

# **Mobile Phone Use among Young Refugees in a Protracted Situation through the Lens of Social Capital**

Dissertation Submitted to

**The Graduate School of Global Studies**

**Doshisha University**

In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in

*Global Society Studies*

Authored by:

Marwa Ahmad

1418171302

(March 2021)

Supervised by:

Prof. Anne Gonon

# Abstract

The decade-long war in Syria has been termed the worst human crisis since World War II, one massive outcome of which is that it has produced a “lost generation” of young Syrian civilians. The dispersal of the Syrian people scattered around the world, with Turkey and Lebanon hosting the largest exodus of the Syrian population, has caused numerous stressors to the very core of the Syrian family, which once played a central role in the strength of the country’s social fabric. With minimal resources, the compromised social support system among displaced Syrian families has left 2.5 million Syrian children struggling to understand the scenario of their refugeehood while having to adapt to their new roles and responsibilities.

Although the existing literature on the war has thoroughly examined the plight of its victims, however, deliberations have been limited to the pathological aspect of their displacement. While describing their vulnerabilities, focusing on their physical and psychological health conditions and the challenges they have faced in terms of economic, financial, and educational matters, as well as health, housing, employment, and legal status, among numerous others, scholarly work has not adequately addressed elements of positivity linked to the effect of mobile phone use among refugees as detected in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) research, and certainly not in relation to the youth refugee population living in Lebanon.

From the standpoint of Coleman’s view of social capital as a theoretical tool, leading our investigation, this has triggered our attempt to answer the research question: Does the use of ICTs contribute to developing agency among young Syrian refugees? Hence, in our research endeavor, we examine the use of mobile phones and social networking sites among 64 young Syrian refugees

(YSRs) aged between 14 and 25 years old by means of a qualitative questionnaire administered to 91 respondents living in four distinct geographic areas in Lebanon: Beirut (the capital city), Tripoli (a city in the North, second largest after Beirut), the Bekaa valley (a mixed urban–rural region to the east, between the coast and Syria) and Sidon (a city in the South). The choice of the collection of the random sample we adopted was motivated by our attempt to capture specific nuances in the Lebanese sociopolitical system relevant to the distinct social, sectarian, educational, housing, and employment experiences that the young refugees may face in each area residence. We also aimed to detect how those different experiences in their daily lives as refugees may have influenced their mobile phone use accordingly. This allowed us to detect both a generic and a specific use of the device, coupled with a family-centric use in contrast to a personal use of their mobile for their own self-interest.

At the micro-level, we also explored family ties and how social capital is transmitted from parents to their children through their work, education, and social networks, and then how families' capital is reflected in children's lives as refugees and influences prospects for their futures. We identified a significant weight to a family's economic status on the experience of their children in being able to replicate their traditional way of life and in influencing the youth's agency in seeking social capital beyond the family.

In conclusion, by closely examining mobile phone use among YSRs in Lebanon, our empirical investigation sheds new light on a neglected topic of research on mobile phone use among the youth population of refugees that can be leveraged to help us understand how vulnerable youth can maximize the use of available resources in an active attempt to reduce the distresses of their refugeehood and in an initial effort to overwrite a better future for themselves and their families.

**Keywords:** Young Syrian Refugees; Mobile phones; Protracted Refugees; Coleman; Social Capital; Bonding, Bridging, and Linking ties; Social Media and Social Networking Sites; Family structure; Quality of family bonds; Family wealth.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	II
Table of Contents .....	V
List of Tables.....	VII
List of Figures .....	IX
List of Abbreviations.....	X
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1

### PART I

<b>Who are the Young Refugees? The State of Research</b>	17
--	----

<b>Chapter 1 – A Lost Young Generation?</b> .....	18
<b>Chapter 2 – The Use of Mobile and Social Media in Refugee Situation</b> .....	36
<b>Chapter 3 – Methodological Considerations</b> .....	51
I. A Tool for the Research: Social Capital .....	53
II. Adopted Research Methods and General application of the investigation .....	71
III. Introducing the Sample of YSRs .....	83

### PART II

<b>Young Refugees Relying on Family’s Social Capital</b>	93
--	----

<b>Chapter 4 – Refugee families’ social capital and contextual vulnerabilities</b> ....	95
I. Syrian refugee families and strategies of residence .....	96
II. Syrian refugee families’ social capital .....	137
III. Children’s prospects as young refugees .....	157
<b>Chapter 5 – Where Tradition is Respected: Children’s Lives in a Wealthy Family</b> .....	176
I. Age and Gender Inequalities .....	177
II. Wealthy Family Leading a Conventional Lifestyle .....	188

<b>Chapter 6 – Opportunity of Change: Children’s Lives in a Non-Wealthy Family</b> .....	200
I. Education, Work and Values in a non-Wealthy Family .....	201
II. Openness and Potentials for Growth.....	213
<b>PART III</b>	
<b>Mobile Phones and Youth’s Agency – Creating social capital</b> .....	236
<b>Chapter 7 – Heavy Use of Mobile Phones and of Social Networks</b> .....	239
I. Human-Machine Interaction .....	242
II. Refugees and Mobile Phones .....	248
<b>Chapter 8 – YSRs’ Ambivalent Use of their Mobile Phones: Between Family and Oneself</b> .....	266
I. Forms of Ties .....	267
II. Support to Family: Family-centric Mobile Phone Use.....	292
III. Patterns .....	313
<b>Chapter 9 – Outside the Family: Weak ties and YSRs’ Agency</b> .....	319
I. YSRs’ Social Networks using Mobile: Granovetter’s weak ties as bridging opportunities .....	320
II. YSRs’ Forging Ties .....	325
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	334
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	341
Appendix A: Instrument of Research .....	1
Questionnaire.....	4
Appendix B: TABLES .....	10
Appendix C: FIGURES.....	26

## List of Tables (Appendix B)

Table 1, The percentage of increase in the price of rice, sugar, beans, and milk since 2010.....	10
Table 2, Types of ties and their strength.....	10
Table 3, Tracking UNHCR Registered Syrian Refugees by District in Lebanon for the year 2018 .....	10
Table 4, Marital Status, Target Sample, Region and Gender .....	11
Table 5, Percentage of the Syrian refugee population by governorate in Lebanon, 2018.....	12
Table 6, YSRs' stated conditions and reasons for their flight to Lebanon .....	13
Table 7, Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR in Lebanon end-2012 to mid-2014.....	13
Table 8, Parental Education Levels .....	14
Table 9, Indicators influencing YSRs' reproduction and vulnerability, as informed by their families' SES.....	14
Table 10: Most mentioned countries where respondents' social networks exist.....	15
Table 11, Report of the most important usage of a mobile phone by age-range .....	15
Table 12, Reasons for buying a mobile .....	16
Table 13, Participants' mobile usage as a Camera by age range .....	17
Table 14, Participants' mobile usage as a Music device by age range.....	18
Table 15, Participants' mobile usage as a Camera by gender.....	18
Table 16, Participants' mobile usage as a Music device by gender.....	19
Table 17, Participants' mobile usage as a Gaming device by age range .....	19
Table 18, Respondents' general use of SNS and social media platforms.....	19

Table 19, Respondents’ usage frequency of the one or two-most used SNS platform on their mobile phones, by age-range. ....	20
Table 20, Respondents’ usage frequency of the three-most used SNS platform on their mobile phones, by age-range .....	21
Table 21, Respondents’ usage frequency of WhatsApp, by age range.....	22
Table 22: Respondents’ usage frequency of FB, by age range.....	23
Table 23: Respondents’ usage frequency of the Internet/ Google, by age range .....	23
Table 24, Report of respondents’ reported area of origin and period of arrival to Lebanon .....	24
Table 25: Social capital indices among respondents .....	24
Table 26: Respondents’ perceptions about the level of happiness of their social networks.....	25

## List of Figures (Appendix C)

Figure 1: The Evolution of Social capital in Literature .....	26
Figure 2: Elements measuring social capital .....	27
Figure 3: Distribution of Age.....	28
Figure 4: Number of Siblings .....	29
Figure 5: Number of male siblings .....	30
Figure 6: Birth order in the family .....	31
Figure 7: Educational Level.....	32
Figure 8: Employment .....	33
Figure 9: Types of Work.....	34
Figure 10: UNHCR Mapping of the Refugee Population in Lebanon.....	35
Figure 11: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Place of Origin.....	36
Figure 12: Catalysis of social capital in a refugee context .....	37
Figure 13: The personal iceberg metaphor .....	38
Figure 14: Smartphone use, Social capital building and youth empowerment.....	39

## List of Abbreviations

FB: Facebook.

GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council.

GSO: General Security Office.

ICT(s): Information and Communication Technologies.

ISF: Internal Security Forces.

LCPS: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

MENA: Middle East and North Africa region.

IMF: International Monetary Fund.

IOM: International Organization for Migration.

NGO: Non-Governmental Organizations.

OCHA: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

OECD: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders.

SCPR: Syrian Centre for Policy Research.

SES: Socio-economic status.

SNS: Social Networking Sites.

UN: United Nations.

UNDESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

UNESCO: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNDP: United Nations Development Program.

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund.

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund.

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

UNRWA: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

VASyR-: Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.

VOIP: Voice over IP.

WFP: United Nations World Food Program.

WHO: World Health Organization

YSR(s): Young Syrian Refugee(s).

YT: YouTube.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Anne Gonon, without whom I would not have been able to think deeply into what it means for a young refugee to reinvent himself/herself facing vulnerabilities. I am deeply indebted to my parents, brother, and siblings to whom I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude for the faith and trust they have put in me. The amount of love, care and support you have extended me is immeasurable, I thrive to make you proud and repay your kindness somehow, someday. I am extremely grateful to my friends, classmates, and colleagues without whom the completion of my dissertation in a vibrant family-like setting of support and nurturing, would not have been possible. Writing this acknowledgement, my memory is bringing forth everyone who has contributed and is contributing to making my life as warm as possible, I am indebted to each and everyone of you, Shukran jazilan.

# Introduction

The Middle East is perceived as an unstable region of turmoil perpetually faced with conflicts, and numerous socioeconomic and political challenges that threaten the effective implementation of good governance, democracy, justice, and the rule of law. The failed Arab Spring, or so-called Arab Awakening, primarily reflected Arab citizens' discontent with their governments and echoed their demands for political, economic, and judicial reform. There were limited success beginning with the overthrow of President Ben Ali of Tunisia in January 2011, when the region saw authoritarian rulers collapse, one after the other, through popular revolutions that brought regime change in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, the implementation of constitutional reforms in Morocco, and the dissolution of parliaments in Jordan and Kuwait. Most disastrous of all the repercussions is the ongoing Syrian crisis that developed rapidly into a protracted proxy war with dire consequences not only for the country itself but also for the entire Levant region.

Protests in Syria began in March 2011, when peaceful demonstrations were fiercely resisted by Syrian government forces, and where the country's strategic geographic location rapidly led to the involvement of international powers. In numbers, the implications of this proxy war entail the uprooting of 13.2 million of Syria's 22 million population, including the internal displacement of 6.6 million people and more than 6.7 million fleeing the country as refugees and

asylum seekers worldwide (OCHA, n.d.). As bordering countries, Turkey and Lebanon have hosted the largest communities of Syrian refugees fleeing their war-torn country.

Second to Turkey, Lebanon is recognized as a major host of more than 1.2 million officially registered Syrian refugees, followed by Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. However, with the number of refugees representing 45 percent of its population, Lebanon has been granted international recognition for being host to the largest Syrian refugee population per capita. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereafter, UNHCR) registered the influx of the first million Syrian refugees into Lebanon by May 2014 (Dionigi,2014, p.13). What led to the absorption of such a large wave of newcomers without the country falling into massive unrest or paranoia, as has taken place in Europe, triggered our initial interest in examining the importance of the experience of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. This dissertation highlights the particularity of the Syria-Lebanon aspect of the Syrian refugee situation.

## Start of the war in Syria

Following the start of the armed conflict in Syria in 2011, wave after wave of refugees fled the war-torn country as demonstrations quickly turned into a vicious proxy war between major global powers. As of today, the Syrian crisis has reached its decade mark since the unfortunate turn of events in March 2011, leading to the displacement and migration of more than half of the Syrian population, instigating what is widely recognized as the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II (EU External Action, 2018).

The Syrian refugee crisis has been extensively deliberated across the global scene. While the literature does not fall short in examining the plights of the victims of war, however, deliberations have mostly been limited to the pathological aspect of their displacement. This

includes an analytical description of their physical and psychological health conditions, as well as the many other economic, financial, educational, health, housing, employment, and legal status challenges they face, among numerous others. Social science research also has focused more on the humanitarian emergency response, which immediately impacts refugee families. A regular recurrent common point of significance among multiple sources pertains to the vulnerability of those refugees, especially in a host country like Lebanon, ill-prepared to manage such a humanitarian crisis on a massive scale at multiple institutional and infrastructural fronts, many of which are outside the scope of this dissertation.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a refugee as being “a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.” (Oxford Dictionaries(c), n.d.) Moreover, the International Organization for Migration, (hereafter, IOM) based on the 1951 Refugee Convention, defines the term “refugee” as:

“A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.” (Art. 1(A)(2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol). (IOM(b), n.d.)

The term prompts the provision of several services to individuals who hold or qualify for this status from their host state. These include ensuring refugees’ protection, safety, and dignity among others, according to international human rights agreements.

Several other accounts come into effect when looking into the experience of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. In the following, we briefly present the historical background that ties the Syrian nation to their Lebanese neighbor, shedding light on the importance of Syrian pre-established social networks that will later serve the objectives of this dissertation.

## The significance of the Lebanese–Syrian case: Historical relations affecting the experience of Syrian refugees in Lebanon

The pre-crisis population of Syrians in Lebanon has been estimated at between 200,000 and one million migrant workers, who had been in the country since the 1950s, mostly working in construction and agriculture (International Rescue Committee, n. d., p.2; Chalcraft, 2005). Therefore, Syrian male workers are not considered “alien” to Lebanon. They were present long before the crisis, but were accustomed to staying in Lebanon “alone,” while their families remained in Syria, benefitting from the currency exchange rate and from the cheaper cost of living in Syria. That generally entails a bus commute of between 2.5 hours (Beirut-to-Damascus) to 10 hours from the Lebanese borders, depending on where the Syrian workers came from.

### *Syrians as Refugees in Lebanon for the first time*

After the first 2,000 to 5,000 Syrian refugees crossed the border one month after the beginning of the Syrian conflict in April 28, 2011 up until the official recognition of the Syrian refugee crisis by the international community after the exodus of 18,000 to 40,000 refugees within few days into Lebanon following the assassination of the Syrian president’s brother-in-law in Damascus on July 18, 2012—which intensified the fighting thereafter—Lebanon was silently receiving a regular flow of Syrian refugees (Dionigi, 2014, p.9). Initially, the Lebanese government,<sup>1</sup> as well as many

---

<sup>1</sup> DISCLAIMER: It is important to note here that by using the “Lebanese government” throughout this dissertation, it is not to criticize the current members of the parliament and political players nor to address their performance. Merely, “the government” is employed in this research as the entity or the institutions responsible for managing the country’s affairs.

other close observers of the domestic developments in the Syrian conflict,<sup>2</sup> did not anticipate the extent of the conflict or its repercussions. This unsolicited open border policy response indicates its recognition of the historical relationship with its neighbor, despite internal debates over an official policy that should be sensibly adopted in dealing with the Syrian neighboring crisis, especially in light of Lebanon's previous experience with Palestinian refugees.<sup>3</sup>

The very definition of a refugee, as stated above, presumes the interruption happening by extents that are greater than an individual-, a nation's will. The Syrian refugee population now living in Lebanon, were once leading ordinary lives. There was order and a sense of stability before the war, which provide a catalyst for emotional and psychological health, not to mention cognitive growth (UNICEF, 2012, p.5; Chopra, 2018, p.11; Nakeyar, et al., 2018, p.188). A large degree of their adult lives was routine, including cleaning, cooking, and attending to children, among others. Moreover, they were accustomed to and familiar with the prevalence and acceptance of the general pattern of a patriarchal system. This made it easier for them to develop and maintain strong family ties, including gradually parting ways with patriarchy. The changes that occurred with the war led to complete disruption and compromise of ordinary life. It is in such a context that the Syrian refugees found themselves for the first time in their lives having to re-invent their social roles. They were forced to establish new family ties and new domestic responsibilities, and to develop new habits. With the objective of reestablishing order, albeit after disruption, a new form of an "ordinary life" had to emerge.

---

Therefore, the term "government" comprehensively includes the Lebanese Cabinet or Council of Ministers with executive powers; the Parliament, as the representative councils or Chamber of Deputies with legislative powers; and the Lebanese political elites as rotating political actors through the ten years since the start of the Syrian war in March 2011. This entity has included different parliamentary players depending on the election term.

<sup>2</sup> For a timeline of the major events in Syria, see: <http://syrianrefugees.eu/timeline/> [December 12, 2016].

<sup>3</sup> For a timeline of the Lebanese major local news related to the country's response to the neighboring conflict in Syria and other national political developments since April 11, 2011 until October 25, 2012, see: (Carnegie Endowment, 2011).

In the Lebanese context, the Syrian refugees came to constitute one third of the Lebanese population (UN Women, 2018, p.26), in addition to 455,000 (UNRWA(b), n.d.)<sup>4</sup> protracted Palestinian refugees, 32,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria (UNRWA(a), n.d.), and above 7,500 refugee families of other nationalities from among Iraqi refugees,<sup>5</sup> Sudanese, Eritrean, and Egyptian asylum seekers distributed among twelve official Palestinian refugee camps throughout Lebanon or living mostly in low-income Lebanese neighborhoods. According to UN and World Bank data, 70 percent of all refugees in Lebanon live below the poverty line (UNHCR, 2008, pp. 8, 23).<sup>6</sup> More than 80 percent of the Syrian refugee population are under the age of 35, and 20 percent of them are below the age of four (Ghanem, 2015). While only about two thirds of Syrian children in Lebanon go to school (Ibid.), 84.5 percent of them stopped attending school when they moved to Lebanon (UNICEF, 2019 p.48).

Similar to Turkey, where only 20 percent of the registered Syrian refugee population live in camps, Syrian refugees in Lebanon have settled among local Lebanese in low-income to poor neighborhoods or in Palestinian camps where rent is low.<sup>7</sup> By doing so, they have escaped the confinement of an officially defined UNHCR-run refugee camp and have created residential spaces of their own. However, as will be later explained, this has submitted them to greater

---

<sup>4</sup> I came across a master's thesis published in 1980 where the author mentions the number of Palestinian refugees to be 400,000 and whose reference is from two books published in 1976 and 1979. It is highly unlikely that since then, the Palestinian population only increased by 55,000 people within a period of around 40 years. See: (Wnek, 1980, p.12).

<sup>5</sup> In fact, the UN "General Security estimated that there are 100,000 Iraqi nationals in Lebanon in total, legal and illegal." See: (Human Rights Watch, 2007). New data account for 18,200 Iraqi families and 1,125 families from Sudan in Lebanon according to the "Vulnerability Assessment of Refugees of other Nationalities in Lebanon" in 2018. (VARON, 2018, pp.2, 6)

<sup>6</sup> According to the UNHCR, the lower poverty line is set to those earning US\$ 2.4/day, and the upper poverty line is for those who earn US\$ 4/day. Furthermore, a study by Oxfam in Lebanon suggests that a typical household of 5 members should generate an income of around 600 dollars per month to be able to live above the upper poverty line.

<sup>7</sup> That is no longer the case, as one report mentioned that rent in the Sabra-Shatila Palestinian camp, has reached \$330 per month, higher than their low incomes. And even though the UN Refugee Agency provides some with a financial allocation of \$66 per month, this is spent on food, medicine, and household expenditures before it can be saved for rent. The 2018 vulnerability report showed that, on average, the Syrian household spends \$98 per person per month of which \$44 is allocated to food alone. For further information, see: (Global Fund for Women, n.d.; & Op. Cit., VASyR-2017, p.54).

challenges related to their housing being located in neighborhoods of poor Lebanese, whose livelihoods have been most impacted by the refugee influx.

