yenni, *al-Fatat* (1918) founded by Mohammad Al-Baqer, *Fata al-Watan* (1919) founded by Mariam A'Zammar, *al-Fajr* (1919) by Najla' Abi Al-Lama', etc.[5] Women's organizations crystallized in various forms: religious, national cultural, familial, and those who formed as a branch of men associations.[6]

A first generation of feminists: national independence and political rights for women

The first generation of feminist organizations, after the independence of the Lebanese state, coalesced around the struggle for political rights of women. These feminists based their demands on their participation in the movement of national independence alongside men and on international law emerging in the same era. However sectarian chieftains of the newly independent political institutions had different priorities. In fact, the first electoral law passed in 1950 expressly deprived women of the right to vote and to be elected to parliament.[7] The first demonstrations and the organization of coordination meetings began in this context.

This led to the union of feminist organizations in 1951. However, Lebanese women's movements

d'engagement et reconfiguration de l'espace militant (de gauche) au Liban, PhD thesis, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2013.

1   Fawwaz Traboulsi, An Intelligent Man's Guide to Modern Arab Feminism, *Al-Raida*, Volume XX, No. 100 Winter 2003, p. 16.

2   Traboulsi, 2003, *op.cit.* ; Caroline Sukkar, *The Lebanese Council of Women: the issues of its protest movement (Al-Majlis Al-Nisa'I Al-Lubnani: Ishkaliyat Harakatihi Al-Matlabiah)*, Masters thesis, Lebanese University – Social Sciences Institute - Section 2, 2003, p. 50-51.

3   Sukkar, *op.cit.*

4   Azza Charara Beydoun, *Nisa' wa jam'iyyât lubnaniyyat bayna insâf al-thât wa khidmat al-ghayr (Women and associations)*, Beirut, Dar Annahar, 2002, p. 13.

5   Aida Al-Jawhari, *Ramziyat al-hijab mafahim wa dalalat (The symbolism of the veil, concepts and significations)*, Center for Arab unity studies, 2007.

6   Nahawand Al-Qadiry, "Sahafat al-nisa' wa jam'yatihin: Wajhan li 'omla wahida" (Lebanese women's journalism and their organizations in the 1920s: the two side of the same coin), in *Al-Nisa' al-'arabiyat fil 'ishrinat houdouran wa howiyatan* (Arab Women in the 1920s Presence and Identity), Center for Arab unity studies, Bahithat, 2nd ed., Beirut, 2010, p. 82, 83.

7   Iman Shamas Shoukeir, *Nisa' fi imra'a, sirat Laure Moughayzel* (women in one woman, the life of Laure Moughayzel) Annahar, Beirut, 2002, p. 50.

were divided along sectarian lines between two main networks of Muslim and Christian organizations. The first branch was called *Jam'iyat al-tadamon al-Nisa'i* (Women Solidarity Association), headed by Laure Thabet, including Christian charitable women's organizations. The second, *Ittihad al-Nisa'i al-Loubnani* (The Lebanese Union of Women), founded in 1920, included Muslim women organizations and those who formed the branches of Arab nationalist and leftist political parties.[1]

The importance of the campaign for political rights was to be found in its socio-political impact. Thus the foundation of a union of women's organizations under the umbrella organization of the Lebanese Council of Women (LCW) was the fruit of the victory of 1952, when the demands for political rights were fulfilled.[2] However, the campaign did not encourage women's organizations to create a feminist agenda and tended to benefit from the protection and encouragement from the *paterfamilias*. In fact, the efforts of Laure Moughayzel, when of the leaders of the suffragists, were encouraged, approved, and protected by the founding father of the *Kataeb* (Phalanges), Pierre Gemayel, who wanted to "modernize and westernize the woman and the country."[3] Moreover, the LCW fit the sectarian political system by alternating its leadership's affiliation between Christian and Muslim.

This is also a similar approach that was adopted within part of the "civil" organizations of the 1990s, studied by Karam Karam, to the extent that "the principle displayed in the objectives and purposes of the association is the absence of sectarian discrimination; the recruitment and organization of the group can function on logics of positive discrimination where categories of the fought classifications are used tacitly."[4]

Caroline Sukkar summarizes the characteristics of women's organizations after independence as non-radical, adopting an approach that does not connect the feminist cause to societal and structural issues. This elite had no interest in defending women belonging to lower economic classes, for example. Many member organizations of the LCW lacked representativeness and addressed the social problems with the sole objective of preserving the status quo.[5]

Feminist discourse of this generation reflected the degree of overlap between national identity and female identity. In fact, the claim of political rights by the feminist movement was justified by recourse to women's participation in the battle for national independence. This confusion between female identity and national identity had been part of the discourse of political parties of the period, those on the left like those on the right.[6]

The second feminist wave: the experience of the leftist collectives

The early 1960s reflected a change in the role of associations in Lebanon, in the context of transformations within the state and society during the "Chehabist era".[7] The reformist policies of Fouad Chehab[8] led to the emergence of new social actors.[9] The Lebanese government was trying to fulfill its social functions and found in the associations, especially those of women, a way to help solve its social dilemmas.

According to Karam Karam, "during the second period (1958-1975) several elements of articulation between the political and the associative spheres had crystallized, guided by a modernist and developmentalist political will."[10] It is worth noting that the reform project proposed by Chehab, following the report of the IRFED[11] mission, was in response to the political and socio-economic crisis that took a "turn of sectarian confrontation" in 1958.[12] Thus, some associations began to play a public role and work in the direction of developing the most disadvantaged areas.

In this context Fahmieh Charafeddine traces the beginning of the second wave of the feminist movement in Lebanon in the late 1960s. This era was marked with the disappointment caused by the

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1 *Ibid.*
2 Sukkar, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
3 Shoukeir, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
4 Karam, 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
5 Sukkar, 2003, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
6 Fahmieh Charafeddine, *Al-haraka al-nisa'iyya fi Loubnan* (Women movement in Lebanon), ESCWA, 2006, p. 12.
7 Beydoun, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 14
8 President of the Lebanese republic, elected in 1958, his mandate and his reform project were known as Chehabism.
9 Beydoun, 2002, *op.cit.*, p. 14.
10 Karam, 2006, op.cit, p.53.
11 "Besoins et possibilités de développement du Liban; étude préliminaire. Mission IRFED-Liban, 1960-1961," International Institute for Research and Training, Education Culture and development, Lebanese Ministry of Planning, Beirut, Helio Electronic Press, 1963 or 1964.
12 Karam, 2006, *op.cit*, p. 54.

defeat in the 1967 war between Israel and Egypt.[1] This atmosphere turned the country into a laboratory of political movements; new schools of thought emerged within political parties and feminist organizations.[2]

Women's organizations of this period were factions of nationalist and leftist parties, for example *al-tajammou al-Nisa'i al-dimocrati al-lubnani* (Lebanese Democratic Gathering of Women - LDGW) founded in 1976 as a sister organization for *Munazamat al-'amal al-shuyu'i* (the Organization of Communist Action - OCA) and *al-Ittihad al-Nisa'i al-taqaddumi* (the Progressive Women's Union) founded in 1980, affiliated to the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). Modernity was the first intellectual basis of the visions of these organizations, while their second cornerstone was national independence and regional development.

However, feminist movements of the second wave did not have an agenda independent of the political parties to which they are affiliated. Moreover, women's rights were not defended by specific public campaigns – "the victory of the feminist cause depended on the victory of the socialist cause".[3] Other interviewed activists spoke about a policy of containment and annexation practiced by the political parties towards women's committees; "[they] allowed us to form a committee for women but they controlled our work and monitored all our meetings".[4]

It seems that the separation of the LDGW from the OCA happened only on the organizational level. While organizational independence was supposed to meet specific needs of women, intellectually, however, LDGW maintained the same ideological structure of OCA.

The LDGW therefore failed to draw the outlines of its own ideology. In a context of war, this feminism prioritized humanitarian action to bring aid to victims of war. By aligning itself with OCA, LDGW and other feminists of this wave lost their ability to recruit women they claimed to represent, particularly those of the lower social classes. In fact, the common definition of social classes within the leftist circles of *al-haraka al-wataniya al-lubnaniya* (the Lebanese National Movement) was manipulated according to the interests of its various factions. This approach focused on the sect and not the relationship to the means of production, as in the Marxist definition. The left of this generation, including LDGW, failed to translate its secular ideals and the intellectual openness of its pioneers into political action. Moreover, their helped exacerbate communal tensions, through what some sociologists call the concept of "community class."[5] This demonstrated a particular failure within the LDGW to reconcile between ideological determinants modeled by the OCA and its own discourse, specifically "inequality within the family, structured by the sectarian laws of personal status within the sectarian system."[6]

Several factors contributed to the passage from the nationalist feminism of the first wave to the leftist feminism of the second. The Chehabist period allowed the newly-formed associations to pick components of its reform plan and participate in governmental efforts. Moreover, the defeat in the 1967 war triggered a process of questioning of nationalist ideologies of the independence movements, which promoted the formation of new leftist collectives fed by an influx of unions and student activists. This wave of feminism adopted the discourse of the left and played a vital role in the new polarization in that direction. Leftist feminists of the second wave even had access to international networks of feminists of the second wave in the United States and France, through their writings, and benefited from funding by those networks. However, the onset of the civil war in Lebanon had a major impact on the evolution of feminist activism; humanitarian work became their first priority.

Feminist discourse of this period, nonetheless, did not change much compared to the wave that preceded it. It integrated female identity to national identity without real participation in the decision-making of political movements; feminist activists almost devoted the entirety of their efforts to aid and assist during the civil war. For Charafeddine, political parties managed to appropriate the work of social movements and those of women and made their priorities the priorities of feminists.

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1 Charafeddine, 2006, *op. cit.*
2 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
3 Interview with Jihane on May 16th, 2013.
4 Interview with Oraib, May 5th, 2013.
5 On this subject; Samir Kassir, *La guerre du Liban : De la dissension nationale au conflit regional*, KARTHALA-CERMOC, 1994, p. 91. Fawwaz Traboulsi writes in the magazine of the OCA, *al-Hurriyah* on October 3rd, 1977, "(…) the confrontation of the religion of governors by the religion of the governed, the religion of those satiated by the religion of the hungry", cited in Walid Daou, "The Trade Union and Workers Movement in Lebanon, a Story of Struggles and Victories", *Majallat Al-Thawra al-Da'ima* (Permanent Revolution Journal), No. 3, March 2013, http://permanentrevolution-journal.org/ar/issue3/brief-history-oflabor-movement-lebanon (last accessed June 15th, 2013).
6 Interview with Jihane, *op.cit.*

The third wave and the globalization of feminist politics

After the 1975-1990 Civil War in Lebanon, the main event for feminists was the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, and related Lebanese preparations. This period witnesses the formation of new organizations including *al-lajna al-ahlia limutaba'at qadaya al-mar'a* (the National Committee for the Follow up of Women's Issues - CFUWI) and the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women (LECORVAW), which allowed a rejuvenation within the visions of the feminist movements, now modeled on the methodology of Beijing. A new jargon was born around the emergence of the "new" causes, such as "positive discrimination", "gender based violence", and "full citizenship".

The Lebanese State, and as part of its obligations relating to the ratification of CEDAW, created *al-hay'a al-wataniya li-shou'oun al-mar'a al-lubnaniya* (the National Commission for Lebanese Women – NCLW) in 1996. In 1998, this commission became a national institution by Law No. 720. NCLW was able to implement two strategies, the first in 1997 and second in 2011, in partnership with feminist organizations of civil society. The last aimed to achieve full equality between men and women in all legislation in the areas of health and education, to fight poverty among women, strengthen the participation of women in the economic and political life, combat violence against women (VAW), change social stereotypes, and strengthen national feminist work and partnership with civil society.

In fact, the specialization of feminist NGOs appears following to the institutionalization of certain programs run by the government. This "NGOization" of feminist movements affected the very structures of the groups, in practice, but also in the content of the claims, as indicated above. Thus, the structures of these new NGOs now met the requirements of international donors: initiatives turn into "projects",[1] activists into "project officers" or employees.[2]

Similarly, an important factor that accompanies this NGOization must be emphasized, the perpetual search for funds from donors. This funding, on which depends the survival of these new structures, helps to create dissension and rivalry within organizations and between them. The adoption of donor priorities launched NGOs into frantic competition and helped deflect their objectives.[3]

This process was accompanied by a transformation in the feminist discourse, focused on rights and reform of existing laws. Some activists also described the transformation of the discourse from one on the "left" into one based on those specific causes and reforms (*tajzi' al-qadaya*). Thus, the discourse of communist feminists of the 1970s was adapted to globalization.

The fourth wave of feminism: the rise of a New Leftist feminism

The fourth wave of feminism in Lebanon was born in an LGBT movement, created during the leftist mobilizations of the 2000s.[4] The activists of this wave of mobilization adopted a critical position in relation to existing feminist organizations, specifically on the totally overlooked issues related to sexual and bodily rights.

Women's experience in *Helem* were consistent with that experienced in several LGBT movements around the world, specifically on the issue of organizational relationships between women and men in these movements. While *Helem* positioned itself in principle against the patriarchal system, gay and lesbian activism reproduced sexist logics.[5] Those patriarchal power relations led at the end of each episode of disputes to the secession of women.[6]

The withdrawal of women from Helem began with the creation of Helem Girls.[7] The "girls" needed to get together and discuss their experiences and needs in an environment where they could feel safe. Their meetings were held outside the premises of Helem. The group even became independent in 2006, under the name of *Meem,* where politics and religion were forbidden from the discussions.[8] Meem members, following several episodes of "inevitable" political discussions, decided to

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1 Luc Boltanski, Eve Chiapello, *Le Nouvel Esprit du capitalisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 1999, p. 843.

2 Johanna Siméant, "Urgence et développement, professionnalisation et militantisme dans l'humanitaire", Mots, n°65, 2001; Frédéric Sawicki, "Les temps de l'engagement. À propos de l'institutionnalisation d'une association de défense de l'environnement", in Lagroye (Jacques) (dir.), *La politisation*, Paris, Belin, 2003.

3 Géraldine Chatelard, "Constructing and deconstructing "the Iraq refugee crisis"", paper presented at the conference of the International Association of Contemporary Iraqi Studies, SOAS, London, 16 and 17 of July 2008, 2008.

4 Ghassan Makarem, "The Story of Helem", in *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, Vol.7, n°3, Fall 2011, p. 102; and AbiYaghi, 2013, *op.cit.*

5 Abi Yaghi, 2013, *op.cit.*

6 Abi Yaghi, 2013, *op.cit.;* also see Anthony Rizk and Ghassan Makarem,"Masculinity-under-threat": Sexual Rights Organizations and the Masculinist State in Lebanon", *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Lebanon Support,2015.

7 Interview with Khouloud, Nasawiya activist, on August 26th, 2013.

8 *Ibid.*

create the "Feminist Collective" as an electronic platform to publish their opinions about the situation of women in Lebanon.

The birth of Nasawiya[1] came later in 2009, as a reconstruction of the Feminist Collective, which imploded as its structure failed to withstand existing political differences within the group. Nasawiya highlighted its uniqueness compared to the existing Lebanese feminist movement. Its activists emphasized their "intersectional" discourse for the liberation of women. For them, "women do not form a uniform biological identity, but, rather they are the result of the interaction of the different facets that make up the identity and in a specific context in which they live."[2]

Nasawiya crystallized around the so-called "identity politics", and more specifically sexual identities, gay in this case. Despite a "radicalization" of their rhetoric and a new approach to female identity throughout the body, these organizations were not carriers of any political program. Like their predecessors, the new generation of feminists continued to operate in elite circles. In practice, the other societal oppression agents, such as social class, were neglected. The relationship to "politics" in Nasawiya was an experimental one, approaching the political sphere through experience and not through a predefined, clear, and immutable ideology. More precisely, the collective had been created around a lesbian identity and not as a result of an ideological differentiation from Helem.

Nasawiya identified itself as leftist, and could be considered as belonging to the new anti-war left and anti-neoliberal globalization movement, which distances itself from the traditional left and their feminists. However the collective could not emerge outside the frames of a clique of activists who talk alike,[3] dress alike, and have a similar lifestyle.[4] While the politicization of Nasawiya happened *a posteriori*, its activism and organization was not an outcome of its vision, which probably was the main cause of the repetitive breakup of the group. This was also an indication of a deficit in Nasawiya's representation of women, not in the numbers of adherent or sympathizers of the group, but in the concealment of the various components of women identities in the Lebanese context, in specific women from poorer social classes who were marginalized within the group.[5]

This wave was triggered by the formation of the LGBT awareness, which was not present in previous generations of feminists. It was a radicalization that borrowed heavily from the standards and norms of donors, without real impact on the patriarchal structures of local society. Hence, Nasawiya was primarily created around an "identity"[6] issue in a "depoliticized" manner, to the extent that this group failed to translate its scattered claims into a theoretical framework or a common program. In practice, it was reflected by an inability to mobilize around "one" cause; the group remained confined in a series of scattered initiatives, which always led to organizational schisms, until the implosion of the collective, once again, in 2012.[7]

2. Distancing from State feminism: Dynamism and Diversity of Feminist Positions in Lebanon

During the years of the Civil War, feminist groups acted as representatives of women's rights due of the collapse of state institutions. As explained above, by the 1980s, leftist and nationalist feminists were central in activist circles. These organizations played a decisive role in the changes undergone by the movement and repositioning towards the "system".

Framing of Legislative Reform within the Lebanese Reservations on CEDAW

Debates about public policy towards women reduced feminist organizations into a purely advisory role. This was largely accompanied by the process of institutionalization of CEDAW, encouraged by the Lebanese state. Feminists were central to the preparations for the Beijing Summit.

Activists who traditionally put into practice the traditions of solidarity and sharing of experiences

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1   Literally "feminism".
2   Interview with Khouloud, *op.cit.* This is a reminder of the work of Judith Butler, who criticizes the assumptions made by feminist movements that there is a female identity that needs to be represented in the political sphere. For Butler, "women" is a complex category of interactions with race, class, sexuality and other factors that make up the identity.
3   Most of the meetings and discussions observed were conducted in English.
4   Similar dynamics and trends were noted in other activists groups in the early years 2000 notably within the alternative globalization milieu. See Abi Yaghi, 2013, *op.cit.*
5   *Ibid.*
6   Taylor Verta; Whittier Nancy, "Collective identity in social movement communities: Lesbian feminist mobilization" Morris Aldon D. (Ed); Mueller Carol McClurg (Ed), *Frontiers in social movement theory*, New Haven, CT, US: Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 104-129.
7   Field observations; also see Farfahinne Blog, "Feminism and self-criticism: notes from my personal experience," September, 2014, available online at: http://farfahinne.blogspot.com/2014/09/feminism-and-self-criticism-notes-from.html [last accessed January 12th, 2015].

of violence had anticipated "unknowingly" this process of reorganization of the Lebanese feminist space. In fact, the Beijing Conference accelerated the legitimization of new issues of struggle and helped to put new themes, such as domestic violence, on the agenda, which were previously not taken into account by "official feminism". During the Beijing Conference, signs of divisions became apparent between feminists who produced knowledge about the existence of such violence and other feminists, who, from their academic position, "denied its existence."[1]

However, in the wake of the conference, Lebanese feminist organizations would gradually adopt new modes of action, more targeted and specialized and conforming to the language of donors. The implementation of CEDAW further accelerated a process of NGOization of feminist movements, accompanying the institutionalization of state feminism and breaking, in part, with the legacy of feminist movements of previous decades. This process included, among others, the creation by the Lebanese state of a National Commission on issues around gender, according to the CEDAW guidelines, which provide for the formation of a non-governmental committee affiliated to the National Commission and acting as the supervisory body.

The governmental commission was created with a lack of representation from civil society, which claimed its place in terms of "democratic decision" that existed within the movement. The atmosphere of cooperation between government efforts and those of civil society within the preparations of the Beijing Conference resulted in the exclusion of feminist organizations. In 1998, the non-governmental committee eventually separated from the National Commission, deciding to form an independent organization following disagreements with the administrative body.[2] These examples illustrate the political negotiations between the feminist groups and the state, on the one hand, and the rules of the game, which the Lebanese government sought to impose through its reservations on CEDAW, on the other.

The government's rejection of certain articles of CEDAW[3] has been a significant patriarchal resistance to reform at the heart of the Lebanese state institutions, which targeted sectarian structures of the family, the hypersexualization of the female body, and women's practice of their rights as citizens. The intervention of the Director General of the Ministry of Justice Wajih Khater (1995) on the text of the Treaty are particularly eloquent:

> "The principle on which the treaty was based is the principle of absolute equality between the woman and the man, without any consideration of her biological and physiological condition and her feminine specificity as wife and mother. This concentration is devoted to a Western cultural reality, not accepted by the Eastern manners related to civilizations and religions that differentiate between the man and the woman, with full preservation of the woman's dignity and the abolition of injustice towards her [...] Ultimately, the Lebanese government rejects the principle of equality [...] in the western manner that contradicts the principles of Islam and Christianity and rooted Eastern traditions."[4]

Simultaneously, with this dual process of professionalization and institutionalization, feminists were able to strengthen their role as experts, widely integrating new trends in the global discourse around gender equality, such as the comprehensive approach to the problem of violence against women. This change appeared to be a direct response to the resistance of the Lebanese state, in order to encourage it to withdraw its reservations to CEDAW. However, this resistance was not manifested only by the state, it was also reflected inside the Lebanese feminist space between organizations defending a radical perspective to those who claim more a record of expertise.

Beyond the debates, this process was also responsible for the emergence of new feminist organizations, such like LECORVAW, *al-lajna al-ahliya*, and, at later stages Kafa, Abaad, etc. Similarly, it required from some partisan structures to reposition themselves in relation to new causes of the 1990s: the issue of "gender" was by then largely integrated into the institutional and partisan agenda.

In the Lebanese context of the 2000s, the redeployment of "feminist" issues occurred on three principal levels; professionalization, supporting the representation of feminist causes, and the multiplicity of positions with respect to institutional frameworks.

Professionalism had been the source of multiple tensions inside the movement. However, it was necessary, to the extent that it allowed the groups to adapt and contextualize the new paradigms

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1 Interview with Asia on September 5th, 2013.
2 Interview with Ferial on May 21st, 2013.
3 The Lebanese reservations to CEDAW include Article 9, on equality in the nationality law, and Article 16 on equality in family laws.
4 Hurriyat Khassa (Personal Freedoms), *Al-Karama al-insaniyah fi qanun al-'uqubat* (Human Dignity in the Penal Code), Beirut, Sader Press, 2003.

adopted by CEDAW. The postwar period saw an abundance of funding, which supported the cre-ation of new organizations, as well as the "restructuring" of older feminist associations. For example, the LDWG implemented an external evaluation of its structures to adapt them to the needs of inter-national mechanisms. The paradigm shift caused by CEDAW contributed to some political auton-omy from partisan structures. To illustrate this, the process was created by the conflicts within the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), following the disintegration of the OCA and the collapse of the Soviet Union. This new feminist leadership created its new organizations, agendas, and networks; it chose the March of Women (MoW) as a new framework for mobilization, action and advocacy. How-ever, on the eve of the MoW, some of the organizations withdrew from the demonstration because the list of demands included enacting a civil personal status law.

These divisions reflected the multiple positions feminists took towards the "system" and recalled the limits imposed by the state on the application of CEDAW. This patriarchal record, dominant in the majority of Lebanese political actors and institutions, was further verified in 2014, with the partial adoption of the law on domestic violence. Although supposed to protect women from domestic violence, it was issued as a law to protect the family, maintaining women's status as dependent on the family structure. The Lebanese Legislature introduced concepts borrowed from religious institutions to the text, legalizing marital rape under the pretext of "conjugal rights".

As the limitations imposed by the state on the CEDAW approach significantly impeded legislative reform, the advocacy process for the protection of women against domestic violence was no less interesting, becoming a major political issue within the associative sector, but also on the institutional level.

Mirroring Society to Deconstruct Patriarchal Norms?

The movement around VAW, which began in 2000, crystallized in 2007 by the production of a draft law by Kafa. It was endorsed by a new coalition of feminist organizations, the National Alliance to Legislate the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence. The campaign succeeded, in 2014, to mobilize sections of society beyond the traditional circles of activists and created pressure for the law's adoption by the parliament. Around 5,000 people joined the March 8, 2014 march in Beirut to support the new bill, although it was adopted in a very patriarchal version on April 1, 2014.

To illustrate the different approaches to VAW and consequently the distance from patriarchy, two examples of mobilization will be considered here. The *Nu'min* (We Believe) campaign organized by Abaad and *Hone rujoulitak? Fattish 'an insanitak* ("Have you found your masculinity? Then seek thy humanity") coordinated by Kafa, on the occasion of "16 days of activism against violence against women" in 2012. Abaad launched a campaign broadcasting a message from the heads of religious sects, preaching to men to refrain from violence as a hated practice by religious texts. Abaad explained the objectives of the campaign by stating that "the approach we use is not simplistic toward religion, we are trying to negotiate with these institutions, and there are differences of opin-ion inside them we had to approach them in a non-threatening manner."[1] By not directly "threat-ening" the patriarchal institution, *Abaad* enshrined the power of religious leaders in explaining the sacred texts, and thus set the standard for control over society.

On the other hand, Kafa chose to introduce questions about the dominant forms of masculinity and sexist behavior by suggesting to men to build alternative identities that do not respond to the violent and oppressive model. In this perspective, Kafa launched an advertising campaign mirroring sexist behavior related to violence, to highlight male prerequisites and try to put them under the test in order to change them. In the same campaign, Kafa published testimonials written by men who think and live their masculinities by resisting patriarchy in public spaces but also within private and inti-mate relationships, in their daily life.

In Kafa's campaign the male speaks to embody the "resistant masculinities" to patriarchy, unlike the approach of Abaad, which contributes, for many observers, to reinforce the power of religious leaders, the guardians of sectarian family laws in the Lebanese context. These two approaches are opposed in their treatment of the standard: one attempts to deconstruct the hegemonic model of masculinity, the other strengthens the place of religious power in the determination of the standard, and thus protecting the status quo.

The distance of feminisms from Lebanese patriarchy varies between pragmatic and revolutionary approaches and among organizations, and sometimes within the same organization. Kafa, shows a dynamism in its position in relation to state institutions, combining lobbying against legislative and executive institutions and radical challenge to the patriarchal norm. Other organizations have

1 Interview with Sumaya on August 21st, 2013.

continued to favor national causes, adopting a holistic approach to social change, but this time around the claim of a "place" in the institutions, in particular calling for parliamentary and administrative quotas for women. Forms of institutional cooptation also appear in the field of women's NGOs, responding to donor projects, positioning themselves as "service providers" without really protesting the status quo.

Kafa succeeded in mobilizing citizens to the demonstration on March 8th, 2014, and in rendering VAW into an issue of public debate, when women victims of domestic violence revealed their "naked" identity in the public sphere encouraged by a wide media coverage. In Kafa's perspective, the bodies and stories of women victims of domestic violence voiced in the public space, will contribute to deconstruct this social phenomenon as a stigma, and put it forward as as a violation of rights. While these women used to be blamed and encouraged to endure violence in silence, the march showed them in their oppressed essence to claim their rights within the sectarian family structure in place. While this new protest strategy (which incorporates the voices of those who resist the "system") had mixed results, it requires of feminist organizations to explore new modes of social protest outside the legislative reform framed by the state.