Syrian refugees in Lebanon face numerous challenges, yet their primary reason for seeking refuge in Lebanon stems from their desire to stay as close to Syria as possible while ensuring their safety. Many thought they would be able to achieve the dignity of work to feed their families and eventually return to their homeland as soon as the situation allows (Van Vliet, and Hourani, 2014). Those who were financially able to afford to pay the passage to Europe, risked their lives and the lives of their children by attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Although it goes without saying that “charity” is not the ideal situation for most Syrian refugees, yet legally speaking they are not allowed to work—although this does not stop them from working wherever possible, but it places them in a more vulnerable situation where they are taken advantage of—and are left to depend on humanitarian assistance delivered mainly by UNHCR and United Nations World Food Program (hereafter, WFP).<sup>8</sup> One important point to note is that their decision to come to Lebanon, if not coerced by war and direct threats to their safety, has turned out to have been endorsed by a great social network.<sup>9</sup> That network consists of family ties—relatives and friends who long preceded them to neighboring Lebanon, some of whom had been in Lebanon for as long as thirty-five years.<sup>10</sup>

Social, anthropological, and observational studies have shown that refugees’ desire to stay close to their relatives and preexisting social networks relates to a perception of inter-community comfort and support (Soh-Leong, 2009, p.1035). Initially, this option convinced many to forgo

---

<sup>8</sup> For data on adolescents in Lebanon, see: (Gercama, et al., 2018).

<sup>9</sup> A more detailed analysis of the Syrian refugees’ demographics and the rationale behind their settlement in Lebanon will be covered in Chapter 4 in the context of their social capital.

<sup>10</sup> For more information relevant to Refugees in Lebanon, see: (Hourani, 2018).

the European option for the Lebanese one as a destination for refuge given higher risks associated with the former and the already established network of family in Lebanon. Additionally, fear of the perceived language barrier abroad as well as having few other realistic viable options—as only 3 percent of the Syrians in Lebanon have been resettled in a third country of asylum so far (CARE, 2018, p.5-6)—pushed many Syrians to move to Lebanon over the course of the war (Eldawy, 2019).

The living conditions in the Lebanese context have turned out to pose major physical, health, social, psychological, legal, and financial costs to Syrian refugees. These topics have been heavily addressed by numerous observers and service providers involved in the plight of displacement surrounding the Syrian, Palestinian, and other refugee communities living in Lebanon (Daniel, 2016).<sup>11</sup> The Syrian crisis gathered international media coverage for multiple reasons. Not only due to the perils of their migration routes and asylum to European countries and the risks involved along these life-threatening journeys (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014), but also because of their precarious legal status and the political schism of their host-countries, submitting refugees to greater risks of exploitation from within both their community and the host society and contributing to their vulnerability, as will be explained in the literature review. Finally, and most importantly, as refugees must “live in the shadows,” they are pushed to further alienation, disenfranchisement, and societal exclusion, which are all experiences associated with negative individual and social outcomes. This will be detailed as the focus of this dissertation addressing the refugees’ protracted situation and their responses to it.

---

<sup>11</sup> Including 8,000 Iraqi and some 2,200 Sudanese refugees, among others.

## The Significance of examining refugee children, specifically

Although the number of displaced children inside Syria is estimated to be 5 million and 2.5 million Syrian refugee children are scattered across Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq (UNICEF, 2020; Burack, 2020), the available scholarly publications do not address the effects of the impacts of the Lebanese refugee experience on the youth population among Syrian refugees (Save the Children, n.d.). While consulting additional literature on this sample group, we have noted certain elements of positivity detected by scholars of research on the discipline of Information and Communication Technologies (hereafter, ICT) regarding the effects of mobile phone use among the youth refugee population.

While the available studies heavily focus on registering the economic and social troubles of refugee families as a unit of research, they do not substantially document the positive experiences underlying young refugees' developed adaptation mechanisms. Instances of their strength include their behavior expressed in the form of their ownership-sharing of available resources and strengthened ties inside the family, as antecedents to the development of social capital, capable of fueling the youth with appropriate potential to develop autonomy, subjective wellbeing, and empowerment, as theorized in this research.

This triggered our curiosity even further and we concluded that young refugees' use of their mobiles had not been thoroughly investigated, and certainly not in the Lebanese context. But first, a word about why it matters for us to investigate mobile use among the young refugees living in Lebanon specifically: The significance of this particular academic endeavor goes beyond the current media dealing with the refugee crisis limited to the pathological aspect of refugees' displacement and surpassing merely focusing on the importance of mobiles in refugees' lives as a

standalone variable. The relationship where the two nations have had the chance before the crisis to establish a social network, gives an interesting perspective to researching the YSR population living in Lebanon, relevant to their leveraging their families' social capital. Where the young refugees did not have to deal with a new language to acquire, a new culture to adapt to that is remote to theirs, but on the contrary they moved to a country of numerous similarities to their own sociocultural and religious background. Allowing them, instead, a chance to revoke how they are portrayed in existing literature as a vulnerable group and presenting them the possibility of rewriting their own future, dictated by their agency using mobiles.

Hence, the importance of investigating these components put together, specific to such an interesting Syrian-Lebanese case, lies in that it perfectly showcases how young Syrian refugees (hereafter, YSRs) become agents by means of a detailed analysis of their mobile phone use, explored in Part III. Where we examine the usage of mobile phones and social networking sites (hereafter, SNS) among 64 YSRs between the ages of 14 and 25 by means of a qualitative questionnaire administered to 91 respondents living in four distinct geographic areas in Lebanon: Beirut (the capital city), Tripoli (a city in the North), the Bekaa valley (a mixed urban–rural region to the east, between the coast and Syria) and Sidon (a city in the South).

Therefore, the present dissertation examines the effect of smartphone use in the production of social capital by an under-researched category of mobile phones users in the body of ICT literature: that of the vulnerable refugee communities, and especially the youth. As recorded above, much of the literature on Syrian refugees in Lebanon has focused on their economic and human vulnerabilities neglecting the importance of social capital in helping them overcome their situation and influencing their surroundings positively.

## On young refugees, mobile phones, and social capital

Although studies on social capital in relation to refugee communities exist in the literature, we have detected a lack of research on the YSRs living in Lebanon, in particular. Moreover, we have noted an absence of scholarly work that proposes social capital as a concept mitigating the hardships faced by the YSRs in Lebanon. Existing studies assume that YSRs cannot be responsible for their social capital but, rather, can only benefit from it through their families. This dissertation proposes otherwise. Since social capital is embedded in YSRs' social networks, and in the quality of the relationships built with family members and with the larger local communities where they operate, we hypothesize that YSRs react to their refugeehood not only by using their parents' social capital, but also by negotiating new roles within the family. Their acquired or imposed responsibilities during hardships have added to their domestic value, and through the use of their mobile phones, they embark on furthering their social capital beyond that of their families, yet for the purpose of serving them as well as their own. Current studies on YSRs in Lebanon seem to be blindfolded with respect to testing the relationship between smartphone use and social capital that allow YSRs to be agents of their own lives rather than vulnerable collateral damage.

Available studies on Syrian refugees' use of smartphones and social media lack the theoretical framework in addressing the subject matter. Only few of those studies have referenced classical and modern theories of refugee and migration studies—such as uses and gratification theory (Katz et al., 1973), push and pull<sup>12</sup> theory (Lee, 1966), the theory of planned behavior

---

<sup>12</sup> Push factors (i.e., motivation): Examples from among our YSR sample pertains to: mobile use (heavy users); transnational social networks (active communication and actively seeking to establish digital connections); economic and job circumstances (those unhappy with their current state; either poor or subject to harsh working conditions and low pay—like Hasan from Beirut working in a plastic factory for 13USD/day); high dreams and ambition (including a girl from the South and another in Tripoli); low burden (=low responsibility; marital status, age, gender, birth order, personality). As for the Pull factors (i.e., preventing from taking action), examples from the YSR respondents: perceived personal barriers in the face of change; parental attachment (that is the reason why the majority of the female respondents can't possibly make the move, unlike men, like Ahmad from the South, or Hasan ...); Parental blessing and obedience (Rida).

(Ajzen, 1991), and that of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994), among others—in relation to social science and the field of communication technologies and social informatics research. Going forward in their respective disciplines, the available body of literature has not produced enough scientific evidence on the implications of mobile phone use on the present empirical investigations and theoretical propositions of a relationship between ICT and agency.

In addition to recording their daunting experiences in a digital format as a reminder of what they have gone through along their journey of forced displacement, refugees' heavy dependence on their social network and cellphones is worth investigation for multiple reasons. Their sharing of the horrific trails of displacement have helped others, both refugees and non-refugees, to witness the underlying hardships accompanying vulnerable people, but also have helped us all to learn of refugees' survival journeys from those who achieved safe refuge in neighboring countries.

Besides noting a significant need for more empirical research on this front, other researchers have also pointed out the scarcity of research covering this relatively nascent dependent relationship between refugees and their mobiles (Trickett et al., 1991, p.1), as well as the multiple inherent effects of social media and virtual networks on the refugee community at the level of ICT research. Specifically, little notice has been paid to young refugees' advanced networking skills with the use of ICT (Op. Cit., Ramadan, 2017, p.1), despite its significant importance to exploring YSRs' mobile networking strategies in reducing their own hardships and those of their families. The literature on YSRs in Lebanon fails to highlight the potential offered by smartphones, social media use, and digital family networks in nurturing a modicum of youth empowerment among the young refugee community.

## Introducing Coleman's work

While the result of the existing literature is key to an understanding of the experiences facing YSRs, we feel that the body of literature has failed to paint a realistically observable picture of the day-to-day struggles of YSRs, in particular. This has prompted the direction of this dissertation to cover this lack and to focus on giving YSRs the voice needed for us to better understand their struggles and to document their strengths in the middle of this life crisis. The theoretical tools employed for this include children's use of mobile phones, all to be approached from the angle of using, bonding, and building social capital.

As agents of their own lives, looking through young refugees' uses of their families' social capital and their activities seeking their own, Coleman's notion of social capital—introduced in Chapter 3 and employed throughout Parts II and III—seemed the most appropriate framework for analyzing YSRs' use of smartphones and social media use (Op. Cit., Gillespie et al., 2018, p.1). Even though as a concept, social capital is not born by children but is reaped from their parents, we hypothesize that YSRs possess their own separate reactions to their harsh realities and are resolved to revolting against their limitations and acting in their own interests and the interests of their families in creating alternative realities for themselves using their mobiles.

Finally, although there exists research dedicated to YSRs' smartphone use across countries, like in the Netherlands and Canada as documented in Chapter 1, none of the existing analyses have focused on YSRs in Lebanon. More importantly, such studies simply have looked at how users behave and act on social media applications. They provide descriptions of uses and gratifications without linking such usage to the generation of social capital, hence, we decided to conduct our

own survey to collect personal data to cover this lack, which will be the focus of discussion in the next chapter.

## Analysis of YSRs' mobile phone use

The importance of the pathological approach that we employed in reading through the plights of Syrian refugees lies in highlighting the ability of the young population among them to create a new reality for themselves beyond the tenebrous scenario they are faced with at numerous levels, as presented in Part I. It will contain 3 chapters covering the effects of the Syrian refugees' displacement to a fragile host country: Lebanon. It will incorporate refugee families' multiple layers of insecurities and will showcase how families' vulnerabilities reflect on the youth population in Chapter 1.

The specific use of mobile phones among the YSRs living in Lebanon entails several causes and implications. These pertain to their pre-established social networks prior to the crisis, the common language shared with their Lebanese neighbor, the historical relationship that joins the two nation-states, and the role of these givens in reducing a great deal of their suffering<sup>13</sup> compared to those who migrated to Europe, Canada, the United States, or other countries. To elaborate on this in the present dissertation, Chapter 2 will present literature on the use of mobile and social media starting with migrants, asylum seekers and other diaspora communities. Then, we will present how refugees use their mobiles, particularly highlighting the youth, as reflected in the existing literature. By the end of Chapter 2, we will have made a link between mobile phone use by refugees and the reason why the concept of social capital is relevant. Chapter 3 will cover the methodological aspect of our investigation; it introduces social media as discussed by

---

<sup>13</sup> Analyzed further in Chapter 4, Part II, relevant to our sampled respondents.

numerous scholars, particularly examining Coleman's use of the notion of social capital and its forms within relationships. Then we will present the sampled size and relevant research methods employed in our research.

Starting with Chapter 4, Part II will bridge the link between the effect of families' social capital and YSRs' experience of their refugeehood. It will illustrate the heterogeneity of displacement experiences between families who have enjoyed a pre-established social network, and those who have not. Hence, Chapter 4 will highlight the importance of families' social capital, especially pertaining to YSRs' prospects and educational attainment during refugeehood. This chapter will, therefore, allow us to see how the sampled YSRs, despite not having a typical supportive family role, have employed their social ties and their parents' social networks to help them resettle into new more favorable scenarios than they would have otherwise.

Noteworthy, one of the important findings in Chapter 4 is that not all families taking refuge in Lebanon have had similar experiences of their plight. Wealthier family models are those who have had pre-established social networks compared to the refugees who started coming from the earliest days of May 2011. This wealth inequality also has influenced the social capital of YSRs, which can be seen at the level of their undermined education and employment, and how it has influenced domestic considerations relevant to their birth order and gender.

Both Chapters 5 and 6 will, thus, analyze the hypothesis that, due to their increasing vulnerabilities of their protracted scenario of refugeehood, YSRs have realized that they must adapt themselves to their new reality. They have employed the meager resources available to them to circumvent challenges and have attempted to effectively build on their families' networks, increasing their own social capital. These chapters will address the difference in ties between

wealthy and non-wealthy families, hence, reporting chances of openness and change to traditional structures among the young population vis-à-vis their parents.

The above discussion will pave the way to Part III, on the analysis of YSRs' mobile phone use in Chapters 7 and 8. This last section will investigate how YSRs have employed their mobiles during displacement in multifaceted ways, ranging between helping their parents, attending to themselves, and even going beyond self-care to helping their communities as well through extended friendships and civil engagement—hence, prompting Granovetter's work on the importance of weak ties that will be the focus of Chapter 9.

Thus, we will show at the end of this research endeavor in Part III, the new potentials rooted in this seemingly vulnerable community. Through this dissertation, we will see how YSRs have been able to have a voice of their own for the first time when they displayed to their parents that they were capable of sharing responsibility and taking on the burdens of their plight. We will notice a new scenario where, despite their hardships, they are able to contribute effectively to the wellbeing of their families, therefore enforcing role-changes within the traditional patriarchal Syrian family model. Further changes involve the emergence of female heads-of-households, the engagement of the entire family in support of each other, and the reduced overall dependence of the children on their parents for caretaking. Hence, this refugee crisis is believed to have given rise to a more active youth community, compared to previous cases of refugeehood.

## **PART I**

# **Who are the Young Refugees? The State of Research**

# Chapter 1

## A Lost Young Generation?

### Protracted Refugees

As a definition by the International Rescue Committee, Protracted Refugee Situations (hereafter, PRS) are situations where refugees have been in exile “for 5 years or more after their initial displacement, without immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions.” (International Rescue Committee, n. d., p.1) Two thirds of today’s refugee population have been trapped in extended wars, such as the likes of Afghans in Pakistan and Iran, Sudanese in Kenya and Uganda, and most recently Burmese in Thailand, Bangladesh, and Malaysia (Milner, 2007). The global conditions for such a failure for humanity, date back to the changing nature of conflicts after world war, with the rise of failed and fragile states. This population is not only subject to a wide range of protection challenges such as encampment, violence, crime, the denial of their rights, the rise of injustices especially among women and children, but also raise security concerns among their host countries undermining political solutions and resettlement efforts (Ibid, 2007). In such a case, communities who had displayed once receptive attitude towards the newcomers, abandoned their initial response.

More than 1.5 million Syrian refugees have relocated to Lebanon since the Syrian Revolution commenced in 2011. While the two nations share political, social, and cultural histories resulting in a general positive attitude from the host population towards assisting the newly resettled refugee population, the colossal demographic shifts have imposed serious strains over the Lebanese state's economy, security, and infrastructure. However, due to the protracted nature of their displacement, during the summer of 2017 the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (hereafter, LCPS) have conducted field interviews with refugees and state officials and reported that there is a growing negative narrative among the host Lebanese communities viewing Syrian migrants as potential threats to the security of the already precarious Lebanese apparatus (SafeWorld and LCPS, 2018).

The Lebanese community initially displayed hospitality in hosting the Syrian refugees, in recognition of the humanitarian aid response and the Syrian's historical relationship to Lebanon (Harvard University, 2014). For instance, while some Lebanese received cash from international organizations to accommodate the newcomer refugees, a research investigating Lebanese locals' hospitality in 2016, reported that most Lebanese hosted refugees on the basis of "blood ties, old friendships, and personal favours." (Carpi, 2016)

Extensive literary work speaks of common problems resulting from the ongoing refugee influx that both the Syrian refugees and the Lebanese community have had to face and endure its negative impacts. Those include but are not limited to the following topics, such as: overall economic difficulties, increased unemployment—especially among the youth—wider segments pushed to poverty, increased crime rate, shortage of potable water and electricity as well as other such basic utilities, violence against women—including honor killings, forced marriages, prostitution and trafficking—incidents of discrimination against refugees and social backlash,

child and human rights abuses, in addition to other security-related incidents and challenges to the country's sovereignty (Geha and Talhouk, 2018). In such a context, vulnerabilities<sup>14</sup> and reduced prospects creates the perfect environment necessitating change.

Perhaps, the greatest impact of all the challenges brewing in Lebanon, which causes most implications on the poor population, is the country's worsening socioeconomic conditions that intensified after the influx of the Syrian refugees according to a study published jointly by Nupur Kukrety consulting firm, Oxfam, and the American University of Beirut (2016, p.8).<sup>15</sup> This was also noted by the UNHCR report in the following: "[t]he largest impact is expected to stem from the insecurity and uncertainty generated by the conflict, which negatively affects investor and consumer confidence and lowers economic activity." (UNHCR, 2013, p.8)

As previously maintained, with the abundant and cheap refugee labour force, in 2014 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (hereafter, OCHA) registered a drop in wages, increased competition in the limited job market, and an increase in household expenditures leading to the widening of the income gap among residents, especially within low-income to poor households (OCHA, 2014, p.33). The country's purchasing power, for instance, was reduced due to the increase in inflation rates, in some rural areas reaching 40 percent. Coupled with the increase in demand, numerous other studies point that "[t]he prices of basic food items (such as sugar, rice, oil etc.) [...] increased by more than 20%" since 2010." (Op. Cit., OCHA, 2014, p.33)<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Within the context of this dissertation, vulnerability is understood as the inability of individuals to exercise their freewill due to their experiencing of disadvantaged socioeconomic, educational and juridical circumstances caused by their forced displacement.

<sup>15</sup> The study indicated that "the poor households in Lebanon continue to survive on an income that is lower than the poverty lines defined in 2008 by UNDP, much before the Syrian crisis escalated and began impacting the Lebanese economy." (p.8)

<sup>16</sup> Annexed Table n. 1, entitled: The percentage of increase in the price of rice, sugar, beans, and milk since 2010.

For reference purposes, the joint study mentioned previously suggests that a typical household of 5 members living in Lebanon should generate an income of around 600 dollars per month to be able to live above the upper poverty line (Op. Cit., Nupur Kukrety, et al. 2016, p.8). Adding that “[f]ood is the main expense for all poor households comprising approx. 35–50% of the total expenditure.” (p.9). Most interestingly in this regard, is that the study admits that the situation of poor Lebanese is worse than that of Syrian refugees: “Compared with the Lebanese poor households [...], Syrian refugee households are protected to some extent from food price fluctuations because of WFP food vouchers. This assures them the supply of a specified quantity of food at pre-agreed rates.” (p.15) In fact, “[u]nlike the Lebanese poor households for whom a daily wage is the only form of income, refugee households’ income comprises a daily wage and humanitarian assistance.” (p.11)

Furthermore, if we were to include the humanitarian assistance with the annual household income of a Syrian refugee household, one would find that the average total earnings of the latter is close to the income range of a poor Lebanese household, which serves to understand the reaction of the Lebanese poor to the Syrian refugee population. Especially as the population concentration of the latter precisely reside in low-income Lebanese neighborhoods and Palestinian camps, as earlier mentioned. Hence, aid agencies and humanitarian assistance need to pay more attention to area-specific sensitivities and deliver development projects that are more sensitive to local dynamics (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014).

This sensitive situation resulting from the protracted nature of the refugee crisis poses a challenge in front of aid agencies to face, as even the geographic areas with a once receptive attitude towards the newcomers are wearing off. In fact, as previously explained, since 87 percent of Lebanon is urbanized, reports advance that 82 percent of the Syrian refugees are living in four

major cities of Lebanon, while only 18 percent live in informal tented settlements (Kabalan, 2016, p.12). This not only makes it harder for aid organizations to locate refugee urban residents that are most in need to deliver their services efficiently, but also drives higher demands on housing (The Council for Development and Reconstruction, 2016, p.13), which has created another set of challenges for refugees to face.

To conclude, in relation to the Lebanese society, the Syrians' initial welcoming into Lebanese peoples' houses given the previously mentioned historical relationship between the two nations, was short-lived. As previously maintained, by the end of 2014, social violence and discrimination against the Syrian refugees had been registered in numerous Lebanese towns. Having no formal education and no viable alternatives, the refugees had to work under exploitative circumstances and harsh working conditions, signaling failure to their social integration and causing additional distress.

### Refugees' Different Forms and Causes of Vulnerability

In the body of literature on *refugee* populations, key concepts emerge across the multitude of disciplinary analyses pertaining to this population's resilience (Sleijpen, et al., 2017; Almohamed and Vyas, 2016), vulnerability (VASyR-2015; VASyR-2017; VASyR-2018), education (Reardon, et al., 2013), security, economic activities, and outcomes of their existence on different national fronts. Within the compressive literature about refugees, the population is recurrently attributed with multi-levels of vulnerability (VASyR-2018, 2018, p.1), as scholars addressed topics related to their health (Caidi and Allard, 2005), employment (Carrington, et al., 2007), habitat, social capital, social inclusion (Andrade and Doolin, 2016), discrimination, abuse, among others. At the

global scale, the most studied refugee population is that of refugee-migrants spread across Canada (Veronis, 2018), the United States (Rupa, 2018), the Netherlands (Alencar, 2018; Alencar and Tsagkroni, 2019), France (Gillespie, et al., 2018), Germany (Abujarour, 2019) and Turkey (Culbertson and Constant, 2015). In addition to other countries of the Balkans (Anemona 2015) and Nordic countries (Sputnik News, 2018) due to the heavy migration flow to these territories or the path of refugee migrants going through them, as a topic of national interest on the management of those newcomers as well as in their integration.

When it comes to the *Syrian refugee* crisis specifically, the body of knowledge addressed a wide area of challenges facing refugee families' including their mental (Chen and Paterson, 2006) and physical health (Hadfield, et al., 2017; Abou-Saleh and Hughes, 2015), their housing, education (Shuayb, et al., 2014), employment, gender inequality (Charles and Denman, 2013), and gender-based violence, among numerous other topics of academic inquiry. As for the literature focused on the Syrian refugee *youth* population, studies dealt with issues related to female-specific vulnerabilities (Jabbar and Zaza, 2016; Op. Cit., Charles, and Denman, 2013), child marriage and child abuse (Mourtada, et al., 2017, p.27), resilience (Pieloch, et al., 2016), youth empowerment (Cargo, et al., 2003), among others.

#### A. Effects of Displacement to a Fragile Host-Country

Our main purpose in presenting the following implications pertains to the effect of refugees' protracted crisis on the Lebanese socio-political and economic scenario, thereby leading to hardships among the YSRs to extend social capital with the local community. Especially after that the Syrian refugees, as an entity, became perceived negatively at the local level, as will be analyzed in Part III.

### *Security outcomes*

The country's sovereignty was severely jeopardized after the influx of refugees. In fact, between October 2012 and November 2015, Lebanon's security was tested on 29 different occasions, postulating the spillover of the violence into the country (Cherri, et al., 2016). Beginning with the flaring of sectarian tensions and bloody fights in the Northern, 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest city in Lebanon, Tripoli, between Syrian Alawites and Lebanese Sunni locals. This was followed by a series of rocket attacks on Lebanese border cities from Syrian territories, clashes between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Islamist Syrian militants (Brog, 2014), car explosions, and suicide attacks in Shiite-populated areas in Beirut, and remote bordering cities where Hezbollah has a stronghold such in Hermel (Al-Jazeera, 2014; Security Council Report, n.d.).<sup>17</sup> However, analyzing these attacks fall far from the scope of this research endeavors, instead, we make mention of them to present the Syrian refugees' socio-political impact of their choice of residence, which in turn has influenced local communities' welcoming or unwelcoming of them in certain geographic areas.

### *Economic outcomes*

Before the Syrian crisis, Lebanon relied on tourism, trade, and services to contribute to the country's annual revenues. However, those three sectors were severely hit after the refugees' tragedy, as economic growth stalled in Lebanon with the closure of the export route to Jordan, Iraq, and Gulf Cooperation Council (hereafter, GCC), according to the UNHCR study in 2013 investigating "Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees." (UNHCR, 2013 p.8) However, after the influx of refugees as mentioned by OCHA report 2014, there was a significant impact on the Lebanese livelihood conditions and strains to the country's limited resources caused mainly by: economic hardships, a surge in labour supply, and a higher demand for basic services, especially when the

---

<sup>17</sup> See cited sources for a timeline of the attacks.

resources are limited as multiple reports and studies indicate, at the level of food and shelter for instance. (Op. Cit., OCHA, 2014, p.4)

After 2011, the Lebanese labour market witnessed a massive increase of unskilled labour supply, leading to competitions over jobs, according to the World Bank of 2013, which cites that “the supply of unskilled labour in the youth age group is likely to increase by 120 percent.” (p.83) This competition over available employment opportunities consequently raised Lebanese unemployment levels from 8.1 percent in 2010, to 10.6 percent in 2012 (UNHCR, 2013, p.7), to 20 percent in 2013, according to the UNHCR report of the same year (Op. Cit., World Bank, 2013). Again, notice here, mention of “youth age group” who, for one, constitute the vast majority of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and who also represent our focus group. As typically, those should not be even in a position to enter the labour market but were coerced to do so due to war circumstances, which further justifies the importance of putting focus on the topic of how YSRs react to their refugeehood and their new enforced realities.

Moreover, this situation strained local businesses to the brink of bankruptcy and pushed employers to seek cheaper labour, especially in semi-skilled, low-skilled, and unskilled jobs. When Syrians charge half the amount of an average Lebanese worker of US\$ 13 a day, one landowner admits: “Yes, I am hiring 100 Syrians for picking the grapes. They are much cheaper than the Lebanese, and with the loss of trade income, I need to cut costs.” (Azakir, 2013) In 2016, another study noted on this saying: “The conflict in Syria has exacerbated the problem by increasing competition for unskilled jobs, thus negatively affecting annual household incomes of Lebanese poor households.” (Op. Cit., Nupur Kukrety, et al., 2016, p.26)<sup>18</sup> In terms of tourism,

---

<sup>18</sup> For an excellent tracking of poverty and inequality in Lebanon between 1961 and 2014, see page 38 of the cited joint study.

neighboring oil-rich countries of the Arab Gulf and others have warned their nationals against traveling to Lebanon in fear that the situation in Syria may spillover Lebanon, leading to the drop of tourism sector revenues to near zero, according to the World Bank report (Op. Cit., Azakir, 2013). Furthermore, results of Itani's study of 2013, investigating the most affected sectors by the influx of the Syrian refugees into the country, reported that housing; water and electricity; infrastructure; employment; health care, education, and decreased wages, to have been "affected by Syrian willingness to work for low pay." (Itani, 2013) Other sectors mentioned by another study conducted in 2015 by Baroudi cites others, including "higher inflation rates and a negative economic growth as direct consequences of the Syrian crisis." (Baroudi, 2015)

The direct results of all the above, was reported by the OCHA report in 2014, positing that the current growing tensions between Lebanese citizens and the Syrian refugees "risk exacerbating national, ethnic, political and sectarian tensions in local communities." (Op. Cit., p.5) This will play a hampering role as will be addressed in detail in Part III, at the level of YSRs' attempts to extend bridging and linking ties with the Lebanese community to help reduce their hardships and seek support beyond the family structure.

#### B. Refugee Family: Multiple layers of vulnerabilities

According to the Vulnerability Assessment Report of 2017 (hereafter, VASyR-2017), conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (hereafter, UNICEF), the UNHCR, and the WFP, 80 percent of the refugee population who fled to Lebanon are women and children (VASyR, 2017, p.6), among whom 53 percent were children and 26 percent were women older than 18 years old (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 5). With this high constituent group, it is important to address the family situation of refugees and the gendered struggles they face, to finally understand the

effect of those elements on the YSRs' education, health, and overall wellbeing, later discussed. In terms of numerical data, the report tallies the number of Syrian refugee children aged 3 to 17 years old at 460,000 Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2016b), and those between 18 and 24 years old to have reached 108,639 in 2016 (42,230 males and 66,409 females) (El-Ghali, et al., 2017, p.16). Following on with data relevant to the wellbeing of YSRs in particular, it is noteworthy that around 20 percent of the Syrian refugee households that amount to 253,302 according to the UNHCR Daily Statistics report (UNHCR, 2016a), are headed by women only (Op. Cit., Amnesty International, 2016, pp.5, 9, 13).

It goes without saying how much the health situation of refugees gathers national concerns especially in countries of poor public health care and infrastructure like Lebanon. Therefore, in cases of a refugee crisis outbreak, aid agencies and local governments urgently work together to mitigate the spread of common epidemics and infectious diseases, such as Cholera and Ebola that could develop taking the form of plague and raise national health security risks (Rushton, et al., 2015; Koser, 2015). The Syrian refugees in Lebanon suffer from poor state of affairs and poor housing conditions that threaten the outbreak of public health hazards and infectious diseases, such as measles, tuberculosis, and a Hepatitis A Virus outbreak in 2013-14 (Bizri, et al., 2018). They had to face mental health struggles due to their collective trauma, including recurring episodes of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (hereafter, PTSD) (Sangalang, et al., 2017). Refugee families have registered high infant mortality rates (Haider, 2014), prevalence of skin and digestive disorders, respiratory infections, and high risk for chronic health conditions, like high blood pressure (Colhoun, et al., 1998), heart diseases and diabetes due to poor dietary and lifestyle choices associated with their abject poverty conditions (Kaplan and Keil, 1993).

Numerous literary works addressed refugee families from a policy perspective. The *family* institution by itself, however, did not gather much attention by scholars of refugee studies and migration. Even though the Syrian refugee family in Lebanon faces significant vulnerabilities preventing the social structure from achieving its role in support of its members. The Vulnerability Assessment Report of 2018 (hereafter, VASyR-2018) noted that about 90 percent of Syrian families in Lebanon suffer from food insecurity, 40 percent of whom were classified in the moderate and severe range (VASyR, 2018, pp.6, 84). On average, the number of meals consumed by an adult in a Syrian family in Lebanon is 2.2 (3.0 for children) (Ibid., p.83), hence, 38% of families reported inadequate food intake, which has also affected infants feeding (pp.5, 87). Such a gloomy situation of their health also reflects the inadequate public healthcare infrastructure and the unaffordable private healthcare services of their host, as the Syrian refugees have often reported shortage of staff and lack of sufficient resources in their treatment experience in Lebanon. Despite that their refugee health insurance covers their health bills,<sup>19</sup> the Syrian refugees in Lebanon still suffer from severe healthcare disparities compared to Lebanese citizens, which places them under the desired-healthcare standards for any population set by international agencies such as the World Health Organization (hereafter, WHO). More specific to the Lebanese terrain, the limited epidemiological reviews concluded that the Syrian refugee crisis has come to breed the worst health disasters in the current century affecting Middle Eastern host nations, while jeopardizing the lives of many young Syrians especially.

In terms of their *legal vulnerability*, according to numerous reports by the United Nations Development Program (hereafter, UNDP), UNHCR and other United Nations (hereafter, UN)

---

<sup>19</sup> The registered Syrian citizens with the UNHCR receive the refugee status with which they are entitled for State protection, as well as the reception of full health coverage in public hospitals, education in public schools, and several assistances for their living, in cash and in kind.

agencies, over 55% of Syrian refugee families lack legal residency in Lebanon, while only 19% of the families surveyed secured those for all family members (Lebanon Support and UNDP, 2015, pp.26, 29). This situation contributes to their vulnerabilities at the level of work (Dupuy et al., 2018, pp.41-42), as well as increases their difficulties in finding jobs, avoiding exploitation (Jones and Ksaifi, 2016), and harassment by Lebanese authorities and the host community. Hence, increasing their psychological pressures and submitting refugees to frequent arrests, deportations, and jail service time (Janmyr, 2016a).

The *economic situation* of refugees in Lebanon is also a key problem as it contributes to their vulnerability and experiences beyond their physical health state and psychological wellbeing. With their current protracted situation, Syrian families expect to live for many years away from their homeland. The financial dimension of their settlement and their low income is of a significant weight to the quality of other aspects in their lives including food, employment, children's education, and other vulnerabilities (Needham, et al., 2012). According to the VASyR-2018, refugees have lived in persisting poverty given shortage of income streams to fulfill rudimentary needs (Op. Cit., p.4). The report suggested that 69% of Syrian refugee families in Lebanon live under the poverty line (Ibid., p.98) and about 82% of them are borrowing money to provide for their household needs (p.90). More strikingly, the most common reasons reported for accumulating debt is to pay for their families' food provision (82%), followed by rent (53%), healthcare (35%) and medicament (28%) (p.99). Moreover, to meet households' needs, 66% of Syrian families have reported resorting to survival strategies that have direct effect on their children, including involving school children in income generating activities, thus, terminating their education, and giving their under 18-years-old girls' hands in marriage (p.124).

## Female Refugees

Researchers pay attention to the type of refugee in order to understand the different changes that occur during a protracted situation impacting lives and roles in specific aspects: men learn to cope, women gain independence, young people become adults, and so on. Female refugees were given special attention to their noted vulnerabilities compared to their counterparts, especially widowed, or divorced single mothers and female heads-of-household. This vulnerable population have been reported to face significant challenges in raising their children and surviving displacement than a two-headed regular family with the presence of a male figure.

In its 2016 report, Amnesty International uses the phrase “women heads of households” to describe refugee women who are living in Lebanon without a husband (the traditional head of household) or other adult male relatives who assume the role of head of household.<sup>20</sup> They may be: “widows, some are divorced, and some have husbands who have either stayed in Syria or have sought asylum in other countries. Others have husbands who are missing, forcibly disappeared or detained in Syria.” (Op. Cit., Amnesty International, 2016, pp.9, 13, 5)

Regardless of where their husbands are, missing, dead, fighting or chasing risky asylum journey (Ibid., p.5), what is certain is that those females were reported to be of most critical need for aid and support from humanitarian agencies, as the lack of male figures accompanying those women and their children, exposed them to more risks when women settled in insecure environments. Their peculiar situation has given them higher exposure to multiple forms of exploitation, including aggression, human trafficking, blackmailing, pimping, sex labor, and sexual violence (Shaheen, 2016; NY Times, 2016), hence jeopardizing their human security and

---

<sup>20</sup> However, under Lebanese law they are not necessarily recognized as head of household or as guardians of their children.

survival in Lebanon (Sacy, et al., 2018, p.308). Moreover, their insecurities also extend domestically threatening their children, forcing instances of child labour and child marriages of their daughters, as will be later explored.

Similar such patterns of vulnerabilities among female refugees typically emerge as alternative sources of income and can also be traced in other countries of such war and conflict conditions as Nigeria, Rwanda, and Senegal (UNODC, 2018), and Iraq (Gimon, 2007) among others. Finally, it is worth adding that those illicit acts started emerging after around 2015-2016, as the UNHCR funding decreased and the refugee' crisis started being more-likely recognized as a protracted one with no solution in hindsight.

### C. Two implications of the family's insecurities on the Youth population

On the importance of family in youth development, especially among refugees, it is well reported in the literature that families are one of the oldest widely recognized foundational social institutions and organizational models of governance (Bennett, 2012). They have the potential to nourish their members' physiological, emotional, and financial support well beyond a person's basic needs (Connidis, 2010, p.18). And despite the multiple challenges leading to the decay of the conventional family model, the institution continues to grow and adapt to social changes and the different paradigm necessary for its preservation (Ibid., pp.77, 187). To this effect, David Mace, a well-renowned family, and marriage studies scholar once remarked: "Nothing in the world could make human life happier than to greatly increase the number of strong families." (DeFrain, 1999, p.7) Given the above detailed description of family and females' vulnerabilities, researchers noted the recurrent mention of the impact of the above realities on the young refugee population, specifically, rendering children as most vulnerable compared to other groups of refugees. Since

any of the above described have had a direct effect on the YSRs, it can be deduced that the vulnerabilities of this group are not only situation-bound but are also closely tied to their family's socioeconomic situation, education, and social network, as described below.

a) Economic status

A refugee family's low socio-economic status (SES) has been reported to cause a wide range of mental health conditions (Yoshikawa, et al., 2012), and personality disorders (Spencer et al., 2002), especially among the young refugees. This includes chronic stress (Op. Cit., Chen, and Paterson, 2006; Op. Cit., Miller, et al., 2011), anxiety, depression, suicidal attempts, low self-esteem, and self-confidence (Op. Cit., Reardon, et al., 2013), which has affected these vulnerable groups' growth and development (DeCarlo et al. 2011).

Moreover, family's poverty influenced their children's educational attainment (Sheridan and McLaughlin, 2016) and school graduation rates (Miller, et al., 2011) and pushed them into an exploitative local labour market, which has submitted them to child marriages, abuse, and neglect (Ondersma, 2002). It has also led them to experience higher episodes of emotional and behavioral difficulties (Russell et al., 2016), including delayed speech development (Purcell-Gates, et al., 1995), obesity, higher levels of cigarette consumption, drug abuse and alcoholism (Newacheck et al., 2003). In such communities of low income, violence, aggression, and crime are also more prevalent compared to high SES communities (Molnar, et al., 2008).

To foster YSRs' coping strategies and avoid their radicalization due to their dire condition, several supportive entities and services were registered by Brook's investigation of large-scale peacebuilding programs in 2015 (Brooks, 2017). Providing games, art, music, and other forms of therapy to 7,000 YSRs in Lebanon and Turkey, the study reported that role models, mentors and

supportive social networks greatly improved YSRs' self-confidence and feeling of hope. The study also found that engaging children in such programs instilled in them values of tolerance and respect for diversity. As we will consider later in Part II, the importance of Brooks' study lies in the role that social support networks played in appeasing YSRs' struggles, especially in discouraging them from engaging in violent behavior or joining armed groups (Ibid).

#### b) Education

Low educational levels among children are one of the most devastating outcomes of any given war or scenario of forced displacement. At the fundamental level, researchers consider children's education of utmost importance, especially among the refugee population, given the high human capital cost associated with what it is known to cause: a lost generation of unschooled children (Deane, 2016). Hence, it is another point of particular importance to this research, influenced by the family's economic wellbeing and directly affecting children's educational opportunities and future prospects, as will be deliberated in parts II and III.

In the Syrian case, the VASyR-2018 reported about extreme regional disparities in refugees' education (Op. Cit., p.63) with the lowest enrollment rates registered in the Bekaa at 7%, and Beirut having the highest enrollment of 22% (Ibid., p.67). While another study conducted by Plan International in 2015 of 521 Syrian refugee children between age 12 and 17, reported that 17 percent of young Syrian adolescents are illiterate and 30% in Tripoli indicated not receiving any form of formal education (UNHCR, 2018b, p.4). The reasons behind this were reported to be the financial difficulties experienced by the family, the unavailability of schools in the vicinity of their residence and the associated direct and indirect costs of education (Ibid., p. 9). Other studies reported reasons linked to refugees' fear of harassment especially targeting girls, violence in the neighborhood, and discrimination/bullying (p.4).

Moreover, the percentage of enrollment in formal education among YSR between the age of 6 and 14 reached 79% in 2017 and 2018, only to drop drastically to a mere 11% of those between the ages of 14 and 25, with only 12% completing grade 9, among children aged 17 to 19 years old (Op. Cit., VASyR, 2017, p.13). With lower boys' school enrollment compared to girls of the same age, at the gender and employment levels, the report cites:

“Sixty-one percent of Syrian refugees aged 15 to 24 were not employed, not in education, and not attending any training (NEET). While more girls than boys are enrolled in secondary school than boys, the NEET rate is higher for female youth (79%) than for males (41%), reflecting significantly lower levels of female employment. The NEET rate is also notably higher among youth 19 to 24 years of age (67%) than those aged 15 to 18 (54%).” (Op. Cit., VASyR, 2018, p.3)

To conclude, despite the gloomy scenario facing the Syrian refugees in Lebanon at multiple dimensions described in this chapter, we can say that YSRs are in the most vulnerable situation, which compels my attention to them as a sample of focus of this academic endeavor. Moreover, reading through the literature on refugee studies, we were able to detect a new trend in social media research. It seems a positive aspect exists in one of the strategies undertaken by the youth to adapt to their lives in Lebanon, one which invites research curiosity to inquire further of YSRs' use of smartphones. In the following chapter, we present data collected on refugees' mobile use. Their use of mobile phones may be viewed as a reaction to their previously outlined vulnerabilities, stating that even among the most vulnerable groups of refugees, like females and the youth population, one has a choice to object to their conditions and act on their available resources in pursuit of change. This proposes an entry point to research on Information and Communication

Technologies and its use by the youth, an investigation that we would like to address among available literature studies presented in the following.