An Intifada *of Feminism in the Arab Spring?*

A new feminist movement is campaigning in the context of the Arab Spring, for "freedom, independence, and security." In response to the question of the link between gender issues and revolution, three women launched *intifadat al-mar'a fi al-'alam al-'arabi* (The Uprising of Women in the Arab World) in October 2011. The first action on Facebook attracted thousands of entries; the page collected more than 100,000 supporters ("likers"). It was moderated (2012-2013) by a dozen of volunteer women. The *Intifada* group highlighted discrimination against women in the Arab world on all levels (social, economic, political, legal...) and the fact that women in the region share many struggles. Its objective was to reopen the debate on the situation of women who have suffered many backlashes against their rights after the revolts in the Arab countries. The collective made use of social media networks, as well as being inspired by a more classic repertoire of contention, organizing sit-ins and writing press releases. The content of the responses received by the campaign was no less interesting; in particular, themes relating to the question of the body sparked heated debates. The photo of Dana Bakdounes, an activist of the Syrian revolution, said: "I am with the uprising of women in the Arab world, because for 20 years I was not allowed to feel the wind blowing inside my hair and on my body." Bakdounes' post caused the page to be blocked for several days.

Feminist campaigns of the "Arab Spring" were focused primarily on issues related to the body and the need of Arab women to write their stories and History with a capital "H". The proliferation of initiatives promoted the formation of new organizations such as the aforementioned *Intifada, Ishtar,*[1] OpAntiSH,[2] and *Sawt al-Niswa* (which had broken off from Nasawiya).

This new approach is characterized by opposition to holistic approaches, wanting to document the invisible stories of women, written by themselves, as illustrated by the mentioned examples. The emergence of issues related to bodily rights was symbolized by the photo of the Egyptian Magda Alia al-Mahdy posing nude for the camera to protest sexual violence in Egypt in late 2011. This move was much criticized by the Liberals before the Islamists. Freedom of the body appeared as the added value of the struggles taking place in the Arab revolt, including those of its women. It constitutes a late claim of a *habeas corpus*[3] for women who express their opinions in public spheres and suffer its physical consequences.

The late formation of *habeas corpus* could be explained by a perception of the imminent danger of Islamism, especially those who aspire to the consolidation of power. The context of post-colonial Arab states, wanting to distance themselves from Western standards, but at the same time seeking to build societies on the values of secular Arab nationalism, socialism, and state Islamism, the seculars practiced containment policies and annexation of the bodies of women and their freedoms. This can be particularly interesting for further research.

The present research paper attempts to account for the ideological and sociological evolution of feminist mobilization in Lebanon.

The first wave, which was formed within the Republic, was born of women from the Lebanese

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1   http://3ashtar.com/home

2   Operation Anti Sexual Harassment https://www.facebook.com/opantish/info

3   Geneviève Fraisse, "L'HABEAS CORPUS des femmes : une double révolution ?", February 16th, 2014, http://feminis-tesentousgenres.blogs.nouvelobs.com/archive/2014/02/16/l-habeas-corpus-des-femmes-une-double-revolution-par-gen-evie-522793.html [last accessed on May 15th, 2014].

bourgeoisie, with a high level of education. The main slogan of their struggle was the end of colonialism. In this nationalist perspective, they claimed the right to vote and participate in political life. These Lebanese pioneers of feminism were generally quite far from the concerns of the working classes. Two main organizations were present at the time, marrying a sectarian division. It was only after the various demonstrations against the first electoral law of 1951 that denied women's participation in political life that these two organizations merged under the single banner of the Lebanese Council of Women. However, the approach of the new council had not intended to upset the religious status quo. Indeed, the political action of women of that generation received the blessing of sectarian political leaders, taking place under their supervision. In short, a "male feminism" dominated by sectarian leaders, and relatively disconnected from the popular bases.

The period following the disintegration of nationalism in Arab countries and their development projects reflected the transition from a nationalist feminism to a leftist one. The second wave emerged especially within political parties. Women organizations appeared only as appendages of partisan organizations, much like youth organizations. The cause of women was secondary, fading behind the cause of national liberation. Feminists of this generation were controlled and monitored by their male counterparts at the head of parties. After the defeat of 1967 and the questioning of dominant ideologies (Arab Nasserite nationalism, Baathist, pro-Palestinian and other), these feminists had access to the literature of feminist movements in Europe and the United States, reinforcing a certain intellectual and academic elitism, disconnected of the fate of Lebanese women, especially those in the poorest regions (Bekaa, Akkar, the South, etc.). The lack of political discourse crystallized with the beginning of the Civil War and the transformation of the work of women into humanitarian efforts without a real protest against warlords.

The third wave was born in the early 1990s, prior to the preparations for the Beijing conference. This period favored a more advanced 'NGOization' of feminist associations. Priorities were thus set by donors; rivalries and competition created new schisms. The elitism that characterizes the history of feminism in Lebanon was also present in this generation of experts who gained knowledge of a specific vocabulary.

The fourth wave was born around an anti-imperialist movement, which resulted in the formation of Helem (LGBT movement). It stemmed from a perception of women as the result of a social construction by the oppression of women by patriarchy and religious system. The fourth wave focused on lesbian identity of women from middle and upper classes who have access to Beirut private education (graduates of major universities such as the AUB, USJ, or LAU), led to the creation of Nasawiya. Like their predecessors, the new generation of feminists continued to operate in elite circles.

Is it therefore possible to speak of the failure of feminist utopia in Lebanon? It would be simplistic to deduce this conclusion from the history of the formation of feminist organizations. Certainly lobbying strategies with legislative, administrative, and judicial institutions are confined by the Lebanese state's reservations to CEDAW. Reservations that affect the essence of feminine existence: the right of women to control their own bodies. However, the impact of such strategies sparked an unprecedented mobilization in 2014 against the bill on domestic violence. Leadership of associations like Kafa promoted a discourse by women victims of domestic violence for the first time in the Lebanese public space, accompanied by a strong media campaign, which allowed the unveiling of victims to the general public. This transformation of the Lebanese feminist mobilization was partly induced by the rise of social movements throughout the Arab region and the proliferation of initiatives to claim the body and its everyday history, forming a *habeas corpus* within the "Arab spring".

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Gender politics in Lebanon and the limits of legal reformism
Riwa Salameh

It has become common in Lebanon to hear statements such as "men should be asking for their rights," expressed by men through a joke or by waging an endless conversation. Such sentiments were made public by Lebanese MP Ali Ammar, during the parliamentary session on the recent family violence[1] law, who said: "We call on women's organizations to draft a law that protects men from violence."[2]

Such statements, regardless of the level of their seriousness, imply that women are currently enjoying a life free of discrimination and violence and insinuate that gender equality has been achieved and became a question of the past.

Indeed, the extensive amount of violence, lack of justice and transparency, corruption, lack of workers rights, and violations against freedoms of speech are denying all Lebanese citizens their human rights. But this should not mean that gender equality has been realized; only that it takes a back seat. However, it reflects a transformation in women's status and role in society.

This paper will analyse the status of women in Lebanon, based on various indicators highlighting women's participation in politics and decision-making processes, with a focus on the structure and the responses of women's organizations when addressing discrimination against women. It aims to identify challenges that hinder the achievement of gender equality by examining gender equality from the legal perspective and in terms of women's economic status. Finally, the paper proposes an analysis of women's achievements in terms of gender equality, reviewing some strategies (and their limits) adopted to enhance women's status in Lebanon in the particular Lebanese socio-political context.

1. Women's status in Lebanon

1.1. Women: Legally second-class citizen

Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1996. The step was considered a major achievement towards equality by women's organizations who had struggled for the Convention's adoption. However, reservations by the Lebanese government – on Article 9, Paragraph 2, and Article 16, Paragraphs 1(c, d, f, g)[3] – refuted the purpose and objectives of CEDAW. The rejected articles related to personal status laws and nationality rights of women citizens. Through the reservations, the Lebanese state continued to deny women the enjoyment of the same rights as men in instances of marriage, divorce, and all family matters and upheld the ban on Lebanese women from passing their nationality to their husbands and children. The reservations intended to maintain the current personal status law, which is under the mandate of religious courts, rather than civil courts.

According to some women's organizations, these reservations are an obstacle towards concrete advancement in women's rights. For example, KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation (KAFA), the Collective for Research & Training on Development-Action (CRTD-A), the Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL), and several other organizations launched a campaign protesting the Lebanese state's promotion of patriarchal authority over women's rights by preserving the discrimination inherent in religious personal status laws.

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1 Family Violence is is when someone intentionally uses violence, threats, force, or intimidation to control or manipulate a family member. The difference between family and domestic violence is that the first highlights violence committed by an extended family member, while domestic violence covers violence committed by partners who are not necessarily family members or spouses.

2 Saada Allaw, "Will KAFA ask 10 MPs to challenge the law?", *Assafir*, Arabic, April 2, 2012, available online at http://bit.ly/1tpAbX4 [last accessed on June 7, 2014].

3 UNGA, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, adopted on 18/12/1979, available online at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/ [last accessed on April 26, 2014].

What is wrong with personal status law?

As it stands, the Lebanese constitution delegates all personal status laws to sect-specific religious courts. All matters related to family (divorce, marriage, inheritance, custody of children) remain the exclusive responsibility of religious institutions, which subscribe to the notion that men should be at the head of the family unit, hence preserving the inferiority of women under the law.

Inspired by religious discourse, this legal structure necessarily places women as second-class citizens, treating them as minors in decisions related to governing their own lives. Suad Joseph describes how citizenship in the Arab world is gendered through nation, religion, family, state, and the individual:

> "Most constitutions of Arab states identify the basic unit of society as the family. This suggests the masculinization of citizenship in Arab states is tied to a culturally specific notion of the citizen as subject. The Arab citizen subject is seen as a patriarch, the head of a patriarchal family, legally constituted as the basic unit of the political community who accrues rights and responsibilities concomitant with that legal status."[1]

In Lebanon, Marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody and alimony are governed by religious courts, which favor men and represent their supreme interests. Religious courts apply arbitrary rules on women, subjecting them to various levels of inequality in comparison to men. For example, women from non-Christian sects inherit less than their male counterparts and the age of marriage for women is lower than that of men across all sects. Men are considered the sole decision makers in matters of divorce, in particular according to Muslim sects. Additionally, the prohibition of divorce in Catholic sects ultimately favors men over women, due to the unequal dominant social and economic order.

This reality cannot be ignored, as people are basically unable to practice social life, relations, and personal choices outside of the license of sectarianism. These aspects of social and personal practices are all centered around the notion of the family unit and governed by its dynamics. They are ultimately shaped by the interests of the ruling religious and political establishment, where the family is defined by law through male kinship. Hence, the Lebanese state denies a wide variety of rights for citizens, which fall outside the sectarian structures. The personal status law also discriminates among and between women (of different confessions), through disparate statuses and conditions set by different religious courts, whereby the personal status of women citizens are accorded according to their religious denomination.

The delegation of personal status to religious jurisprudence compromises the safety of women, complicates the establishment of protection mechanisms, and often legitimizes violence against women. Thus, it could be inferred that the Lebanese state denies its citizens their individual constitutional rights, by allowing sects to establish their own religious courts. And since men are the heads of families according to religion, women will remain at the bottom of this hierarchy. Consequently, this implies that discrimination is legalized and protected by law, as religious ideas and discourses – which often discriminate against women and define gender roles according to their particular understanding – are not merely personal beliefs, but applicable laws with a direct impact on peoples' lives. This issue will be discussed in details below.

Discrimination in Civil Law and the Penal Code

Discrimination against Lebanese women extends to the penal code. Nationality laws deprive women of the right to pass the Lebanese nationality to their families if they choose to marry a non-Lebanese citizen. Moreover, articles related to rape in the Penal Code exempt rapists from penalty if they simply declare their intention to marry the victim (Article 522)[2] and criminalize rape while clearly excluding incidents of rape and forced intercourse practiced by a husband on a wife (Articles 503 and 504).[3]

Moreover, Article 541[4] of the Lebanese Penal Code criminalizes abortion and effectively denies women their right to control their bodies. However, abortion is not considered criminal if it is with the intention of maintaining a woman's 'honor' (Article 545)[5], even in the case of forced abortion

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1 Suad Joseph, "Gender and Citizenship in the Arab World", Concept, University of California, Davis, 2002, available online at: http://www.euromedgenderequality.org/image.php?id=487 [last accessed on June 6, 2014].
2 Lebanese Penal Code, http://www.madcour.com/LawsDocuments/LDOC-1-634454580357137050.pdf, in Arabic, [Accessed on 2/4/2014].
3 *Ibid.*
4 *Ibid.*
5 *Ibid.*

inflicted on women without their consent by male family members (articles 542 and 543)[1]. According to articles related to abortion, women's bodies and unwanted pregnancies can be subject to decisions by (most probably male) family members, but not by women themselves.

This situation forces women to compromise their protection by undergoing so-called 'back-alley' abortions, where it is impossible to hold accountable the doctors who performed the surgery due to its criminalization. Nermine el-Horr recounts the story of a woman who had to undergo such process, in the article, "Secret abortion market: poor women are the victims." Horr explains how poor women in particular are facing serious obstacles and safety issues if they wished to abort an unwanted pregnancy.[2]

Adultery laws reveal more gender-based disparities in terms of punishment and scope. Articles 487 and 488[3] of the Penal Code specifies a penalty from one month to one year, when a man commits adultery in the marital household or in public. On the other hand, women are penalized up to years in any situation considered to be adulterous. Furthermore, while a woman's extramarital partner is not considered a guilty party, a man's extramarital partner (or his mistress) is penalized.

Despite affirmations by the Lebanese state concerning equality between all citizens, as set forth by the Constitution of the Republic of Lebanon, it is clear that civil laws and personal status laws are equally gendered, with a clear and declared bias against women.

The next section will examine how this discrimination applies in the workforce and working class women in particular by examining the socio-economic situation of women and the value of their work.

1.2. Women: the invisible and exploited working class

The vast majority of workers, if not all, are subjected to labor exploitation in one-way or another. But women seem to face the brunt of this discrimination. Such observations are diluted by official labor statistics, which claim that only 23% of women above 15 are part of the formal labor force.[4] By excluding the informal sector, labor statistics imply that most women are not economically active. However, female exploitation cannot be measured through a simplistic assessment of wages and benefits in the formal workforce. The vast majority of working women are invisible, employed in the informal sector or in the household. Tasks performed in the household should be considered part of the social care sector, defined by Seiko Sugita as referring to

> "[...] work that involves connecting with other people and trying to help them meet their needs, such as caring for children, the elderly, and sick people. Teaching is also a form of caring labor, whether it is paid or unpaid. Social care is a unique type of work. Since social care does not generate financial resources and does not contribute to economic production as measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the classical definition of work has not considered it as proper work."[5]

Patriarchal society sets a double standard by not considering labor within the household to be economically valuable. By default, this denies the value of the majority of women labor, as patriarchy limits women's primary labor role to the family sphere, and refuses to acknowledge the economic value of this type labor. Sugita shares the findings of a survey of 2,797 households regarding division of household labor.

> "According to a cross-sectional survey of 2,797 households in three communities in Lebanon, a clear division of household labor was apparent, with more than 70 percent reporting that the wife performed in-house chores such as cooking and washing clothes and dishes. The analysis shows the correlation between the lack of involvement of the husband in housework and the wives' psychological distress, marital dissatisfaction, and overall unhappiness. In comparison with wives whose husbands were highly involved in housework, wives whose husbands were minimally involved were 1.60 times more likely to be distressed, 2.96 times more likely to be uncomfortable with their husbands, and 2.69 times more likely to be unhappy.

> "Among the 16 households where the main caregivers are married, only one household responded that the husband is the main executor of the non-care household tasks such as

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1   *Ibid.*
2   Nermine el-Horr, "*Souq al-Ijhad al-Sirri* [Secret abortion market]," *al-Akhbar*, Arabic, April 22, 2010, available online at: https://www.al-akhbar.com/node/54031 [last accessed on April 2, 2014].
3   Lebanese Penal Code, *op. cit.*
4   Azza Charara-Baydoun, "Women in Power and Decision-making Positions: Conditions and Restraints," *al-Raida,* Issue 126-127, 2009, p. 53.
5   Seiko Sugita, "Social Care and Women's Labor Participation in Lebanon", a*l-Raida,* Issue 128, Winter 2010, p. 31.

cooking and cleaning. In 15 households, women are the ones most responsible for the execution or supervision of the housework. Indeed, only 9 out of 22 people interviewed in the context of this study thought that men should take more responsibility in carrying out household tasks. In many cases, the lack of participation and contribution is explained by the long working hours."[1]

Although the family unit is positioned as the frontline caregiver and takes over the social and health responsibilities of the inadequate State, women's labor in the family sphere remains unrecognized and is considered a "duty" and "responsibility". Consequently, women carry the burden of numerous caregiving services to children, older persons, and family members with special needs, which otherwise should be the burden of the State. These long working hours, which are often trivialized, are spent managing and performing tasks in the household, free of charge.

"Social care in Lebanon is often considered a family and private matter, in which the state is traditionally reluctant to intervene. In fact, the various kinds of household chores are all considered as a woman's job. Moreover, social rituals within the extended family structure are usually time consuming and labor-intensive, and constitute thus an additional burden to the care needs of the nuclear family."[2]

In our society, women receive no compensation for working in these areas:

"Unpaid caregiving and assistance activities include housework (cooking, cleaning) and care for people (children's hygiene, assistance to elderly and the infirm) performed in homes and communities. They contribute to well-being and economic growth through the reproduction of a sound and productive workforce, able to learn and innovate. In all economies and cultures, women bear the greatest burden of unpaid care. In addition, it is estimated that if a monetary value is assigned to this work, it would represent between 10 and 39 percent of the GDP."[3]

Low-paid Migrant Domestic work

In addition to the estimate above, it is important to note the high numbers of migrant domestic workers who perform such tasks at very low wages in Lebanon. On this matter Seiko Sugita notes that:

"Social care is a growing market where foreign housemaids supply their labor for the Lebanese middle class (Jureidini, 2003)... The standard remuneration is on average five thousand pounds (3.5 dollars) per hour for Lebanese and Palestinian women and freelance foreign workers. This type of freelance care service is attractive to many households where there is not enough room for a live-in domestic worker and where there is no need for a full-time domestic worker."[4]

Although this may be an economic estimate of the cost, it falls far short of the actual economic contribution of unpaid household services, as migrant women represent another exploited social class governed by discriminatory contract called the sponsorship system. According to a study by KAFA:

"The 'sponsorship system' in Lebanon is comprised of various customary practices, administrative regulations, and legal requirements that tie a migrant domestic worker's residence permit to one specific sponsor in the country. Migrant domestic workers are excluded from the Lebanese labor law, denied their freedom of association, and not guaranteed freedom of movement."[5]

The non-recognition of women's domestic work as an economic value and the exploitation of migrant domestic workers relieves the state from the burden of providing those services, placing them on the backs of women.

Yet, women's unpaid labor is not restricted to domestic work. According to a study conducted by CRTD-A:

1 *Ibid.*

2 *Ibid.*

3 UNRISD, "Pourquoi les soins sont importants pour le développement social (Synthèses de l'UNRISD sur les recherches et politiques)," May 5, 2010, available online at: http://bit.ly/1nxhflN, [accessed on July 10, 2014]; also quoted in, Delphine Torres Tailfer, "Women and Economic Power in Lebanon: The legal framework and challenges to women's economy," CRTD-A, 2012, available online at: http://bit.ly/1lIwz3C [last accessed on March 12, 2014].

4 Sugita, 2010, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

5 KAFA, *Policy Paper on Reforming the 'Sponsorship System' for Migrant Domestic Workers: Towards an Alternative Governance Scheme in Lebanon,* January 2012, http://www.kafa.org.lb/StudiesPublicationPDF/PRpdf47.pdf [Accessed on 2/4/2014].

"Women represent 34% of the total permanent family work force in agriculture in unpaid labor...They provide considerable labor to the tobacco crop. They also collect wood for energy and nearly 40% of remote rural areas require women to fetch water from source or wells. Many women are hired to perform seasonal agricultural work, particularly during harvest time, receiving low salaries."[1]
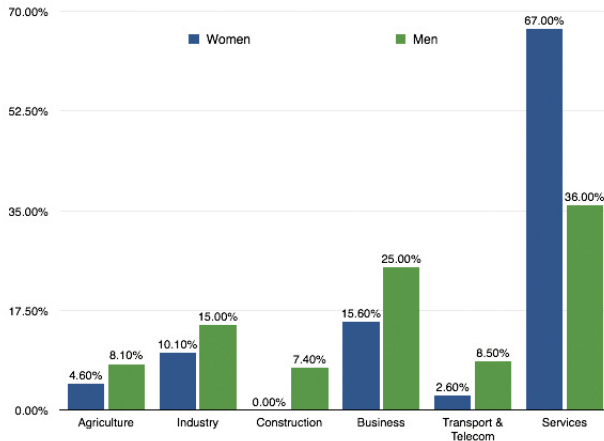

Figure 1. Labor force by economic sector, in percentage of labor force by gender. Source: UNDP 2007 Household Survey

Women's labor in the agricultural sector is also invisible. According to the same study "agriculture employs 12% of the Lebanese workforce, ranking it last among Lebanon's economic sectors. Women participate significantly in agriculture but mostly as invisible labor."[2]

Women participating in paid labor also face economic exploitation. At least 57% of female employment is informal,[3] unregulated by the labor law. This sector is mainly characterized by lack of safety, long working hours, arbitrary expulsion, and lack of social security. It is also important to note that the majority of NGO workers are women, employed in time-limited project and where donors fail to take into consideration the need for budget lines related to social security and insurance. Furthermore, the NGO sector lacks clear salary scales and workers are denied the ability to enjoy salary raises in a systematic manner.

Carole Kerbage shares the stories of women NGO workers who expressed frustration about their working conditions:

"Maya (not her real name) has ten years experience in civil society organizations, during which she moved between seven different organizations (the longest period she spent at one organization was a year and a half). Throughout those years she only received social security benefits for two years, therefore she was deprived of a large chunk of end of service indemnity. She admits that she has recurring anxiety about funding running out or the project ending."[4]

From a different angle, women are also victims of sexual harassment and mistreatment while performing their work. However, figures stating the level of sexual harassment do not exist due to social constraints and the culture of victim blaming. This prompted Legal Agenda (a judicial watchdog NGO) to draft a law addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. The proposed regulation suggested that:

"Physical or psychological harassment in the workplace constitutes a threat to the right to work, the right to privacy, the mental health of workers, their physical integrity, the right to non-discrimination, and so on. Despite the gravity of those acts, Lebanese legislations are still free of any prohibitive articles, leaving individuals vulnerable to harassment without effective protection. This gap is aggravated by the fact that harassment impacts the most vulnerable

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1 Tailfer, 2012, *op. cit.*

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 Carol Kerbaj, "NGOs in Lebanon: Abusing Their Workers in the Name of Human Rights," *al-Akhbar*, English, July 7, 2012, available online at: http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/ngos-lebanon-abusing-their-workers-name-human-rights, [last accessed on April 2, 2014].

categories of wage earners, including workers conducting domestic and agricultural services, who do not benefit from protection under the labor law."[1]

Although Lebanon is considered a 'progressive' country in comparison with its neighbors, women's sexuality is still considered a taboo. Society ties family honor inextricably to women's sexuality. Revealing an incident of sexual harassment would compromise her safety, reputation, and advancement in life, not to mention the physical and psychological consequences of such an incident.

Collectively, women also face discrimination and inequality in wages, benefits, and sick leave, compared to their male colleagues. They are paid 27% less than their male counterparts for the same type of work.[2] Likewise, they have limited opportunities in accessing decision-making positions. Moreover, women are limited to low–income care-provider jobs, which reinforce stereotypical gender roles for the most part, and the great majority of women are employed in the services sector.[3]

In short, the majority of women suffer from various forms of exploitation, including unvalued domestic work and employment in the formal and informal sectors. This exploitation is institutionalized through the non-recognition of economic value of domestic work and invisibility in the labor code, namely for migrant domestic workers. Furthermore, the total absence of state policies related to protecting women in the workplace could lead to hesitation in joining the workforce. The Lebanese state turns a blind eye to sexual harassment and the exploitation of women in terms of wages and social security, in both the formal and informal sectors. The governance of personal status by religious institutions clearly stipulates that the man should be at the head of the family unit, which necessarily means that women's work is always secondary in comparison to her 'duties' at home. Moreover, the educational curriculum is far from being gender-sensitive; rather, it contributes to sustaining the stereotypical image of women as mothers and caregivers.

1.3. Women's political participation

In 1995, Lebanon participated at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and agreed on the principle of equal access by men and women to power structures and decision-making bodies. Participating countries are obliged to abide by the recommendations of the final statement, which requires each country to set goals and implement measures to substantially increase the number of women in leadership. Women's organizations considered the conference to be a huge step towards women's political participation. However, after almost two decades, this participation remains almost non-existent and Lebanese women are still excluded from decisions making positions.

Women's organizations are constantly proposing a quota system for parliamentary elections to ensure a framework for such participation. However, this suggestion contains limitations in terms of achieving effective participation and, most importantly, ensuring a share for women in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, women's participation in parliament does not guarantee that women agendas will get through legislative bodies by default. In fact, MP Gilberte Zwein, a member in the joint committee discussing the draft law to protect women from family violence, did not support the demands of women's organizations and her presence did not prevent the committee from distorting the content of the law.

Azza Baydoun gives a revealing description of the confessional system restricting women from access to political positions:

> "In Lebanon, like any country that is governed by a patriarchal system, belonging [...] to a particular family is inherited through the male line of kinship (bloodline) [...] By contrast, a women's lineage or affiliation changes through marriage, as does her sectarian, regional, and familial affiliation... Therefore, the appointment of males in decision-making positions [...] has clear benefits for all actors, whether political authorities, decision-makers, or recipients and beneficiaries, i.e. citizens under this system."[4]

It is quite clear that the patriarchal and sectarian nature of the state functions as an obstacle to women's presence in the political scene. Personal status laws are intimately tied to political nepotism, where the male head of families are also heirs to the political throne. The incident below illustrates an example of how such laws deny women access to politics.

In October 2013, the municipality of Nahr Ibrahim was disbanded. When the municipality president was asked about the reason, he answered that four out of nine municipality members resigned

1   Legal Agenda, "Draft Law on Harassment in the Workplace", *Legal Agenda*, February 3rd, 2014, available online at: http://www.legal-agenda.com/newsarticle.php?id=573&lang=ar#.UzwJcVeWn-A [last accessed on April 2, 2014].
2   Torres Tailfer, 2012, *op.cit.*
3   Sugita, 2010, *op.cit.*, p. 31.
4   Charara-Baydoun, 2009, *op. cit.*, page 53.

and the fifth, a woman, was no longer eligible for the position. A municipality is disbanded when a majority of its delegates resign. The fifth member, a woman, however, did not resign. She had married a man from outside of the village and therefore lost her affiliation with the village she was born and raised in and which she politically represented. Her political affiliation changed to that of her husband's, effectively voiding her ability to represent her community. The minister of interior and municipalities decided to disband the municipality.[1]

Similarly and due to dominant patriarchal culture, women are unable to reach parliament or government, except in the absence of a male heir in the family. Doreen Khoury eloquently explains how this access can be denied, in her article Women's political participation in Lebanon. She explains how all political blocs are linked to family allegiances and how "most followers accept that the leader's son will inherit his position."[2] This applies to women who joined the parliament after the death of male relative or the absence of the male heir which means in her opinion that the patriarchal construct in the family is replicated in the politics:

> "The patriarchal construct of the family in Lebanese [sic.] is replicated in Lebanese politics. Political familism has been one of the major factors affecting the relationship between state and citizen. It is a two way process. Citizens depend on their families and extended families (i.e. kinship ties) to extract demands and privileges from the state and state actors deploy these ties to mobilize supporters and control sectors of the state. When the state fails to provide protection and resources to its citizens, they turn inwards towards their families, patriarchs and sects."[3]

Hence, even if the participation of a number of women in parliament or the government is achieved, the main challenge deterring women from accessing such institutions to put in place an agenda for women will remain untouched.