# Chapter 2

## The Use of Mobile and Social Media in Refugee Situation

Research on social media use in refugee communities has been an emerging trend in refugee, migrants, and technology research. Especially since the Syrian refugees reported a 79% increase in the use of social media platforms since leaving their homeland, due to their relatively less busy schedules, reliance on their local networks in their new settlement setting and the limited monotony of this lifestyles compared to their customary routines in Syria (Op. Cit., VASyR, 2018, p.34). In this chapter, we address the influence of ICT in reducing what was previously enumerated of young refugees' chain of vulnerabilities.

The body of knowledge on social media and social networks<sup>21</sup> shed light on several arenas of inquiry including: the type of social platforms used by the vulnerable population, the uses and gratifications of the refugee and migrant population, the effects of social media use on the

---

<sup>21</sup> A more detailed definition will be mentioned in Chapter 7, but to lay it briefly here, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, a Social Network is defined as being "A network of social interactions and personal relationships." While Social Networking sites are "A dedicated website or other application which enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc." (Oxford Dictionaries(b), n.d.)

population's reduced vulnerabilities and improved social wellbeing (Latonero, et al., 2018, p.4), in relation to familial relationships, community building, human trafficking, and exploitation, in particular. The existing literatures also tackled the role of social media and social networks in the political participation (Gil de Zúñiga, et al., 2012; Fourn, 2017), and civic engagement (Burke, et al., 2011) among the refugee population, and their role at the level of refugees' psychology and the formation of their identity in exile (Op. Cit., Ramadan, 2017, p.20). However, none of the studies considered how YSRs use smartphones or social media applications in Lebanon, which prompted our empirical endeavor.

As a definition of *social media*, perhaps the most common element shared by multiple literatures state that the term refers to: internet-based platforms (like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, etc.) that allow users to express their thoughts, produce content and share it among people they know or may not be linked directly to, in their social network. Such an exchange of information among multiple users around the world is also an act that is alternatively known as *social networking*, which involves the audio, visual and textual exchange of contents (Balakrishnan and Gan, 2016; Solis, 2008; and Selwyn, 2012). Hence, the difference lies in that Social Networking Sites (SNS) like WhatsApp and Messenger imply the user makes effort to actively seek and engage in direct communication with one or more individual, contrary to social media's major one-way communication.

It is, therefore, largely noted on the use of these social media and social networking platforms that they have provided the refugees with virtual spaces, where they could express themselves freely without having to deal with social restrictions in their camps or their host states. In this sense, mobile phones and social media applications served as an escape space, a virtual home, and a place of connection to the external world for Syrian refugees, as the authors continued.

It is worth mentioning that researchers agree that the heavy online searches and network mobilization is conducted to secure a safe haven elsewhere, before, during and after refugees decide on their asylum journey (Op. Cit., Veronis et al., 2018, p.86; Dekker et al., 2018).

This chapter serves as the literature review on the subject of the use of smartphones and social media applications from which we can point out three perspectives to present the importance of mobile phones in refugees' lives, and to analyze their social media use from a sociological perspective of their resources, YSRs' agency, and power (i.e., conflict paradigm) inside a refugee family's sociocultural norms. First, the use of smartphones and social media applications among refugee diaspora communities and migratory groups, including how use of ICT connects between diaspora communities and their social network back in their home country. Second, the effect of the use of smartphones, social media and SNS on young refugee and non-refugee communities. And finally, the use of smartphones and social media applications among the YSRs exclusively as presented by the literature. Therefore, we address the controversial debates on the topic of the use of ICT by the young, leaving room for the question of whether their over-connectedness to their mobiles reflects positively or negatively in their lives as refugees, to be answered later in Part III.

#### A. Refugee migrants, asylum seekers and diaspora communities

Several studies have been conducted in Europe, showcasing an increased interest in social media use among refugee communities, including its inherent role in facilitating their settlement, transition, and integration in their local European host.<sup>22</sup> Social media to them was described by digital expert Mark Latonero as “a new infrastructure for movement as critical as roads or railways” (Op. Cit., Gillespie, et al., 2018, p.2). However, most of the available research examine

---

<sup>22</sup> Those include studies in the Netherlands, France, Finland, Germany, and Canada, among others (Op. Cit., Alencar, 2018; Tuomas, 2016; Op. Cit., Abujarour, et al., 2019; and Op. Cit., Veronis et al., 2018).

already settled populations in host countries that have different sets of motives, expectations, services, and lifestyles than that of a refugee in a fragile host-country of a temporary stay like Lebanon.

#### *Helping to plan the journey to Europe*

Refugee-migrants took the risk of the journey because reaching a European country for them meant going to a place that could potentially help them reach safety and economic betterment. To serve this purpose, smartphones are reported to have been the most used device before and during the asylum-seeking processes by Syrian migrants, with which they collected, processed, and determined information not only related to their migration journey and place of destinations, but also where to seek legal counseling (Op. Cit., Dekker et al., 2018). In a study conducted in Canada in 2018, to examine the welcoming of more than 40,000 Syrian refugees in 2015-2016 as part of the government's special resettlement program into Ottawa, social media was said to "provide a virtual 'contact zone' [...] that enables cultural sharing and learning, a mechanism for cultural and linguistic 'translation' [...], a 'borderlands' [...] that helps to bridge cultural differences and build connections, and to negotiate a sense of belonging." (Op. Cit., Veronis et al., 2018, p.81) Hence, at the level of their social media use assisting them throughout the journey, studies observed that Syrian migrants use social media platforms to access various information on asylum and possible destinations for travels (Op. Cit., Dekker et al., 2018). This is especially true as those platforms became considered as providing refugees with real-time information on migration routes, border closures, job opportunities and humanitarian international organizations' aid, as these change frequently and are updated by the day.

On refugee empowerment, social media and smartphone usage were investigated as well. A qualitative study on the role of smartphones in Syrian and Iraqi refugees' passage to Europe

concluded that “smartphones are lifelines, as important as water and food. They afford the planning, navigation, and documentation of journeys, enabling regular contact with family, friends, smugglers, and those who help them.” (Op. Cit., Gillespie et al., 2018) Moreover, an online Facebook-based large-scale survey of 964 smartphone users conducted during the month of Ramadan, showed that Facebook served as a facilitator for familial and community collaboration, resource sharing and identity formation tool among Syrian refugees abroad (Op. Cit., Ramadan, 2017). Authors reported the widespread practice among refugee community members of their sharing of their belongings, like clothing, vehicles, and kitchenware, as well as other basic available resources as a common group-level behavior (Alencar, et al., 2018).

Related to mobile infrastructure, studies showed that the Syrian refugees’ migration to Europe have emphasized the effect of the digital infrastructure, availability of WIFI connection, battery chargers and phone replacement stores accessibility, as a moderator for their lifeline *en route* to Europe (Op. Cit., Alencar et al., 2018). Such include, the battery charging, paying the remainder of the smuggler fees with a phone-call or through e-payments, calling family for assurance of their safe passage, or calling local government officers for help (Ibid.). However, one challenge faced by the Syrian refugees in Europe pertains to their lack of permanent address in many cases, which precluded them from obtaining an appropriate registry for their mobiles, depending on mobile carriers or the individual discretions of a mobile shopkeeper.

#### *Securing a safe environment to live in and escaping surveillance*

In addition to helping refugee migrants plan their journey to Europe, an analysis of 18 semi-structured interviews with Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in the Netherland<sup>23</sup> reported that “social

---

<sup>23</sup> It appears from my reading that the Netherlands as a case study, has been most successful in integrating refugees and migrants when compared to Germany and Sweden. The former is said to have successfully integrated more refugee migrants due to the state’s cultural assimilation policies and local efforts geared towards achieving that goal (Op. Cit., Alencar, 2018).

media networking sites were particularly relevant for refugee participants to acquire language and cultural competences, as well as to build both bonding and bridging social capital.” (Op. Cit., Alencar, 2018, p.1588) This has rendered Syrian families’ sense of community belonging higher, especially in the camps, due to heightened feelings of collective trauma and shared struggles (Ibid., p.1601).

Moreover, studies found that smartphones, social media and SNS created opportunities to broaden social networks that not only facilitated finding essential information but reinforced social cohesion during refugee’ flight out of Syria. To access vital information going about their new settlement and wondering of the asylum process, refugees shared phone accounts, mobile devices, social media accounts, and exchanged connections with their virtual network, which further strengthened family and communal ties (Op. Cit., Alencar, et al., 2018; Maitland, and Xu, 2015). Wall et al. concluded that “phones were used by several members of a family while refugees who didn’t own a phone said that they could borrow one from a family member or friends if they needed to make a call.” (Wall, et al., 2017, p.13) Documenting the journeys of Syrian refugees across Europe in 2015-2016, Gillespie et al. also confirmed in 2018 that “smartphones...are bought and sold, exchanged and bartered, fought over and gifted, personalized and loved. They may be co-used by entire families or social groups traveling together.” (Ibid., p.6) However, sharing devices was also reported to have been a strategic way to avoiding potential surveillance activities by the Syrian regime when they suspect their phones (Op. Cit., Maitland, and Xu, 2015).

#### *Commonly used SNS platforms*

The Syrian refugees who have made it to Europe were reported to prefer certain social media platforms over other mobile applications or internet sites, such as “Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Viber and Google.” (Op. Cit., Alencar, 2018). Results of in-depth

interviews with 54 Syrian asylum seekers in the Netherlands in 2016 indicated that social media mediums including Facebook, LinkedIn and WhatsApp are largely visited by current Syrian refugees and prospective asylum migrants. 80 percent of respondents indicated that they used Facebook and LinkedIn while 63 percent suggested the use of WhatsApp and Ping.<sup>24</sup> Voice over IP (hereafter, VOIP) such as Skype or Viber were also heavily used by the sample, 47 percent (Op. Cit., Dekker et al., 2018). The reason why some platforms are more used than others is due to the fact most of their contacts utilize the same platforms increasing their likelihood of improving their professional and social networks. Hence, the Syrian refugees preferred Line over Skype given its spread among the Syrian community for instance (Op. Cit., Alencar, 2018).

To complement these data, it is important to note that each platform played a certain function that the refugee migrants adopted to their specific interest. While Facebook is universally known to be a platform connecting people, it has been used by the refugees as a tool to contact smugglers, which has recurrently associated the platform to the dark sides of popular SNS (Op. Cit., Alencar, et al., 2018). Moreover, studies of social media use among YSR, aged 14 to 25 years old, have consistently reported that such a vulnerable population use Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and other SNS to reconcile cultural differences between their destination in Europe or North America and their homeland, Syria (Op. Cit., Veronis et al., 2018). Other studies reported that newly settled Syrians in Europe employed LinkedIn heavily due to their need for employment, different to their experience in the Arab world where the platform is limited to the white-collar professional workforce.

---

<sup>24</sup> The majority of YSRs in Lebanon work in blue collar jobs, hence using LinkedIn is not adopted by the Syrian refugees to Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, or Jordan.

Syrian refugees' use of media resources and SNS platforms for personal benefit, takes us back to the uses and gratifications theory by Katz et al., who proposed that individuals actively seek to use a specific media resource from other available ones as a tool to serve personal motives particular to their circumstances (1973). Borrowing his theory to examine Facebook uses and gratifications by Syrian refugees, Ramadan tested the empirical fit of his proposed model based on a structural equation modelling approach. His hypothesis indicated a positive significant relationship between the perceived usefulness of Facebook among refugees and their networking and social relations-seeking behavior, including news sharing, online collaboration, and communication practices with other Syrians in their multinational networks. He concludes that even though Facebook has thus aggrandized levels of social capital in host countries and the homeland among Syrian refugees, the freedom to express hate speech among opposing parties has also undermined the unity of the nation by taking their differences offline (Op. Cit., Ramadan, 2017). Building on this, mobile phone use among YSRs in Lebanon will be the topic of further empirical research in this dissertation of their social capital use and formation.

#### *Mobile phones in relation to family ties*

When it comes to parents-children' mobile practices and family bonding, Duggan et al. surveyed 2,003 American adult-aged parents of 18 years old and more in 2015. Although the studied sample does not represent our focus of a refugee community the report shows that parents who texted their family members, shared photos with them, posted about family experiences and participated in family group chats, showed stronger bonds with their families compared to those who did not (Duggan, et al., 2015). Similarly, children who communicated with their immediate family members and extended families residing in other locations, were found to exhibit stronger family ties as well (Ibid.).

Social media platforms and mobiles were also reported to be playing a significant role in altering family ties, revamping social network structures, and facilitating migration (Jungbluth, 2017). Following Dekker and Engbersen's notions of weak and latent ties (2014), the higher exposure to online social networks granted users a larger volume of decentralized information, which also indicates the advantage of the children over their parents being more avid users of mobiles. Once again, mobiles have had great influence due to their media rich contents and multiple digital exchange platforms of far reach, compared to the following more traditional means of information dissemination, like news outlets, aid workers, state personnel, and geographically proximate social networks of socially strong ties to parents (Op. Cit., Jungbluth, 2017, p.74).

#### *Limitations of the device*

Syrian refugees have highlighted several other challenges concerning social media use. As refugee migrants do not trust most of the online content circulating through social media (Op. Cit., Dekker et al., 2018), they still tend to disregard the challenges related to their decision to migrate because the benefits of the journey outweigh its risks (UN News, 2018). One respondent for instance remarked that "We made the decision to leave. The house was destroyed. My parents-in-law told me to go, and they will stay and will accept their fate. We went on the road and became hungry, everything happened to us on the road. But we arrived safely, thank God." (McNatt and Boothby, et al., 2018)

To counter this information precarity challenge, the refugee migrants exercise a thorough validity check of the information and the trustworthiness levels of the source of information shared (Op. Cit., Alencar, 2018). Refugees tend to trust information originating from close personal and social ties compared to advertisements or governmental sources, especially when accounting that

refugees' mobile use is restricted by the fear of government surveillance (Op. Cit., Dekker et al., 2018).

Another limitation to mobile phones is detected in the literature showcasing a gendered perspective in the work of literature in social media use among the Syrian refugees. Scholars have noted the importance of gender in determining the frequency, type and intensity of smartphone and social media use. In their research on information, mobile phones and the Syrian refugees living in Jordanian camps by Wall et al., analyses from focus groups conducted in 2015 have indicated that young females were precluded from using such devices and mediums for communications fearing potential social stigma, which indicates that the predominant patriarchy of the Syrian community is reinforced in the context of ICT utilization.

In that context, young unmarried females were restricted from numerous behaviors limiting their access to smartphone, use of social media, and mobility inside camps (Op. Cit., Wall, et al., 2017, p.7). Other studies, such as the one conducted by Ramadan, have also documented many examples of Syrian females lacking access and ability to use Facebook, YouTube, or WhatsApp in the same ways their male siblings did. Such discrepancies can be related to the patriarchal cultural and religious beliefs, where women are subjected to a form of oppression under the pretext of being protected from the potential exploitation of abusive men (Op. Cit., Ramadan, 2017).

#### B. Refugee communities living in a temporary host-country

In this section, we cover research on mobile use among non-migrant or asylum seeker refugees to highlight how much the Syrian refugees spread across Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt are understudied compared to refugee-migrants or asylum seekers in countries of a more stable future.

This brings forth a new perspective, relevant to how this vulnerable population would use their mobiles differently when their future prospects are unclear, such in Lebanon.

In an earlier investigation conducted in 2015 in the Zaatari Camp, a study examined how refugees used their mobile phones before and after their forced displacement and indicated the sort of services mobile-data providers made accessible to this user population in Jordan. The research showed that 89% of the Syrian refugees, own smartphones and 85% at least have 1 SIM card. Samsung Galaxy, iPhone, and Nokia were the most common smartphone models owned by refugee communities. More importantly, Syrian refugees own more than a single SIM card for one or more carriers. One of the potential reasons explaining the multiple SIM cards phenomenon is fear of governmental or organizational denial of services or prosecution for having sensitive information stored on one SIM card (Op. Cit., Maitland, and Xu, 2015).

In terms of platforms, the VASyR-2018 indicated that 80% of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon had access to Internet and that they used WhatsApp (78%) and Facebook (16%) the most to connect and communicate with their networks (Op. Cit., p.34). Despite their excessive dependence on their smartphones for survival, the telecommunication infrastructure was worst in Jordan, where the report showed that according to their geographic locations the refugees living there, experienced accessibility issues to the internet due to limited capacity of the country's mobile infrastructure. However, even in such cases, the Syrian refugees were able to develop an agile sense of resiliency dealing with networks' congestion and the lack of robust information and communications infrastructure in their host country by developing specific coping mechanisms, such as sim-card sharing and changing depending on location (Op. Cit., Maitland, and Xu, 2015). Access to mobile phones among the Syrian refugees in refugee camps in Jordan is relatively easy while access to reliable networks is reported as a prime challenge for refugees (Op. Cit., Alencar

et al., 2018). Adding that the Syrian refugees prefer to use their host countries' telecom networks like Orange and Zain in Jordan, rather than to use SyriaTel, a courier provider that still works in some territories in Jordan but is owned by the Syrian president's cousin, Rami Makhluf (Ibid.).

Finally, in an in-depth qualitative analysis of 85 semi-structured interviews with Syrian refugees conducted in Jordan in 2018, smartphones, SNS, and phone applications (like Facebook, WhatsApp, and IMO) were reported to have increased the connectivity of separated families. Once the Syrians were forcibly displaced, they left relatives behind. From then on, and more than ever before, cellphones and SNS became the primary medium for refugees to regularly check on their individual networks (Op. Cit., McNatt and Boothby, et al., 2018). After their arrival to their final-destination or temporary settlement, the refugees noted the necessity of the communication device and discovered the reduced costs associated with the purchase of a single mobile. Given their rather limited and scarce resources, community members' sharing of phones and SIM cards became vastly widespread among the refugees (Op. Cit., Wall, et al., 2017, p.13). In fact, Syrian refugees' use of smartphones, social media platforms and SIM card shuffling may be seen as a sign of refugee family togetherness, witnessed among other refugee communities like Bosnians (Weine, 2008), and have been regarded to be strengthening family's bonding capital as will be discussed in Part III.

### C. The Young Syrian Refugees exclusively

Only a small number of studies described smartphone use increasing the amount of social capital available to youth thereby improving their chances of reducing their hardships, while allowing for their social networks to grant them further support before, during and after their displacement (Op. Cit., Gil de Zúñiga, et al., 2012; Ellison, et al., 2007; Op. Cit., Burke, et al., 2011). While "young people's social media use show the ways they are connecting with others, bridging isolation and

drawing strength from sharing their experiences” (Swist, et. al., 2015, p.32), it seems the focus of scholars investigating Syrian refugees’ SNS uses has been mainly on populations outside Lebanon.

Noting the need to highlight the potential of smartphone and social media use in fostering better levels of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral empowerment among YSRs, given their heavy dependence on their mobiles, we saw it necessary to embark on this empirical journey through field research. Moreover, despite authors recognizing the youth’s reliance on their mobiles and considering the protected environment that social media presents as a place to harness “new social contacts, find social support, and participate in (online) activities” (Feuls, et al., 2014, p.6), available analysis of social capital in refugee communities in Lebanon have not adequately demonstrated the concept’s mediating effect on the relationship between smartphone, social media use and youth empowerment.

To this effect, Collin et al., argued that the “...strong sense of community and belonging fostered by SNS has the potential to promote resilience, which helps young people to successfully adapt to change and stressful events” (2011, p.7). Similar findings were made in a study on the effect of the use of social media on unemployed people concluding that: “Individuals who use social media seem to feel less insecure and excluded than individuals who refuse to use social media.” (Op. Cit., Feuls, et al., 2014, p.19)

While other scholars found that the excessive use of mobiles may be mirroring a social exclusion trait among users (Faith, 2016 p.263). This was seen to increase loneliness among users of the internet and new media, as the more online communication activity is undertaken, the fewer registered engagement in offline social interactions (Op. Cit., Feuls, et al., 2014, p.6).

However, at the level of emergency communication and management, it seems that building on user's existing social networking tools and their wide adoption of cellphones as information and communication technologies (Pine, 2006, p.87), may finally activate the long-awaited potential role of regular citizens in disseminating information and knowledge for a better emergency management, during which the resources and aid abilities are especially limited (Haataja et al., 2016, p.141).

Our analysis in parts II and III aims to address such gaps found in the literature. The following covers literary work on the specific use of mobiles by the Syrian refugee youth, who is use of mobiles include cases of positive and negative usage patterns, as will be presented below. It seems that only Ramadan's study of 2017 mentioned young refugees and reported that mobile phones, the internet, and social media—in combination, known as new media—applications increase the agency of YSRs by expanding the horizons of their cultural, economic, and social relations by awarding them a free world where restrictions on mobility and imagination are not existent (Op. Cit., Ramadan, 2017).

## Conclusion

The above review of the body of literature on refugees' use of ICT, it was vastly evidenced that the Syrian refugees have engaged in technological appropriation and resource maximization, using their devices in novel ways considered alien to service providers and other mobile users given the precariousness of their resources. For instance, as previously detailed, they purchased multiple SIM cards, Syrian, Jordanian, or Lebanese, and changed them throughout the day depending on who they are contacting and the reliability of the coverage in their geographic location.

Moreover, refugees have also noted the heavy use of Facebook and WhatsApp due to the widespread use of those particular SNS among the Syrian community worldwide. Their devices allowed them to seek specific information about their host country, local aid providers, as well as news of their home villages and towns, as previously maintained. After the arrival of news, they reported starting a verification procedure of precarious information, such as the heavy shelling of towns or the occurrence of fierce battling there. By means of other social media conversations however, they then communicated with relatives and friends of a closer tie to confirm the news. Similarly, the Syrian refugee migrants in Europe used social media to find reliable information about potential employment, housing, healthcare coverage and education as some countries allowed them to pursue full-time work or education while waiting for their court decisions.

Most importantly, notice the bulk of coverage of research on refugee migrants and asylum seekers who made it abroad while the Syrian refugees in fragile countries like Lebanon, are not adequately covered. Scarcity of research is even more pronounced on the youth age group of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, whom, despite the loss of hope, death, and violence that they have witnessed at a young age, their usage of their mobiles and social networks appears to be geared towards creating an alternative narrative than their lives away from their haunting misery. This brings us to the third part of the literature review coverage related to how all the above translates at the level of refugees' social capital and the benefit of it, influencing young refugees' experiences as will be detailed below and through the course of the dissertation.

# Chapter 3

## Methodological Considerations

### Introduction

Going through the body of literary work on global refugees, it is evident that the refugees seeking permanent settlement to Europe, Canada or the United States are much less vulnerable, far more legally protected, accounted for, and thoroughly researched than their counterparts who took refuge in fragile states like Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan. The literature available abundantly on refugees in these countries are for the most part; a multitude of humanitarian reports, policy briefs, independent research, investigative studies, proposals, guidelines, concept notes, proceedings, fact sheets, recommendation papers on governmental policies, and several scholarly studies and publications describing their need for aid, registering their humanitarian condition, and showcasing their vulnerabilities.

At the core, those are largely driven, funded, and produced by international NGOs, humanitarian agencies, and Think Tanks, in line with the global humanitarian response to the global refugee crisis and aim to seek funding allocations and donations as crisis response to international parties and their local executing agencies in a complex field. However, this is not to

be misunderstood that there exists no exception to this picture among local agents interested in this vulnerable community, producing meager knowledge production from local sources compared to available literature on the rather inaccurately portrayed picture of vulnerable subjects of study: Refugees.

What interests us in this dissertation, however, is the content of the literature produced on the refugees living in fragile states with no certain prospect to their permanent settlement in their hosting country. One common point in this literature is that from among refugee families, parents, and children, the youth population stand out as most resistant to their grim reality caused by their disrupted lives. Moreover, that those young refugees as social actors, have not been accurately studied in the body of literature and certainly not the ones living in Lebanon. And the available literature also lacks specific distinction between the challenges faced by the young adolescents and adult refugees specifically, compared to the comprehensive plight of the Syrian refugee population as a whole. Finally, a window into young refugees' disrupted lives, lost childhood, daily struggles, survival patterns, family relational dynamic, shaping identities, dealing with their locality, and their future aspirations that allow their voices to be read, are not effectively recorded in the existing literature, if at all.

Interestingly, the debate on the influence of mobiles was portrayed in the literature as holding a positive contribution to refugees' lives, especially among refugee migrants and asylum seekers, and an intriguing influence on that of YSRs specifically. Moreover, the literature review shows that a limited number of research addressed young users of mobile phones and even more scarce are studies exploring the use of the device from among YSRs in Lebanon.

As we noted that in the aim to survive their hardships with their families and adapt to their new setting as refugees to a fragile state like Lebanon, the young refugee revolted in their own

way, attempted to bend existing sociocultural norms, and struggle to assume new roles for themselves amidst their disrupted lives. Hence, we thought it is worth understanding better the debate on how refugees attempt to survive their present and build their future using mobiles, which geared the dissertation towards focusing on the vulnerable population of YSRs to give a voice to their behavior and portray an empowered image beyond their circumstantial vulnerabilities.

We hypothesize that by acting using available resources in specific ways (both their social networks and mobiles), the YSRs displayed a heavy use of their ICT technology (i.e., mobile phones), and identified their mobile phones as a tool for change that could facilitate the beneficial dimension of their family's social network, while helping themselves. To explore this sample further in this direction, we looked to studying their interaction with the ICT through a few identified concepts that would serve a better understanding of how they reacted to their circumstances in Lebanon using mobile, including a look at YSRs' social capital, agency, and empowerment functions (Fakhoury, 2016; Mackreath, 2014; & Erden, 2017). This scientific endeavor invites us to a look into how YSRs have been able to employ their resources to increase their social capital. This chapter aims, therefore, to systematically describe the proposed exploratory approach employed in this dissertation to analyze the empirical data that examines the viability of the above hypothesized.

## I. A Tool for the Research: Social Capital

### A. Diverse Concepts

Literature review shows that many tools have been mobilized to understand refugees' lives and their strategy. We can mention among others, empowerment, agency, and social capital.

## *Empowerment*

The overarching purpose of empowerment is to assist individuals with their goals, by providing them with necessary tools for them to achieve independence and contribute positively as healthy actors in society. In a general sense, the term is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as being the “process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one’s life and claiming one’s rights.” (Oxford Dictionaries(a), n.d.)

Given its promising implications, the concept has been, thus, heavily researched and employed in numerous fields,<sup>25</sup> particularly to groups who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, marginalized, and struggling among minority communities, such as women, children, school dropouts, ex-drug and alcohol abusers, individuals of disability, among others (Lincoln, 2002; Claridge, 2004). The notion is especially promoted by humanitarian agencies, NGOs and Think Tanks when addressing refugees and other vulnerable social groups. Critics of its usefulness argue that the concept implies a top-down undertaking rather than agent-born, which questions its usefulness in this research despite its significance.

Nowadays, the concept has been widely used to describe socially conscious individuals who would offer beneficial tools that foster other peoples’ independence and opportunity to achieve their own potentials (DeJong et al., 2017.).

## *Agency*

Many studies on refugees’ use the notion of agency relevant to its importance in explaining actors’ evaluation of emerging events in their lives, their reaction to it and rational choice paradigm. Emirbayer and Mische’s re-conceptualization of the concept is useful as their definition

---

<sup>25</sup> Annexed Figure n.1, entitled: “The Evolution of Social capital in Literature.”

incorporates the dimension of time relevant to our YSRs whose past, present, and future prospects are influenced by their choice of action today, as follows:

“We define it as the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situation.” (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p.970)

Other notions relevant to a person’s routine, habit, thought process of the future, and choice pertinent to a given contextual scenario at present is also incorporated in the above definition. The notion of agency serves to describe the componential significance of actors’ setting and surrounding, which contributes to individuals’ empowerment or the constraining of their action (Ibid). This explains why the literature has noted lower use of agency among refugee youth and their lack of empowering tools compared to non-refugee populations (Op. Cit., Almohamed and Vyas, 2016; Hadfield, et al., 2017).

What concerns us in this dissertation relevant to this concept is what has been reported in the literature of specific elements underlying the notion of actor’s agency. Its normative, structural, situational, contextual, cultural, and symbolic patterns of inhibitors and enablers of action, which are latent in our YSRs’ lives as agents to their own story, highlights the importance of the concept in the process of their reinventing of their lives and their perceived possibilities within its structure.

In their research-review of 20 years of refugee children resilience research, psychologist Pieloch et al. wrote that several factors contribute to the fostering of agency among young refugees,

including: family and friends' social support and strong bonding ties, the individual's outlook to life, his/her pursuing of education, and maintaining connection with the source culture (Op. Cit., Pieloch, et al., 2016, p.330). Furthermore, the importance of the concept looking into YSRs' lives, advances that such empowering elements encouraging individuals to act to their best interest in ameliorating their surrounding has been relegated by the body of literature to be developing their agency, allowing the young refugees to subsequently feel autonomous (Ibid.). Noteworthy, this dimension will serve at a later point, to illustrate how important it is for YSRs to financially contribute to their households, as will be described in Part II.

### *Social capital*

A third concept seems appropriate to frame our research: social capital. In the following, we dedicate a comprehensive section to the concept of social capital. A historical overview shows that many distinguished authors were interested in the topic from the works of Hanifan, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, to that of a modern use by Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam.

In reference to social capital, people's behaviors, actions, and networks were historically analyzed since the early writings of Alexis de Tocqueville (1835-1840), Durkheim (1951) and Weber (1920). However, the very first use of the concept can be traced back to the writings of Hanifan in 1916. In his definition, Hanifan wrote about the notions of trust, fellowship, quality of the relationships, and sympathy among individuals in reference to social capital. He also granted more of an economic advantage to individuals with a large pool of a social network within its local community (Hanifan, 1916).

In his book *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* published in 2000, Robert Putnam, a renowned political scientist, has chiefly contributed to the widespread use of the term.

He argues that social capital refers to the benefits accrued from social networks: Such as for example, getting a ride from home to the grocery store at no cost by a passing neighbor is a benefit of a social capital nature (Putnam, 2000, p.223). Putnam's understanding of bonding social capital refers to the exclusive ties that connect members of a small social network only, such as the family. Therefore, it is private to the members that belong to the network but unavailable to the larger community. His notion of bonding capital is similar to that of other scholars pertaining to family; where family members enjoy reciprocal trust, connecting them and engaging them in ways whereby everyone is expected to extend benefits to each other, voluntarily.

Like Coleman, Putnam believes that deteriorating nuclear and extended families decrease the amount of social capital available to members, and so does a reduced attendance to childcare and the amount of time spent between family members. He also adds that higher labour participation rates among women have decreased bonding and bridging ties within families. Interestingly, Putnam makes clear mention of how new technologies have affected social capital, as he posits that the more time individuals spend on their smartphones and digital devices, the smaller the amount of social capital they gain. However, to serve the purpose of our research, he also argues that during times of national distress or disasters, social capital is expected to rise on all levels, as in the case of our sample of forcibly displaced refugees. To overcome this social capital decrease in societies, Putnam turned his focus to another form of social capital: Bridging social capital, to which he sees being the result of public goods that are available to members of any community as resources that they could use.

French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) use of the notion of capital is central in his sociology. He makes the distinction between four dimensions which are economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Bourdieu's view stems from a class-based perspective

where the sociologist juxtaposes elites and the workers' class to be at the center of the struggle over capital, wealth, and power in modern day society, following one of those four forms of capital. He defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." (No Author, n.d., p.3)

## B. Coleman's Conception of the Notion

### *Constituents of Social Capital: Three types of ties*

In 1988, James Coleman published a fundamental article entitled "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," where the author illustrates the concept of social capital, examines its forms and effects underlying individuals' sociocultural and sociostructural conditions, including family background and the surrounding community. In the article, the author defined social capital by its function, presenting it as "not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure." (Coleman, 1988, p.98) Moreover, social capital has specific constructs, but *networks* constitute the core of the conceptual paradigm, which essentially represent the systems that interconnects people (Balatti, et al., 2009, p.11).

The concept is then widely broken down into three types of ties that have emerged in the social scientific literature: bonding ties, bridging ties, and linking ties.<sup>26</sup> One must make a distinction between these three forms as follows:

---

<sup>26</sup> We attempt to cross data between the three age brackets [14-17/ 18-21/ 22-25] to look into YSRs' social capital. This involves looking into specific indicators such as: age, gender, economic wealth, date of arrival to Lebanon, education, and so on.

First, bonding social capital applies to similar close groups that share numerous characteristics, like language, race, religion, past, present, and future, it perpetuates the benefits gained from these close relationships. For instance, nuclear families, extended families, close friends, and neighbors are homogenous groupings in several ways, which allows them to develop their strong ties into bonding capital (Patulny and Lind Haase Svendsen, 2007). Bonding represents the quality, strength, and trust available in a specific society that residents share with one another within the network.

Second, bridging ties, which on the other hand, describe the connections and bonds that go beyond the boundaries of a certain community to include groups of diverse races, religious background, languages, ethnicities, cultural differences and so forth but whose members still share among them other strong belongings like their love for a football team, or their passion towards a hobby, a sport, or a singer, etc. It applies to larger, more distant groups (i.e., looser ties) that have a great deal of heterogeneity among its members, such as difference in age or background, but still share common elements like the examples above. Another concept pertaining to bridging social capital, is the power of working as a unit for the common benefit of the family and community (Karner and Parker, 2008). Hence, cooperation between these different groups occurs at a higher level in this setting, allowing members to access wider resources. Those groups also serve the establishment of entities that would extend help and bring advantages to its members: The social networks. Those networks qualify as one of the examples of bridging social capital (Ibid.), such as the Syrian refugees' extended networks dispersed intercontinentally.

Third, linking ties portray the relationship between individuals and the different social powers and formal institutions that fall outside the community, which are yet capable of providing resources or information to the individual, such as proposing work opportunities or an invitation

to participate in cultural and political activities (Szreter and Woolcock, 2004, p.655). In the life of a Syrian refugee in Lebanon, those could include aid agencies, humanitarian relief workers, local healthcare providers, and the local Lebanese networks, representing formal institutions whose resources can be leveraged.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, to “measure” social capital,<sup>28</sup> one may resort to detecting the degree of a community’s engagement in society, as well as examining notions of trust between residents, trust in governments, as well as the degree of social responsibility, and volunteering within a community. What Coleman calls a “system of credits and debits,” accounting for the accumulated, ideally reciprocated, register of *favours* exchanged among members of a community (Op. Cit., Coleman, 1988, p.104). However, since every proposed model measuring the concept proved to suffer from validity problems and difficulties in measuring the frequency, intensity, and quality of the relationships amongst individuals, we found for this research that the best available psychometric tools to measure social capital necessitated the gathering of indirect measurements.<sup>29</sup>

#### a) Within the Family, where social capital is produced

The relationship between families and the creation of social capital has a central meaning. Families are understood to be the reservoir of social capital and their deterioration leads to the decay of social capital on the individual, community, and national levels. Extensive literature exists on the centrality of strong families in the upbringing of children who are then able to engage positively

---

<sup>27</sup> Annexed Table n.2, entitled: “Types of ties and their strength.”

<sup>28</sup> Annexed Figure n.2, entitled: “Elements measuring social capital.”

<sup>29</sup> This was achieved by: 1) exploring in Part II, the antecedent social capital resources available for our sampled YSRs through their parents, and 2) describing in Part III, the consequences of available tools to them in the creation of their own social capital. Antecedents can be thought of as the factors giving rise to the inception and development of social capital, such as those dictated by the background of YSRs’ parents at the level of their economic capital, network, and education. On the other hand, consequences are the effects and the outcomes of social capital, including the quality of family bonds, the effect of YSRs’ use of mobiles in relation to their domestic family dynamics. In parts II and III, we will attempt to link such related variables to social capital in an effort to measure the concept.

in society, and in forming healthy social individuals themselves, capable of later raising their own children for the overall replication of the social wellbeing (Bridging Refugee Youth, n.d.).

Several scholars like Coleman have clearly delineated the relationship between families and the creation of social capital as well. Coleman (1988, 1990; 1991) also tried to draw on social scientific theories, mainly rational choice theory (Coleman, 1990) and social organization theories (Coleman, 1988), to blend agency with structure in the production of social capital. To Coleman, families are the most important social structures for the generation of social capital, given their role in creating, facilitating, sustaining, and transmitting social capital themselves. Moreover, Coleman broadened the perspective and scope of social capital to reach the surrounding community: He mentions benefits drawn from the capital in the form of free rides, job opportunities, social assistance, and legal help through individuals' networks at the cost of reciprocity (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009, p.499).

Coleman explains that in the *expectation* of a future symbolic payback, family members invest in each other, proposing that parents spend on children with the expectation that their children will care for them in their senior years. Hence, for Coleman, family provided the locus of social capital where siblings provided support, extended advice, offered a helping hand, and made financial contributions in favor of each other, with the expectation of other family members reciprocating such to their parents and vice versa. This expectation has several points of impact: First, it creates a normative shared belief that sustains the *cohesion* of the family and fuels the repetition of this behavior. Second, it leads to the development of a sense of *obligation* within the individual, which is important for the maintenance of this reciprocal dynamic. And last, it is endorsed by sociocultural norms and religious beliefs.

Coleman continues that, as such, a web of *reciprocity* exists between family members, which defines their *interactions*: As the parents bear on themselves a set of *responsibilities* towards their children, they act upon them by providing a living for their children. They pay for food, shelter, education, and all other physical, emotional, mental, and psychological *needs* that are expected from a parent to provide. Reciprocally, in return for their caregiving, children are expected by the parents to recognize their act and return it at present in the form of *obedience*, *respect*, *understanding*, *caregiving*, and *recognition* in the future when they fall ill or in need of any form of *care*, be it financial, emotional, psychological or any of the sort.

Coleman argues that families are in fact, the organizations where social capital originates from, since they come with an already inherently complex structure of obligations and expectations. Those are dictated by sociocultural norms that sustain the exchange of benefits between parents and children throughout generations. He then adds that families with high levels of reciprocity expectations are expected to create more social ties to resort to when in need, than those with a lower level of obligations-expectations exerted between its members. Pointing that the *size* of the family also influences the *quality* of the obligations-expectations dynamic among its members.

Additionally, crucial to this dissertation, Coleman highlights the importance of *information* exchange among family members, as it contributes to members' accumulation of social capital. As children receive their initial learnings from home, their parents as information providers present themselves as facilitators to their children's social, relational, and cognitive developmental stages throughout their growth. Likewise, parents also need their children's informational input, and readily receive such advantageous access to their societies. Notice that family members are likely to seek information from each other first given biological attachment, geographic proximity, and

the low cost of such an information source, but most importantly due to the reliability of the information shared among one another.

In the digital world we live in, however, children have had exposure to information from multiple sources from the internet. Information is no longer centralized to parents, especially as children grow older and become well-versed in their use of their mobile potentials. Additionally, as children are more familiar with mobile technologies, the youth population has been more advantageous in operating the device, maximizing its use, seeking, and finding the information they need beyond their parents' input. This not only reduces the influential power of parents as information disseminators and reduce children's reliance on their parents, but also increases the value of children in the family ranking as information finders, even if the information were of a questionable source. The information is not taken by face-value but would then be discussed and confirmed further by family and friends as more trusted informants. This is particularly true in a setting where information is considered among the few resources that a family has, such in the case of refugees. How YSRs have taken advantage of this information privilege will be discussed in due course in Part III.

#### b) [Harnessing social capital Outside family](#)

Besides pointing to families' obligations-expectations patterns and the informational exchange between parents and children, Coleman continues that families do not exist in a vacuum. Since families belong to a greater community where the social norms define relationships, roles, and acceptable behavior amongst its members, then, families are not the only social construct

responsible of encouraging/discouraging their members' behavioral patterns (El-Khani, et al., 2018; Sim, et al., 2018, p.5).<sup>30</sup>

He thus argues that the reinforcing and sanctioning of behaviors goes beyond family alone to the point of granting equal importance and significance to individuals' social networks (Op. Cit., Coleman, 1988, p.119). Coleman supports that social capital has a positive relation to encouraging certain conducts and discouraging others, by rewarding what complies to the general understanding of a favored behavior and sanctioning inappropriate conduct. He then adds that when families experience similar circumstances and hold mutual responsibilities, intergenerational closeness occurs as well as stronger forms of social capital among the wider community members that share similar norms and hardships.

Along these lines, Coleman also extended his intergenerational family pattern of favors exchange to actors outside of the nuclear family, including extended family structures, local communities, and close friendships as part of a family's social network. Naturally, adding that such an expansion of group and individual relations yields a larger resource of social capital opportunities made available to members of the family structure.