The following table illustrates women's participation in decisions-making and the political scene in Lebanon in general:

Position	Year	Women's Participation	Position	Year	Women's Participation
Lawyers syndicate (Beirut-North)	2010	0%	Executive board of general union	2010	0%
Engineers syndicate (Beirut-North)	2010	3 out of 31 members (9.79%)	Judges	2010	42%
Doctors syndicate (Beirut-North)	2010	6.25%	Mukhtars [neighborhood mayors]	2010	3.6 (148 out of 2570)
Dentist syndicate	2010	0%	Parliament	2009	3.12 (4 out of 128)
Pharmacist syndicate	2010	25%	Government	2009	2 ministers
Journalism syndicate	2010	12.5%	Government	2011	0
Editors syndicate	2010	8.33%	Government	2014	1 minister
Political bureaus (political parties)	2010	12-16%	Municipalities	2010	4.55 (520 out of 11425)
General managers-first degree (public sector)	2010	13.3%			

Source: Azza Mroueh, intervention by Lebanese League for Women's Rights (LLWR) at the Consultative Workshop for Civil Society organizations in the Arab Region on the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action after twenty years, 12 August 2014.

1 Nicole Youhanna, "Marriage dissolves Nahr Ibrahim municipality," *al-Joumhouria*, Beirut, 13/11/2014, available online at: http://www.aljoumhouria.com/news/index/103523 [last accessed on Sptember 7, 2014].
2 Doreen Khoury, "Women's Political Participation in Lebanon," Heinrich Boell Foundation - Middle East, 23/9/2013, available online at: http://www.boell-meo.org/en/2013/09/23/womens-political-participation-lebanon [last accessed on 6/9/2014].
3 *Ibid.*

The above table, although a mere snapshot of women's participation in formal politics, demonstrates that women are far from achieving equality and are held back from decision-making positions and the political scene in general. The question of representation was discussed above, in relation to its links with the patriarchal family structure. This situation is replicated, however, in the dynamics of representation in other types of institutions.

Out of all the professional and representative positions in the political class, the only place where women are close to parity is in the judiciary, as 42% of judges in higher courts in 2010 were women and were expected to reach 60% in 2011.[1] Although UNDP considers the figure to be "a promising progress in women political participation," the situation could be attributed to fierce competition in the litigation sector and the prevalent "old-boy" networks of prominent lawyers, leaving the judiciary – and its merit system – as the only channel for many women with law degrees to actually practice law. This exception, which proves the rule, becomes even more apparent when compared with the percentage of women in the leadership of bar associations, which are sustained by the same pool of professionals.

Generational questions also play a role, especially since it is only now that post-civil war generations have begun to assume influential positions. However, in this particular case and several other professions, women also constitute a majority of university graduates in the field, especially from the Lebanese University, which is reserved for the poorest social segments.[2] Despite equal access to education and improvement in the opportunity to join professions on the formal level, women – especially less privileged women with less access to ruling structures – tend to become invisible and have to confront another glass ceiling in their professional associations.

2. Responses and challenges

The above situation raises questions about the effectiveness and impact of responses and tools used by women's organizations regarding women's political participation. This section analyses women's organizations responses to the aforementioned status, highlighting their achievements and influence on women's lived experiences as well as their contributions to gender equality. It also looks at the challenges and obstacles that play an essential role in hindering the realization of gender equality.

Considering the long history of the women's movement in Lebanon, gains in terms of achieving gender equality remain lacking on all levels. The reforms realized so far have had little impact on women's lives and remain far from fulfilling women's ambitions in enjoying life free of violence and discrimination. But, what makes gender equality so hard to achieve despite the long years of struggle?

2.1. An alternative response?

In its coverage of the 2013 International Women's Day (IWD) march, al-Liwaa newspaper chose to focus on the status of some marchers as a measure of legitimacy. The march itself was characterized by shy attendance and only attracted women engaged in women's organizations – similar to other protests calling for women's rights, which failed to adequately mobilize the vast masses of women. The newspaper wrote:

> "In this context, the Gathering for Women Youth and Civil Associations organized a national march to achieve equality and full citizenship for women. It was attended by the president of the National Commission for Lebanese Women Ms. Wafaa Sleiman represented by the former minister Wafa al-Diqa Hamadeh and Dr. Fadia Kiwan. The former ministers Mona Ofeish and Pierre Dakach and a number of professors, women's organizations, human rights committees, and civil society organizations also participated in the march."[3]

What is notable about this piece of news is that it is repeated every year, giving the impression that IWD is merely a yearly celebration by the same group of women presenting the same demands listed the article year after year. This observation does not intend to undermine women's activism and mobilization or other existing campaigns. Rather, it attempts to raise questions about failure to mobilize wide sections of women on issues with a direct impact on their lives. However, this inability

1   UNDP, "The Millennium Development Goals in Lebanon", available online at: http://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg3/ [last accessed on September 6, 2014].

2   Najwa Yaacoub and Lara Badre, "Education in Lebanon", *Statistics in Focus*, Issue 3, April 2012, Central Administration of Statistics, Lebanon, available online at: http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/PDFs/SIF/CAS_Education_In_Lebanon_SIF3.pdf [last accessed on September 6, 2014].

3   "*Masira wataniya wa nashatat wa bayanat wa nadawat fi yawm al-mar'a al-alami* [National procession, activities, statments, and workshops on IWD]," *Al-Liwaa*, Beirut, March 11, 2013, http://www.aliwaa.com/Article.aspx?ArticleId=157313 [last accessed on March 30, 2014].

to attract a strong political base of women in such protests is an indication of the challenges faced by women's organizations in relating with other women who do not belong to an elite community.

On the other hand, the 2014 demonstration attracted around 5,000 persons demanding the endorsement of the law to protect women from family violence. The action reflected specific demands set by the organizers (led by KAFA) as well as calls by feminists to end violence and discrimination against women. The diversity of the participants and the significant response, in comparison with the recent past, indicated an ability to build a far-reaching movement calling for women's right.

Although the 2014 IWD demonstration was the first to be organized by KAFA or similar organizations, it stood out due to the absence of official participation by mainstream political parties or 'prominent' figures in society. Rather, the call was for people to raise their voices and pressure the parliament to endorse the law related to violence against women and ensure specific protections for women.[1]

The above is merely an indicator of the ability of women's organizations to create a wide movement and mobilize people once IWD stops being a mere commemoration of a day and adopts an agenda, to which people, particularly women, could relate. However, this ability is challenged by organizational structures and limitations in terms of engaging with the public and providing spaces for building alliances and where people could contribute to decisions-making, strategizing, and setting actions plans and priorities for women's movement.

A brief history of women's organizations in Lebanon

The era of al-Nahda, characterized by associative effervescence, witnessed the emergence of many women's organizations in Lebanon. Academics identified what has been called the first wave or first generation of women organizations, which were mainly charity oriented, much like the rest of the existing associative organizations during that era. The 1960s and 1970s saw the birth of a second "wave," which burgeoned from left-wing groups; this generation adopted specific women-centered issues.[2] During the 1990s, a third wave of organizations – created in the aftermath of international conventions (CEDAW, 1979; Beijing, 1995) – underlined a new trend of "professionalization" of women activism in Lebanon.[3] More recently, the 2000s, and in the vein of alternative globalisation mobilizations, witnessed the emergence of groups presenting themselves as "radical," and which focused their demands on gender identities and sexual rights, with an increasing trend of health service provisions shifting away from right based and advocacy mobilization.[4]

The following section will elaborate on some structures and organizational methods adopted by women's organizations, National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), the Lebanese Council for Women (LCW), RDFL, KAFA, and CRTD-A.

2.2. Top-down structures

NCLW was established by the Lebanese state in 1996 in accordance with the 1995 Beijing Resolution. It was formed of official and non-official bodies and structured to have the First Lady as president and the parliamentary speaker's wife and the wife of the prime minister's wife as vice presidents, in tandem with the Lebanese sectarian political structure.

Such state-driven structures, evident in the majority of reactions to Beijing, cannot be seen as credible or welcoming for women, who are suffering from the sectarian system and forced to delegate their personal matters to religious institutions. Thus, a conflict of interest has already been established in terms of the commission's agenda. On one hand, this commission is mandated to monitor the application of the CEDAW convention and enhance gender equality. On the other, it is directly affiliated with the sectarian system, which continuously perpetuates gender discrimination and conflicts with the CEDAW convention itself. Furthermore, the structure clearly denies the access of women to leadership positions and limits such access to a small group of women from the political class.

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1 For more information on the message of the campaign, please see, KAFA, "So what happened to us would not happen to you," IWD campaign promo featuring the mothers of women victims of violence, YouTube, March 4, 2014: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeQiegAewvg [last accessed on September 9, 2014].

2 Fahmiyeh Charafeddine, *Al-harakat al-nisa'iyya fi Lubnân (Women's Movements in Lebanon)*, ESCWA, 2006.

3 Bernadette Daou, *Les féminismes au Liban. Etude des principales organisations et campagnes féministes (titre provisoire)*, mémoire de master 2, Université Saint-Joseph, Masters thesis, Forthcoming.

4 Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi, *L'altermondialisme au Liban : un militantisme de passage. Logiques d'engagement et reconfiguration de l'espace militant (de gauche) au Liban*, Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne, 2013.

LCW – an umbrella of more than 100 organizations[1] – had been founded 1952 as a result of the merger of two bodies, the Lebanese Arab Women's Union, founded in 1920, and the Solidarity of Lebanese Women association, founded in 1947.[2] LCW follows a top to bottom structure, compromising women's agendas in favor of sectarian benefit. Lara Khattab eloquently expresses this issue in her thesis entitled Civil Society in a Sectarian Context: the Women's movement in Post-War Lebanon:

> "The General Assembly, the decision-making body which is also responsible for the election of a new administrative committee, is almost totally colonized by confessional and sectarian associations. Hence, the same council which sets for itself the goal to empower women brings together the largest number of associations that have the highest stakes in alienating women. Most of these associations are headed by a religious or a sectarian leader, are oriented towards service provision for their narrow confessional communities operating under a system of religious patriarchy."[3]

Nonetheless, this is not necessarily the case for all women's organizations, as many of them, including KAFA, CRTD-A, and RDFL, to name but a few, refuse to be part of LCW and adopt a non-sectarian agenda.[4] The top to bottom structure, however, also denies women access to decision-making and leadership positions in those organizations, despite this structural distinction. For example, although RDFL is structured as a member-based organization active throughout the country, its ability to mobilize women on political demands remains limited, largely due to the non-circulation of leadership. For instance, Wadad Chakhtoura remained at the head of the organization from the 1980s until her death in 2007.

By contrast but with a similar effect, KAFA and CRTD-A are led by a professional leadership, which relies on performing daily tasks by hired staff, which is not heavily involved in strategic planning. This structure draws distinct lines between women professionals advocating for women's rights, their staff, and women "beneficiaries." In effect, beneficiaries are often seen in the position of victims, rather than women who share the same cause.

These hierarchical patterns turn women organizations into exclusive spaces for experts and professionals, leaving no room for other women, especially working class women, to join the decision-making and strategic planning process. Likewise, women are turned into victims, rather than being part of a platform where women's voices and experiences can be raised and shared.

This particular situation is explained by Nisrine Mansour in her thesis Family Law and Women's Subjectivity and Agency in Post-conflict Lebanon:

> "The shift towards service delivery with the VAW [violence against women] approach created new expertise roles for activists as translators of knowledge on gender equality in family law. It also included professional staff as new operational translators of this knowledge. As discussed below, this division of labour worked in tandem to further marginalize women's participation in collective action."[5]

Mansour also shares her experience at a feminist conference she attended:

> "One example is the conference that I participated in during my fieldwork on the achievements and challenges of the feminist movement in Lebanon. In one of the discussions, several feminist activists lamented the fact that the burden of collective action has become increasingly too big to bear, as there the numbers of new feminist activists joining women groups was very low. The discussion between long-standing activists and other younger members of the audience explained the conundrum of the 'feminist activist'. Two feminist activists gave different explanations. The president of LWNGO5 found that there was 'low commitment by young generations to the issues of women's rights.' The president of LWNGO3 rather attributed it to the 'burdens of economic constraints and the domestic pressures that women face by their family obligations' (Fieldnotes 2005). These two explanations framed individuals – and primarily women – as either unconcerned or constrained, but in both cases defaulting from the 'activist' role. While the discussion went on along these lines, an unaffiliated young woman participant asked to speak. She explained openly that she and her friends are interested in working on women's issues, but they feel 'crowded out by long standing members

1 For a list of LCW members, please check the following link: http://bit.ly/1u4ZGPV [last accessed on September 6, 2014].

2 Lebanese Council for Women (LCW): http://lcw-cfl.org/en/en-us/history.aspx [last accessed on February 28, 2014].

3 Lara Khattab, *Civil society in a sectarian context: the women's movement in post-war Lebanon*, Masters Thesis, Lebanese American University, Beirut, 2010, available online at: http://bit.ly/1rayoTh [last accessed on September 9, 2014].

4 *Ibid.*

5 Nisrine Mansour, *Governing the Personal: Family Law and Women's Subjectivity and Agency in Post-conflict Lebanon*, London school for Economics & political Science, 2011.

in rigid organizational structures' (Fieldnotes 2005). The young woman's views pointed to a sense of exclusion that individuals might have within feminist circles."[1]

In conclusion, women organizations are still unable to establish a mass movement that can actually push for gender equality. This failure is mainly due to their top to bottom structures, affiliation with the sectarian patriarchal system – as with NCLW and LCW, or to the dichotomy of experts and beneficiaries – as with KAFA, CRTD-A and RDFL.

Organizations like KAFA, CRTD-A, and LWDG are considered influential bodies, which confront the confessional system by demanding a civil law for personal status, nationality for Lebanese women's families, and taking part in demands for civil marriage. Yet, the lack of leadership circulation, and the elitist distinction based on expertise causes the exclusion of women, in particular younger women, from accessing decision-making positions. NGOization, however, does not merely apply to Lebanese women's organizations. It is a phenomenon that characterizes contemporary civil society organizations around in the world. Ultimately, the process tends to imprison women's organizations in elite circles and such structures replicate the hierarchical patriarchal system, in terms of using its tools as means of change instead of creating a different model of peer organizing.

2.3. Limits of legal reform under sectarian laws

Recently, strategies by women's organizations began focusing on adopting advocacy campaigns through engaging with decision-makers and governmental institutions, in the aim of achieving reforms leading to the enhancement of the situation of women. This process, however, has imposed long-term negotiations with these institutions, where key demands would be transformed, distorted, and eroded in a manner that compromises the main objectives. Condemning them to remain governed within sectarian family law, these distortion actually tighten the noose around women's necks, as will be elaborated below concerning campaigns engaging with religious leaders.

In the first eight months of 2013, ten women were killed by their sons, fathers, or husbands.[2] Throughout the same year, 450 cases of family violence were documented by KAFA alone. The question of protection came to the forefront through women who began breaking the silence around the issue of family violence. Their stories revealed that religious courts are practicing injustice towards women in cases of divorce and custody and even incidents of severe violence. Such voices deemed religious courts as incapable of providing protection. Their role in such incidents was seen as enhancing and legitimizing the status quo, by imposing silence on women and insisting on considering family violence as a private matter and religious taboo.

In 2007, lack of protection under the current mandate of religious courts dealing with family issues prompted KAFA to spearhead the "Draft Law to Protect Women from Family Violence." The proposed law did not merely criminalize all forms of family violence – physical, sexual, mental, verbal, and economic. It also included several regulations to protect women and girls inside the family, such as provisions on restraining orders, reporting violence, securing accommodation and/or medical expenses for victims, safeguarding the family privacy, and ensuring the establishment of family units in the Internal Security Forces (ISF).

However, despite the brutality of recent incidents of femicide, the Parliamentary Subcommittee of the Joint Parliamentary Committee studying the draft law to protect women from family violence failed to adapt the law as it was proposed by the national coalition. The non-partisan committee consisted of MPs Gilberte Zwein, Nabil Nicolas, the late Michel Helou, and former human rights defender Ghassan Moukheiber (Free Patriotic Movement), Ali Ammar (Hezbollah), Imad al-Hout (Jamaa Islamiya), Shant Janjanian (Lebanese Forces), and Samir al-Jisr (Future Movement). Their amendments, however, went on to distort the proposed content, through:

• Broadening the scope of the law to cover all family members, which effectively de-prioritized women subject to family violence and dismissed the specific protection procedures highlighted in the draft law. For example, the text proposed by women's organizations had suggested that Public Prosecution would be responsible for following-up on women victims of violence. However, the subcommittee delegated this task to judges in chambers that are not available after working hours or on holidays, which practically suspends protection for women subjected to danger or violence outside working hours.

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1 *Ibid.*
2 Rajana Hamyeh, "al-Mawt al-Muannath [Death in the Female]", *al-Akhbar*, Arabic, December 31, 2013, available online at: http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/197878 [last accessed on May 11, 2014].

- Considering marital rape as a "marital right," which is only criminalized in the event of physical harm; this introduced a precedent, where the religious concept of so-called "marital rights" was clearly stated in a civil law.[1]
- Excluding children from the scope of protection, when custody does not belong to the mother, which is in line with personal status laws.[2]

The Parliamentary Subcommittee had been targeted by a counter campaign launched by Dar al-Fatwa (the highest Sunni religious authority in the country and regulated under the presidency of the Council of Ministers) and religious courts, which said the law – particularly marital rape – would destroy the family unit. The subcommittee, through MP Moukheiber argued that the law, by specifying protection from women alone, was in contradiction of Article 7[3] of the Lebanese constitution and discriminated against the remaining family members, such as children and the elderly.

These distortions invalidated the fruits of years of investment by women's organization, which spent their resources and launched advocacy campaigns to convince the government of endorsing the draft presented to the Parliament in 2010. The bill was approved by the Lebanese parliament on April 1, 2014 and ignored KAFA reservations on the amendments. By doing so, parliament failed to consider the fact that the law had been originally designed to respond to women's particular protection needs.

The Lebanese state's hesitance in acknowledging and addressing violence against women reveals its patriarchal nature, working hand in hand with religious institutions to preserve the status quo; they feed on each other to maintain their authority. The state benefits from religious institutions to regulate the family unit expected to fulfill the needs of individuals such as education, health, shelter, and so on. On the other hand, this allows religious institutions to maintain their authority on private life, with the state's backing. Although the original draft was endorsed by MPs by a show of hands, the circumstances of the the law to protect women from family violence and its final version are an indication of the direct influence of religious institutions in shaping legislation in Lebanon.

Moreover, Dar al-Fatwa's counter-campaign was organized by the Women's Committees and Associations Gathering for the Defense of the Family. In a statement issued in 2011, Mufti of the Lebanese Republic Mohamed Rashid Qabbani expressed his opposition to the draft law and

claimed it was in violation of sharia. He said the proposal would lead to the destruction of the family and create conflict between civil and religious courts.[4]

These distortions, prepared jointly by the state and religious institutions did not deter the Resource Center for Gender Equality (ABAAD), however, from launching a campaign entitled "We Believe," in collaboration leaders of religious institutions, including the Mufti Qabbani. ABAAD stated in the campaign's press release that:

> "The active participation of religious leaders in this campaign is meant to reinforce the potential of building bridges between activists in civil society associations concerned with women's issues, on one hand, and religious leaders, on the other. Discussion on effective common grounds would remain open and ongoing in the scope of enhancing common efforts aiming to improve public interest and build a society that respects human dignity and Women's rights, which both sides agree upon."[5]

"We Believe" campaign[6] was a strategic component aiming to enhance the dialogue between religious leaders. According to ABAAD Director Ghida Anani in the closing press release of the campaign, this strategy started at a regional round table consisting of religious leaders from all confessions and discussed their role in ending violence against women. Moreover, this strategy seeks reforms in religious institutions as a new tool to infiltrate the sectarian system.[7]

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1 Saada Allaw, "Will KAFA ask 10 MPs to challenge the law?", *Assafir*, Arabic, April 2, 2012, available online at: http://bit.ly/1tpAbX4 [last accessed on June 7, 2014].
2 For Kafa's comments on the amended law: http://www.kafa.org.lb/FOAPDF/FAO-PDF-9-635101053455518206.pdf [last accessed on April 2, 2014].
3 Republic of Lebanon, Lebanese Constitution, Article 7: "All Lebanese shall be equal before the law. They shall equally enjoy civil and political rights and shall equally be bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction," 1926, 1995, http://www.presidency.gov.lb/English/LebaneseSystem/Documents/Lebanese%20Constitution.pdf.
4 Dana Khraiche, "Dar al-Fatwa rejects draft law protecting women against domestic violence", *Daily Star*, English, June 23, 2011, available online at http://bit.ly/1rxT1sM [last accessed on September 9, 2014].
5 "We Believe: Campaign to end violence against women", *al-Mustaqbal*, Arabic, January 1, 2012, available online at: http://www.almustaqbal.com/v4/Article.aspx?Type=np&Articleid=549237 [last accessed on September 9, 2014].
6 ABAAD, "We Believe: Campaign video," YouTube clip, 2/4/2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trsSvCBLgr0, [last accessed on September 9, 2014].
7 ABAAD concludes international campaign," Lebanon Files, 9/1/2013, http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/488816 [last

The campaign intended to create a space in the religious realm to enhance women's chances in attaining justice in the case of violence inside the family. However, it legitimized the authority of those institutions, whose main role is to protect the patriarchal and sectarian system, which continues to hold women hostage, considers them as inferior member in the family and benefit from the social and economic exploitation of women. Moreover, the reforms that would take place in this sphere would still have to follow the whims of religious authorities, who could manipulate such reforms when they start to threaten the status quo. These types of strategies, however, tend to perpetuate the existing sectarian structure.

It is interesting to note that such campaigns are attractive to donor organizations and receive huge amounts of funding. For instance, "We Believe" was funded by more than 10 donors,[1] whose logos were plastered all over campaign ads addressing religious leaders and state institutions.

This poses a critical question about the role of funding policies in maintaining the current order and shaping the discourse and strategies of women's organizations. Lara Khattab also tackled this issue. She highlights the "role of funders in reinforcing and maintaining the existing sectarian system [as] the main obstacle in achieving gender equality," shedding light on USAID funding for a campaign encouraging participation in the 2010 municipal elections and arguing that:

> "As is the case for the parliamentary elections, the municipal elections also involve kinship, confessional and sectarian structures. In this regard, the campaign for the new municipal councils is a minefield, and the electoral process is a battlefield where all weapons should be used to win the blessing of the patriarchal leaders. Hence, the increased participation of women in municipal elections does not ensure the adoption of a women's rights agenda as winners will continue to act on the basis of sectarian and kinship affiliations rather than inter-est-based considerations. In this regard, funders' encouragement for women to take part in the same system that deprives them of their rights as equal citizens strengthens the ideological legitimacy of this patriarchal and sectarian system."[2]

Concerning this trend, Khattab explains that the donor community adopts a non-confrontational stance concerning family law debates. She provides an example, where the European Commission refused a project proposal presented by LWDG, aiming to reform the personal status law.

Hence, women's organizations are not alone in bearing the responsibility for the marginal progress in terms of women's lives. The lack of volunteer-based organizations and the transformation of activists into professional staff meant that women's organizations have become dependent on donor money to maintain their work and pay salaries. Donors will have the upper hand in drawing strategies and shaping the women's movement, leaving the system, which aims at compromising gender equality and women's protection untouched, well-maintained, and legitimized.

2.4. Reclaiming history of struggle

As a consequence of women's activism being oriented by a group of elite or middle class women – like the leaders of NCLW – priorities, strategies, and policies adopted to achieve gender equality are set with a foundational class bias. The majority of women, the most vulnerable and marginalized ones, those who belong to the working class or working class families, have little or no say at all in shaping strategies and policies purported to represent their interests.

This alienation of marginalized women from the decision making process places the majority of women at a far distance from being interested in adopting the demands of the existing women's movement. It also explains the movement's inability to mobilize on the ground. Women's organizations are often frustrated with women's lack of awareness of their rights. However, they neglect to evaluate their own discourses, in line with multi-level discrimination and the class issue.

Women's organizations often decide to approach other women with "awareness raising" campaigns and activities, which essentially confirms their elite status and superiority toward their political base. This approach often calls upon women to adopt a demand, discourse, or tool founded and elaborated by international standards and definitions of human rights and women's rights. However, such tools and discourses may not be applicable to many women in their daily life. It is important to appreciate that women live under different circumstances and communities that shape the injustice they face. Thus, they must be given space to create their own tools and discourses in order to survive and resist the status quo. Notably, this is not categorized as activism, resistance, or struggle.

accessed on September 9, 2014].

1 ABAAD, YouTube campaign video, *op. cit.*

2 Khattab, 2010, *op. cit.*

More than a century ago, "factory girls," the daughters of Lebanese peasants, responded to the unfair working conditions in factories, at the very beginning of the attempt industrialization in Mount Lebanon. They organized themselves according to their needs, using their own tools to achieve their goals. Such experiences tell us that women themselves are able to change their own conditions. It is also interesting to note that those women formed a kind of union to achieve better conditions. Moreover, this process led those women to challenge and rebel against other limitations and stereotypes imposed by society.[1] This experience shows the importance of women's involvement in unions, particularly since the "factory girl" rebellions were probably the very first instances of industrial action in the country.

Ayman Wehbe captures such resistance in his article on factory women in the 19th century. He notes that:

> "One hundred years ago, a working class movement was born among women who work at Lebanese factories, which turned their communities upside down. "*A'amiah*", a name for factory girls, became a word that meant independence and struggle for change… The struggle of female factory workers to enhance their working conditions was combined with social independence. Mothers used to call their daughters 'factory girls' whenever they wanted to straighten their behavior. And neighbors used to bully men whose daughters work in factories for being 'out of control.'"[2]

Such experiences in organizing no longer exist or, at least, are not highlighted or documented enough as alternative methods of struggle or sources of knowledge. Women's struggles to achieve equality are limited to the representation, priorities, and strategies of women's organizations, particularly NGOs.

Women's access to protection and equality in Lebanon remains limited. The presence of personal status law – governed by the various sects – is an actual hindrance to all types of reform aiming at achieving a better position for women. This law stipulates that women are more than often subordinate to male members of the family and should abide to their decisions. Moreover, it was evidently clear that the current personal status law was an obstacle to the adoption of a family violence law and kept the questions of custody and marital rape tied to religious regulations and concepts related to relationships between men and women and their reciprocal duties.

Consequently, the family structure and state institutions seek to promote an institutionalized and stereotypical image of women, denying them, in many cases, access to various sectors of the workforce and limits their primary role in the services sector, where they mostly underpaid or unpaid, such as with domestic work. It seems the sectarian, patriarchal, and capitalist structure of this state and its institutions, on one hand, and women's interests, on the other, are moving in opposite directions. Yet, those institutions will continue to provide solutions that act as tranquilizers to maintain the status quo as long as possible.

On the other side, women's organizations have addressed the above-mentioned obstacles in an apologetic manner, with a strong focus on reforms in response to a specific need or problem. In all the years of struggle, the question of the family unit remained untouched and glorified – without reservation in some discourses. Little by little, women's organizations were steered away from engaging with other women, preferring to address the powers that be, who continue to legitimize the sexist structure.