#### c) Far from the ideal family

However, Coleman detected several radical changes that have resulted in rapid developments within the modern nuclear family structure, diminishing the social capital available in the family. He mentions the rise of single parent households, the expansive role of the state in family regulation and social mobility, as all bearing negative influence on the generation of social capital among members of the family and larger society.

---

<sup>30</sup> Refugee parents, in particular, have been found by the literature to be needing parenting support programs to help ensure a healthier adjustment of refugee children to their new norms.

Let us have a look at these points. First, the increase of single-mothers households decreases the amount of social capital per individual given the absence of fathers. Second, working mothers spend less time with their children thereby decreasing the obligations-expectations bond. Third, according to Coleman, due to a global raise in mobility, numerous families today are deprived from a close access to their extended family and social networks of kinship, which also lowers individuals' social capital. Fourth, modern life consumption patterns and long working hours spent away from the family and home, also was regarded by Coleman to be reducing the quality of social capital ties.

Finally, the surge in daycare facilities, large public schools and decreased communal activity, all contribute to the decay of interdependencies among family and community members, leading to a decrease in social capital. He then goes on to say that the expansive public welfare system decreases the family's obligations-expectations dynamic, contributing to the reduction of social capital creation opportunities. He believes that today there is on average less social capital compared to previous generations given all such changes to the nuclear family and society we live in.

Coleman's expansion on social capital is related to the life of a normal family and its application is conditional to a family life that is nondisplaced: Where a residential, geographic, and professional dimension of stability exists, fostering a healthier relational family bonding that enables members to build on their social capital and social networks. However, what happens in the context of refugeehood, when the family is in a state of instability, where the above necessary standards are absent? What changes can we observe in families' social capital, what can be transmitted to the young generation? We hypothesize that young refugees attempt to create their

own social capital using their mobile phones, to compensate families' loss of social capital as a reaction to their displacement and insecurity, as will be analyzed in Parts II and III.

### C. Why and How to use the concept of social capital

Social capital has been addressed in different aspects covering issues related to sociology, political science, economics, business, psychology, and all interdisciplinary areas of research. Its wide adoption in different fields indicates the usefulness of the concept as a theoretical framework. Moreover, consensus among researchers encourages research on the social capital of refugees, given its traceable importance in improving individuals' lives leading communities to prosper.

Hence, we explore the usefulness of the concept as a theoretical tool that could serve the purpose of our research in helping us understand the dynamics of family ties among refugees, particularly among the youth population of refugees, whose social capital have been undermined after their displacement. Furthermore, we chose to employ the concept to explore how young refugees employ social capital as a tool to help them cope with their new lives and navigate through their relations within their family, their extended Syrian network and community, and with their Lebanese host society.

And as we also aim to investigate other available sources or facilitators of social capital among YSRs and how they have attempted to increase it, we analyzed their mobile phones' usage. However, we have opted not to employ the concept of empowerment in our analysis because our proposed argument addresses YSRs' use of mobiles beyond the device being considered a tool of empowerment but rather giving young refugees the opportunity to themselves be regarded actors of their own fate, authors of their present and future; leveraging their families' social networks and social capital with the use of their mobiles to actively seek what is best for them. Hence, collecting

information and data, finding work, overcoming structural barriers by seeking to further their social capital, all of which would help them, and their families overcome the daily challenges of their imposed refugeehood.

Finally, at the practical level, understanding the potential benefits of social capital among refugees, also seems necessary to leverage the concept in achieving the local stability and security of vulnerable communities that are residents to fragile host-countries, like Lebanon. Particularly true as such countries are themselves struggling to meet the basic demands and human rights of their local populations, potentially influencing policies that would be geared towards increasing social capital among refugee and non-refugee communities to attain more local stability.

#### a) The positiveness of social capital

Instead of depicting them as a vulnerable community that lacks human rights in a fragile host-country, faced with unattended humanitarian needs, there exist great potential benefits in leveraging refugee communities' social capital, as a form of resources existing within. The available studies on the youth population did not examine the potential of social capital in helping them overcome some of the pressing challenges facing refugee communities. Nevertheless, to answer the research question mentioned shortly after, we evidence that their social network contributes to the decreasing of their cost of living, the increasing of their levels of awareness about the socio-political and economic dimension of Lebanese cities. It contributes to their receiving of emotional, psychological, and sometimes financial support and it helps them gather critical information that would improve their overall livelihood.

## b) Family's central role

The concept of social capital refers to the above attributes made up of intangible, invisible resources and assets that emerge from families' social interactions and relationships. It may refer to the abovementioned abstract notions of cultural norms and family's reputation, and it can also be quantifiable and materially observed in the strength of family's social networks, through the family's financial support behavior, grandparents' role, members' civic engagement, community service and volunteering culture, religious gathering patterns, etc. As well in their material belonging, which represents their physical resources reduced to some golden jewelries they had saved from the war in Syria during their forced displacement, and their mobile phones of tremendous use especially as refugees. Allowing refugees to reach out for their network, to establish a digital footprint connecting them to people, and to seek out information through its specific use. Moreover, as authors on the notion of social capital agree, social networks breed the potential of economic capital, which also represents an element of survival value for refugees, evident in our result outcome pertaining to families' SES evident in the next Chapter 4.

But social capital is, as Coleman wrote, a way to develop human capital. The extent of bonding and intergenerational understanding and solidarity inside the family unit is a central resource of potential and reliable gains, especially in the context of refugeehood. Each member of the Syrian refugee household is mindful of his and her role within the family structure and outside, basing their roles on cultural influences and the family's socioeconomic circumstances. Driven by an internal sense of obligation-expectation, the family communicated among each other over what needs to be done, verbally and nonverbally, in order for it to survive their contextual emergency hardships.

This is detected by Coleman, who wrote of a reciprocal expectation that drives children to grow feelings of responsibility towards their parents, as an expression of the solidarity that has bonded different members of a family unit and kept them alive through war and uncertainty as unwelcomed refugees in Lebanon (Op. Cit., Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009, p.489). The combination of these three elements of an a) emotional nature, such as trust, of an b) invisible dimension that dictates rules, and of a c) structural aspect, in the case of the networks, constitute the three necessary components for the refugees, especially the youth community among them, to successfully overcome their hardships and improve their overall circumstances.

Social capital offers an attractive normative tool that allow us to understand how refugees' lives may be observed to portray actors' seeking to increase social capital and how they attempt it to improve their lives socially, psychologically, and economically. In this sense, to compensate on their deteriorating social capital as refugees, it is through the notions of cooperation, trust and reciprocity, fundamental characteristics of social capital binding closed social interactions, that the concept of social capital is treated like a valued resource that members of a social network may draw upon once in need (Op. Cit., Coleman, 1988, p.99).

At the individual family level, a closely tied family has accumulated more resources to offer its members than one with loose family bonds. The concept is believed to increase the existing feelings of trust and cooperation among members of a family, a social network, and a wider heterogeneous community. For instance, members of the same family trust each other to: prepare meals for all members, walk offspring or siblings to school, care for the disabled and lend money to each other, which increases family integration (Brown and Ashman, 1996). Lyon (2000) indicates that once trust is established in a small community, informal institutions are formed providing public goods at a lower cost for its members. For example, in low-policing areas,

parents, and adult members of the neighborhood act informally as protectors of local neighborhood children, ensuring their safety.

Requena (2003) notes the positive significance of social support, social cohesion, and social integration on social capital. Durkheim had proposed likewise that the horning of social relations contributes to the curbing of misconduct and suicidal tendencies (Turner, 2003). And Weber (2013) believed that shared norms and religious practices provided community members with a sense of belonging, itself foundational to social capital. Following their logic, parents' reinforcing of their children's cultural character through their sanctioning of behavior and attitude vis-à-vis children's conducts, was domestically encouraged and socially reconfirmed for the young actors to adopt the family values and cultural norms. In following traditional norms, this may have also contributed positively on children's psychology, sense of belonging, feeling of stability, and security. It also helped reducing instances of intergenerational conflict, typically witnessed among non-refugee, stable families.

#### c) Problematic and Research question

This research hypothesizes that within a family that had to adapt itself to a refugee situation, young children emerged as players of a new role during displacement: Employing their use of their mobile phones to contribute to their families' wellbeing, leading to the increase of their autonomy. This is justified by means of how central social capital has been to YSRs' lives as a resource. Therefore, we chose the focus in this research to target the YSRs as the investigated sample, in the aim of answering the research question: **Does the use of ICTs contribute to the development of young Syrian refugees' agency?**

## II. Adopted Research Methods and General application of the investigation

To analyze social capital, an empirical research was conducted in Lebanon between April and September 2018 with data collected from 91 refugee respondents. Among these respondents 64 are between the ages of 14 and 25, who represent the targeted sample.

Since the focus is geared towards understanding the experiences of mobile phone use from the perspective of young refugee users, we employed a qualitative research design. Data on the SNS used among YSRs in Lebanon is unavailable in the existing literature, and to answer the research question above, it was essential to obtain empirical information on young Syrians' smartphone usage and SNS adoption patterns by means of focus groups and in-depth semi-structured interviews with YSRs.

Additionally, as the literature established, there is limited research on how young refugees' use of smartphones and social media applications impact parents-children relations, encouraging the latter to gain relative autonomy after employing families' available social capital. To this aim, we have analyzed YSRs' attitudes towards their situation and their family dynamic through their mobile phone use to collect data of their activities purporting social capital. Denzin (1989) suggested that qualitative research is the appropriate mode of research design when data is limited, and rich detailed information is necessary to answer the proposed research questions. hence, based on theoretical and practical considerations, the proposed qualitative approach captures YSRs' relationships with their family members and social networks to inform the investigation of their social capital and how they employed it to their benefit.

## a) Research method

Subsequently, the author resorted to *thematic analysis*, and the choice of this technique is informed by its practicality and appropriateness. Thematic analysis entails the identification of patterns across responses collected. It is often the first qualitative data analysis exercise preceding more advanced methods such as content analysis or discourse/narrative analyses. It is also not tied to a specific epistemological paradigm like phenomenology, grounded theory, or field research. Hence, it is a flexible, and presents an easy-to-use and -interpret method.

While many researchers have recommended best practices in applying thematic analysis, Braun et al. proposed an accessible step-by-step guide comprising six distinct phases reaching an interpretable and easily understood set of themes from complex data. The authors identify two dominant types of themes across data, semantic and latent (Braun, et al., 2019). The former refers to the themes explicitly voiced by participants and the latter refers to themes inferred by the researcher regarding the relationships between semantic themes or researchers' observation. It is worth adding here that since we found no research covering our scholarly objective, we resorted to secondary data to complement the gathered empirical findings. We also employed participants' observation, especially registering the dynamics of the relationship between family members during focus group discussion.

## b) Field Research

In our collecting of data, to interact with our targeted respondents as close as possible to their setting, we conducted *field research* that entails access to the site of research and the establishment of contacts with participants in their regular environment. From our readings, we understood that field research broadly referred to a distinct approach of conducting qualitative research rather than

a mere data collection method, and that its use rendered the data collection process and observation easier, and its results more reliable.

While in the field, we had the chance to administer an open-ended questionnaire, which sometimes was conducted during a one-on-one interview session, and at others within a focus group discussion. As we sought to sample YSR residents of major cities in Lebanon, including Beirut, the Bekaa, the South and the North—the reason of which will be justified in due course—interviews necessitated that we visit prospective participants as per their convenience and where they are most comfortable to meet in their Lebanese towns of residence.

While ethnographic and anthropological research is oftentimes used to explain cultural constructs limited to relatively specific homogenous group of people, we gathered best to adopt a *phenomenological* research paradigm to address our academic undertaking for multiple reasons as follows. Given the complexity of our research, combining a historical and sociological aspect underlying the relationship between the Syrian and Lebanese nation states, carrying an ethnographic systematic study helped us interpret the experience of YSRs. It also allowed us to construct their narrative based on the data we gathered from their own perspective of their individual experience. We aimed to construct an objective account using social capital as the scientific theory guiding our investigation of how YSRs used their smartphones and social media accounts in Lebanon to answer the proposed research question: Does the use of ICTs contribute to the development of young Syrian refugees' agency?

### c) Interviews and focus group discussions

To collect relevant information that serve our research objective, we employed two methods of data gathering: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions with YSRs and their

families. Focus groups have been employed specially to gather information from target populations who were geographically difficult to reach, like the Bekaa and the South. Each session lasted from 60 to 90 minutes with the target subject along his or her family. We asked the same question to each and every present participant, starting with our targeted sample before hearing the comments and points of view of other younger or older family members. Individual interviews took almost half the time and were held with random sample population that fits our age range criteria of 14 to 25 years old YSR.

The semi-structured, in-depth interviews allowed participants to share specific contextual information allowing us to gather precise data about young refugees' smartphone and social media use. Prior to our agreed date of the interview, we started to establish a virtual rapport with our refugee prospective participant from the moment we received their number.<sup>31</sup> On the day of the meetup, having been granted access to their home, we attempted to establish trust with all family members that we were welcome to meet by introducing ourselves and our background. We promptly gathered this was important from having been in a few houses since the beginning of our interview process. Our introduction of ourselves, therefore, did not only hold formal information of the objectives of research and respondents' rights, or how data would be used following interviews.

The introduction was purposeful in attempting to diffuse the initially displayed of hesitation towards us coming from the side of refugee parents, in particular. Whom, unlike the person we had been in contact with virtually representing our targeted age range, as the head of household, the father was particularly questioning our intended visit, much more than the

---

<sup>31</sup> Introduced to us from our pre-established network of Syrian refugees and local Lebanese.

welcoming refugee mothers that we met for the first time too. However, we observably witnessed that their initial attitude was significantly changed during the focus group discussion, after having heard our story and following a couple interview questions. The fathers then encouraged us to stay longer and visit more often, as is expected and customary in the traditional and hospitable Syrian culture.

Eventually, we ended up visiting these families with whom we had a common local Lebanese or Syrian social network, more than once after the initial formal data collection process was over. This gradually enabled us to establish better *rapport* with participants, slowly reaping the trust that we had built with them throughout our frequent visits. It resulted in a more collaborative session where the interviewed individuals were more at ease and their answers, then gained more accuracy and reliability. Hence, in our subsequent visits, we were able to make informal observations about their housing and living arrangements and captured the most interesting domestic relational dynamics among members of a Syrian family the more our subjects felt comfortable with us, specifically in the absence of refugee fathers. Moreover, the registered interaction among participants allowed us to trace unstated patterns of thought within the interview process, while field observations explained how participants used their phones, social media accounts and their family ties to navigate their new lives as refugees.

*Focus groups* are used to solicit the responses of small groups of participants allowing us to access more detailed answers to each question, while observing the interactions and forms of the relational dynamics that exist between family members. Focus groups were held with multiple family members of the household that were present at the time of our interviews. In conservative families more than others, the Syrian parents were concerned with respect to the type and amount of information their children could be sharing with us, as a stranger. They have either felt more at

ease attending interviews or have concealed their curiosity, perhaps, under the umbrella of acting culturally hospitable to us as their guest at home and, thus, they have remained present during the interview with their children, our prime target. It is important to note that YSRs have lived in small spaces with their families, making it difficult to meet each of our target respondent separately.

This has also been the case among the sample of refugees selected randomly on the streets to answer our questionnaire. In fact, we have felt that it was more feasible to collect relevant information in focus groups because it facilitated the collection of information from more than a single user in a more time efficient manner. It also has allowed parents to comment on their children's use of smartphones and social media granting us intergenerational perspectives to the information shared by all participants. Finally, it has presented us with the chance to explore whether the information provided by YSRs are consistent across multiple visits.

By adopting the focus group discussion method, one of our limitations has been in having some opinions replicated by other participants in the session, who opted to nod in agreement to other respondents' answers. This observably created a dynamic where shy participants avoided voicing out their opinions at times. Another limitation to this approach has been registered on the occurrences when the dominant participant has deterred other respondents from expressing themselves freely, especially among young girls. Where on several instances, one participant, usually a dominant male but sometimes the eldest sister too, attempted to impose his/her opinion by directly or indirectly debating their siblings' contrasting views, if any were ever expressed.

But even more problematically, some voices may have been self-concealed by traditional families' understanding of their sanctity towards what could or could not be shared with a stranger

like myself. This may have also been mostly the case among girl respondents, who may have answered questions based on what they think should be their position on one matter, rather than what they really believed about it. Male respondents did not have to worry about this because even if they did overshare information, they would not have been held accountable later for their sharing, perhaps at most they would have been promoted about it. However, maintaining their image as a “good girl” in front of their parents and siblings, must have been one of the factors keeping girls from expressing themselves freely in the company of other family members.<sup>32</sup>

With regards to the interview *process*, upon interviewing a Lebanese woman of 43 years old married to a Syrian man. As the Lebanese constitution does not provide citizenship for her offspring, we included her children’s input in our sample because they had been born and living in Syria since their childhood and the family had just returned to Lebanon in 2011 after the start of the turmoil in Syria. One point we noted, however, is through the interview process: As a general observation, the house was more furnished than other refugee houses of humble furnishing indicating a more stable life than other refugee families with a much smaller social network or connection in Lebanon. Moreover, in this house, the young girls were not all wearing a headcover, unlike all other young Syrian girls we interviewed who had both Syrian parents.

During the interview, we experienced more of a chaotic session of discussion where the children interrupted each other and briefly left the living room where we had been all sitting on their own terms, compared to a more serious feel to the interviews conducted in all other Syrian refugee houses. This reflected in a generally smoother interview process in a Syrian family household of no mixed marriages, where we faced a fewer missing answer to the questionnaire.

---

<sup>32</sup> This position was captured in one of the anecdotes shared by a girl respondent in Part II as will be illustrated in due course.

What is even more interesting to note is that YSR respondents of both Syrian parents replied similar to each other more often than their counterparts of a Lebanese mother did.

In the Lebanese model of a family-siblings relation portrayed organically during focus groups, each young refugee child from all ages and across boys' and girls' gender, had a different answer than his/her sibling and would debate their positions if it countered that of their older, younger, or male/female siblings. All of which occurred in the company of the father, who otherwise, in a Syrian family would have at least expressed that the children should "conduct themselves" in my presence, as a stranger.<sup>33</sup> This may similarly be relevant to the earlier notion of Syrian girls, especially, answering questions based concurrently on their older sibling' opinions as expected answers rather than conveying their true belief, risking falling out of their supposed judgement and relative comportment which has granted them families' endorsement so far.

Another noteworthy point of comparison is the case of a Syrian woman we met in Bekaa who is married to a Lebanese, herself. Even though her children are not included in our surveyed respondent sample for being registered Lebanese citizens and falling younger than our targeted age bracket, while herself was older than 25 years old to fit our sample criteria as well. However, what is to be noted is the case of comparison on the difference between inside the home of a Syrian housewife and that of a Lebanese mother: The house was in a much cleaner state, the children very polite, and the house less furnished with more domestic plants adorning the entrance and the balcony, when compared to the Lebanese married to a Syrian man.

---

<sup>33</sup> That is to assume that he himself was not bothered by the children quarreling or that the children themselves, did so in front of him, knowing that the father as the highest authority in the household, was portrayed by the vast majority of our respondent youth as being short-tempered, ill-tempered and would certainly not tolerate children's bickering in his presence, let alone in front of a stranger.

Moreover, what is to be noted at the personal level and relevant to Syrians' feeling of instability in their temporary host, there is clear distinction between Syrian citizens who do not feel like they belong in Lebanon, and those who know that they have a more permanent status and could feel more integrated in the Lebanese society. The latter automatically had her perspective of her own life and the lives of her children largely optimistic, and it felt as though she did not share the worries of a Syrian citizen living in Lebanon, even when comparing her views to refugee families of a much better SES status.

### *Questionnaire*

Surveys of Syrian refugees in Lebanon lack detailed information about their use of ICTs and SNS. Furthermore, aside from the abundance of NGO reports and recommendation on the subject of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, much of the scientific qualitative interviews and focus groups research available on the refugee population is difficult to obtain and does not include details on how YSRs use their smartphones from a uses and gratifications perspective. Thus, we prepared the annexed questionnaire instrument to guide the interview process attempting to answer our research question: Does the use of ICTs contribute to the development of young Syrian refugees' agency? It served to solicit as much as detailed information possible on YSRs' use of smartphones and social media applications.

Questions are based on previous smartphone and social media uses and gratification studies, described earlier in the literature, to investigate the patterns of usage among YSRs in Lebanon. The questionnaire features common uses and gratifications generated not only by rigorous dimensional reduction methods used on large studies, but also on potential uses and gratification uses by refugees' populations based on this in-depth qualitative study. Such featured

topics of inquiry include its use for: communication, entertainment, information sharing, stress management, social capital building, among other uses.

The questions were asked formally, and the interviewees had ample time to answer each question freely. And the use of semi-structured interviews in delivering the questionnaire has also increased the range of uses and gratifications of the instrument. In cases where new uses and gratifications are mentioned by participants, such is recorded and noted to be distinct from the prepared categories thought to be used by the YSR participants.

### *Difficulties*

To administer this survey questionnaire, we used two sampling designs to recruit willing YSRs to participate in the research: convenience and snowball. Convenience sampling is the most appropriate when selecting a group of participants on the basis of their availability as informants and their belonging to an element of our research focus; particularly YSR subjects who are willing to take part in the research and who fall between the ages of 14 and 25. Without having access to refugee camps, requiring formal permission from the UNHCR or from local municipalities requesting to conduct research on young refugees. And without working or being in contact with a humanitarian agency that had worked with refugees proved the most difficult for us after having been in Japan for a long time.

However, having had an established robust network of individuals that worked or knew someone who worked with international and local relief agencies from among our personal local Lebanese and Syrian networks located in Beirut and the Bekaa, we identified a set of initially recruited young Syrian subjects that we had previously knew were living in Lebanon for either being married to Lebanese citizens or having worked in the country for more than 30 years.

Not only access to refugees has presented a difficulty, but also composing a balanced sample of participants as well. We did not have any contacts in two areas of coverage, Tripoli, and the South. Hence, we resorted to snowball sampling where we visited refugee communities and interviewed several passersby on the street, asking them at the end of the interview to kindly refer us to other subjects they knew would be willing to participate in the study. For numerous reasons, those interviewees were mostly boys and young males and referred us to their male friends as well, which explains the slightly higher percentage of male participants than females in our questionnaire (52% and 48% respectively, from the total number of interviewed respondents).

When asking boys to nominate girl participants, there was a great deal of resistance as the boy respondents did not trust us enough to give us access to their female siblings, mothers, wives, and sisters-in-law located at home, those were the exclusive female relationships they had since their displacement. However, after familiarizing themselves with our questions and scholarly inquiries some boys were more encouraged to offer help, accompanying us to their home and giving us access to the female members of their family.

Some participants questioned the credibility and genuine nature of our research suspecting an association with international, local NGO or governmental organization given the background questions we had enquired about them. Up to the point that before even beginning our questionnaire, the background information alone made one female respondent comment that for a moment while we had just begun gathering essential information to paint a basic understanding of her background, she had already suspected us to be interviewing her on behalf of a UNHCR staff. Other respondents questioned a few items mentioned in the interview and asked for clarifications about our background, which was resolved by showing the Doshisha University student card as proof of enrollment as a doctoral candidate there.

These instances surely hampered the process of building *rapport* with our young respondents, which is essential to the setting a relationship of trust and credibility between our young, targeted sample and us, as administrators of the interview. It may also have put in question the reliability of the answers provided by the young respondents, not completely at ease during the interview. Another reason for their holding back of answering freely and truthfully may have been born from their perception that they are un-welcomed in Lebanon, as they are oftentimes reminded about that in their dealing with local Lebanese.

To minimize this shortcoming, in several cases, we made multiple visits to six Syrian families we encountered. We were thus able to gain the trust of the family and had access to a more natural setting that describes better family members' dynamics, the structure of their intergenerational gendered relationships, the strength of their ties, and the young refugees' approach to their mobiles and social media use in connection with the wellbeing of the refugee family unite.

Given the difficulties of data gathering in low-income neighborhoods, often in informal or abandoned buildings and remote locations, the interview setting placed several constraints on the reliability of the interview process. Interviewees' accommodations were small and humble, which forced the interruptions of the interview session by the household small children, particularly among new mothers and girl participants. On other occasions, extreme weather conditions such as high heat rendered some participants impatient to the questionnaire, hence preventing us from asking further to obtain richer answers.

In terms of reliability of an official number of registered refugees, those have differed across varying periods of times as evidenced in the Annex. Making it difficult to construct accurate

samples and design effective visitation to the research sites.<sup>34</sup> In fact, due to the lack of access to information caused by deteriorating security situation and diminishing confidence in data sources, “[t]he UN high commissioner for human rights—which manages conflict death tolls—stopped counting Syria’s dead in mid-2014,” (Black, 2016).

### III. Introducing the Sample of YSRs

In this section, we will present numerical data on where the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are living.<sup>35</sup> This will include: The geographic location of the sampled refugees, when they had reached Lebanon (newcomers vs. of an older social network), statistics about their age with respect to their geographic distribution (in each of Beirut, Tripoli, the Bekaa and the South),<sup>36</sup> their marital status, the number of their household, the gender ratio among siblings, and their residential and socio-economic status (i.e., if they lived in settlements or rented apartments and if they are relatively wealthy or of a low-income status).

#### a) Age classification

The population of interest in this study is of YSRs living in Lebanon, while disagreements on the meaning of young have ensued throughout the literature, we chose to operationalize this by looking into YSRs, aged 14 to 25 years old (Table 4, below).<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> The inaccurate toll count represents one of the impediments of this dissertation. Visit Appendix A section, entitled: “Challenges to Data Accuracy.”

<sup>35</sup> This section outlines the demographic data analysis for the sample that participated in this research dissertation. The analysis includes basic frequency distributions demonstrations and graphical display of summary statistics of the variables. Notice that the choice of the measure or statistic is informed by the level of measurement for the variable. Most demographic characteristics collected in this research are nominal variables indicating the appropriate use of frequencies and relative frequencies. See: Stevens, J. P. (2012). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences*. Routledge.

<sup>36</sup> Table n. 3 entitled: “Tracking UNHCR Registered Syrian Refugees by District in Lebanon for the year 2018.”

<sup>37</sup> Whereas the number of Syrian participants falling below and over this age-range (annexed Table 5) will always be specified when mentioned in relevant sections.

**Table 4:** Categorization of respondents’ profiles, by age range and gender.

Age Range	Under 14	<14-17<	<18-21<	<22-25<	Over 25	Total
Total Number of Respondents	6	24	20	20	22	91
Male	2	13	13	11	8	47
Female	4	11	7	9	14	44

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

We chose to divide the sample of YSRs into three age categories based on their developmental stage, following the above-mentioned categorization of respondents’ profiles by age range and gender. The first age bracket of analysis is for those participants who fall between the age 14 and 17, irrespective of their gender. We purposely did not include younger respondents because our endeavor aims to detect the YSRs’ use of their agency. Therefore, besides being physically able to actively seek employment, should they wish to pursue so, and perform physical or mental work, we limited our focus to those who have no legal barriers to this condition.

In light of the Lebanese Labor Law of 1946 (also, the Labour Code), individuals who are less than 14 years old are prohibited from work (Habib et al., 2019b, p.97), which automatically then limited the first category to young Syrian participants aged 14 to 17 years old. This age cycle belongs to children who are supposed to be still in school, completing their upper secondary education (Grade 10-12). Moreover, this age bracket is regarded by numerous official reports to belong to adolescents’ developmental age, through which psychological health is developed, educational performance is assessed, as well as adolescents’ mental and physical health are sought, for the sake of forming a healthy social individual capable of assuming a positive labour participation and integrating successfully in society, for the overall wellbeing of the latter (Inter-Agency Coordination, 2018, p.3).

The second age category constitutes Syrian respondents who are considered to be young adults between 18 and 21 years old, regardless of their gender. If they were not interrupted by war, they would have supposedly completed their high school or vocational schooling and would have had the option to either go directly to the labour market or pursue a university level schooling by age 21, according to the Syrian educational system. This category would also typically witness marriage occurrences, with more females being married at this age than Syrian men. However, it is worth noting that 13% of the marriages happening in a traditional Syrian family had occurred before females turned 18 years old, according to data from UNICEF for the years between 2000 and 2010 (UNICEF, 2012, p.122). And the VASyR-2018 cited that 29 percent of the surveyed girls were married in Lebanon between the age of 15 to 19 years old (Op. Cit., p.3).

Finally, those between the age of 22 and 25, represented the third age group who were not pursuing their education at that age any longer but who were either working full time, part-time, or as students and housewives, as indicated in annexed figures (3-1) and (3-2).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the majority of those falling within this age bracket seem to already be in the stage whereby they have either found their spouse, and are expecting their first, second, or third child, or that they are emotionally engaged and communicating with their loved one via mobile, at the time of our encounter with them.

It is worth adding that in a typical scenario of cognitive and social human development, this age structure of the youth, between the ages of 14 and 25, must incorporate individuals who are still students, who have freshly entered the job market, who recently became parents of their own, or who have recently moved out of their parents' house in pursuit of work elsewhere, be it

---

<sup>38</sup> Entitled Employment and Types of Work

close or abroad, or perhaps even chose to continue their journey towards higher education. This makes them open to identity formation, influence, and change still at the level of their psychology and emotional wellbeing, as also categorized under the “Youth” rubric by the UNICEF, the UNHCR, and the WFP (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2012, p.5).

#### b) Sample Validation

A number of differences include the family’s geographic origin (coming from rural versus urban areas), the parents’ educational upbringing, their economic status (prior to and post their forced displacement), as well as their preexisting social network in Lebanon—depending on when they arrived in Lebanon: prior to the war incidents or did they settle as part of the refugee exodus to Lebanon, making them “new” refugees who became unwelcomed after that their displacement became protracted.

We combined all willingly provided available information on the Syrian refugee families living in Lebanon to give the readers a clear image of the diversity of the young respondents, because unlike age-related realities, the sample of YSRs have different sorts of backgrounds and circumstances that are family-bound, which define their lives and future possibilities. Hence, by crossing all this information we will help the reader understand more accurately what it means for someone of a particular age-range to be a refugee.

On the distribution of participants at the level of their marital status. For one, there are more single boys (37.2%) than there are single girls (16.3%), as confirmed by the literature of a higher number of female refugees getting married at a younger age, compared to statistics in Syria prior to their displacement (UNHCRd, n.d., p.25). Second, married YSRs constitute less than 10% from among the pool of 91 participants in the survey, including both males and females. With the

youngest registered married boy within the sample being 19 years old and the youngest girl married at age 15.

We tried to have equal representation of both genders.<sup>39</sup> The annexed boxplot for YSRs' age shows that the distribution of all 91 refugee participants is positively skewed with many outliers marked as asterisk indicating the relatively old ages of the parents compared to the YSR sample of 64 participants, with a registered Mean of 24.40 and a standard deviation of 11.28.<sup>40</sup> At the level of their geographic distribution, almost 40% of the sampled YSRs lived in Beirut while 21% resided in the Bekaa Valley region, and 22% in the South of Lebanon, leaving Tripoli with the least number of participants at 17.6%.

Moreover, Syrian refugees come from big families.<sup>41</sup> On average a participant reported having 7 siblings across the four regions surveyed. It is worth indicating that literature has linked a greater number of individuals in a household to a higher household income, except when the number of young dependents is high (i.e., small children). However, even in such a case, a big social network of family, relatives and friends have substituted as a strategy to circumvent the hardships of finding a job (Halpern, 2018, p.20).

On the number of male siblings in a household, we noted a positive correlation between the number of boys and the households' income: where the higher the number is, the more male members worked, the larger income the household gathered. Pertaining to our sample, the annexed figure shows that each Syrian refugee family we encountered had on average 4 male siblings from among the total sampled population across four regions.<sup>42</sup> The results of these two figures above

---

<sup>39</sup> Table 5, entitled: "Marital Status, Target Sample, Region and Gender."

<sup>40</sup> Annexed Figure n.3, entitled: "Distribution of Age."

<sup>41</sup> Annexed Figure n.4, entitled: "Number of Siblings."

<sup>42</sup> Annexed Figure n.5, entitled: "Number of male siblings."

indicate what is already evidenced in the literature that bigger families allowed responsibilities to be distributed, hence reducing individual members' obligations.

But also, as will be discussed with greater evidence in due course, that the better the household income was, the more it allowed families to maintain a closer replicated model to the domestic family dynamic that once ruled the family in Syria. In such a scenario, while the boys worked to receive income, increasing their symbolic value at home for contributing financially toward the household wellbeing, the financial abundance actually afforded more chances for the girls to stay in school. However, to their detriment, the family's financial wealth also solved the family subsistence, eliminating the element of desperate need from the equation, which therefore, minimized girls' opportunity within these families to question the traditional family structure and attempt to compromise gendered roles.

Studies have linked how economic status can affect wellbeing, as one refugee explains in a study conducted by Baker et al., in 2019 saying: "some of the fruits are quite expensive, or the vegetables ... [parents] said oh, I buy these biscuits because I can get three for so many." (Baker, et al., 2019) And since the Syrian families have high birth rates, refugee parents are faced with greater challenges in providing adequate means and standards of living for each family member, in addition to numerous other displacement stressors. However, with the exception of food deprivation, in terms of domestic labour power, we noted more helping hands being extended by family members in a situation of displacement to appease other causes of a family's distress. As a guideline published by the UNHCR on means to protecting refugee children by concerned stakeholders, puts it into words:

“The single best way to promote the psychosocial well-being of children is to support their families. Refugees bring with them their personal resourcefulness and they come with other refugees - relatives, friends and neighbours - who have a tradition of helping each other.” (UNHCRb, n.d., p.15)

In line with Samara’s study on refugee children’s psychological wellbeing (2020), the birth order was an important variable influencing YSRs’ perceived family role and parents’ expectations, as will be analyzed in due course. Most of our participants fall in the middle between the eldest and youngest siblings (73%), while eldest participants comprise about 18% of the sample and the youngest only makes up roughly 5% of it.<sup>43</sup>

Related to the distribution of participants with regard to their educational level,<sup>44</sup> it is clear that Syrian refugees who participated in the study exhibit lower levels of education compared to the Syrian pre-war population. About 35% of the sample reported being in elementary school or having that as their highest level of education. 25% suggested that they possess a Middle School or equivalent education followed by about 10% of the sampled population indicating attaining high school education. Moreover, only 20% of the sample reported receiving some college or vocational training education, while older parent-participants reported no educational level at all. These low percentages, however, are not representative of the entire Syrian refugee population living in Lebanon but may still testify to the abject conditions that the Syrians have been going through when it comes to their educational pursuit, since the start of the 2011 war.

---

<sup>43</sup> Annexed Figure n.6, entitled: “Birth Order in the Family.”

<sup>44</sup> Annexed Figure n.7, entitled: “Educational Level.”

Related to employment status among the YSRs,<sup>45</sup> about 45% reported full time work status whereas the remaining 55% were either: students (12%), unemployed (35%) or held part time work (only 8%). With the exception of one school aged boy of 17 years old, all those who reported not working were almost all the female participants we met. It is noteworthy, however, that even though these women and girls were not working at the time of the survey, the entirety of them expressed a strong desire to help-out their families by all possible means, should any form of employment present itself across any sector, if they had the chance to do so.

Their barriers to work, they explained, is that they could not find part-time jobs that their parents or husbands agreed to: As the none-educated refugee girls could not find descent employment (i.e., not related to cleaning, cooking, or agricultural services). And from among our female refugees who did work part-time, they were all university graduates. We encountered two females teaching in the afternoon schools for refugee children, one working as a cashier at the mall, and one interning at a pharmacy. All of whom expressed having made the promise not to let their work compromise their obligations inside home, while accommodating their domestic responsibilities, as condition for their joining the workforce. It is worth noting that the pharmacist intern is the only girl respondent who comes from a relatively wealthy family, meaning that if it were not for the families' financial hardships, perhaps those employed girls would not have even been working from the onset, it seems.

Our sample reported working in small businesses across the construction-, retail- and food-services industries, with only a handful of about 5% said to have made it to firms assuming white-collar jobs (teaching, working in a pharmacy, or employing their technical skills).<sup>46</sup> Notice that

---

<sup>45</sup> Annexed Figure n.8, entitled: "Employment."

<sup>46</sup> Annexed Figure n.9, entitled: "Types of Work."

from among the “unemployed category,” only a few answered this question, which may be indicative that YSRs were under-reporting their employment status, perhaps in the hopes that they would eventually receive financial reimbursement for their participation, as we heard oftentimes in the form of a joke while conducting the survey. On a different note, as numerous females reported being mere housewives (with the vast majority of them being married, as previously mentioned), this may explain the overall high unemployment rate indicated earlier among the Syrian refugees. And finally, those figures, even though are unrepresentative of the entire Syrian community living in Lebanon, yet are still relatively accurate, indicating the cheap and exploitative nature of the demand for Syrian laborers that the refugees experience while residing in Lebanon.

## Conclusion

After their lives had been disrupted, the YSRs were placed in a situation that compelled them to engage in using any tool at their disposal to improve their situation, which suggests the importance of their social networks, for instance when undertaking the commute to safety, as mentioned above. We believe that those formal and informal social relations are a key element pertaining the investigation of YSRs’ active pursuit in the accumulation and building of social capital. With half of the displaced Syrian population having experienced a life of refuge since their childhood, without ever having been to school, and entering the exploitative labour market as children still, our dissertation promises a thorough understanding of what it is to be a refugee from among a varied sample of YSRs. Moreover, the values of social capital resulting from such an analysis, could be used as a tool to understand what is happening in Syrian refugee communities, at the levels of their family relations, and how could any given community in a similar situation to their organize and manage itself (Pelling and High, 2004).

As social capital is known to decrease during displacement, we addressed in Part I the constructs of the concept relying on multiple writings on social capital, especially that of Coleman's. We understood the concept as being the conducive outcomes of economic, social, and cultural nature that arise from the quality relationships among members of an existing social structure, represented by family, community, acquaintance, and the surrounding local host-society. In this sense, social capital is a resource that people receive, use, pursue, and seek to increase by all possible means, in order to solve social, individual and community problems, to attain perceived economic benefits, social objectives and gain social advantages. With these lenses, social capital is thus considered a solution to numerous persistent problems faced by an individual, such as poverty, substance abuse, crime, trauma, and legal accountability, among others. Moreover, we chose in this dissertation to explore how the young Syrians use it to improve their lives as refugees, with respect to their parents, surrounding and with the help of their social network and available resources.

Hence, borrowing Coleman's understanding of the concept and the role assigned to the family in his writing on social capital acquisition represents the tool we chose to shed light on the means by which the young refugees could re-discover themselves when they were left to cope with the new realities of their refugeehood away from home, how they took to react to their surrounding circumstances, and how have they employed their mobile phones in the process. Especially in light of the minimal resources they have to survive by, amidst grave vulnerabilities facing them as protracted refugees in a fragile host-country like Lebanon. Through the lens of social capital, we will examine in detail young refugees' active coping through a bottom-up approach where their agency demonstrates their voice, as presented in Parts II and III of our analysis.

## **PART II**

# **Young Refugees Relying on Family's Social Capital**

The objective of Part II is to understand the influence of the family's social capital on the YSRs, as the latter are captured by their family's social network and primarily depend on it, with some having to work and some remaining in schools, depending on how well their family's financial circumstances are in Lebanon. Comparing between a well-established Syrian refugee family and an economically struggling one through Coleman's notion of social capital, we analyze how Syrian parents' background impacts children's living conditions as refugees and their future aspirations. No empirical research discussing the link between Syrian refugee families and their social capital has been available to date. This lack of studies marks the importance of our analysis in investigating the relationship between the quality of family ties in the receipt, sustenance, transformation, generation, and proliferation of social capital among the YSRs in Lebanon as the focus of Chapters 5 onward. Hence, Part II presents the consequences of parents' education, family income and wealth on the refugee child's educational attainment, employment, and gendered responsibilities through values and norms. However, as we would like to hypothesize in Part III, both young models—living in a wealthy or poor family—are tied to their family's social capital until they seize the opportunity to create their own with the use of their mobiles. In this part, however, we will not mention YSRs' created social capital, but the effect of their parents' social networks on their lives, opportunities, and prospects for their future. The following chapters will aim to describe Syrian refugees' living circumstances and the context within which a Syrian family had to reorganize itself.

# Chapter 4

## Refugee families’ social capital and contextual vulnerabilities

### Introduction

The family unit is essential for children as a provider of unwary forms of support: It is the “bedrock” where individuals’ identity is formed in the Middle East (Lokot, 2018). In a scenario of refugeehood and displacement, the family role becomes even more important due to the new situation and children’s dependence on their parents for survival and coping. However, as the relationship between the two nations comprise Syria and Lebanon a long historical, sociopolitical, and demographic significance, introduced in Part I, Syrian refugees’ time of arrival, location of settlement, and social network—given previous economic activities between Lebanon and Syria—necessitated distinct focus in our analysis. Especially as this complexity impacted the young refugees’ experience and has emphasized the diversity and heterogeneity of their experiences during displacement, which also presents one of the major significances of our research among others in similar literature. Hence, it is important to make a clear distinction that the Syrian refugee

families who had a previously established social network had higher social capital, which reflected in the young refugees being agents of their own lives as elaborated in Part III.