Recently, huge sums were spent on campaigns targeting patriarchal institutions, such as the parliament and religious institutions. This process required tremendous amounts of resources, in terms of efforts, time, and money. Yet the outcome was minimal, in comparison, as the gains achieved throughout this process failed to meet the expectations of those organization and, more importantly, women victims of discrimination and violence.

This shift to addressing institutions and focusing on minor reforms, without tackling the roots of the problem, is highly influenced by the NGOization of the women's movement and the limits of project-based intervention and prevention. This recent phenomenon, which is replicated around the world, pegs the participation of women and other groups calling for gender equality to a limited number of NGO employees who tackle the issue as a career, which necessarily requires a specific type of education, skills, and background. The methods shifted from organizing and enlarging the movement into report-writing and knowledge of international human rights standards and tools,

1   Ayman Wehbe, "Banat al-Fallahin, Amilat al-Masaneh [Peasant Daughters, Factory Workers]", *Al-Manshour*, 2008, available online at http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=126605 [last accessed on September 9, 2014], citing Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001, available online at http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft9d5nb66k/.
2   *Ibid.*

which excludes other means of organizing and delegitimize all struggles outside existing trends and acceptable tools.

Moreover, strategies and interventions by many women's organizations are often shaped and influenced by funding trends, which – in most cases – prefer to maintain the status quo and keep the existing structure of the state untouched. Organizations calling for social change, including women's organizations, are designing their projects according to funding opportunities, which set their priorities and channel the money into specific types of projects.

To challenge the obstacles, women's organizations must ultimately revisit their structures, which hinder mass involvement and obstructs the way of creating a movement able to push for equality and justice. The creation of structures welcoming all women on a peer to peer basis and defending their interests would be a cornerstone in defeating patriarchy and removing the burden of donors. Negotiations and dialogue should take place among different groups of women suffering from patriarchy, classism, and violence, and not be confined to the court of religious and state institutions.

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From Public Space to Office Space: the professionalization/NGO-ization of the feminist movement associations in Lebanon and its impact on mobilization and achieving social change
Dalya Mitri

Women's organizations in Lebanon today seem to be at a crossroads. The failure of the Lebanese state to address women's civil rights and status in society, among other issues, indicates a general withdrawal of the state from the public sector, due to the almost total collapse of the Lebanese state during the war in parallel with neo-liberal reforms. This continuous, historical, and structural weakness of the state in the public sphere has led NGOs and associations to try and fill the void left by the state. Thus, throughout a now century–long history, Lebanese women organizations moved from charitable societies and political left-wing clubs, to a real cottage industry of NGOs run by highly-professionals activists, into the recent emergence of organizations more centered on claims related to sexual and bodily rights and gender identities, as recent studies have shown.[1]

The emergence of women's movements in Lebanon took place in the wake of major historical changes in the Arab world – independence and modernization embodied, among others, by secular nationalism and Islamic modernism –[2] and in parallel with the emergence of similar movements in the West.[3] Lebanese women organizations peaked following the end of Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). This period coincided with the end of Cold War era and its subsequent massive funding from Western donors to local NGOs, seeking to implement post-cold War liberal policies such as "democratization" or "good governance", in which women's rights seemed to be an unavoidable component.

Women's movements are generally perceived to be the frontrunners of "emancipatory social change. However, these movements in Lebanon seem to be in a difficult position to transform, mobilize and ultimately bring about such change. Instead, the institutional form of the NGO appears to be more stable, heavily funded by international donors, and relying on highly skilled professionals. Yet, structurally, NGOs may not have the same mobilizing capacities as social movements, since they are mostly run by professional "activists" aiming to target specific groups and implement specific projects. A women's movement, on the other hand, would be expected to attract a large number of people, aiming for a common goal and trying to have a wide impact on social change. Hence, NGOs can appear poorly equipped for mass mobilization and organization in order to achieve social change. Is it enough to infer that women's organizations and more specifically women's movements in Lebanon find themselves caught in a paradox, if not a deadlock?

This paper tries to grasp this question by arguing that the process of professionalization of these groups, or what has been termed as a *NGO-ization,*[4] does not only have a negative impact on the capacity of mobilization of women's organization in Lebanon, but also unexpected consequences on the structuration of Lebanese political space.

In order to do so, it seems necessary to first suggest a definition of a social movement and the difference between a social movement and an NGO or other forms of organizations. Drawing on data collected via a short questionnaire distributed to 15 women's organizations and activists working on gender issues in Lebanon, the paper will then try to assess the impact of NGO-ization of these groups on their ability to mobilize and how it led to transforming the discourse and structures of these organizations, the importance of their operating context, and their links to other social and

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1 Riwa Salameh, "Gender politics in Lebanon and the limits of legal reformism", *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Lebanon Support, 2014, available at: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/gender-politics-lebanon-and-limits-legal-reformism [last accessed 20 December 2014] ; Bernadette Daou, *Les Féminismes au Liban : un dynamisme de positionnement par rapport au patriarcat et un renouvellement au sein du "Printemps Arabe"*, Masters Thesis, Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut, 2014.
2 See for example, Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi, Olivier Fillieule, *Résistances et protestations dans les sociétés musulmanes*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris, 2003.
3 Lucy Earl, "Social Movements and NGOs: A Preliminary Investigation", International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), 2004, available at: http://www.intrac.org/resources.php?action=resource&id=31 [last accessed 20 November 2014].
4 Islah Jad, "The NGO-Isation of Arab Women's Movements", *IDS Bulletin,* Vol. 35, No. 4, 2004, pp. 34–42.

political groups, mainly the state and international donors. After quickly identifying the main actors, the existing structures and the different Women waves (from upper-class charitable societies to the recent radical organizations), this paper will situate the struggle of women movements into a broader political and social context.

Social movements and women's movements

There is today a certain consensus in the studies of social movements[1] that has generally led to putting the emphasis on the three sets of factors; first, the structure and constraints of political opportunities that shape social movements; second, the formal and informal mobilizing structures through which groups seek to organize in order to engage in collective action, and finally, the framing processes necessary for mobilization accounting for the mediation between opportunity and action.

Social movements can emerge from and produce different organizational infrastructures that range from social movement organizations (SMOs), social kinship, friendship, informal activist networks and, sometimes, formal organizations. Hanspeter Kriesi grasps this heterogeneity through a typology of four types of organizations playing different parts in social movement: SMOs, supportive organizations, movements associations, and parties and interest groups. He argues that as SMOs mobilize their constituency for collective action with a precise political goal in mind, supportive groups on the other hand, in which actors such as media or religious organizations could have a more indirect participation to social movements,[2] movements associations are more "client-oriented". Finally, parties and interest groups seem to aim more towards political representation than investing in real participation in collective action.[3]

From the view of the framework described above, women's movements could be considered as social movements. Women's movement mobilization processes are here defined as "mobilization based on appeals to women as a constituency and thus as an organizational strategy,"[4]encouraging them to be politically active, redefining their roles within society in both public and private spheres, and favoring the emergence of awareness networks; all this towards pointing to the need for change and ending gendered oppression and discrimination. Although not all women movements could be called feminist, they are "rooted in gendered structures of oppression."[5]

To summarize, women's movements are social movements, even if not always considered as purely feminist, since they encourage women to be politically active and actors of social change. This said, this paper will see how these movement have been institutionalized and turned into professional organizations, and the impact of this process on the structure of the movements themselves. As defined by Della Porta and Diani, "the difference between social movements and these and other organizations does not consist primarily of differences in organizational characteristics or patterns of behavior, but of the fact that social movements are not organizations, not even of peculiar kind [...] As a consequence, a single organization, whatever its dominant traits, is not a social movement."[6]

The institutionalization of women's movements and the emergence of women's organizations

The institutionalization of women movements since the mid 20th century has proven to ensure a solid and undisputed place to women's organizations within civil societies, thus allowing the circulation of feminist ideas through transnational networks. Women began participating more in international conferences and meeting and raised issues on colonialism, state independence and nationalism.[7] This was also an opportunity for women from the South to bring back to their countries issues of gender equality and build their own national and regional networks, on the one hand, and bring the stories of their national and local struggles to the international arena, on the other.

The 1980s, in particular, witnessed demands to raise the topic of women's rights and include legislations within a broader human rights discourse. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by a majority of countries (including Lebanon). This trend gave way to a substantial number of women's organizations, funded by

1 Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
2 Hanspeter Kriesi, in: McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Ibid.*
3 *Ibid.*
4 Myra Marx Ferree , Carol McClurg Mueller , *Feminism and the Women's Movement: A Global Perspective,* in: David A Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, Second Edition, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA, 2007.
5 Ferree and Muellers, 2007, *ibid.*
6 Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, Wiley, Oxford, 2006.
7 Jad, 2004, *op. cit.*

international donors, being integrated in international networks, allowing for the creation of project-oriented organizations, which targeted women by addressing their social and economic needs. Feminist organizations, or organizations with a clear feminist approach were gradually replaced with organizations targeting specific aspects, nonetheless raising awareness about issues such as violence against women. This new trend of transformation, or "split" into different organizations was also encouraged by international organizations and donors, financing huge regional and national programs (Beijing 1995, UN declarations on Violence against Women (VAW)), based on a broader agenda, which focused on promoting "good governance", set mainly by the United States. The 4th International Conference on Women's Rights in Beijing 1995 put what had been formerly considered as "women's issues" on the global agendas of other UN conferences, coining the term and the subsequent global policy that "women's rights are human rights". The types of women's organizations that emerged post-CEDAW were categorized by Valentine Moghadam as: charitable organizations, official or state-affiliated, professional associations, women studies centers, women's rights and feminist organizations, NGOs working on women's and development issues, worker-based and grassroots women's groups.[1] These new emerging discourses and structures, as classified by CEDAW, helped facilitate and bring to the forefront issues of gender equality worldwide. They were also a tool for mobilizing women in order to obtain social and political change.

However, the gain of efficiency and visibility induced by this these above-mentioned transformations arrived with the growing professionalization of women's organizations, bearing unexpected consequences. As put by Della Porta and Diani, "[a] movement tends to burn out when organizational identities come to dominate once more, or when "feeling part of it" refers primarily to one's organization and its components, rather than to a broader collective with blurred boundaries."[2] The next section (and the rest of the paper) will further investigate the consequences of this aspect, with a particular focus on Lebanon.

The NGO-ization (or professionalization) of women's movements in Lebanon and the Arab countries

Socio-political variations within Arab countries contribute to explaining the evolution of women's movements, from upper middle class charitable societies to participation in the national struggle for independence, in both colonial and postcolonial contexts. Arab women movements had their roots in political parties and nationalist movements,[3] then established their own organizations later on to push for their own specific agendas. The reasons behind that was mainly because they felt marginalized by men within the organizations they participated in and excluded from the decision-making process. Another reason was that these women found common ground with other women inspired by the ideas of feminism as a way to struggle for their own visions and rights and establish their own political agenda and demands.[4]

These women pioneers usually emerged from upper-middle and middle classes. Organizing in charitable societies was a first step to break through their traditional domestic role and force their way into the public sphere. The newly independent states dealt with these movements by granting them political and economic rights and participation.[5] Then, in the second half of the 20th century, educated young women were drawn to leftist ideas, but their feminist agendas were not always welcomed by leftist parties, who did not see it necessary to separate both agendas, arguing that women's rights would be obtained as the direct outcome of social revolutions.[6] Following CEDAW and international conferences that took place around women rights, women organizations in the Middle East became generally active in the reform of family laws, especially working women such as lawyers, social workers, and researchers, who usually came from an upper middle class background.[7]

These funded organizations raised suspicions among Islamist and conservative parties – as well as from the left – who were appalled by what they saw as an imposition of western values aiming at

1 Valentine M. Moghadam, "Feminism, Legal Reform and Women's Empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa", *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 59, No 191, 2008, p. 9–16.
2 Della Porta and Diani, 2006 , *op.cit.*
3 Stéphanie Latte Abdallah, "Vers un féminisme politique hors frontières au Proche-Orient", *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, Vol. 103, No 3, 2009, pp. 177–195.
4 *Ibid.*
5 Moghadam, 2008, *op.cit.*
6 See the evolution of RDFL (Rassemblement Démocratique de la Femme Libanaise) in: Lara Khattab, *Civil Society in a Sectarian Context: The Women's Movement in Post-War Lebanon*, Masters Thesis, Lebanese American University, Beirut, 2010.
7 Moghadam, 2008, *op. cit.*

destroying Arab societies and values. The same accusations were also directed towards women's movements during the independence and nationalism era.

The end of the 1990s witnessed new networks of feminists emerging outside political parties and rejecting all types of violence and discrimination against women, including in other Arab countries and against marginalized communities in their own countries (like Palestinian refugees and foreign migrant workers). These movements and organizations also worked with globalized civil society networks, searching for support within networks like CEDAW and trying to receive funds from international donors who were less likely to impose their own vision and ideology on them. They championed a feminism that goes beyond "partisan and national frontiers"[1] and which relies on a broader support base. Still, some critics argued that cooperation and networking were still funding-dependent and failed to create a real sense of coordination among common lines.[2]

Another aspect of institutional differences between social movements and NGOs is found at a structural level, preventing them from doing actual political action leading to social change, even if some claim to be as radical in their ideas as social movements. As Nawla Darwiche puts it, "[the] reality of the majority of women's organizations in the Arab region continues to oscillate between a charity and a developmental role, with few truly feminist agendas."[3]

As witnessed in other fields such as development and humanitarian work, another consequence of the professionalization process of these women's organizations leads to a "salarization process"[4]of the employed people involved, which is directly linked to higher budgets. This process is also related to donor agencies' requirements, which helped create a new category of women workers: a mix of employees and volunteers (or activists). Paying professionals became the norm, while activists and volunteers started to disappear in a trend that led to less action-oriented and more "managerial" type of organization.[5]

In the Arab world, and specifically in Lebanon, NGOs and women organizations tend to collaborate closely with state institutions,[6] either because of historical ties or in the aim of filling the gaps left by the state in the public sphere. These "specialized NGOs", in the words of Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi, tend at the same time to bring their expertise to state institutions and collaborate with them, while continuing to promote collective actions in order to put pressure on the state and to push for their agendas which tends to dilute their contentious role.[7]

To some extent, these NGOs acted like the state by proxy, by agreeing to play the role of the state (through bringing in their expertise, drafting laws, lobbying for their endorsement, and monitoring their application).[8] This specific relationship between NGOs and the state has somehow transformed their original social and political vocation, leading ultimately to a certain form of bureaucratization of political activism. In Lebanon, this openness to bureaucratization could have been accelerated by the weakness of the state. Filling the void - left by the collapse of the state in the 1975-1990 Civil War, Israeli and Syrian occupation, and persistent turbulence in the era of civil peace- meant that tremendous amounts of resources from these organizations, both human and financial, were mobilized mainly to provide services and fill gaps in governance, which could have been dedicated to enhance mobilization and collective political action.

To sum up, the evolution of women's movements in the Arab world, and more specifically in Lebanon, into the form of professional entities with a specific role vis-à-vis the state has determined the shape of their discourses and actions. This evolution also poses the question of their role within the Lebanese society and their ability to mobilize large groups of women.

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1 Latte Abdallah, 2009, *op. cit.*
2 Jad, 2004, *op.cit*, Latte Abdallah, 2009, *op.cit*
3 Nawla Darwiche, "Women in Arab NGOs: A Publication of the Arab Network for Non-Governmental Organizations, *Feminist Review*, Vol. 69, No 1, 2001, pp. 15–20.
4 Joanna Siméant, "Urgence et développement, professionalisation et militantisme dans l'humanitaire", *Mots*, No. 65, 2001, pp 28-50.
5 Karam Karam, "al-Masar al-Taraju'i li 'Amaliyat al-Islah al-Intikhabi fi Lubnan: Naqd li Tajribat al-Tasharuk bayn al-Mujatama' al-Madani wal-Qita' al-'Am wal-Munazamat al-Dawliyah" (The Regressive Path of Electoral Reform in Lebanon: A Critique of the Participatory Experiment between Civil Society, the Public Sector, and International Organizations), published in part in *Al-Akhbar*, 15 July 2008, pp. 32-33.
6 According to Lucy Earl, 2004, *op. cit.*, "the stamp of a social movement is precisely its refusal to provide services and resolution that this should be the role of the state".
7 Marie-Noëlle Abi-Yaghi, *L'altermondialisme au Liban : un militantisme de passage. Logiques d'engagement et reconfiguration de l'espace militant (de gauche) au Liban*, Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne, 2013.
8 As we see, for example, in the implementation of the "anti-tobacco law", which was monitored by the association that drafted the law, TFI (Tobacco-Free initiative).

Women's movements evolution in Lebanon, and the political implication of the NGO-ization process

The evolution of women's movements in Lebanon, as eloquently described by Bernadette Daou,[1] came in four successive waves. First was the mobilization of the upper-classes in the framework of the struggle for independence. The creation of an independent Lebanon was then followed by the rise of leftist movements, closer to Marxist ideas, after the defeat of 1967. Then everything came to a halt during the civil war. A new wave emerged in the post-civil war period (coinciding with the Beijing conference, the adoption of CEDAW, the multiplication of NGOs, etc). In the past decade, a new radical model of leftist feminist organization was born within the framework of the anti-globalization movement.[2]

These waves were characterized not only by organizational transformations, but also by discursive differences. The first wave of women activists were claiming their political rights within the frame of national identity, while the second generation of feminists were followed a more Marxist approach and expressed their ideas within a broader struggle for socialist revolution, resistance to colonialism and liberation movements.[3]

A structural change within these second generation movements, due mainly to the professionalization of these organizations and their actions during the civil war and its aftermath, helped model the current landscape of civil society in Lebanon, which became mainly articulated around NGOs adopting a single-approach or a single-issue through the use of media campaigns, advocacy networks, lobbying, and awareness-raising.

The emergence of the anti-globalization movements, or the "fourth wave", saw discursive practices of leftist, anti-imperialist, and anti-neoliberal politics, which were critical of the institutionalization of women's organizations in Lebanon. NGOs and donors, however, often perceived this movement as "western" and imposed by external forces.

The agendas and goals of these four waves of women movements also differed and varied. They ranged from pushing for participation in the political arena and for voting rights, leaving the sectarian and patriarchal system unchallenged, to relief, development work, and reaching out to underprivileged areas. After the hiatus of the civil war, where all NGOs and associations were operating in the field of relief, either as a branch in a political party or as an institutionalized NGO, the conference on Women's rights in Beijing, held in 1995, stated a new paradigm of women's right as human rights, and called for the participation of women in all aspects of public and private life, encouraging awareness about their rights.[4]

The new agenda of Lebanese women's NGOs, and the structural changes that some organizations went through as a result of this conference, was now aiming at targeting women with specifically designed projects, funded by donor agencies, in line with the new trends defined by the successive women's rights conferences and in compliance with the political agenda set by western donor countries. Women who were active in associations on a voluntary basis became paid professionals, and had to adapt to new ways of work and bureaucracy that served not only the community but also the donor agencies, even if these organizations were always cautious in trying to draft their projects according to the beneficiaries needs. As put by a representative of RDFL, "we usually choose the standards and interventions of its projects that serve its main goals and objectives which in turn it is what our community needs."[5]

The radical feminist movement, the most recent wave in Lebanon, was more articulated around the social role of gender, struggle against male oppression and patriarchy.[6] It came out of the Lebanese LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, intersex, and queer) movements[7]. These groups raised issues that were not tackled previously, like sexual identity, bodily rights and sexual liberation.[8] While it could be stated that re-centering the debate around private matters enhanced the gap between the movements and their potential constituencies, Stephanie Latte Abdallah however, argues that this

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1 Daou, 2014, *op. cit.*
2 *Ibid.*
3 *Ibid.*
4 VAW became a specific topic, thus the creation of dedicated organizations (LECORVAW then KAFA in 2005 then ABAAD in 2011.)
5 Interview with RDFL representative, December 2014
6 Daou, 2014, *op. cit.*
7 Such as Helem, Meem, and Nasawiya. See Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi, 2013, *op.cit.*
8 A clear example of these movements is the feminist collective Nasawiya, which had a radical feminist approach to political struggle, pinpointing the importance of intersectionality in understanding power dynamics, as women's identity cannot be dissociated from race, social class or sexuality issues.

focus on "private" matters, instead of "narrowing the horizon of women's movements struggles, allowed them to take their actions to a political level."[1]

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, many feminist NGOs today work alongside the state to implement women-related projects.[2] However, women's organization had always worked closely with the state and different political parties, and even recent ones have implemented their projects in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), through their local centers, targeting and reaching out to grassroots women communities.[3] This "strategic interaction with the state"[4] is often problematic and creates a tension between the necessity to fill the gaps left by the Lebanese state weaknesses and the necessary independent expression of dissent and assuming "the role of identifiers and articulators of society's health needs."[5]

Since "the stamp of a social movement is precisely its refusal to provide services and its resolution that this should be the role of the state,"[6] it could be argued here that women's movements are again caught in the paradox of their inevitable NGO-ization in the Lebanese context. The NGOs workers themselves blame this inevitable collaboration on "the weakness of the legislative role of the political authority and their concern with other issues (mainly security and political issues), giving the NGOs and society in general in Lebanon the opportunity to fill in this gap and play a role which is not required from them."[7] NGO workers, as well as self-proclaimed activists, clearly express their opposition to the government (the thought of cooperating with "such a corrupt state is nauseating") and their dissatisfaction in having to "fill in" for the state – "activism [does not mean] doing the job of the government".[8] However, they often deem this cooperation necessary to push and advocate for the adoption of laws, as well as observing and monitoring their proper application[9] by state institutions. Lobbying face-to-face or organizing training sessions for state employees are often cited as a good ways to ensure message delivery. Lobbying and law making[10] are often seen as the best means to convey the demands and obtain results, even if it means monitoring the application of these results.[11]

Thus, there is a general consensus amongst actors and analysts that Lebanese organizations are indeed playing the role of the state, by providing services or advocating and lawmaking. Nevertheless, newly formed Lebanese organizations define themselves as highly vocal actors,[12] rather than service providers, and their claims come very politicized, as they are looking to focus on marginalized groups and issues that need to be addressed by the state and its policies.[13] In other words, "advocating in the direction where we see fit, in a radical unapologetic way to fill in for the insanely grave gaps of the government and the light and upsetting tone of many NGOs who advocate for the wrong thing or for the right ones in the most apologetic of ways."[14]

The Impact of NGO-ization on Mobilization and social change

These new types of NGOs have often failed to mobilize large groups of women in Lebanon around issues serving their interests, such as domestic violence, personal status law, and nationality rights.

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1   Latte Abdallah, 2009, *op. cit.*

2   After signing the CEDAW agreement, Lebanon became a de facto a partner to all organizations promoting family law reforms and pushing for law on domestic violence.

3   Interview with RDFL representative, December, 2014

4   Earl, 2004, *op. cit.*

5   *Ibid.*

6   *Idid.*

7   Interview with LECORVAW representative, November, 2014.

8   Interview with founder of MOSAIC, November, 2014.

9   We could see as an example the issue of the application of the law against domestic violence: NGOs themselves created monitoring mechanisms to ensure the application of the law, since no government body would take the lead. The NGOs (mainly KAFA) organized training for Judges and Internal Security Forces personnel, elaborated a software to file the complaints, helped create within the ISF a department to hold accountable the personnel who doesn't apply the law properly.

10   Interviews with LebMASH, RDFL, KAFA, November-December 2014.

11   For example, KAFA's experience in working with state institution did not specifically mean not putting pressure on the state or challenging the system. Even members of the NGO are aware that this position is rather hard to stand by, working with MPs in order to push for the law was fruitful, but KAFA is fiercely convinced that they still have the latitude to criticize and denounce the state's institutions shortcomings.

12   AbiYaghi, 2014, *op. cit.*

13   For example, the Ferguson Movement in the USA (following the killing of an unarmed young man by a police officer), dismissed the policies and terms of activism, civil rights, and working with state institutions and community representatives. They defined themselves as representatives from a community in "active struggle" and unrest against state sanctioned killing, and that this struggle will continue if their demands are not met.

14   Interview with Anti-Racism Movement representative, December, 2014.

Khattab argues that one major cause is the division of women along sectarian lines. Low levels of women participation could be attributed to the Lebanese sectarian and clientelist political system itself.[1] Social movements[2] and NGOs, have been unable to mobilize beyond the barriers of sectarian identities or political loyalties.[3]

Another factor hindering mobilization is the language used by these Lebanese NGOs, as international agencies and NGOs have established their own jargon, usually in English, and mastering this jargon is almost mandatory in order to work properly, write proposals, reports, programs and projects, even if a real effort is made in communicating and campaigning in Arabic, using an interesting blend of colloquial and standard Arabic, which could be understood by everyone. Since most of recent feminist theories and texts are written in English as well, non-english speakers are de facto excluded from discussion groups and thus unable to be mobilized. This has practically implied that a vast majority of women's movements, even the last generation of what has been described as the "fourth wave",[4] who wanted to avoid the bureaucratic and hierarchical structures of its predecessor, are still led by educated middle class or upper middle class women.

Moreover, to comply with donor agendas, resulting in dependency on available funding and the inevitable alignment with global trends pertaining to women's issues,[5] grassroots efforts are further hampered by the professionalization of their structures, losing touch with the realities of the terrain, while trying to properly implement heavily-funded and accountable projects. There is always the risk "that these NGOs lose sight of the fight to transform representations of gender and changes in consciousness at the grassroots level."[6]

Finally, donors have a tendency to approach NGOs they know, often the most institutionalized, headed by well-known figures. This perpetuates the system and provides for what Khattab coined as "technical quick-fix" solutions for more complex political issues. Despite awareness of the limitations imposed by the "fund hunt" realities, and the competition amongst NGOs stirred by this hunt, some NGOs remain strongly committed to drafting projects according the core values and aims of their original political commitment. A way to illustrate this is KAFA's recent decision to refuse to submit proposals in the framework of the emergency appeal for Syrian refugees, or ABAAD's controversial project to target men as well as women that was "imposed" on donors after they've established its necessity through focus groups and feedback from the field.[7]

New Modalities of mobilizing and targeting public opinion

Even though NGOs have a hard time mobilizing, different models of mobilization do exist. This section provides examples of recent actions conducted by two women's organization, based on two very different approaches.

The coexistence of different models of mobilization was epitomized by the contrast of this year's most visible actions, KAFA's rally in favor of the endorsement of the Law on domestic violence, and a more controversial and highly unusual project by ABAADs,[8] using religious leaders as the campaign image. In 2012, ABAAD launched the *Nu'min* (We Believe) campaign, a series of dialogues with religious leaders to end Gender Based Violence (GBV) and create a space for dialogue between women's organizations and CSO and religious leaders about women's rights and women's status in Lebanese society. Although this project was deemed very successful by the implementing organization, who saw a unique opportunity to bring religious leaders and women on the same table and make them take a public stance against Gender based violence, it was heavily contested by other women's organizations because the core of the project reestablishes the power of religious leaders over Lebanese society, without confronting the patriarchal system, by refusing to dispute the authority of religious leaders and their role in shaping the family model and women's role in Lebanon.

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1   Khattab, 2010, *op. cit.*

2   One could note here the presence of usually un-politicized women spontaneously joining the various protests in the aftermath of the Hariri assassination (2005) but a there was no clear attempt to capture their enthusiasm and mobilize them around other political issues.

3   Salameh, 2014, *op. cit.*

4   Daou, 2014, *op. cit.*

5   LebMASH founder points out that the fact that all donors are currently interested in funding LGBTIQ related projects follows a *"hype",* and donors are actually "knocking on these organizations' doors" to encourage them to submit proposals for funding.

6   Earl, 2004, *op. cit.*

7   Interview with ABAAD, November, 2014.

8   ABAAD – resource center for gender equality, was founded in 2011, promoting equality, protection of women and marginalized groups through policy development.

In an interview conducted with a member of ABAAD, she stated that:

> "Our methods to mobilize depend on the target , if we decide to target influential people, we're going to use positive psychology, no aggressive tone, no accusation, searching for role models for men, denounce but in a soft way, without antagonizing the significant actors. We try to find space for encouraging social change and women's rights"[1]

A second example is KAFA, which managed to mobilize around 5000 people on March 8th, 2014, for a demonstration in favor of the adoption of the law against domestic violence, using a nationwide media campaign and attracting women from different backgrounds. The success of this mobilization depended on a combination of tools: meetings with community leaders and women in the field, focus groups, meetings with volunteers who want to get involved in the organization, while organizing the protest. But it also relied on a lot of campaigning using social and mainstream media. Communicating via mass media helped in the "naming and shaming process", mainly as far as the MPs or members of the parliamentary commission were concerned. Massive media presence and having journalists relaying the information helped to a great extent raising awareness and the mobilization of the public opinion around the issue of VAW and the necessity to endorse the law.[2]

These actions epitomize the differing modalities of women's organization mobilization in Lebanon. KAFA chose to use the public space as a space for mobilization. However, despite their difference, they share common features: both organizations are strongly structured, have experience in policy making, lobbying and advocacy, and know how to use the media to convey their message. Most importantly, their approach is shaped by the necessity of the interaction with the state, which is a strong indicator of the paradoxical relationship between women's organizations and the Lebanese state.

Although these two distinct actions, conducted by two of the biggest and well-known women's organizations, have been deemed successful by organizers and participants, they surely helped raise the awareness of public opinion on women's struggles. However, some members of smaller organizations argue that the policy making approach is often useless in the Lebanese context. They add that there is a need for more grassroots oriented organizations, who work hand in hand with the communities according to their needs, and who are not afraid to be vocal in denouncing the weaknesses of the state. As put by one of their representatives:

> "We try to fill-in gaps on the ground rather than put effort in talking [to representatives of the state institutions]. We can take a quick look back at the last 10 years and count what sort of "civil society" policies have reached the table and then we know how little we gained on this front."[3]

Beyond NGO-ization

Understanding and analyzing the difference between a social movement and an NGO, or a formal organization, seems necessary to show that, essentially, both cannot, would not, and could not mobilize along similar lines. The quasi-impossibility for women's organizations in Lebanon to mobilize beyond their constituencies, beyond the lines of class, rural/urban dichotomy, education, and/ or sectarian lines, is a reminder of the most obvious impact of NGO-ization on women's movements. The difficulty to find a common cause to enhance cooperation between these organizations, and the competition stirred by the hunt for funds is also contributing in blurring the feminist message.

By acting like a proxy and filling the multiple voids left by the disintegration of the Lebanese state during the civil war, the Syrian occupation, and the neoliberal policies implemented since the end of the war, NGO expertise in "covering" for the Lebanese state's weaknesses had paradoxically creating a mutual dependency relationship, making them unable to act as catalyst for collective action and mobilization of greater segments of the Lebanese population.

That being said, a research about the transformation or drift, as would argue more critical voices, of women's rights social movements towards a professionalized/NGO-ized rationality in Lebanon (and elsewhere) remains a moving target both at the conceptual and practical level. It is indeed worth concluding here by stating that what actually and practically constitutes the very distinction between an NGO and social movements needs to be further clarified. Even if this paper has drawn on rather

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1 Interview with ABAAD, November 2014.
2 In summary, three factors helped in shaping the success of this rally: building-up mobilization using awareness raising and advocacy tools, disseminating the information to reach as many people as possible; the role of the media in talking about the cases of four women in a row who died as victims of violence that created an emotional response in the public opinion, and thirdly, the thoroughness in the organization of the rally itself, by targeting people through meetings (voluntary, activist, women in sister associations).
3 Interview with Anti Racism Movement, December, 2014.

ideal-typical definitions for the sake of analytical clarity, a closer look points towards a more fuzzy picture. That feeling should not however be considered as a call for further conceptual clarification. On the the contrary, it seems that the very practices of women's rights organizations contribute to it. Some sort of an idealization of social movements seems to be at stake here. Thus, who determines at the end of the day who is part of a social movement and who is just a bureaucrat who has lost his soul in the journey towards NGOization? And subsequently, who says who is a real feminist and who is not? As the distinction is ultimately not that clear cut on the field, the NGOization argument is maybe also partly fuelled by a critique from smaller organizations and some researchers sharing a somehow nostalgic ethos of political struggles. In order to investigate further this assumption, it would be interesting to raise the question of the limitations of social movements themselves in terms of institutionalisation and efficiency.

The demonstration to denounce violence against women organized by KAFA in march 2014 that gathered nearly 5,000 people constitutes a good example to grasp the actual women's organizations capabilities in Lebanon. Despite a fairly important mobilization, this demonstration translated its claims as the National Coalition for the Legislation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence ultimately failed to pass the law it had spent years drafting and advocating. This case seems to indicate that even if NGOization of women's organizations is a new constitutive feature of Lebanon's civil society, the path to women's rights recognition does not rely only on the establishment of the right proportion of social movements towards NGOs, but on much structural problems of Lebanon's political field.

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"Masculinity-under-threat": Sexual Rights Organizations and the Masculinist State in Lebanon
Anthony Rizk and Ghassan Makarem

The early 2000s saw the beginnings of Lebanon's sexual rights movement, partly evolving from left-wing organizations such as *Khat Mubashir* and *al-Yassari* (the Leftist) magazine. The beginnings of sexual rights activism in Lebanon on the public scale could be characterized as subversive activism, culminating in Khat Mubashir's Radical Film Club and it's "Man is a Woman" film festival in 2001.[1] These first developments were in the wake of the Queen Boat "panic" of 2001 in Egypt, which marked the first of many explicit targeting and highly publicized repression of sexual non-conformity in the region over the past generation[2] and inspired a regressive penal code reform in the autumn of 2002 in Lebanon, which intended to increase the scope of the anti-sodomy law (Article 534). Both the Egyptian and Lebanese repressive campaigns invoked a new public enemy of the state – the homosexual. In 2002, members of newly-formed human rights initiative *Hurriyat Khassa* (Private Freedoms) (2001-2007) formed the ad hoc group, Helem, which became an organization in 2004. This very same trajectory participated in the politicization of some feminist organizations in Lebanon, and the first formations of radical feminist organizing later in 2009,[3] which refused both the "elitism of many Lebanese feminist organization" and to allow "the NGO funding structure" a principal role in defining work by left-leaning activists.[4]

However, it is possible to trace the shift in strategy in LGBT organizing in Lebanon, where the subversive activism of the past (as was the case with Khat Mubashir's *Man is Woman* campaign in 2001[5] and the *Ana Shaz* Campaign in 2010[6]) have been largely discarded and replaced by demobilized professionalization and NGOization, following several years of quiet elimination of public spaces for gay cruising and non-conformity, in general, in favor of rampant gentrification, including the creation of imaginary queer spaces.[7] While much has been said on the politics of women's and sexual rights movements and organizations, this paper utilizes the concepts of "hegemonic masculinity" and "masculinist states" to further understand women's and LGBT activism around questions of masculinity, in particular.

The present discourse analysis draws from material collected from a desk review, interviews with activists and the authors' own experience in LGBT organizing. The first section of the paper summarizes the theoretical frameworks underlying the paper and discusses political masculinity and it's

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1 Ghassan Makarem, "The story of Helem", *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2011, pp. 98-112; Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi, *L'altermondialisme au Liban : un militantisme de passage. Logiques d'engagement et reconfiguration de l'espace militant (de gauche) au Liban*, PhD thesis, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2013.

2 Human Rights Watch, "In a Time of Torture: The assault on justice in Egypt's crackdown on homosexual conduct", *Human Rights Watch*, 2004, available at: http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/02/29/time-torture [last accessed 22 November 2014].

3 Bernadette Daou, "Feminisms in Lebanon: after proving loyalty to the "Nation", will the "Body" rise within the "Arab Spring"?", *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Lebanon Support, Forthcoming, January 2015.

4 Nadine Naber and Zeina Zaatari, "Reframing the war on terror: Feminist and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) activism in the context of the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon", *Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2014, pp. 91-111.; Although these "leftist" leaning were constantly renegotiated within Helem as explained in AbiYaghi, 2013, *op.cit.*

5 Makarem, 2011, *op. cit.*

6 "Am I Queer? IDAHO 2010", Helem, 2010, available at: http://www.helem.net/?q=node/110 [last accessed 22 November 2014].

7 Campaigns against cruising spaces and meeting points such as cinemas or bathhouses have persisted ever since the publicity surrounding Queen Boat; the latest example being the raid on Agha Hammam in Beirut on August 13, 2014 and related state discourse on protecting masculinity; see, for example, Sarah Wansa, "Torture at Every Stage: The Unofficial Narrative of the Hammam al-Agha Raid", *The Legal Agenda*, November 12, 2014, available at http://www.english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=665&folder=articles&lang=en [last accessed 5 January 2015]. This could be contrasted to the publicity regarding a more globalized gay nightlife in Beirut in "gay" themed reporting abroad; see, for example, Briand Bedford, "Beirut and Lebanon: The gay paradise of the Arab world", *Gay Star News*, 8 June 2012, available online at http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/beirut-and-lebanon-gay-paradise-arab-world080612 [last accessed 5 January 2015].

relation to the postcolonial Lebanese nation-state. The following sections respectively discuss discourses of "masculinity-under-threat" and women's and LGBT activism in relation to state masculinity, while the final section of the paper interrogates the emergence of new "counter-masculinities".

1. Masculinity and the Nation-State

In "Finding the Man in the State" (1991), Wendy Brown unravels the gendering of the state by characterizing the liberal state, at least in the United States, as a "masculinist state". She writes: "State powers are no more gender-neutral than they are neutral with regard to class and race, such an appeal involves seeking protection against men from masculinist institutions."[1] Similarly, but in another current, Robert Connell discusses a historically constructed "hierarchy of masculinities" in society, one that became more apparent with homosexual visibility, where "hegemonic masculinities" are understood as "as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" and "embodied the currently most honored way of being a man [and] required all other men to position themselves in relation to it."[2] While Connell places hegemonic masculinity as a societal force enacted on and by men, an "ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion,"[3] we aim in this paper to begin to approach and test the interaction of the societal and the political through looking at the politically-driven ideal of hegemonic masculinity as enacted by masculinist state power.

Figure 1. *Caricature of the empty presidential seat in Lebanon.[4]*

A reiteration of hegemonic masculinity as political masculinity is partly grounded in Joan Nagel's interpolation of masculinity and nationalism in building the state.[5] She writes:

> "By definition, nationalism is political and closely linked to the state and its institutions. Like the military, most state institutions have been historically and remain dominated by men. It is therefore no surprise that the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism."[6]

Nationalism, according to Nagel, is intimately linked to masculinism, and has historical roots in the French and Industrial revolutions as part of a process of restructuring local and global politics and "[creating] a national market economy and a viable national bourgeois class."[7] Patriarchy, in Lebanese political formation, is expanded by Suad Joseph in her discussion of nations as "imagined communities" through which women are often used as a critical symbol in inventing the nation. This

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1 Wendy Brown, "Finding the Man in the State", *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1992, pp. 7-34, available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178212 [last accessed 4 December 2014].

2 Robert W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic masculinity rethinking the concept", *Gender & Society*, Vol. 19, No. 6, 2005, pp. 829-859, available at: http://gas.sagepub.com/content/19/6/829.short [last accessed 4 December 2014].

3 *Ibid.*, p. 832.

4 *Daily Star*, Beirut, Editorial Cartoon, December 27, 2014, available online at http://www.dailystar.com.lb/dailystar/Comics/27-12-2014/376715_635552371698007174_img300x200_img300x200_crop.jpg

5 Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1998, pp. 242-269, available at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/014198798330007 [last accessed 4 December 2014].

6 *Ibid.*, p. 249.

7 Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, London, New Left Books, 1977, pp. 333. Cited in Joane Nagel, 1998, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

contributes to rendering the "state" and the "nation" into effectively masculine and feminine gendered constructs, where the male state is designated the task of "protecting" the female Nation.[1]

The on-going militarization of society can be associated with its masculinization, where, we can observe, that political strength of nationalist parties is, at least partly, drawn from the masculinity of the political elite and their militias. This can be seen in the use of sports, military training, and fascist physiological development by nationalist parties (such as the Phalanges, SSNP, and others) and the Statist Left (such as the Communist Party) alike.

Nation-state formation has also come hand in hand with nuclear family formation as the central social institution,[2] and the masculine/feminine divide in labor, for example, as well as their protectionist connotations. Pro-military video clips, featured in 2014 in response to the kidnapping of Lebanese soldiers by Islamist militants on the borders with Syria, continue to depict the victims of the loss of military power as widowed wives and young boys.[3]

2. Women's Organizations: Legal Reformism and the Appropriation of Masculinity

2.1. Legal Reformism and the Creation of the 'Masculinity-Under-Threat' discourse

While women organizing for their rights in Lebanon could be traced back to women's industrial actions in 19th century silk factories, the women's struggle against patriarchal oppression at the beginning of the 21st century has become "limited to the representations, priorities and strategies of women's organizations, particularly NGOs,"[4] who rarely question the socio-economic aspect of the patriarchal order. The first wave of what could be called a women's movement was involved in the independence of Lebanon, however, a woman was not seen as an identity in herself, but as part of building the nation, resisting oppression, and the issues concerned with the body were forgotten.[5] The second wave, in the 1970s, saw the politicization of women through union and student movements and the engagement of women in political parties in Lebanon, parties from which they were soon sidelined or, in some cases, expelled for advancing feminist issues.

In reaction, rights-based women's and feminist NGOs in Lebanon, identified as third wave feminist organizations, marked the beginning of a transformation in feminist discourse and organizing that diverted from their predecessors.[6] Yet, the question of masculinity, does not seem to be central prior to the emergence of third wave feminist organizing, where it was formally approached in the late 1990s with the emergence of a more visible political participation of women and the beginning of formal engagement on issues of gender-based violence and violence against women, as well as direct engagement in parliamentary political campaigns.

Although third wave women's organizations adopted the tactics of legal reformism, limiting the discussions within legal and professional circles and alienated women from political participation,[7] legal reformism has achieved the provocation of discourse around gender and masculinity at the national level. Most pertinent among those reactions are the ones we identify as constituting discourses of "masculinity-under-threat", noting that this discourse takes shape as an oppositional response to the demands of the women's rights movement in Lebanon.

For as long as Lebanese women have been organizing to be allowed the right of passing on their nationality to their children, a counter political discourse has existed that implicates women's rights with demographic and confessional imbalance. Granting women the right to pass on their nationality constitutes a demographic threat to the "higher interests of the state", with marriage between Lebanese women and Palestinian men being a main concern.[8]

1   Suad Joseph, "Gender and Citizenship in the Arab world", Concept Paper, University of California, Davis, 2002, available at: http://www.euromedgenderequality.org/image.php?id=487 [last accessed 4 December 2014].
2   Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920*, University of California Press, 2001.
3   For example, Mohamad Iskandar, "*Id Min Hadid* (Iron Fist)", available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g-CdTzGrqsY; and Hiba Tawaji, "*Mitl el-Shajar Mazrouin* (Planted Like Trees)", available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGHWJdC1UXE.
4   Riwa Salameh, "Gender politics in Lebanon and the limits of legal reformism", *Civil Society Knowledge Center, Lebanon Support,* 2014, available at: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/gender-politics-lebanon-and-limits-legal-reformism [last accessed 4 December 2014].
5   Daou, 2015, *op. cit.*
6   *Ibid.*
7   *Ibid.*
8   Olivia Alabaster, "Activist: Rejection of nationality law sets dangerous precedent", *Daily Star*, Beirut, January 16, 2014, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Jan-16/202419-activist-rejection-of-nationality-law-sets-dangerous-precedent.ashx [last accessed 4 December 2014].

As Lina Abou Habib, coordinator of the nationality campaign, put it: "they are basically saying that women constitute a grave danger to higher state interests."[1] We can identify, at this point, higher state interests as not only concerned with demographics, but also intricately concerned with the gender of citizens, where the naturalization of foreign men, specifically Palestinian and more recently Syrian men, is a threat to the sectarian makeup of the nation-state.

The debates over the domestic violence law saw the most public display of masculinity-under-threat discourses and counter discourses and brought the question of women's rights and masculinity to a national level. A demonstration organized by KAFA on International Women's Day on March 8th, 2014, drew more than 5,000 demonstrators to the cause of domestic violence.[2] However, the demand for state intervention on domestic violence, including marital rape, through a draft law, constituted a significant enough threat to the sectarian state that it warranted a drawn-out campaign, a statement from *Dar al-Fatwa* denouncing the draft law, and dilution of the law in parliamentary committees.[3,4] After revision by parliamentary committees, possibly indicating a process of containment of the women's mobilization, the law was ratified in April 2014.[5] Parliamentary committees removed any special protections to women from the draft law, criminalized marital rape only if it leads to physical harm, and introduced the precedent of "marital right".[6,7]

Opposition to the domestic violence law, in the form of a statement issued by *Dar al-Fatwa* in April 2011, revolved around the issues of averting conflict between the civil and Islamic courts, "preserving the masculinity and manhood of the male,"[8] and refusing a law that punishes men for physically abusing or having non-consensual sex with their spouses.[9] Mounira, an academic researcher and activist on women's rights, had this to say:

> "It is because it touched upon both the civil and penal law, which often conflict, such as with issues of custody and rape. They changed the penal codes, where they were straight forward, but did not approach the civil laws. The personal status laws are the core of the sectarian state, and the civil law is one of its pillars. Changes in it threatens this construction, this is both a sectarian and masculinist state. Imagine that, if a woman gives her child her last name, everything collapses, all the sectarian connotations of that collapse also."[10]

It is through these examples that we are able to see political masculinity at play, and the role played by discourses of masculinity-under-threat. Women's rights legal reforms are opposed on a masculinist basis – it is said that women's rights not only threaten the masculinity and manhood of men themselves, but threaten the nation and the state. The interpolation of masculinism and nationalism in the formation of the Lebanese nation-state explains this aggressive resistance to the demands of the women's movement and the discourse of 'masculinity-under-threat'. As Nagel explains, "this unseemly, sometimes hysterical resistance to a diversity…makes more sense when it is understood that these men are not only defending tradition but are defending a particular racial, gendered and sexual conception of self: a white, male, heterosexual notion of masculine identity loaded with all the burdens and privileges that go along with hegemonic masculinity."[11] Masculinity is regulated by defining "good" men and "bad" men, through a standard of legitimacy revolving around gender and sex roles. The "good" man becomes the one who protects his family, sect, land and nation. Beyond this, any behavior or identity that threatens this construct can be seen as a threat to political masculinity and cast as a perversion, and morally condemned.

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1   *Ibid.*
2   *Ibid.*
3   Tamara Qiblawi, "Women decry Lebanon's domestic violence law", *Al-Jazeera*, English, April 15th 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/03/women-decry-lebanon-domestic-violence-law-2014327115352486894.html [last accessed 4 December 2014].
4   Azza Charara Beydoun, "العنف ضد النساء وواجبات الدولة اللبنانية (Violence against women and the duties of the Lebanese State)", *The Legal Agenda*, 2012, available at: http://legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=156&lang=ar [last accessed 4 December 2014].
5   Nizar Saghieh, "Interpreting Lebanon's Law Against Domestic Violence: Jurisprudence as Legal Reform", *The Legal Agenda*, June 30, 2014, available at: http://english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=626&lang=en [last accessed 4 December 2014].
6   Charara Beydoun, 2012, *op. cit.*
7   Salameh, 2014, *op.cit.*
8   Said by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Darwish Abu Qataa al-Naqshabandi, cited in Jean Aziz, "Islamic clerics Oppose Lebanese Law Protecting Women". *Al-Monitor*, 2013, available at: http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/07/womens-rights-activists-lebanon-domestic-violence-law.html# [last accessed 4 December 2014].
9   *Ibid.*
10   Interview with Mounira, November 19, 2014, Beirut. All the names of the interviewees were changes so as to respect their anonymity.
11   Joane Nagel, 1998, op. cit., p. 254.

It is from similar experiences of the women's right movement in Lebanon that Brown warns of approaching the state as "provider, equalizer, protector, or liberator"[1]and questions and critiques what she calls the "politics of protection and regulation"– feminists appeals to the state for protection from violence through the gender-based regulation of private and public life, by arguing that these demands are fraught by an established, already masculinist, state, one that is "a historical product and expression of male predominance in public life and male dominance generally."[2]

2.2. Appropriation and the (lack of a) Challenge to Hegemonic Masculinity

Although third wave feminist organizations had strong roots in civil action, experience in political mobilization and the capacity to mass mobilize women on issues such as domestic violence, some organizations drifted towards corporatization and a disconnection from militant activism.[3,4] This shift has been accompanied by activist discourses that seek to appropriate, reshape and redeliver masculinity. One of the most obvious examples is ABAAD's "We Believe" campaign, where bulletin boards state: "Be a Man, Don't Hit your Wife" – in no way complicating what it means to "be a man". Two respondents characterized this process as "adding criteria" to hegemonic masculinity rather than reshaping it.[5] This process is in no way limited to one organization, but the 'engaging men' track can be seen as a recent direction in third wave women's organizing. Riwa, a long-time queer feminist organizer, elaborated:

"The demand of organizations is one of rights, equality, and calling on men to stand for women's rights. But, there is no demand to think critically about gender and masculinity, and masculinity isn't being deconstructed. There are some organizations that tell men to be 'gentlemen', like the *Koun Rijjel* [Be a Man] campaign. Some organizations are working on masculinity through bolstering it, saying that it is too base for men to be violent, men are better than this, so on. This is taking us into a worse place, where we are compromising with men more than taking our rights."[6]

She also had this to say:

"If World Vision does a campaign on cleanliness, it says "if you're a mother, close the trash bag". Now, UNICEF has a campaign directed to women saying they are responsible for their child's protection from polio. Civil society revolves more around these gendered thoughts than people themselves. […] Everyone who works on humanitarianism is concerned about cultural sensitivity, often to the point of compromising human rights. […] We don't have organizations that are really feminist, that are actually deconstructing, analyzing. And if there are such organizations, they don't have the resources. No one is interested in supporting anything that wants to do this work. They prefer to do a campaign with the police, and love the UN, love the governmental partnerships. There is also this standard of success, that every time you have an event with someone from government, this is success. The standard of success relies on institutions that are sexist, such as the legislature and the media… this is what gets supported. […] when the UN talks about gender, they say they don't want men to be women or women to men, they want men to be men and women to be women."[7]

The above excerpts bring to light the role of funding agencies in shifting the agenda of women's organizations towards, possibly unwanted, partnerships with government and UN institutions, and therefore contains women's organizations feminist discourse within a statist program. The alternative, a strong critique of political masculinity and active engagement with it is unwanted, unfunded, and neglected.

Furthermore, a second process that can be observed is one of 'appropriating' masculinity in "engaging men" campaigns launched by women's organizations. As Riwa explained:

"There is a state of terror with men, it shows up in conferences and trainings and it is very violent. I face a lot of violence in these places, men scream at me defensively, as if someone is taking something from them. [...] The attention to women's issues is coming in such a segregative way, it is not opening any way for discussion between men and women. NGOs are

1 Brown, 1992, *op.cit.*
2 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
3 Salameh, 2014, *op. cit.*
4 Daou, 2015, *op. cit.*
5 Interview respondents Riwa and Mounira, November 19, 2014, Beirut.
6 Interview with Riwa, Beirut, December 19, 2014.
7 *Ibid.*

approaching men and women separately and telling them they are 1, 2, 3, and 4. Programs include only men, or only women, there is no room for them to be together [...] Participants are expressing that this kind of masculinity is under attack, there is a reaction of why are you targeting us men and supposing we are violent? Another statement I've heard is along the lines of 'stop comparing us to Europe, Europe isn't better', it comes along with an Arab nationalism that promotes Islam as a savior of women. They then contradict themselves, saying women are 'flowers', and need to be protected."[1]

On one hand, men identify these campaigns as threatening to their masculinity, and are, therefore, defensive; on the other, the threat to masculinity is seen as a western import and an attack on their customs. These insights into the dynamics of masculinity and its interconnection to nationalism imply that rights-based activism has been forced to develop strategies in response to the state's defense and protection of political masculinity and the reconfiguration of masculinity into a 'masculinity-under-threat' discourse by state actors. However, for women's organizations, particularly of the third wave, the tactics of subversion have largely disappeared and may have been replaced by tactics of reshaping masculinity and its appropriation.

Fourth wave feminism has not been addressed directly so far, as it's story is interconnected with that of the LGBT movement. The next section will discuss LGBT politics and political masculinity, where, while subversion marked the beginning of the first decade of sexuality organizing in Lebanon, demobilization and NGOization has marked the end of the decade and a new politics of respectability.

3. LGBT movement: From Subversion to Demobilization

3.1. LGBT Demobilization and "Masculinity Under Threat"

In attempting to advance sexual rights in the public sphere in Lebanon, activists have struggled against the dichotomization of sexuality issues between the contested tropes of "westernized" gay identity and "national" straight identity, while at the same time participating in creating this very same binary both linguistically (*mithli/moghayer*) and discursively. The discussion on masculinity and homosexuality in Lebanon is mired in a homo/hetero political binary, which has come to be constructed, to the detriment of the movement, as a conflict between the (predominantly white) male Westernized homosexual and the Arab/Nationalist (non-white) male heterosexual. What seems to be at stake here, is less the sexual behavior than the performance of homo- and hetero- sexuality, specifically within a heteropatriarchal and capitalist system.[2] For example, while homosexual behavior is legally and socially regulated, it is done so along class lines,[3,4] where it is the poor and the underprivileged who must conform, under punitive threat, to state-sponsored morality. Similarly, transgender persons experience a more intense system of regulation and both social and state policing specifically for their defiance of performing their biologically determined gender and/or sexuality.[5] While race and class are important dimensions of oppression, this section will focus on gender-disciplining under forces of hegemonic and political masculinity, where, similar to the woman's movement, 'masculinity-under-threat' features in state discourse.

On June 9, 2013, Helem's yearly International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), coincided with Hezbollah's military takeover in al-Qusair and its announcement of active engagement against the Syrian revolution. In its evening news, *Al-Jadeed* TV channel casually characterized the LGBT movement as one that "sings to its own tune" and "neither concerned with politics, nor with war."[6] *Al-Jadeed*'s biases aside, this constitutes a possible reflection of a noticeable demobilization of the sexual rights movement at a time of growing politicization of sexuality at the national level.[7] Following 2011, the Arab revolutions as well as the further militarization of the

1 *Ibid.*

2 Judith Butler, "Gender as performance: An interview with Judith Butler," *Radical Philosophy*, Vol. 67, No.1, 1994, pp. 32-39.

3 Lara Damaghi, Alena Mack and Doris Jaalouk, "A case study of the first legal, above-ground LGBT organization in the MENA region", Helem, 2009, availablee at: http://helem.net/?q=node/55 [last accessed 22 November 2014].

4 Wansa, 2014, *op. cit.*

5 Ahmad J. Saleh and Adriana A. Qubaia, "Transwomen's Navigation of Arrest and Detention In Beirut: A Case Study", Lebanon Support, *Civil Society Knowledge Center*, Gender Equity and Information Network, January 15, 2015, available at http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/transwomen%E2%80%99s-navigation-arrest-and-detention-beirut-case-study [last accessed on January 16, 2015].

6 Al Jadeed Evening News, 9 June 2013, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4R7gk2HWOw [Arabic] [last accessed 28 November 2014].

7 Maya Mikdashi, "Moral Panics, Sex Panics and the Production of a Lebanese Nation", *Jadaliyya*, February 22, 2014, available at: http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/16570/moral-panics-sex-panics-and-the-production-of-a-le [last accessed 4 December 2014].

region, Helem and organizations based on the same framework had to confront a new dilemma, that of direct clashes with regional militarization and discourses of 'masculinity-under-threat'.

This discourse was crystallized, perhaps, in a highly-publicized incident in December 2013, when Antoine Chakhtoura, the Mayor of suburb of Dekwaneh, north of Beirut, ordered a highly mediatized arrest and humiliation of transgender individuals. The mayor's campaign condemned "moral perversions" as a threat to his municipality, characterizing Dekwaneh as a "Fortress of Resilience".[1] Chakhtoura's condemnation was linked to the preservation of militarized masculinity and sectarian pride. This public engagement with sexual politics by sectarian and nationalist political actors constitutes a development in sexuality politics in advancing the argument of masculinity-under-threat, where, previously, the repression of sexual rights through security arms did not require justification. The argument of masculinity-under-threat was more recently reiterated at the Zouk Mikhael Music Festival by a politician who opposed a gay-identifying band from performing.[2]

Figure 2. *Banner raised in Dekwaneh in 2013, it read: "Let your paths be straight and do not deviate (Prophets of the Word - Dekwaneh)"*[3]

The question of hegemonic masculinity, implicitly tied to political participation and mobilization, has been contentiously debated in Helem since its founding.[4] Faithful to a universalizing LGBT discourse, where the basis for Helem's mobilization was on sexual behavior and not political ideology, Helem underwent chronic political paralysis due to a political divide that progressively polarized the organization. This struggle between mobilization and demobilization led to a crisis in 2006, during the Israeli war on Lebanon, which revolved around political participation and mobilization. The rift in the LGBT movement in 2006 manifested around a leftist membership that called for political engagement with the national struggle and the opening of the organization's doors to refugees, on one end, and the more identitarian membership that called for an exclusive focus on gay rights as the ceiling for engagement.[5] The severity of the war ultimately required a forced opening of Helem's doors to the displaced refugees and political contact of Helem with national parties and the anti-imperialism and anti-zionist movement, including Hezbollah. This lead to the estrangement of a number of members from the organization, and the recruitment of many others.

On another note, and similar to women's organizations, the tensions revolved around subverting political masculinity, on one end, and reshaping it, on the other. "Good" masculinity was in the process of being constructed as respectable, middle-class, educated and professionalized homosexual masculinity. The alternative, queer feminist activism in Helem, was short-lived and quickly expired in its clash with an internationalized mainstream gay agenda.[6] Queer feminist activism, at one point, did attempt to reclaim the derogatory term *shaz* (شاذ) in 2010 through the *Ana Shaz* campaign,[7] which was met with heavy resentment and backlash by a gay activist community that had spent almost a decade assimilating itself into heteropatriarchal society and rejecting being positioned as "deviant". Queer was later transliterated, in a depoliticized form, *al-kwiriya* (الكويرية), in subsequent writings and statements.

However, LGBT activism does not seem to have formulated a response to political masculinity and

1 Karim Nammour, "Dekwaneh's "No Gay Land" triggers debate on homophobia", *The Legal Agenda*, December 2, 2013, available at: http://english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=562&lang=en [last accessed 4 December 2014].

2 "Mashrou' Leila's Zouk Festival "gay" performance goes ahead despite pre-concert homophobia controversy", *Daily Star*, English, Beirut, August 4, 2014, available at: http://www.albawaba.com/entertainment/mashrou'-leila-594287 [last accessed 4 December 2014].

3 *BlogBaladi*, 2013, available online at http://blogbaladi.com/on-dekwanehs-incident-and-antoine-chakhtouras-wrongdoings/.

4 Authors' personal experience as Board Members in Helem.

5 Author's (GM) personal experience as Board Member in Helem.

6 Authors' personal experience as Board Members in Helem, and also AbiYaghi, 2013, *op.cit.*

7 Helem, 2010, *op. cit.*

the nationalism that drives it, aside from a demobilized and NGOized trajectory, estrangement from political engagement, and closer relations to the international and US-based gay movements. As the region, the country, and the city, become increasingly militarized, a growing concern of protecting political masculinity from deviance can be seen. NGOization and corporatization are today global activist phenomena, closely linked with foreign and international funding agencies.[1,2] A case in point is the slow and progressive NGOization of Helem which transformed from member-based organizing around social issues into staff-based service provision in a 10 year period. It is this transition that we identify as demobilization, where political participation is stifled through instituting top-down staff-based approaches that may revolve around donor agendas and the delivery of services (such as health, legal, social, etc.) [3] and may prioritize a politics of respectability, value mass professionalization of the leadership and membership, and ultimately create activist spaces that are exclusively middle-class arenas.

3.2. Gender Trouble in LGBT Organizing

A second area where the question of masculinity has been most contentious in LGBT activism has been Helem's progressive disengagement with feminism, which lead to its own internal successive crisis in 2005 and 2011, both of which lead to the ostracization of almost all of the organization's women.[4]

In 2005, Helem's prioritizing of gay male issues over women's led to the formation of Helem Girls, which dissociated itself from Helem soon after. This coincided with engagement with the relief efforts following the 2006 Israeli invasion saw, notably, the presence of the Feminist Collective. Naber and Zaatari (2014) portray this position, saying "[it] was a feminist and LGBTQ movement fighting for the option to live and the possibility of a future. Fighting with and for families and children was part of a struggle aimed at keeping people – all people – alive" in participating in the anti-imperialist movement and in "countering military violence and heteropatriarchy."[5] The core membership of Helem Girls went on to create two platforms, an underground group, Meem, and an above-ground Feminist Collective, a predecessor to Nasawiya, in 2009. This constituted the trajectory of fourth wave feminist organizing, radical feminism, that distinctly diverted from earlier women's organization in relation to masculinity.[6]

While the first schism, in 2005, is part of the narrative of radical queer feminist political organizing, the second schism, in 2011 revolved around a sexual harassment incident and saw a mass leftist withdrawal from organized LGBT activism.[7,8] "Identity politics" was largely implicated in the crisis, where the LGBT framework, seen to be imposed by international frameworks of LGBT organizing, in its dismissiveness of male privilege and its equalization of men and women's struggles, organically favored gay-male centered organizing and alienated women.[9]

The formation of NGOs around sexuality and gender have had a mixed legacy.[10] However, it played a pivotal role in both contesting and reshaping masculinity – in its hegemonic and non-hegemonic forms. The next section discusses, in more depth, this reshaping of masculinity in the form of an emergence of a professionalized, respectable, "counter-masculinity", which challenges hegemonic notions of "good" and "bad" men.

4. NGOization: the Emergence of a Counter-Masculine Identity

The political turmoil of the Lebanese state has met the conditions of formal organizations that contest political masculinity. Although the type of confrontations range from subverting masculinity, to

1   Aziz Choudry, "Global justice? Contesting NGOization: Knowledge politics and containment in anti-globalization networks", in Dip Kapoor and Aziz Choudry, *Learning from the ground up: Global perspectives on knowledge production in social movements*, 2010, pp. 17-34.
2   Islah Jad, "The NGO-ization of Arab women's movements", Feminisms in development: contradictions, contestations and challenges, Zed Books, 2007, pp. 177-190.
3   AbiYaghi, 2013, *op.cit.*
4   Authors' personal experience as Board Members in Helem.
5   Naber and Zaatari, 2014, op. cit.
6   Daou, 2015, *op. cit.*
7   Chloe Benoist, "Lebanese gay rights organization Helem marks 10 years with a mixed legacy", *Al-Akhbar English*, September 30 2014, available at: http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/21786 [last accessed 4 December 2014].
8   "Where do we stand?", *Nfasharte*, 2011, available at: http://nfasharte.wordpress.org [last accessed 4 December 2014].
9   *Ibid.*
10   Please see, Makarem, 2011, *op. cit.*; Salameh, 2014, *op. cit.*; Daou, 2015, *op. cit.*; Benoist, *op. cit.*; and Chloe Benoist "Lebanese gay rights organization Helem marks 10 years with a mixed legacy, Part II", *Al-Akhbar English*, October 2nd, 2014, available online at: http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/lebanese-gay-rights-organization-helem-marks-10-years-mixed-legacy-part-ii [last accessed on January 5th, 2015].

appropriating it, and, in several cases, embracing it, the rise of sexuality and gender non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may have perpetuated a shift in masculinity discourse and new standards of legitimacy of what constitutes the "good man" and the "bad man". As Robert Connell notes, as in any other gender construct, hegemonic masculinity is dynamic, where struggles for hegemony may displace one form of masculinity by another.[1] Insofar as political masculinity prizes militarism, the "new" masculinity advances, in one instance, sexual identity politics as a legitimizing standard, and, on another, professionalization and a politics of respectability, both of which are spread across class lines.

Fawzi, an activist and researcher on LGBT issues, also elucidates the influence of state discourse through international institutions:

> "UNHCR has recently stated what it means to be LGBTIQ in a formatted and standardized way. Now, when assistance is needed, organizations such as UNHCR and Makhzoumi Foundation [a local NGO], that do shelter and cash funding, cross-check people against their understanding of what gay is. If they are effeminate, they then receive the services as their mannerisms qualify them as LGBTIQ. But if they're masculine, then they need to verbally state that they are gay, otherwise they will not receive services. They also try to put them all in one place, as if that means they should all automatically get along. They also ask them intrusive questions, who did you date? For how long? They want to check if they're always gay; long-term relationship is a criteria."[2]

This excerpt underlines the critical role of masculinity and femininity in both mannerisms and identity, and the shift towards identity-based sexual politics. This emerges as another kind of masculinity, one that is not professionalized, and not yet respectable, but very vulnerable. Additionally, this delineation is not separable from the demobilization previously discussed: the subject, who was previously cast as a member, a participant, has become cast as a service receiver.

Through this process the "gay man" becomes also cast, based on sexual behavior alone, as the "good man". This is duplicated through another signifier, the "activist man", a common emergent masculinity in both LGBT and women's organizing. These configurations, which blur male privilege, may have contributed towards collapses of both Helem and Nasawiya in 2011 and 2012, respectively.[3] The "good" activist man has also come hand in hand with creating a male "activist hero", as Riwa put it:

> "Some of the male activists who work in NGOs, their sexism is a lot more than those I see in trainings. Some organizations like to turn men into the "hero". […] There is no celebration of anything feminine, the ideal is the masculine. All the work is women trying to gain these masculine attributes. If a woman wants her rights, she has to act like a man to get her demands heard. What we see in this whole struggle is that feminine needs to become masculine to be good. I have to prove myself with the same tools as men to get my rights or succeed at something."[4]

On militarization and masculinity, she continued:

> "Weapons are masculine, they're not feminine. This is very important, there is a trend of fetishizing women who 'defend the land' in the way men do. There are thousands of initiatives that women have started, but none are acknowledged. Why? Because they didn't carry guns? It's only weapons that count". [5]

The above transcripts draw attention to contested conceptions of masculinity within sexual rights organizing, and a concern about the feminine. While women's rights organizations struggle against a patriarchal state, the (lack of) a critical challenge to hegemonic masculinity may have, at least for one interviewer, led to the appropriation of masculinist tools, instead of subverting them.

NGOization is, arguably, contained within a nationalist framework, of struggling towards a better, secular, Lebanon. It is also the case that NGOization itself plays a political and economic role, it contains political activism within cause-based social activism and creates employment for university graduates. The creation of the counter-masculine identity, the middle-class respectable and professional gay man, or the male "hero" of women's organizations, are part and parcel of this transformation.

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 833.

2 Interview with Fawzi, Beirut, 21 November, 2014.

3 In 2012, both organizations imploded after allegations of mismanagement related to separate sexual harassment incidents, where the male harasser was protected; on Helem, please refer to *Nfasharte* Blog, 2012, *op. cit.*; on Nasawiya, please see Farfahinne, "Feminism and self-criticism: notes from my personal experience", Farfahinne Blog, September, 2014, available online at: http://farfahinne.blogspot.com/2014/09/feminism-and-self-criticism-notes-from.html [last accessed January 5th 2015].

4 Interview with Riwa, Beirut, December 19, 2014.

5 *Ibid.*

The movement from cross-class alliance organizing to middle-class/urban corporate arrangements is not solely the result of foreign intervention. Rather, just like the modern nation-state building project, it goes in tandem with privatization, retreat of the state and, consequently, major political forces from social issues, and engendering the free market discourse.

Masculinity-under-threat, as this paper has shown, has appeared as a political response to both LGBT and women's activism. Third wave feminist politics have, to this date, time and again, challenged sex and gender discrimination, violence against women and the lack of social and political rights for women. The Lebanese state's response, as we argue, has consistently been one of "masculinity-under-threat", where the demands of the women's movement are seen as an attack or threat to the nation-state. Meanwhile, the LGBT movement has faced similar state discourse of "masculinity-under-threat", that has only increased with the growing militarization of the region. Discourses of "masculinity-under-threat" are deployed to justify repressive policies towards both women and people with non-conforming genders and sexualities.

Concurrently, women's organizations have undergone a shift of focus towards appropriating masculinity and have begun the process of delineating the "good" and "bad" man according to new standards. However, the degree to which reshaping masculinity has contested hegemonic and political forms of masculinity is not yet clear. Similarly, the LGBT movement has experienced a "mixed legacy", partly attributed to tensions around male privilege and gender politics. Consequently, a formative challenge to political masculinity has been substituted for a politics of respectability, mass professionalization, and service provision. Furthermore, this same direction may have contributed towards the possible emergence of a "new" or "counter" masculinity.

Contrary to the simplistic construction of the 'masculinist state' used in this paper, it should be noted, as Brown (1991) argues, that the masculinist state is not monolithic, not "a thing, system, or subject but a significantly unbounded terrain of powers and techniques, an ensemble of discourses, rules, and practices, cohabiting in limited, tension-ridden, often contradictory relation with one another."[1] Future research could focus on unwrapping these many, and often contradictory, dimensions.

Lastly, the arguments presented in this paper are not complete. While we have outlined political masculinity and activist engagement and disengagement, we have not discussed the global and regional forces at play in these processes, where we find the geopolitics surrounding the War on Terror to play a central role.

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Transwomen's Navigation of Arrest and Detention In Beirut:
A Case Study
Ahmad J. Saleh and Adriana A. Qubaia

Increased surveillance and policing: inventing 'new' criminals

To begin with, we would like to place transwomen's arrest and detention in the larger ongoing political context of policing and surveillance in Beirut. The past few years – in particular since the outbreak of armed war in Syria in 2011 – have witnessed many new and re-emerging forms of state and communal policing across several local neighborhoods.[1] Citing a general "security threat" facing Lebanon as an urgent incentive, police forces developed new campaigns,[2] received more funding,[3] and increased checkpoints and surveillance in some areas, while communities such as *Burj Hammoud, Dikwaneh, Sawfar,* and others imposed illegal curfews targeting persons they see as representative of this security threat.

Figure 1. An announcement from the Municipality of Sawfar requesting "the Syrian refugees residing in Sawfar to check with the municipality to acquire an identification card."[4]

New police campaigns and modes of surveillance aim to convince the Lebanese public that the police forces are indeed in control of general security and public order through fusing and framing social concerns as security threats. As such, they extend the definition of state-level security concerns to include the policing of social activities and "moral" principles. Issues such as refugee influx, unemployment, homelessness, sex-work, poverty as well as selective attitudes on proper gender and sexual behavior become reframed as part of the larger imagined security threat facing Lebanon.[5] Intervening in social and moral questions thus becomes a primary way through which security forces

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* A small glossary of terms is provided at the end of the paper.

1 "ISF Launches project to improve force's image in Ras Beirut.", Elise Knutsen, *Daily Star*, English, January 17, 2014, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Jan-17/244302-isf-launches-project-to-improve-forces-image-in-ras-beirut.ashx [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

2 "The Policing Pilot Project – Ras Beirut Section", Publicis Beirut, Video File, January 17th, 2014, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHqnDBoSXPA [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

3 "Deputy Chief of Mission Richard M. Mills Jr. Participates in Ceremony for the Launch of Community Policing at Ras Beirut Police Station", Embassy of the US in Beirut, Lebanon, Press Release, January 16th, 2014, http://lebanon.usembassy.gov/pr_011614.html [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

4 Personal archive of the authors; October 2014.

5 See for example the following analysis of how state officials use the Syrian refugee crisis to defend their own shortcomings and failures: Bassem Chit and Mohamad Ali Nayel, "Understanding racism against Syrian refugees in Lebanon", Civil Society Knowledge Center, Lebanon Support, October 28, 2013, http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/understanding-racism-against-syrian-refugees-lebanon [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

demonstrate their control of public affairs and order. Practically, this means that particular subjects, persons, and acts, become increasingly highlighted as threats to an imagined community and selective moral code.[1]

For example, the *Hamra* neighborhood in particular has seen new forms of surveillance and police restructuring. Complaints from middle class residents and business owners about the numbers of beggars and homeless persons in the streets – which they claimed were turning off customers and slowing down business in *Hamra*[2]– were met with several responses. One such response is a joint project between Search for Common Ground (SFCG) – a local non-governmental organization – and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) titled "Better Together: Improving ISF-Community Relations in *Ras Beirut*". This project included the creation of a new "hip" police force, with officers on bikes riding through the streets of the *Corniche*, with the aim to "foster a sustainable cooperation between residents of *Ras Beirut* and ISF members for the success of community policing in Beirut."[3]

Curiously, the same project also included the restructuring of *Hbeish* police station and detention center and renaming it the *Ras Beirut* station. *Hbeish* traditionally handles all cases of "*adab*" (morality) arrests in Beirut and is notoriously known among the general public, including the queer community at large, for its harsh interrogation and detention practices.[4] SFCG and ISF, as well as news reporting on this project, emphasized the refurbishing of *Hbeish* and the training of ISF members as steps that make the station a friendlier place for the community. However, the refurbishing and training only took place in one section of the *Hbeish* building, which has traditionally dealt with *Ras Beirut* security and did not include the section handling all the morality and *adab* cases and detainees – a fact that was not sufficiently highlighted, neither through the project nor the related media reports.

Figure 2. The ISF introduces the new "Ras Beirut Section - previously known as the Hbeich Station" on the 16th of January 2014.[5]

Thus, the emphasis on modernizing the look of the police forces, through including biker patrols and remodeling part of the police station, are efforts aiming to beautify the look of the ISF and normalize their presence and activities among a certain class of residents; namely middle and upper class home and business owners. By claiming to retrain the staff in *Hbeish*, the ISF appeals to middle-class morals and asks the community to trust its handling of morality cases – and by extension 'communal security' – the end result of which is successfully gaining legitimacy for further policing inside these neighborhoods.

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1 See also Adriana A. Qubaia and Mathew Gagné, "Sexualizing and Villainizing Male Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", *Muftah*, December 15, 2014, http://muftah.org/sexualizing-and-villainizing-syrian-refugees/#.VI8QZyvF_T- [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

2 See for example the words of Zuheir Itani, head of Hamra Merchants Association, who described the homeless as a foreign "invasion" harming Hamra's reputation and called on the security forces, among others, to intervene through "patrols, all day and all night." "عيتاني: لمكافحة المتسولين في شارع الحمراء" : Itani: Limukafahat al-Mutasawileen fi Share' al-Hamra" [Itani: to fight beggars in Hamra Street], *Future TV Network*, April 27th, 2014, http://www.futuretvnetwork.com/node/87872 [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

3 From SFCG brochure titled "Better Together! Improving ISF-Community Relations in Ras Beirut", Search For Common Ground, SFCG Publication, 2014.

4 "Adab" or morality cases include charges such as public indecency, "unnatural" sex acts (534), sex-work, etc.

5 "Policing Pilot Project - Ras Beirut", Policing Pilot Project Facebook page, January 17, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/PPP.RasBeirut [last accessed December 21, 2014].

Figure 3. *Police officer on bike in the Corniche area.[1]*

Figure 4. *ISF organizes community outreach efforts at nearby American University of Beirut campus to promote new "community policing". The ISF has a history of harassing many individuals, including students from the same university, on possession of drugs (i.e. personal use of soft drugs)[2]*

Combined, these different policing efforts work together to define who is a proper resident and who is not. Particular persons (such as the homeless, Palestinian and Syrian refugees, working children) as well as certain acts (poor children selling gum and flowers on the street, young people occupying a public space and drinking, etc.) gain a new form of visibility as representatives of security break-down and subsequent public scrutiny and state intervention.[3]

As is frequently the case locally[4] and regionally,[5] renewed policing efforts reinforce "proper" gender and sexuality norms and behaviors and (re)define which acts or persons would be considered threatening or "deviant". As such, they further predispose certain groups, including transwomen, to higher risks of questioning, harassment and detention. This predisposition is partly what produces the "hypervisibility" of transwomen as subjects that break an existing logic of "respectable" gender difference (gender binary) and assumed sexual homogeneity that is based on the coherence of this

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1   "Ras Beirut Police Bike Patrol", Najib, *Blog Baladi*, March 25, 2014, http://blogbaladi.com/ras-beirut-police-bike-patrol/ [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

2   "Mugshot", "AUB Civic and Volunteering Fair 2014" album, Policing Pilot Project - Ras Beirut's Page, facebook page, April 16, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/PPP.RasBeirut/photos/a.639755276107401.1073741831.622608797822049/639766509439611/?type=1&theater [last accessed December 21, 2014].

3   In analyzing the unrest in Arsal, Bassem Chit explains the historical and political conditions that have made it possible for the military and Lebanese politicians to create a false and racist link between Syrian refugees and ISIS, which is then used to justify indiscriminate force and violence against them, see Bassem Chit, "الحرب على اللاجئين/ات السوريين/ات: استمرار للحرب الطبقية: Al-Harb ala al-Lajieen/at al-suriyeen/at: Istimrar lilharb al-tabaqiya" [The War on Syrian Refugees: The Continuation of the Class War], *Al-Manshour*, Socialist Forum, November 30, 2014, http://al-manshour.org/node/6039 [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

4   See for example Sofian Merabet's analysis of the complex factors at play in past raids of known "gay" nightclubs such as Acid wherein discourses on "devil worship", drugs, and tattoos become central to processes of criminalization of certain groups: Sofian Merabet, *Queer Beirut*, University of Texas Press, 2014, pp. 227-232.

5   See Paul Amar's analysis of known Queen Boat raid in Cairo in which he focuses on the regimes of securitization and their interaction with policing "deviancy" in Egypt: Paul Amar, *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*, Duke University Press, 2013.

difference (heterosexuality). To be clear, we do not claim that harassment, arrest, and detention of trans* persons and practices have increased – indeed, we do not have the sufficient information to make this claim at the moment. The transwomen we interviewed all spoke of varied forms of violence and discrimination they face on a daily basis from business owners to administrators to military personnel and significant harassment on the street. Thus, we rather suggest that questions of proper sexual and gender conduct are an integral part of how police forces and communities imagine what is respectable and what is not, and thus who should and who should not be targeted in their renewed campaigns.[1]

We see this paper of particular interest to practitioners, academics, and activists engaged in civil work and response, particularly in the area of bodily rights and sexuality politics. We hope that illuminating the practical gaps and fallouts for transwomen trying to navigate arrest and detention will assist civil society activists and respondents in further building adequate, inclusive, and intersectional intervention strategies and discourses. We begin with a review of key articles in the penal code that are most frequently used to justify and implement the arrest and detention of transwomen. Then we move to discussing key findings and themes that emerged from our interviews and analysis, and end with a few recommendations.

Regulation in the penal code: routes of criminalization of personal liberties

On legal and self-Identification

The Lebanese penal code does not contain any articles that specifically criminalize an individual for identifying as a trans* person. It is permissible by law for physicians to provide counseling, prescribe hormone regimens, and provide surgical interventions as part of the sex-reassignment and transitioning process. The law also provides legal options for persons who have fully completed the transitioning process to change their initial and assigned sex on their identification papers and vital records, as well as take up a new name that corresponds with their self-identified gender.[2]

Yet, the law falls short of acknowledging the lived realities of trans* persons. It fails to recognize that self-identification as a trans* person does not necessarily entail that the person will begin transitioning or that the transition process will take the form of a full sex reassignment. The law also fails to acknowledge that transitioning is not an available and viable option to all trans* persons: it is expensive, long-term, and poses several health risks, which in themselves may become the key deciding factor. In necessitating that trans* persons start and complete sex-reassignment surgeries in order to be eligible to change their identification papers and vital records, the law reflects the state's priority in keeping a heterosexual gender binary separation and distinction. People have to prove to the state (through a forensic physician appointed by the court) that they have fully transitioned to the opposite sex. Full sex-reassignment acts as a guarantee to the state that people will not revert back to their biological state and disrupt the gender-binary again.[3]

The extent of transitioning options in which trans* people choose to invest depends on several factors, including their personal body and identity perceptions, their residency and living conditions, existing social relations and family and community ties, their health status as well as financial capacity. Some people might not be able to afford nor find a physician(s) to transition, while others choose to carry out specific body modifications and keep elements of their biological sex that they wish to retain. In doing so, trans* persons usually exist in a state of gender fluidity that confounds police personnel, legal bodies and the state when trying to identify or charge them.[4]

Illegal Impersonation

Given that changing gender on identification papers is only allowed in the earlier mentioned cases, many trans* people find it difficult or embarrassing to access spaces and locations that require

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1 For example, in April 2013, the mayor of *Dekwaneh* Antoine Chakhtoura ordered a raid of the local nightclub Ghost, which had been operating for a few years in the same location and frequently monitored by the police. The illegal raid included the arrest of 4 persons, all of whom were Syrians and one of whom was a transwoman – all four were subjected to violent and invasive inspection and interrogation. In defending the raid, Chakhtoura insisted that he is fighting against moral corruption and indecency, which include "drug use, prostitution and liwat" and for Dikwaneh's "land" and its "honor". The raid, coming shortly before a round of local elections, was widely seen as a cheap method for Chakhtoura to rally support from local constituents by creating a moral and security panic around a social question and a particular social group. See: "Dekwaneh's 'No Gay Land' Triggers Debate on Homophobia", Karim Nammour, The Legal Agenda, December 2, 2013, http://english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=562&lang=en [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

2 For more details, see "Transfocus Report", Transfocus, forthcoming online, 2015.

3 ME Youmna Makhlouf, personal communication, November 2013.

4 Review court order from Metn Court of First Instance in 25/6/2009.

identification. These 'checkpoints' could be police/army checkpoints, roadblocks, college campus entrances, guards at bars and pubs, and so on; they represent compulsory outing points where trans* people have to present their status and explain it to the other person and whoever is present in the vicinity (many of these checkpoints are public).[1]

Many people would refer to two options to move around and circumvent these outing points; they might either not carry their ID cards with them or carry an ID card of a sibling or a relative who looks similar to how they are presenting themselves. Both options pose legal repercussions that can lead to an arrest. If they did not have an ID card, they are usually arrested (unless the police/army personnel decide to let them go), taken to the nearest police station, and their background is checked. The other option might lead to an arrest and a charge of impersonation according to article 469.[2] In either case, some people have tried to bribe the police/army personnel to let them go for a sum of money, which at times worked and at other times backfired. Sometimes, the police/army personnel would be the person who would ask for a bribe to let them go.[3]

Body-policing and breaching spaces for women

Article 521 of the Lebanese Penal Code[4] poses a serious concern as to how the law polices the appearances and body expressions of transwomen. Though it is easy to debunk the charge when the person shows the officer a paper from a physician (usually a psychiatrist) explaining that she is a trans* person and that she is in the midst of transitioning, it stills opens the door to embarrassment, harassment and possible arrest.

We cannot tell at the moment the prevalence or the likelihood of persecution of transwomen under article 521. However, many of our interviewees have reported that either themselves or their friends have been arrested several times on the streets for "masquerading" as women.[5]

Morality and Offences against public decency

Offences against public decency are detailed in article 209 and later reiterated in articles 531, 532, 533. In article 209, offences are conceptualized as (i) acts and gestures, (ii) speech and communication, and (iii) writings, drawings, photographs, pictures, films, signs and any form of imagery. Articles 531 and 532 define the offence for each of these items, while article 533 reiterates the use of materials mentioned in the third item of article 209 that would be used to "distribute or inform the public about".

Article 534 has been targeted by local civil society organizations for its use in criminalizing homosexuality.[6] Various reports have documented several cases of men that were arrested and detained through raids and reports of "doubt" and "suspicion of homosexuality". While we have little data that documents the use of this article to criminalize other bodies and/or sexualities, we can safely say that its interpretation and usage grows beyond the scope of criminalizing homosexual acts. For trans* persons, they can still be persecuted under article 534 through the criminalization of same-sex intercourse. This would happen when the police or legal bodies take into account the biological sex of the person and not their declared gender identity or self-presentation. So a transwoman would be read as a man according to her ID papers and her sexual relations with other men would be read as same-sex acts in violation of article 534.

The most well-known and recent case wherein a transwoman was considered a man and charged with article 534 was reported in the proceedings of the Metn Court on 25/6/2014. However, the 2014 rule itself can be considered a landmark due to the judge's separation of the "trans*" and "gay" identities (we use these definitions loosely). In this case, the judge began by referring to the transwoman as a male subject and then proceeded to neutralize her gender by using the "he/she" pronouns as he followed her transition throughout the case. In his ruling, he separated the gender

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1 These compulsory outing "checkpoints" are also frequently social ones or service providers, including banks and hospitals, etc.

2 Republic of Lebanon, *Lebanese Penal Code*, Article 469, 1943: "A person who presents to a public figure with a false identity in order to bring a certain benefit to himself or to another or in an intention to infringe on someone's rights, is punished by imprisonment from two months to two years in addition to possible felony offences in case he conspire with a public employee."

3 J., Informal interview, October 2014.

4 Republic of Lebanon, Lebanese Penal Code, Article 521: "Every man who dresses up as a woman and enters a women-only designated place or a place that is forbidden for him to enter, is punishable by imprisonment up to 6 months."

5 R., Informal interview, October 2014.

6 Hussein Yaakoub, "٤٣٥: فقط ولا غير"; "534: Faqat La ghair" ["534 only"], Beirut, Helem, 2009.

of the defendant from her sexual orientation and vindicated her on *each* ground; that a person is free to choose their self-identified gender and that "unnatural sexual intercourse" cannot be applied to same-sex acts.[1] Thus, the case was a victory from a transgender point of view first, and a victory against article 534 second.

Sex work: Incitement on debauchery

Sex work in Lebanon is technically legal as long as it is licensed and occurs in registered brothels. However, since the end of the Lebanese civil war, no brothel was given registration. As such, sex workers were obliged to move their work outdoors; meaning that the sexual encounter itself could no longer take place inside the brothel or club but in the customer's home, a public place, over the phone, or online. All these forms of sex work are considered by law secret prostitution and are punishable by imprisonment and/or fine. The only exception is a legal loophole where a non-local person (usually a woman) can enter country via an "artist" visa. Women who enter the country as "artists" are usually trafficked and forced into the sex industry operating within certain "super night-clubs".[2][3]

Articles 523, 524, 526, and 528 criminalize the solicitation of others for sex. Sex workers are targeted through these articles as solicitors of selling sex, while article 527 criminalizes facilitators and the employers of sex workers. Persons charged with any of these articles are prone to deportation under article 530.

In our interviews, we found a significant overlap among trans* women and sex work. In the face of unwavering financial and social constraints and obstacles, many transwomen are pushed for outdoor sex work to mitigate costs of living, create alternative support networks and so on. Transwomen who engage in sex work practice it outdoors by meeting clients on the streets or negotiating with them over the phone prior to the meeting. In this regard and with the absence of any support or exit programs, they are at a higher risk of being arrested for prostitution and in many cases they become repeat offenders as they always return to the street for work.

Themes in arrests and detention

The logic of detention cells

One of the primary concerns for transwomen upon arrest is the police's decision on whether to place them in the sex-segregated cells on the basis of their declared gender identity or on the basis of their assigned sex at birth which is listed in their identity documents. The transwomen interviewees mentioned that they were placed in the women's cells during the detention period. However, the security forces' decision was not informed by respect to the transwomen's declared gender identity, but by concerns that they would be sexually assaulted and/or that their presence would cause disorder. The gendered and sexual logic operating here is that transwomen are seen through the penetrator/penetrated lens both by the detainees and the police. Under this binary and phallocentric logic, transwomen are frequently read as deviant or disturbed effeminate men who, by choosing to pose as feminine/female are seen to declare that they are penetrable. Thus, to avoid unrest the security forces often choose to place the detained transwomen with women detainees.

For example, one of the interviewees who was detained in *Hbeish* was initially placed in the men's cells. She described being immediately attacked by a group of inmates wherein several of the male detainees began to violently grope her. The detention officer intervened in this case and placed her in the women's cells. Other interviewees mentioned that they were placed in the women's cells as well, and were subjected to a different treatment. For example, they would be woken up during the late night shift and asked to serve coffee and tea for the officers on duty. One interviewee mentioned that in return she was allowed to make a phone call to her relative and ask them to bring gender-appropriate attire.

Though the action of the police officers in the first story was protective, we argue that the decision to place transwomen in the women's section should not be reactionary. This reactionary decision reflects an identification of individuals based on their biological sex that could only be circumvented

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1 Youmna Makhlouf, "'أندروجين، أمام القضاء الجزائي: Androgyny Amam al-Qada' al-Jazai'" ["'Androgyny' in Front of the Criminal Court"], *Legal Agenda*, Issue 14, February 2014, p.8.

2 Signa Huda, *Integration of the Human Rights of Women and a Gender Perspective: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Aspects of the Victims of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Addendum)*, United Nations – Economic and Social Council, February 20th 2006, http://www.globaldetentionproject.org/fileadmin/docs/Special-Rapporteur-Sigma-Hudas-report-on-her-visit-to-Lebanon-2006.pdf [last accessed Jan 5 2015].

3 "Sex for Sale in Beirut: Lebanon's 'Super Nightclubs' Straddle the Line Between Brothel and Stripclub", Sulome Anderson, *Foreign Affairs*, February 7th 2012, http://goo.gl/GNEAS2, [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

under the need to ensure the detainee's safety.

Yet we also acknowledge our limits in challenging this argument, particularly since we did not interview detained transmen. It would be worthy to look at the experiences of men born as biological females who underwent arrest and detention and to examine the police's decision making process in their placement in detention cells.

Heightened harassment and invasive curiosity

Harassment was a recurring theme throughout all of the interviews and stories that the participants shared with us. Harassment and body invasion were so normalized in these stories that many of the participants brushed them off as a given presence within the detention center.

The main manifestation of this harassment was evident through the recurrent requests from police officers and judges to inspect the bodies of the transwomen, especially the ones who had underwent breast enlargement procedures. One transwoman who was arrested and detained for an absent judgment (a technicality created by not attending the court ruling) was met with a personnel who identified himself as a physician and proceeded to lift her shirt and grope her breast while repeatedly asking her where she performed the enlargement procedure and who was the physician who performed the surgery; despite this information's complete irrelevance to her case. Over her week-long stay at the police station, she had numerous requests from other police members to lift her shirt and let them see and touch her breasts. Another transwoman shared her story where she requested her court session to be private and then found herself in the judge's office where he had changed to his undershirt, shorts and slippers. The judge proceeded to ask her to show him her breasts, raise her arms above her head and stand against the wall for ten full minutes, then turn around in front of him while he questioned her about the hair on her lower back.

We read these behaviors as dehumanizing body inspections and invasive curiosity that these personnel found themselves at liberty to perform with impunity.

Unprofessionalism and intentional neglect

Among our interviewees, two transwomen were arrested and detained for over 20 days; which is an unusually long detention period for the type of their cases. We question and place the logic of this prolonged detention in two themes; intentional neglect and community breaking efforts (the latter will be explored in the next theme). Though the two women were eligible for release shortly after their arrest, they were kept in detention simply because none of the police personnel took the time to process their papers after the investigation. The women were kept in the dark about all matters pertaining to their detention: they were not informed of their court date or status, did not have their rights recited, were not informed that they would need a lawyer to follow up with their case and were only informed about their court hearing at 8PM of the day prior to it. Many other women shared their stories about how they were denied any information about their status; as one summarized: "They just kept telling us that we will be out the next day… everyday".[1]

Here we feel it is important to highlight one of the authors' – Ahmad Saleh – direct experiences in navigating the detention and police facilities while doing casework. Through Saleh's handling of several transwomen's cases, we learnt that unlike other cases of cisgender men and women that he works on, the majority of the workers he came in contact with in the police stations knew who was the client he had come to see. In addition, private details of the transwomen's cases were publicly shared across several offices in the police station (and in breach of confidentiality principles) despite the fact that there are various departments at each police station. The workers sometimes went as far as to take liberty in asking questions about whether the transwomen and Saleh were part of a "group" and whether him or his colleague were going to transition too.

We read these behaviors as an evident lack of professionalism as well as an informed and intentional neglect of the detainees' best interests and right to basic confidentiality.

Community breaking efforts

Arrest and detention procedures have an especially negative impact on transwomen's lives and relationships with their communities. Irrespective of the charge, transwomen are often reluctant or unable to contact any relatives or friends for help out of fear that they might get arrested as well. As such, they remain unable to purchase food or water (both of which they report being denied) or have access to a change of clothes. For example, in one case, a detainee almost missed their court

1 J., Informal Interview, October 2014.

date because they were not allowed to walk into court with slippers – the only shoes the person possessed. As explained earlier, transwomen are also unable to ensure that a person on the outside is pushing their paperwork and working on their case, which makes them vulnerable to longer detention periods.

In addition, the police station and detention center function as a particular zone of policing which extend the logics of gender-binarism and class respectability to the persons who attempt to follow up on these women's cases. Caseworkers, friends or relatives, if they show up, are expected to demonstrate a "respectable" appearance and performance. For example, when inquiring about the status of one of the detainees, a friend of one of the interviewees – who is a cisgender woman from a poor background – was questioned about her choice in attire. Similarly, Saleh was asked to leave the station and return without his piercings during his visits to the detained women or even when asking for simple information. It was evident that he was required to wear pants when visiting these stations (as opposed to only shorts) and closed shoes.

In addition, a particular gender performance is preferred in these stations. Through Saleh's work in multiple and varied cases over the past few years, he has observed that police officers and personnel (males) are more responsive to requests and/or pleas from women who reciprocate their advances/ perceptions. As such, cisgender women caseworkers or friends who display normatively feminine, middle class, and "pleasing" attitudes are able to negotiate better with the police officers. Subsequently, they are also susceptible to higher harassment from the officers themselves. In one case, while a cisgender female friend was attempting to locate her friend in one of the police stations, the officer repeatedly asked her to sleep with him before answering her questions.

Summary, Recommendations and Further Thoughts

Arrest and Detention: the police's role in criminalizing Transwomen

Transwomen face disproportionate discriminative and criminalizing moments in their navigation of their daily lives, which is based on their presentation of themselves (for example, inconsistent identification papers) and openly breaking the gender-binary and a heteronormative order. From arbitrary suspicion of "masquerading" or suspicion of sex work, these women face a continuous risk of harassment, policing, arrest and detention solely on the basis of their gender identity (gender based discrimination). The following excerpt from one of the interviews clearly illustrates the difficulty and discriminatory treatment that transwomen face in their daily navigation of the city, particularly from the authorities:

> A: What happens if you pass through a checkpoint on the road with your current ID?
>
> D: They automatically pull you to the side.. leave you for 4-5 hours until they dismantle the checkpoint and take you to the station. Then they bring out your papers. I don't know what they think of us; they think you're a terrorist. One day they say you're 'suspect', another day that you're masquerading, another time that 'there is no law for liwat/fags', once they told me "you're strange" – what does that mean, 'strange'? All of this is wrong. Now I would jump out of the car or go walking [rather than pass through a checkpoint]. I didn't do anything wrong.[1]

It is evident from the above excerpt that the police and military personnel play a role in maintaining the cis-heteronormative gender order and in labeling trans* persons as security threats to justify their criminalization. All of the transwomen we spoke with said they mistrusted the police forces and would not seek their help if they needed to. All of them also mentioned that the largest amount of daily street harassment they receive is actually from the police and the military. In one case, one of our interviewers mentioned she can no longer return home or live there because the military checkpoint near her home has marked her as an unwelcome person and refuses her entry "just because".

As we illustrated, transwomen are also more likely to stay longer in detention due to intentional neglect on the part of the police to follow up on their cases after investigation. Moreover, with a system that is structured to make it harder for people to be released than be detained, and with continuous efforts from that system to break the ties that these women have with their networks and communities, transwomen always end up disconnected from the people that could push their paperwork and secure their release; many of whom are threatened and/or shamed when they try to intervene on the transwomen's behalf.

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1 D., Informal Interview, October 2014.

Sex Work: Continuing the Local Debate

We acknowledge that sex work was an important aspect in the lives of the women that we interviewed. We also realize and point out that not all transwomen engage in sex work and that this might be an observational bias on our side given our sample.

However, we see the experiences of these women in multiple arrests and detentions as providing a well-developed and critically informed perspective on how to address the question of sex work in Lebanon through policy making. In particular, we would like to add to the ongoing activist debate on the criminalization of sex work and point out that it must critically engage with the lives and experiences of transwomen sex workers who work on the streets and not in nightclubs. For the women we spoke with, sex work is often a definitive resort and the sole accessible income source. As one of our interviewees put it:

> "I could not open a bank account because the bank refused my papers once they saw me […], I was thrown out of a cell phone store and told 'we do not serve people like you' […] and even the hairdresser does not allow us to come see her before 6 pm because she is afraid of offending and losing her own customers […] I would take any job, I don't care, but [you see how people see me]; I'm obliged to work [at night and on the street]."[1]

Recent campaigns, currently spearheaded by the local Lebanese NGO Kafa, have rightfully but unreflectively criticized men as the buyers of sex in their campaign titled "You Can't Buy Love".[2] The campaign called for "Fight[ing] Prostitution" without paying attention that this slogan singles out street sex workers and potentially exposes them to more policing – especially, as we hope we have made clear, in the case of the transwomen sex workers who would be at risk of detention for an array of reasons and under several articles. Further, by seeking to link the urgent and serious question of trafficking in women and girls with that of forced sex work and building policies from that departure point, one completely overshadows the structure of sex work on the ground inside the city, and deliberately ignores the different conditions of sex workers in the queer community.

Activists and policymakers must recognize that for some poor transwomen, sex work is the only way to secure a living. They must also come to terms with the fact that sex workers may choose to go back to sex work even after finding a different position to make extra money or make ends meet. Criminalizing sex work – which the latest campaign "Fight Prostitution" is inevitably calling for – without proper exit strategies (none were proposed so far by the campaigners) only further pushes these women into poverty and makes them more vulnerable to detention and arrest.

Thus, before aiming for legislation that would tie policies on sex work with policies against trafficking, we strongly propose digging deeper into the reality of sex workers outside of the night clubs and listening not only to their needs but also to their definitions and views of sex work. Any legislation on sex work would do great harm to already vulnerable groups if it does not take into account local sex workers' reality.

Finally, from previous periods of political unrest in Lebanon, we know that times of perceived and real instability are often accompanied by increased calls for maintaining moral order (often meaning sexual order) and a series of moral panics. These panics always manifest themselves through the policing of certain underprivileged groups at the expense of others. As such, they affect women, poor and homeless persons, refugees, and the queer community first. Civil society organizations must be very careful in not fashioning policies that further the existing discriminatory policing of the very groups they are defending.

Terms

Cis-gender: Identification with a gender identity that is socially consistent with the assigned sex at birth.

Trans* (gender): an umbrella term used to refer to persons who self-identify with a gender identity that is socially inconsistent with the assigned sex at birth.

Transwoman: A person who is assigned as a biological male but self-identifies as a woman. Transwomen sometimes resort to medical intervention to transition.

Transman: A person who is assigned as a biological female but self-identifies as a man. Transmen sometimes resort to medical intervention to transition.

1 D., Informal Interview, October 2014.

2 For more information on this debate see Kafa's campaign and report on the topic. "الهوى-ما-بينشرى: al-Hawa Ma-Byin-shara" [You Can't Buy Love], KAFA: Enough Violence and Exploitation, [No date], http://www.kafa.org.lb/kafa-news/80/ الهوى-ما-بينشرى [last Accessed December 21, 2014].

Heteronormative: Norms that create a cultural bias that favors opposite-sex orientation.

Cis-heteronormative: Norms that create a cultural bias that favors cis-gendered self-identification and opposite-sex orientation.

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Varia

Post-war Lebanon and the influence of international financial institutions: a "merchant republic"
Hassan Sherry

Post-Civil War Context and Donor Intervention

Following 15 years of civil war[1], the Lebanese economy hit rock bottom in 1990, with 25 billion US Dollars worth of physical assets destroyed and a real GDP per capita amounting to one third that of 1974; not to mention that 48% of the population was housed in illicitly built dwellings[2]. Economic and social rights of Lebanese citizens were placed on hold, pending political developments that would attenuate the calamity the civil war violence had spawned.

Attempts to rebuild the country succeeded the Lebanese parliament's ratification of the National Accord Agreement in the Saudi city of al-Ta'ef in 1990. One year later, Omar Karami's government revived the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)–established in 1977–with the aim of rebuilding the infrastructure, after the institutional collapse in the late 1980s. The process was integrated within a three-year plan, the National Emergency Reconstruction Program (NERP), which was presented during a donor meeting sponsored by the World Bank in Paris, in December 1991.[3]

The core of the funds was received from the World Bank and the Commission of European Communities (now known as the European Union). However, regional political complexities, along with a lack of commitment on the side of the Lebanese government to engage in a full-fledged economic reconstruction reform program, prompted the failure in launching NERP. In 1992, when the late Rafik Hariri became Prime Minister, a thirteen-year plan (1995-2007), entitled Horizon 2000 was adopted; one where US $11 billion would be allocated for spending on public and social infrastructure, as well as on convincing investors of the conducive investment environment for capital and finance in Lebanon.

However, as the new millennium drew near, the government recognized that the Lebanese economy was challenged by a difficult economic situation and was on the verge of a recession. GDP growth had stagnated and the overall fiscal deficit reached close to 25% of GDP in 2000.[4] Consequently, the government resorted to an economic strategy that included borrowing as an essential element that would help finance economic activities and achieve better results. This paved the way for augmented international financial institution (IFI) intervention and presence in the Lebanese economic scene. It was often through loans contingent on social and economic policies inclined towards integration in the global economy, through trade and investment liberalization, borrowing, expansion of privatization deals, and overall economic deregulation.

In February 2001, the Paris I meeting was held, with the Lebanese government requesting support from the international community to complement its efforts in bringing about a virtuous cycle of lower fiscal deficits, declining debt ratios, and lower interest rates, which could unleash the potential of Lebanon's private sector. A strategy was presented to the donors, which included liberalizing and facilitating trade, containing public expenditure–including cutting subsidies on some food products, privatization (in telecommunications, water, and electricity sectors), attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), and modernizing the tax system.[5] In exchange, more than 500 million Euros

* "The Merchant Republic" is the name given to Lebanon by historian Albert Hourani. Adapted from: Khalil Gebara, *Reconstruction Survey: The Political Economy of Corruption in Post-War Lebanon*, Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA), Lebanon, 2007, available at: http://www.transparency-lebanon.org/working_papers/reconstruction_survey_lebanon.pdf [accessed on July 2, 2014].

1 The Lebanese civil war broke out in April 1975 and ended in October 1990.
2 Gebara, 2007, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
4 Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Finance, *Lebanon: Paris II Meeting, Beyond Reconstruction and Recovery. Towards Sustainable Growth*, Beirut, presented to Lebanon Paris II Meeting, November 23rd, 2002, available at: http://bit.ly/1uEQbcs [accessed on July 2, 2014].
5 *Ibid.*, Annex II, p. 2 of 4.

were provided to Lebanon in accordance with pledges by the Lebanese government to stimulate the economy in line with the aforementioned points.[1]

However, amid stagnating economic growth and escalating public debt that reached to 170% of GDP, a second round of the international donor conference – dubbed Paris II – was held in November 2002. The conference sought to help Lebanon manage its economic crisis, pursuant to the terms put forth by the Lebanese government, which included fiscal, financial, and privatization reforms.[2]

In the context of Paris II, the government's economic plan, lauded by the donor community, served as a mere repackaging of the traditional market-oriented policies, which aimed at reducing both the current and capital expenditures, as well as increasing the tax revenue with a major contribution from the Value Added Tax (VAT) introduced in the same year. In return, the conference donors pledged some $4.4 billion to the Lebanese government.

The role of IFIs was noteworthy, along with international actors, the likes of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) ($486 million) and European Investment Bank (EIB) ($412 million) provided the largest share in terms of loans to the Lebanese government.[3] Regional financial institutions also pledged a significant share of the funds to Lebanon, with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and the Islamic Development Bank allocating $330 million, $200 million, and $92 million, respectively.

The third international donor conference for Lebanon – Paris III – was held in January 2007. The economic reform plan presented by the Lebanese government rested on a number of pillars, which included speeding up negotiations around Lebanon's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), a privatization program designed to increase investment, maintaining price stability through adjusting monetary and exchange rate policies, promoting the private sector, phased fiscal adjustment through streamlining expenditures and raising revenues, and implementing tax reforms including increasing VAT rates.[4]

Lebanon's official bid for WTO accession took place in January 1999 and a Working Party – a group of WTO members negotiating multilaterally with an applicant country – was established shortly after. In October 2000, the government adopted an Accession Master Plan–a document providing an assessment of the economic and legislative reform required for conformity to requirements of the WTO – and the Ministry of Economy and Trade was designated to lead the accession process. In June 2001, the Memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) – a basic document providing a full summary of Lebanon's legal and foreign trade regime–was presented to the Working Party. After seven Working Party Meetings (the last taking place in 2009), Lebanon has yet to pass and enforce all WTO agreements and thus remains as an 'Observer' at the organization.[5]

Becoming a member at the WTO entails eliminating, or significantly lowering, trade barriers and complying with WTO standards of trade. Today, the WTO legislation has been put on the back burner by the Lebanese government, whose pressing problems are security and political crises spilling over from regional turmoil.

It is worthwhile noting the similarity in the donor structure between the two most recent Paris agreements, where IFIs have come into prominence with the large sums of money they promised to pour into the Lebanese economy, through its central bank, on one hand, and its private sector, on the other. Among others, the EIB ($1,248 million), WB ($975 million), and IMF ($77 million)[6] have all pledged to provide loans. However, their utilization is contingent on open market economic reforms, deregulation, enhancing the role of the private sector, and attracting FDIs.

The socio-economic context during and after economic reforms

There has been a lack of national consensus on how to address the evolving and problematic debt conditions as well as the slump in economic activity. The Lebanese government adhered to the

1   David Schenker,"Lebanon Goes to Paris III: High Stakes in France and Beirut", *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Washington, 2007, available at: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/lebanon-goes-to-paris-iii-high-stakes-in-france-and-beirut [accessed on July 2, 2014].
2   Lebanese Republic, 2002, *op. cit.*, [accessed on July 2, 2014].
3   Gebara, 2007, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
4   Cynthia Abi Rached, "The Paris III Conference and the Reform Agenda," *Social Watch*, 2008, available at: http://www.socialwatch.org/node/11084 [accessed on July 2, 2014].
5   Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Economy, *Lebanon's WTO Accession in Brief: Interactive Accession Chart*, 2007, available at: http://www.economy.gov.lb/public/uploads/files/7258_4520_6365.pdf [accessed on July 2, 2014].
6   Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Finance, *International Conference For Support To Lebanon - Paris III: Second Progress Report*, Beirut, 2007, p.4, available at: http://www.rebuildlebanon.gov.lb/images_Gallery/Paris%20III-Second%20Progress%20Report.pdf [accessed on July 2, 2014].

economic reform agendas that donors, including IFIs, imposed as prerequisites to facilitating any form of aid or grants for the country.

Today, after more than two decades of donor-backed socio-economic reforms, the Lebanese economy has fallen short of achieving the desired levels of development and jumpstarting inclusive and sustainable growth needed to ensure better provision of economic and social rights.

As a result of the borrowing spree, public debt rose from $2 billion in 1992, to $15 billion in 1998, and to $38 billion in 2004. Yet, the most worrying numbers arise from the staggering gross public debt that Lebanon witnesses today. Corollary to the rise in budget and trade deficits, accumulated public debt reached $63.5 billion at the end of 2013, compared to $57.7 billion in 2012 – a rise of 10%.[1]

Aside from the mounting debt problems, the Lebanese economy has not generated sufficient and decent job opportunities, serving as a low-added value service-based economy, externally oriented, and dependent on foreign capital.[2] Sustainable economic growth has been highly impeded by the lack in economic diversification and the concentration of economic activity in sectors that have failed to generate positive spillovers into the overall economy.[3] In addition, the increasing share of the informal sector has been a serious threat to the ability of the Lebanese state to regulate its economy for development purposes, on one hand, and to better target citizens in need for social protection, on the other. On the balance of payments side, the lack in production and competitiveness has, alongside the regional turmoil, led to a 12% decrease in exports, thus indicating a 3% expansion in the foreign trade deficit[4] in 2013; the same year that witnessed an upsurge in fiscal deficit by 31.4%.

It is not by chance that Lebanon has experienced such unprecedented setbacks in economic activity and development. The economic and social policy choices that the Lebanese government has adhered to in the past few decades played an integral role in shaping the development trajectory of the country. Those policies fall within the model promoting liberalization, deregulation, and an enabling environment for corporations, which has, in turn, induced a regression in social indicators, despite the mediocre positive economic growth rates the country has witnessed during the second half of the previous decade. Moreover, austerity measures often targeting developmental and social spending have led to exacerbating vulnerability and economic dependency of the poor and marginalized.

Besides the non-inclusive nature of adopted socio-economic policies, it is worthwhile noting that a major impediment against sustainable development in Lebanon has been the problematic of crony capitalism, confessionalism, and clientelism inherent to the Lebanese political and economic system. The country has always been marred by consociational democracy organized along religious/sectarian lines, the main theme around which the Lebanese socio-economic society was shaped and formed.[5] However, such multi-confessional social structure produced an unstable system of governance, deficient democracy, and an unfavourable environment for equal opportunities. Corruption has impacted the relationship of citizens with the state, entrenching a patron-client relationship, whereby political leaders provide jobs, money, and favors to their clients, in return for their loyalty.

Today, the focus of the donor community and IFIs in particular rests on the financing gap resulting from the increasing budget deficit facing the Lebanese government. The most important claim related to resources is the amount of debt servicing that can be extracted from public revenues. In addition, IFI interventions are associated with policy proposals that serve in the interest of the global economy and the enabling business environment. Time and again, such policies translate into blanket investor protections and impeding capital controls, which unduly hampers domestic development-oriented policies.[6] Quite the opposite, policy proposals in favor of the aforementioned

1   Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Finance, *Debt and Debt Markets: A Quarterly Bulletin of the Ministry of Finance*, Issue No. 27, 2013, available at: http://bit.ly/1qJsTAF [accessed on July 2, 2014].

2   Hassan Krayem, *The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement*, American University of Beirut, undated, available at: http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/conflict-resolution.html [accessed on July 2, 2014].

3   Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Lebanon, *Post 2015 National Consultations in Lebanon: The Lebanon We Want*, 2007, available at: http://www.un.org.lb/Library/Files/Post%202015%20public%20report%20Final%20-English.pdf [accessed on July 2, 2014].

4   Bank Audi sal, Group Research Department, *Lebanon Economic Report: Containing the Cost of Delay in An Economy With Huge Potential*, 2013, available at: http://research.banqueaudi.com/documents/EconomicReports/lebanon_economic_report.pdf [accessed on July 2, 2014].

5   Mahasin Rahhall, *Privatization: Implications on Political Clientelism in Lebanon*, MA Thesis, Lebanese American University - School of Arts and Sciences, 2012, avilable at: https://ecommons.lau.edu.lb:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10725/1107/Mahasin_Rahhall_Thesis.pdf?sequence=1 [accessed on July 2, 2014].

6   Third World Network, *From the Arab Revolutions to Global Austerity*, 2013, available at: http://www.twnside.org.sg/title2/finance/2013/finance130501.htm [accessed on July 2, 2014].

"enabling environment" could suggest an erosion of the policy space needed by the Lebanese government to design a dynamic longer-term plan based on enhancing productivity, encouraging production, generating decent employment, and attaining social justice. These policies hardly create any platform for long-term and sustained public investment responsible for creating decent jobs and spurring new economic activities, which would benefit the wide spectrum of the Lebanese society.

The contractionary policy advice attached to foreign loans holds significant structural constraints to development-oriented economic policies. For instance, austerity measures, which require containing government spending including the phasing out of subsidies while increasing revenues through levying VATs, failed to prevent rising poverty, inequality, and unemployment in the country. Alarmingly, 28% of the Lebanese population qualifies as poor, with 8% (approximately 300,000 Lebanese citizens) living in extreme poverty[1]–that is, unable to meet basic food and non-food needs. Furthermore, according to Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2013, at least 48% of Lebanon's privately-held wealth is concentrated in the hands of some 8,900 citizens who constitute 0.3% of the adult population.[2] As for unemployment, it is in excess of 10%, with youth unemployment close to 25% despite the high rate of emigration of educated labour.[3]

It is noted that in a country like Lebanon, an increase in VAT would translate in a significant rise in both extreme and overall poverty rates. The deteriorating living standards would be due to the impact of rising prices on the poor and lower middle class, with a potential threat to households currently living just above the poverty, who risk falling into poverty as a result of VAT increases, and hence in prices.[4]

As for trade policy proposals, further trade liberalization and investment deregulation induced a shift away from the productive manufacturing sector, towards the services sector. This transformation led to a significant decline in manufacturing capacities and de-industrialization. It also exposed the Lebanese emerging productive sectors to fierce global competition, which forced many industries in Lebanon out of business.

Since March 2011, and amid the mounting violence in neighboring Syria, Lebanon has been witnessing a tremendous influx in Syrian refugees. It is noted that in a country with just over four million residents, approximately 1.2 million Lebanese citizens are directly affected by the influx of refugees. Moreover, amid the absence of political consensus and the lack of appropriate funding to provide assistance to refugees and local municipalities, Lebanon has seen increased pressure on infrastructure, public health, labor, education, rent, and security.[5]

Following requests from the Lebanese government, the World Bank prepared an economic and social impact assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The outcome of a similar approach by the Bretton Woods institution towards Jordan has led to $150 million in support for that country in the form of a loan, not a grant. This has left Jordan's people to shoulder the debt burden alone. Although tackling a humanitarian crisis of such magnitude requires direct aid from international institutions and actors, the loan scenario is imminent for Lebanon. The possibility of incurring a new debt burden is one that civil society has constantly voiced concerns over. In figures, Lebanon's total external debt amounts to 163% of GDP, with a large foreign debt. In 2011 the government spent $5.2 billion on foreign debt payments, 55% of revenue, the highest of any government in the world.

Recommendations for IFIs and the Lebanese Government

In Lebanon – where a significant fraction of the populations suffers from poverty, unemployment, and depressed wages and its government grapples with heightened political upheaval – policy

1 Mariam Saab, "Some 28 percent of Lebanese live below poverty line - study", *The Daily Star*, English, February 5th, 2009, available at: http://bit.ly/1zsu7Rr [accessed on July 2, 2014].
2 "Filthy Rich: Half a Percent of Lebanese Adults Own Half the Country's Wealth", *Executive Magazine*, October 18th, 2013 available at: http://www.executive-magazine.com/cre8mania/frontend/millionaires-own-half-lebanese-wealth/ [accessed on July 2, 2014].
3 Zafiris Tzannatos, "Unemployment in Lebanon: Lack of skills or lack of skilled jobs?", *Executive Magazine*, October 2nd, 2012, available at: http://www.executive-magazine.com/business-finance/finance/unemployment-in-lebanon [accessed on July 2, 2014].
4 Nisreen Salti, Jad Chaaban, *The Poverty And Equity Implications Of A Rise In the Value Added Tax: A Microeconomic Simulation For Lebanon*, UNDP Lebanon, 2009, available at: http://bit.ly/1qJuFBM [accessed on July 2, 2014].
5 Diego Escalona Patural, Ninette Kelley, Stephan Lehne, Makram Malaeb, Kamel Mohanna, Panos Moumtzis, and Paul Salem, "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Impact and Recommendations", *Carnegie Middle East Center*, Beirut, 2013, available at: http://carnegie-mec.org/2013/06/25/syrian-refugees-in-lebanon-impact-and-recommendations/gaz0 [accessed on July 2, 2014].

proposals brought forward by the donor community, of which international financial institutions are an integral component, brought about undesirable socioeconomic repercussions for Lebanon's vulnerable economy.

The macroeconomic framework adopted in Lebanon often placed pressure and limitations on using macroeconomic policies in support of a longer-term development strategy – whereby macro-economic policies gave priority focus to financial stability – while neglecting the productive sectors. Such policy orientations created impediments to the generation of decent jobs and crowded-out the potential support tools to build the productive sectors and lend a hand to the private sector to get involved. Furthermore, policies oriented towards deepened liberalization of trade in agricultural products have put additional stress and limited the space to rethink policies in support of reviving the sector.

Such trends necessitate revisiting the policies implemented over the post-war era, which were centered on integration in the global economy through trade and investment liberalization, borrowing, expansion of privatization deals, and overall economic deregulation.

In a nutshell, Lebanon is in need of a longer-term vision for reversing the slump in productive economic activity and decline in productive capacities, as well we as towards empowering locals economically. Accordingly, and in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda supervised by the UN, the revision and reform in the macroeconomic policy framework, including that of the Bretton Woods institutions and other international and regional institutions, remain critical.

In this regard, the following recommendations are addressed to policy-makers, at both the international and local levels:

• The Lebanese government should focus on nurturing productive capacities and enhancing their dynamic comparative advantage. For those purposes, they need to selectively use and adjust macro-economic policy instruments in support of production, productivity, and industrialization.

• The development and macro-economic dialogue in Lebanon, especially pertinent to the intervention of IFIs and the rest of the donor community, ought to be broadened to include space for perspectives from civil society organizations including labor unions, NGOs, and municipal authorities, regarding economic reform agendas and national development plans.

• Details regarding the IFIs' engagement and negotiations with the Lebanese government should be publicly disclosed. Greater transparency on bilateral meetings will enhance public awareness around economic reforms and generate broader societal consensus over reform agendas.

• IFIs should avoid proposing generic reform agendas, and alternatively tailor policy recommendations for each country's political, social, and economic circumstances taking into account home-grown national development visions that aim toward greater social, economic, and political inclusivity, as well as international human rights standards. This necessitates designing policies aimed at enhancing social protection schemes as well as strengthening productive economic sectors responsible for generating decent jobs and contributing to sustainable and inclusive growth.

• IFIs are expected to urge national governments to consult with civil society organizations including labor unions, NGOs, and municipal authorities regarding economic reform agendas and national development plans, especially concerning the development of social protection schemes.

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La méritocracie néolibérale contre l'égalité sociale? Analyse d'un dispositif de développement destiné aux étudiants libanais
Maissam Nimr

Le but de ce papier est d'examiner un dispositif de bourses financé par une agence internationale de développement[1] et se propose d'analyser les logiques globales et néolibérales mises en œuvre sur le terrain. Si le but affiché par ce dispositif est de lutter contre les inégalités en offrant un accès à une université privée d'élite à des étudiants défavorisés, en réalité, il épouse et conforte des logiques de globalisation en mettant en place des contraintes de productivité des pays en voie de développement et l'aspect d'économisation du domaine de l'enseignement[2]. Derrière ces registres égalitaires et redistributifs, ce dispositif contribue à la propagation des discours de légitimation des normes et des valeurs du néolibéralisme.

1. Le " développement " vu à travers un dispositif de bourses

Dans son appel d'offre visé aux établissements supérieurs qui suivent le mode d'enseignement anglo-saxon, l'agence internationale de développement annonce un financement destiné à la mise en place d'un dispositif de bourses. Celui-ci est destiné à des étudiants méritants et défavorisés socialement, issus d'écoles publiques de différentes régions urbaines et rurales du Liban, leur permettant d'acquérir une formation dans un établissement généralement perçu comme étant de " bonne qualité ". Sans de tels dispositifs, la fréquentation d'un établissement privé d'élite leur serait inaccessible, puisque les frais d'inscription constituent un enjeu fondamental dans les choix de formation des jeunes libanais, et contribuent à perpétuer une inégalité des chances d'accès à l'université. Nous nous proposons donc dans ce papier d'examiner ce dispositif mise en place dans le cadre d'une institution privée qui fonctionne selon le modèle anglo-saxon d'études supérieures, et où l'enseignement est délivré en anglais. Sous l'égide de l'agence de développement, elle offre, depuis 2010, des bourses d'études à environs 100 lauréats par an. Ceux-ci reçoivent une bourse censée couvrir leurs frais d'inscription pour la durée de leurs études universitaires jusqu'à la licence, ainsi que les frais de résidence et d'achat des livres. Dans cette logique, les boursiers sont encouragés à développer leurs " compétences de leader " en s'impliquant notamment dans la vie associative étudiante. Ils reçoivent une formation continue pour améliorer ces compétences de " leadership ", à travers des ateliers organisés par des organisations ou associations de la société civile et des séances de discussion mensuelles avec des leaders nationaux.

Le recrutement et la sélection des " bons " candidats

Une campagne de recrutement est d'abord lancée afin d'attirer des candidats qualifiés par la diffusion de brochures et d'affiches en langues anglaise et arabe, distribuées dans les 250 écoles publiques secondaires du Liban. Des annonces sont ensuite publiées à plusieurs reprises dans les principaux journaux, ainsi qu'à travers le site Internet Facebook et diffusées sur les chaines de radio. Les écoles sont en outre visitées; les ONG et les municipalités diffusent aussi largement l'information. Les critères de sélection mis en avant par le programme sont : les notes obtenues durant les années scolaires précédentes, les résultats au Baccalauréat, le besoin financier mais aussi les compétences de " leader " évaluées durant l'entretien.

La première étape de sélection se fait sur critères " objectifs " selon le dossier de candidature: les candidats qui remplissent les conditions requises (bonnes moyennes en classes de Seconde et de Première, ainsi qu'un résultat d'au moins 12/20 au Bac, et démontrant un besoin financier selon les fiches de revenus des parents, des dépenses scolaires et universitaires, ainsi que de la situation

de résidence), sont retenus. Ceux-ci sont ensuite invités à passer un examen d'anglais pour évaluer leurs compétences linguistiques.

La deuxième étape se fonde sur les résultats de l'examen d'anglais. Les élèves ayant réussi sont convoqués à l'université pour un entretien de 20 minutes qui a pour but d'évaluer principalement leurs compétences de " leadership ". Dans cette perspective de détection de leur aptitude au leadership, l'entretien comprend des questions sur leurs expériences parascolaires précédentes, les rôles et les responsabilités que les candidats ont eues au fil de ces expériences sociales: il s'agit d'évaluer leur potentiel de gérer et de diriger des projets.

A partir des résultats, un comité composé de membres de l'administration sélectionne les boursiers, tout en prenant en compte des critères tels que la diversité géographique et aussi la parité filles/garçons.

Une bourse… sans engagement ?

Parmi les conditions requises pour conserver leur bourse, les étudiants doivent conserver une moyenne de 70/100 au moins tout au long de leurs études, respecter le règlement universitaire, participer dans au moins une association étudiante durant les années académiques, participer aux séminaires et ateliers de travail organisés par l'université pour les boursiers portant sur le thème du leadership, et enfin mettre en place un projet visant à aider à l'amélioration de leur communauté locale ou le pays.

Au cours de leur participation au programme, les boursiers sont supposés s'engager dans des activités parascolaires à travers les associations étudiantes pour développer leur esprit d'initiative et de participation. L'offre d'associations étudiantes disponibles varie d'une université à l'autre. Il est exigé que les boursiers occupent progressivement des positions de responsabilité dans ces associations: secrétaire, trésorier, représentant ou président de l'association entre autres.

A la fin de chaque semestre, les responsables d'associations remplissent une fiche pour évaluer les boursiers, indiquant le niveau de participation, et leur aptitude de " leader " dans l'association en question. Ce processus sert à s'assurer que chaque boursier fait partie d'une association étudiante. De même, il permet de mettre en évidence le développement des compétences de " leader " tout au long de leur parcours en examinant le nombre de postes de responsabilité occupés d'un semestre à l'autre. Les boursiers sont aussi amenés à participer à des discussions mensuelles autour du thème du " leadership ", ainsi que dans l'organisation et de la mise en œuvre de projets visant à développer leur communauté locale d'origine ou leur pays. Le financement de ces projets est aussi assuré par l'agence de développement en question.

2. L'enseignement: outil de développement du capital humain

A travers le dispositif de bourses donnant accès à l'enseignement supérieur, l'agence met en avant l'idée d'offrir aux étudiants une meilleure chance d'accès à des opportunités financières et de potentiel dans le marché de travail. En effet, l'une des principales pratiques des organisations internationales consiste à développer le capital humain et l'adapter aux mutations du marché d'emploi et aux progrès technologiques dans le but de croissance économique dans une perspective fonctionnaliste.

Enseignement et croissance économique

Ainsi, ce programme de bourses figure sous un axe intitulé " expansion d'accès à l'enseignement supérieur et développement de la main d'œuvre " mis en avant par l'agence de développement. Selon les arguments affichés, cet axe aurait pour but de promouvoir un niveau d'études plus élevé et améliorer la pertinence et la qualité des programmes afin d'augmenter la productivité d'un pays en voie de développement, le Liban en l'occurrence. Une étude citée (sans référence) dans l'appel d'offre émis par cette agence de développement indique qu'une année supplémentaire à la moyenne d'éducation au niveau secondaire ou universitaire dans un pays augmente la production nationale de 19%. Dans un contexte globalisé dans lequel l'exigence de compétences de niveau supérieur devient de plus en plus importante, un nombre croissant de jeunes dans le monde en voie de développement risque de se retrouver dépourvu de connaissances adéquates pour participer et contribuer à la croissance économique. L'agence se donne ainsi pour objectif d'aider les pays à développer à atteindre un accès équitable à l'enseignement supérieur et par conséquent une main d'œuvre " compétente ".

Accès facilité aux groupes marginalisés

A travers ce projet de bourses basées sur le mérite et sur le besoin financier, l'agence a pour but affiché d'améliorer le taux d'accès à l'enseignement supérieur aux groupes marginalisés (personnes défavorisées, femmes etc.). De fait, l'un des critères essentiels dans la sélection de candidats a été le besoin financier. Ensuite il s'est agit d'assurer un équilibre entre les régions géographiques, de sorte à ce que les étudiants originaires de régions périphériques aient accès à une meilleure qualité d'éducation. La sélection des boursiers s'est donc faite selon des critères de diversité régionale (ce qui a engendré une diversité confessionnelle).

De même, le critère de genre a été pris en compte, et ceci dans le but de donner aux filles un accès en nombre au moins égal à celui des garçons. D'une manière générale, bien que les effectifs des filles soient plus élevés que celui des garçons dans l'enseignement supérieur au Liban, les parents donnent souvent priorité aux garçons quant à l'accès à une université privée (les filles, notamment celles issues des milieux modestes se dirigeant plus généralement vers l'Université libanaise (UL) gratuite et publique[1]). Ce choix peut être expliqué par les différences d'attentes et de perception concernant le rôle traditionnels des garçons qui doivent être à mêmes d'assurer la subsistance d'une famille, alors que les filles sont supposées être prises en charge par leurs maris une fois qu'elles sont mariées. Ainsi, si les parents ne peuvent se permettre de payer que les études d'un seul enfant dans l'école privée, ils préfèrent y envoyer généralement leur fils plutôt que leur fille[2]. Vu sous cet angle, ce projet de bourses donne ainsi effectivement accès aux étudiants défavorisés à des universités privées renommées auxquelles ils n'auraient pas pu avoir accès autrement.

3. Promotion d'une rhétorique néolibérale

En réalité, les organisations financées par des pays adoptant un système économique libéral (telles que cette agence de développement en question) contribuent à propager le langage hégémonique de la globalisation, le " gospel du néolibéralisme " selon l'expression de Pierre Bourdieu. La globalisation est présentée comme un " état de fait ", une " tendance inévitable ", un ordre qui ne se discute pas. Le rôle de ces organisations consiste à promouvoir l'économie de marché, diffuser le libre-échange, en d'autres termes agir tel que les " bras armés " du monde économique dominant qui imposent des politiques de mise en pratique de néolibéralisme et des politiques de déréglementation financière[3].

Dans cet ordre d'idées, ces organisations contribuent à propager un langage de " développement " axé autour des normes et des valeurs du néolibéralisme, de la valorisation des initiatives personnelles, de l'individualisme selon un modèle économique libéral. De même, elles favorisent la diffusion de normes promouvant le leadership, l'initiative, le développement du potentiel, etc.[4]

Plus particulièrement, dans le cadre de ce programme de bourses, les lauréats vont être conduits, à leur tour, à propager ces normes et ces valeurs néolibérales dans les communautés diverses desquelles ils sont issus.

Si ce dispositif déclare officiellement offrir aux boursiers une opportunité d'accéder à un enseignement supérieur de qualité, le contenu de ce programme, complètement axé autour de l'idée de promotion du " leadership " pose de sérieuses questions d'ordre éthique notamment; en effet, le " leadership " tel qu'il est défini normativement comme une relation d'influence entre leaders et les " autres " dans le but d'effectuer un vrai changement et d'accomplir des objectifs autour d'une vision commune[5], voire un système de valeurs et de principes considérés comme " justes " et " bons "[6].

De fait ces normes et notions sont en quelque sorte inculquées aux boursiers tout au long du projet : dès la phase de sélection c'est justement ce potentiel de " leadership " qui est recherché lors d'entretiens personnels. Ce potentiel est ensuite renforcé au cours des études universitaires principalement par le biais d'atelier de travaux ciblés. Un des résultats attendus de ce projet est bel et bien l'adoption par tous les acteurs (boursiers, autres étudiants de l'université, institution elle-même) d'un langage du développement et le recours aux notions de leadership. A termes, ces acteurs devraient

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1   Adnan El Amine, "Educational Reform: Nine Principles and Five Issues", in Nawaf Salam, *Options for Lebanon*, London-New York, Center for Lebanese Studies, 2004. p. 209-254.
2   Mona Khalaf, "Women and Education in Lebanon", *Al Rawda,* No. 68, 1995, p.11-14.
3   Pierre Bourdieu, "L'essence du néolibéralisme", *Monde Diplomatique*, 1998.
4   Caroline Abu-Sada, Benoit Challand, *Le développement, une affaire d'ONG? Associations, États et bailleurs dans le monde arabe*, Paris, Karthala, 2012.
5   Richard Daft L., Patricia Lane G., *The Leadership Experience*, 5th ed., Mason OH, Cengage Learning, 2008, p.528.
6   Caroline Abu-Sada, Benoit Challand, 2012, op.cit..

se transformer en véritables agents de globalisation dans leurs communautés respectives et leur entourage, contribuant à leur tour, à la propagation de ces valeurs et principes.

4. Développement et justice sociale ?

Le concept de " développement " revêt simultanément les registres de la solidarité mondiale et de la justice sociale. Rist compare la croyance aux préceptes du développement aux croyances religieuses et à des pratiques auxquelles on croit indiscutablement sans en avoir eu le choix, malgré l'absence de preuves de succès[1]. Ainsi, certaines organisations internationales sont créées par les pays riches pour " développer " et lutter contre les inégalités au sein des pays du Sud.

C'est dans cette perspective qu'est pensé et mis en place le dispositif de bourses sur lequel nous nous penchons.

Toutefois, en dépit de sommes faramineuses déboursées par l'agence de développement sur ce projet particulier (aux alentours de 50 millions de dollars partagés entre trois grandes universités privées d'" élite "), les boursiers qui en profitent au final ne constituent qu'une fraction minime des étudiants libanais (aux alentours de 400 lauréats au total).

Ainsi, les dispositifs de bourses de ce type ne contribuent pas à l'essentiel de la promotion scolaire et intellectuelle des classes populaires qui accèdent dans leur grande majorité à l'éducation publique selon un principe de relégation sociale. L'éducation publique accueille 38% des étudiants au Liban, dont les étudiants des écoles " officielles " (terminologie pour désigner les écoles publiques au Liban) et dont plus de la moitié sont des femmes. Celle-ci, depuis la guerre, n'a pas encore réussi à garantir les conditions pédagogiques et matérielles optimales[2].

Les paradoxes de tels dispositifs appliqués au Liban ne sont pas sans rappeler le débat existant en France sur les mesures visant à favoriser l'accès des lycéens de banlieues aux grandes écoles (notamment Science Po), qui, ne touchant qu'une proportion minime d'étudiants " défavorisés ", ne va pas forcément dans le sens de la démocratisation[3]. Un impact plus durable se ferait à travers des réformes institutionnelles au niveau administratif de l'éducation publique, ainsi qu'une amélioration de ces ressources et l'amélioration de ces programmes.

En définitive, ce projet de " développement " dans le domaine de l'éducation, offre l'accès à l'enseignement supérieur privé de bonne qualité à un nombre très limité d'étudiants issus de groupes défavorisés marginalisés, notamment des individus provenant de régions périphériques ainsi qu'aux femmes. Il fonctionne pourtant selon un modèle qui justifie l'investissement dans l'enseignement à travers la productivité économique, légitimant la propagation de normes et valeurs néolibérales. Etant donné que ce dispositif ne bénéficie qu'à une proportion très minime d'étudiants, une initiative visant réellement un accès durable et de meilleure qualité à toute la population devrait plutôt investir dans l'enseignement public qui connait au Liban une crise structurelle et qui reste pourtant le lieu de passage obligé de la majorité des étudiants issus de familles défavorisés, pour qui l'université publique renvoie de plus en plus à l'image d'une université de relégation.

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About Lebanon Support

Lebanon Support is an independent non-governmental, non-religious, non-political, and non-profit making information and research center.

Established in 2006, Lebanon Support was registered as a National Non-Governmental Organization in November 2008 (registered under the number 168/2009 AD).

Lebanon Support aims at enhancing civil society capacity, efficiency and effectiveness through the creation of public spaces for reflection, collaboration and debate on and for civil society in Lebanon.

Lebanon Support adopts a multidisciplinary approach and evidence and fact-based methodologies in civil society work in Lebanon so as to support and develop a civic voice and a better impact towards better accountability and societal change in Lebanon.

Within this framework Lebanon Support focuses on information and knowledge sharing and management, production and delivery; as it is within Lebanon Support's beliefs, that information and knowledge are at the heart of developing adequate strategies and interventions to reduce existing vulnerabilities and marginalization in the country.

Lebanon Support promotes and supports knowledge sharing between organizations in Lebanon, through the exchange of experiences, ideas and information across sectors and among civil society actors in Lebanon.

Lebanon Support core values are:
- Justice and solidarity
- Collaboration, participation and networking
- Diversity and mutual respect
- Sustainability and shared responsibility
- Transparency and accountability

Brief history

Lebanon Support started operations in August 2006, in the aftermath of the Israeli July 2006 war on Lebanon. Through its portal www.lebanon-support.org, Lebanon Support acted as an online space to facilitate aid related information sharing and management, as well as to foster cooperation and partnerships between the different bodies involved in relief and recovery activities in Lebanon.

By the beginning of 2007, Lebanon Support had already managed to build an information network with the active involvement and membership of more than 400 organizations.

By July 2007, Lebanon Support was mandated by National, International NGOs, and UN Bodies as the official information focal point for the Nahr El-Bared crisis. Under such mandate Lebanon Support expanded its network and it reached by the end of 2007 some 750 organizations.

In 2009, and with an active partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), Lebanon Support began re-organizing its network to cover development, emergency and recovery activities and launched a nation-wide mapping of non-governmental organizations operating in Lebanon, and based on that mapping Lebanon Support's civil society network was expanded to cover more than 1,000 organizations. Two print versions of the "Civil Society Directory" were the fruit of the collaboration with MoSA in 2008 and 2010.

Lebanon Support currently provides information and knowledge services to more than 1,300 organizations through its two main portals: Daleel Madani and the Civil Society Knowledge Center.

Lebanon Support has proven itself to be one of the leading organizations in Lebanon in the domain of information management and knowledge production, and has produced several quality research and studies, and online knowledge platforms covering a variety of themes and disciplines pertaining to civil society work in Lebanon.

Lebanon Support's expertise in information production and management derives from its solid links with Lebanon's vibrant civil society, in addition to its pool of professionals and experts in Development, Information Management, Social Sciences, Urban Development, Crisis Management, among others.

Our programmes

Daleel Madani, Civil Society Portal

Launched in 2006, Daleel Madani (Civil Guide) is an online collaborative platform for civil society news and services. Through Daleel Madani, member civil society organizations can register and benefit from a variety of services, such as posting job vacancies, resources, projects, call for proposals, events and press releases. Daleel Madani currently has more than 1,300 member organizations ranging from National Civil Society organizations, International NGOs to UN agencies and Donor organizations. It is visited by more than 100,000 visitors per month, and it is the most regularly updated and used site by civil society organizations and NGOs in the country.

[available on daleel-madani.org]

The Civil Society Knowledge Center (CSKC)

Launched in 2013, with the support of the Norwegian Royal Embassy, the CSKC is the first and most developed online platform for knowledge management for civil society organizations, professionals and academics in Lebanon. Covering issues ranging from humanitarian, recovery, development and human rights, the CSKC constitutes a seminal and innovative knowledge base and publishing platform for original research and analysis on civil society work and issues and serves for civil society cooperation and collaboration.

[available on cskc.daleel-madani.org]

The CSKC offers:

• An online mapping system, allowing the mapping and the documentation of events, projects, human rights violations, conflict reports among many other;

• A research and analysis section offering evidence-based research and studies that cover a range of topics and themes relevant to civil society work in Lebanon;

• An annotated online library that covers resources, guides, studies and information organized through different themes and dossiers, which is an integral tool for any organization and practitioner working on humanitarian, development and human rights issues in Lebanon;

• And a data repository of major statistics organized by themes and geographic regions, allowing ease of access and use of figures and number needed for civil society work in Lebanon.