Given the scenario describing refugees' background, historical relationship to Lebanon, and presenting their protracted plight in the introduction of Part I, it is necessary to present the following information on how the refugee families arrived, and the consequence of their move on their children at the level of: Gender, education, and employment. Analyzing the Syrian refugee family's socioeconomic background will later help us make a point on the effect of such conditions, as family's networks and income (wealthy or of low-income), on YSRs' social capital as well as their mobile use, which will be detailed in Part III.

In presenting the refugee population pre-displacement, we mention how was the Syrian refugees' lives before arriving to Lebanon, how was their family's environment, the mothers' role, and the role of the fathers, as well as what were the expectations and roles of the child in a regular family setting (including variables pertaining to their age, family size, birth order and number of male members in the household). All this, in the purpose of understanding just how much these orthodox family ties are disrupted after displacement to Lebanon, with the beginning of their lives as refugees.

## I. Syrian refugee families and strategies of residence

### Introduction

Numerous scholars speak on the massive scale of the socioeconomic impacts of the influx of refugees to fragile states, both at the macro- and micro-levels. Research addressed forcibly displaced communities that took refuge in neighboring fragile countries like the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and Somali refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia among others where no opportunities

for permanent settlement abound. The particularity of Lebanon as a host-country, however, is in its sharing of significant previous historical, social, cultural, lingual, and political relations with the displaced Syrian refugees. The existence of a pre-established relation between a refugee source- and host-country presents one of the significant values of our research.

Therefore, tracing the Syrian refugees' forced displacement provides the necessary spatial and timely scenery of their move to facilitate reader's understanding of the difference between those who arrived to Lebanon at an early stage of the Syrian war, versus those relative newcomers. In this chapter, we present a brief of the Syrian refugees' spatial distribution following historical givens and socioeconomic considerations pertaining to the Lebanese peculiar circumstantial context, which makes the case of researching the YSRs' conduct in such a host, particularly worthy of investigation.

However, in the following section, we will only present the challenges relevant to how the chosen geographic concentration of the Syrian refugees have had direct implications on their security and further exploitation. As we aim to present some of the reasons why the refugees came to live in specific geographic areas, we briefly describe the most impacted sectors by the protracted crisis and the massive numbers of refugees flooding the low-skilled labour market, which has contributed to their overall disintegration.

Looking into the context of their forced displacement, the Syrian refugees built on their relationships and nurtured the underlying potentials of their social networks, treating them like another form of resource: a capital. From a cultural perspective, the Syrian society is founded predominantly on patriarchal social system, which places the father at the head of the household

giving him authority over women and children. It encourages male members of the household to exercise similar dominant behavior over their female siblings.

However, at the domestic level, our participants commonly described their family relations following positive values that promote trust, unity, reciprocity, empathy, understanding, dedication, collectivity, cooperation, contribution, self-discipline, perseverance, responsibility, compromise, patience, compassion, tolerance, goodwill, faith, friendship, honesty, and loyalty, among others. Hence, during their forced displacement, these cultural norms have proved significantly valuable in damping their hardships and are thus treated among their humble resources—as part of the definition of social capital as will be later maintained. Moreover, it is important in this dissertation to accurately describe the geographic distribution of the Syrian refugees, for a multitude of reasons.

Firstly, at their initial displacement in 2011, when the Syrians were forcibly displaced for the ongoing war in their towns, those who did not have a preexisting social network in Lebanon, made their choice of residence based on the geographic proximity of the Bekaa valley and Tripoli to the Syrian borders. As previously explained, their *rationale* at the time was that of a shortsightedness that what had started as peaceful demonstrations will not take long before it gets resolved so they could return to Syria to resume their lives. In fact, neither did the Lebanese government nor close observers of the Syrian domestic developments of the conflict (Op. Cit., Dionigi, 2014, p.9) anticipate the extent of the Syrian incidents, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who was reported to have said that Syrian president's days were “numbered.” (Goldberg, 2012)

This reminds us of peoples' misinformed perceptions and wishful reading of geostrategic and political realities suffered by the Palestinian people leading to the foundation of Israel in 1948.

In that context, the extent of the Arab-Israeli war was not predicted to protract for 72 years' time and is still counting. Numerous testimonies in fact, speak that Palestinians left everything behind, taking only their house keys and few luggage, thinking victory and justice was on their side, and that they will soon regain their lives back once the Israeli occupier is halted. One oral testimony expresses this perception of Palestinians saying: “[o]ur parents were convinced it was temporary, a question of two or three weeks, the time it would take for Arab arms to liberate Palestine.” (Khawaja, 2011, p.16)

Similarly, among the Syrian refugees where one anecdotal narrative dating two years after her displacement in 2011, Hadia of 23 years old recounted rejecting to assume back her normal life routine: *“for two years, since the start of the events in Syria, I didn’t dye my hair here [in Lebanon] thinking tomorrow I will be back to my neighborhood where my friend works in a beauty salon. She knows the color I like and she always does it for me.”*<sup>47</sup> Though conscious of the years that passed, this denial shows a tendency among refugees to refuse the realities they live in by putting on hold their customary routine with the hope that they will be back “tomorrow” and they could then resume their lives normally, right where they had left off.

Second, there is an aspect of a sectarian geographic divide among Lebanese regions, the implication of which on the Syrian refugees’ choice of residence is heavily dependent on Syrian family’s social capital. However, it is important to cover here the link between refugees’ geographic residence, employment, and housing for a thorough description of how differently these variables influence refugee children’s lives. And more importantly, to highlight how children are influenced by their family’s social capital, which informs why a rhetoric of young

---

<sup>47</sup> During a one-on-one interview in Beirut, conducted in her home on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.

refugees' agency is less relevant than investigating their social capital as pursued in this dissertation.

## A. Heterogeneity of Displacement

### a) A roof on top of refugees' heads: Where did the Syrian refugees live?

*Old camps, tented settlements, and a non-encampment policy*

The case of Syrian refugees is different from Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon for almost 70 years since 1948, 53 percent of whom live in 12 officially recognized camps (Find a World, 2016). Today, Syrian refugees are scattered all around the country,<sup>48</sup> living in Palestinian refugee camps, or concentrated within unofficial and informal tented settlements (UNICEF, 2016).<sup>49</sup> Those are in the form of “1,435 camps” scattered all over the country, and some others report them to be distributed “in over 1,700 locations.” (Duval, 2014, p.53) On the implications of this on the Syrian refugees, it is reported that some refugees had to engage in forced labor sometimes as a condition for their rent, exercised either by the farm owner hosting the camp or by some sort of a middleman employed to coordinate the camp affairs and who may allow refuge families to join the tented settlement or deny their entry (Op. Cit., Jones and Ksaif, 2016, pp.8, 14). These settlements of a high concentration of the refugee population, were frequently exposed to raids by the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (hereafter, ISF), especially following stricter laws on renewal permits imposed by the Lebanese government (Ibid., p.19).

For a brief description of where those Palestinian camps hosting Syrian refugees are geographically located and how is their physical conditions, it is worth stating that under the

---

<sup>48</sup> Annexed Figure n.10: UNHCR Mapping of the Refugee Population in Lebanon

<sup>49</sup> For a geographic mapping of the formal and informal tented settlements in Lebanon, see: Inter-Agency Mapping Partners, 2016.

presidency of Kamil Shamoun (1952-1958), aid organizations set up shacks for Palestinian refugees in 12 formally recognized camps that were gradually turned into proper concrete dwellings (Hudson, 1997, pp. 249-250; Gordon, 1983, p.29; Hanafi, 2012, pp. 67-69). Although, today, these residences are overcrowded, not to say oversaturated, and lack proper infrastructure among others (Habitat for Humanity, 2016), they have also extended to 17 Palestinian camps (Sirhan, 1974, p.91; Amiri, 2016).<sup>50</sup>

Except for 43 informal Palestinian settlement, such as Qasmiyeh Southern Lebanon, residents of those Palestinian camps are recognized by the Lebanese government to be run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (hereafter, UNRWA) and their residents therefore are protected from eviction. Today, some originally Palestinian refugee camps have been outnumbered by Syrian refugee tenants, such in the case of Shatila camp in Beirut where 60 percent of its residents are Syrians (Habitat for Humanity, 2018).

With time, and given the magnitude of the influx, managing the unexpected massive flow of the Syrian people was overwhelming for the Lebanese public agencies, due to lack of pre-established national crisis management mechanisms and where “Lebanese government’s wider *laissez faire* attitude and self-perceived role of facilitator and enabler instead of an actor of reconstruction” prevails the wide scenario of aid and welfare (Hamieh and Ginty, 2011, p.207). Hence, the Lebanese government opted ad-hoc not to officially open formal camps for Syrian refugees and accepted their dispersal in informal settlements instead.

---

<sup>50</sup> Among the official camps, some are located in Beirut such as Shatila, Bourj al-Brajne, Mar Elias; the Dbayeh camp not too far from capital; others in the very North of Lebanon such as Nahr al-Bared and Beddawi camp; three near Tyr in the South: Burj Shemali, El-Bass and Rashidiyeh; two near Sidon: called Ain al-Helwe and Miyeh Miyeh; and one near Baalbak: Wavel camp.

Interestingly, this policy was inspired by the UNHCR at the outset of the crisis, as indicated by Dana Suleiman, the Agency's spokesperson: "at the beginning of the Syrian crisis when the number of refugees was still manageable, even the UNHCR thought of integrating Syrian refugees within Lebanese society to prevent their marginalization and persecution from the local communities." (International Monetary Fund, 2014, p.5) However, it is worth noting that refugees in Lebanon have no official status because the country is not State party to neither the 1951 Convention nor the 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees. This officially renders them guests of "temporary hospitality," (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2016) and grants the country leeway allowing it not to be legally bound to meet international minimum standards of living<sup>51</sup> for refugees when hosting them (Human Rights Watch, 2016).<sup>52</sup>

#### *Rented apartments*

Following the adopted non-settlement policy by the local government, without which the Syrian refugees would have been confined to a specific location of limited mobility, similar to the case of their settlements in the Zaatari camp in Jordan, home to 78,597 refugees by 2019 (Relief Web, 2019), the refugee families scattered all over Lebanon. However, their massive demand for housing, since the vast majority of the Syrian refugees chose to live in apartments (Op. Cit., Kabalan, 2016, p.12), was quick to cause "an increase in rental prices and a shortage of available housing" (p.14) as reported by the UNHCR in 2013, only two years after the outbreak of the war

---

<sup>51</sup> The International Organization for Migration defines the "international minimum standards" as: "The doctrine under which non-nationals benefit from a group of rights directly determined by public international law, independently of rights internally determined by the State in which the non-national finds him or herself. A State is required to observe minimum standards set by international law with respect to treatment of non-nationals present on its territory (or the property of such persons), (e.g., denial of justice, unwarranted delay or obstruction of access to courts are in breach of international minimum standards required by international law)." (IOM(a), n.d.)

<sup>52</sup> Under international laws States are required to provide minimum standards of treatment for the refugees—or any 'alien' person present on States' territory and his/her properties. Refugees are thus entitled to State's protection, while incidents such as the obstruction of access to courts, unwarranted delays to court, and/or forced repatriation despite threats of persecution and similar others, breach minimal international standards.

in Syria. Then as Syrian families' savings got depleted in expensive Lebanon, especially due to miscalculation of the protracted nature of their situation, the body of literature started registering growing incidents of exploitation related to their housing. Reports indicated that those refugees living in apartments were either subject to Lebanese landlords demanding higher rent or accepting sub-standard accommodation conditions, while female heads-of-households reported having been approached for sexual favors in exchange of their rent (Jones and Ksaifi, 2016, pp.3, 12).

Moreover, between the years 2011 and 2012, inflation rates in the country witnessed a sudden increase from 3.1 percent to 10.1 percent (UNDP, 2013, p.13), particularly hitting the food and rent prices (World Bank, 2013, p.46),<sup>53</sup> hence, affecting both the refugees and Lebanese poor class (OECD, 2014, p.10). Therefore, within one year only, between the month of June 2012 and June 2013, a 44 percent of rent increase was reported in certain areas (Op. Cit., Cherri, et. al., 2016) and in some other regions in the capital Beirut, the increase went from 20 percent to a 100 percent (IMF, 2014, p.5). Similarly, the World Bank indicated that the "increased demand in the housing market has put upward pressure on rent prices." (Op. Cit., 2013, pp.46, 54) Adding that the housing problem has not only affected Syrian refugees but also Lebanese citizens (Ibid., pp.116, 122).

#### b) Initial residence and a problematic local integration

The following geographic differences will show to be playing a role in refugees' lives, pertaining to their relationship with the Lebanese community and their personal social networks, as an investigative Part II of YSRs' available social capital through their families. It is worth noting that with respect to the refugees' social network in Lebanon, only those who had established a pre-crisis social network, either by having previously worked in Lebanon or having familial ties with

---

<sup>53</sup> Lebanese inflation data related to rent prices is undertaken every three years only, therefore, "inflation is expected to be underestimated." (Op. Cit., World Bank, 2013)

the Lebanese community, were able to benefit from their aggregate social capital. This trend was captured by our survey when inquiring refugees of who they would turn to in case of trouble. It seemed that whoever the family reported knowing from among their Lebanese network, had been established pre-crisis, otherwise, despite having been in Lebanon for a long period of time, their length of stay did not build on their integrative relationship with the Lebanese community.

**Beirut:** One of the immediate implications to the non-encampment policy mentioned above, is what numerous reports and media outlets documented: Dozens of violent attacks against Syrian refugees, of which the majority were perpetrated in places of low-income Lebanese residents with high concentration of Syrian refugees (Carpi, et. al., 2016, p.9). Such neighborhoods are in the Capital city, like al-Nabaa, Zoqaq al-Blat, Bourj Hammoud, and in Beirut's southern suburbs like al-Lailaki, and Hay al-Sellom (Human Rights Watch, 2014a).

**Tripoli:** By March 2012, new refugees started settling mostly in Northern Lebanese cities like Tripoli and Wadi Khalid, which also later ignited sectarian conflicts and clashes between Alawites and Sunni population. These events critically influenced the government's response to Syrian refugees in the months of August-September 2014—after the Aarsal battle—only limiting entry to Lebanon for those Syrian refugees who can prove exceptional humanitarian cases (Kullab, 2014).<sup>54</sup> But also, the Aarsal incidents further contributed to the growing hostility between refugees and their host by 2014; as more attacks were perpetrated against the Syrian refugee population, as well as more assaults and threatening flyers prompting them to leave the neighborhood, were registered at local governorates level (Human Rights Watch, 2014b).

---

<sup>54</sup> Which by October 23, 2014, the UNHCR had not yet received details regarding what the Lebanese General Security Office apparatus considers a humanitarian case for entry, according to the UNHCR country representative Ninette Kelley.

**The Bekaa:** Even before the influx of the Syrian refugees, Akkar and Hermel registered high poverty rates, with Lebanese living below poverty lines detected in remote areas of Northern Lebanon, and so is the case of Nabatiyeh in **the South**. In fact, the percentage of deprived Lebanese households was 25 percent in 2004, according to the UNHCR report entitled: “the Mapping of Living Conditions.”<sup>55</sup> Adding that 34 percent of the Lebanese residents live in poverty, among which “6.6 percent lived in very low satisfaction conditions and extreme deprivation.” (UNDESA, 2008, p.11) And the effect of which is the abandonment of agricultural lands and the growing trend of rural-urban displacement, pushing rent further in escalation (UNDP, 2013).

Despite this bleak image, the Syrian refugees moved to these places, especially to work in agriculture. Up until the point that today, some villages in the Bekaa have minority Lebanese citizens, as one report suggests; “[i]n a growing number of communities it is not unusual to find that Syrians now outnumber Lebanese. The village of Bar Elias, for example, reportedly has a population of 40,000 Lebanese and 80,000 Syrians” (Davies, 2014, pp.30-31).

In fact, the number of informal Syrian settlements is reported to be 4,881, especially located on or near agricultural terrains in the Bekaa, Baalbek-El Hermel, and Akkar, hosting 35 percent, 30 percent, and 19 percent of those settlements respectively (UNHCR, 2017b, p.81). And for a more concrete illustration of the scale of the Syrian refugees’ settlement in Bekaa, the valley of 120 kilometers long and 16 kilometers wide, is comprised of mostly wide fields of barren and agricultural lands that hosts 69 percent of the total number of informal settlements in Lebanon (2,564), making it the largest concentration of informal settlements in the World, with a population

---

<sup>55</sup> The report measured poverty rates in Lebanon based on the Unsatisfied Basic Needs approach (UBN), which includes housing, water and sewage, education, and other income related indicators.

of 365,555 registered refugees (OCHA, n.d.). This reality poses growing fears of radicalization of the masses, both among Syrian refugees and Lebanese citizens, especially with the absence of trust in the Lebanese government ever felt among Lebanese citizens.

Other contributing factors to the refugees' daily challenges, making them face particular local-level rejection, pertains to the previously mentioned Lebanese-Syrian relationship and political context; by October 2014, the Human Rights Watch traced at least 45 curfew banners imposed at local municipalities' level (Op. Cit., 2014b). The international organization indicates, nevertheless, that this measure may have been "retaliation" reactions for the clashes that took place in August 2014, between the Lebanese Army and Syrian extremist groups taking refuge in the Sunni-populated village of Arsal,<sup>56</sup> as previously mentioned. Such internationally recognized illegal act<sup>57</sup> against a person's freedom of movement may have acquired some moral justification among Lebanese citizens after incidents in Arsal and thus, became widely accepted as legitimate means of protection, especially in urban areas (Op. cit., Carpi, et. al., 2016, pp.24, 30, 34).

Those locally adopted 'preventive mechanisms,' from petty crimes like theft, robbery, and harassment that became associated with Syrian refugees (Carpi, et. al., 2016, p.27), strengthened locals' sense of belonging to the Lebanese community and increased social cohesion against a common target perceived as threat: the Syrian refugees (Ibid., pp. 36-37). Another repercussion, lies in the resulting public display of racism and discrimination against the refugee population and

---

<sup>56</sup> On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, the country witnessed clashes between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Islamist militants in the Lebanese border town of Arsal, known to have hosted anti-Assad rebel groups fleeing from the battles of Qusayr since June 2013 due to its proximity from across the Lebanese-Syrian porous borders (Civil Society Knowledge Centre, 2016). With time, the Lebanese town and its outskirts came to constitute a sanctuary for rebels in Syria and a "primary staging zone for rebels conducting reprisal attacks against Hezbollah targets within Lebanese territory." (Op. Cit., Brog, 2014)

<sup>57</sup> Illegal because a municipality's jurisdiction does not include enforcing curfews.

the ostensible legitimization of their exclusion, further contributing to the Syrians' hardships and vulnerabilities.

Finally, as previously stated, the Syrian refugees majorly moved to areas where poor Lebanese, Palestinians and generally low-skilled, blue-collar workers were most concentrated. Research also suggests there exists a politico-sectarian dimension to their choice of their settlement location. However, it seems that the politico-sectarian dimension of their move was ill-based: stemming from the perception of the refugee newcomers of being more welcome in Sunni localities or resulting from the misinformation of their relatively new social networks rather than backed by facts on the ground. As the Syrian refugees thought their move to a Sunni-majority residential area like Tripoli would grant them safety, or if they lived in a city allied to the Assad regime, such in the South of a Shiite majority, they would feel safer (Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014). However, incidents on the ground show that the massive impact of the Syrian refugees protracted crisis on the socioeconomic livelihood of their host-society left little room for a variant grade of tolerance among local Lebanese, regardless of the sectarian affiliations or political inclinations of their host community.

Such was portrayed by Hasan, a boy living in Sidon (25 years old) who described his experiences in Tyr before moving to the capital of the South:<sup>58</sup> His brother and him were subject to more scrutiny and control when they lived in Tyr, until they relocated a few miles up north to settle in Sidon where they are much more comfortable going in and out more freely.<sup>59</sup> His anecdote may fall under the 'night curfew' policy and 'regulating foreigners' freedom of movement'

---

<sup>58</sup> Both cities are in the South, but Sidon being the capital of the South, is closer to Beirut (43 km), is bigger in area size, has a bigger economy, and in terms of demography, its residents are more heterogeneous between Sunni and Shiite residents majorly. Although it is politically under Sunni-mainstream-party influence. Whereas Tyr is heavily populated by a pro-Hezbollah Lebanese community, an Assad ally of a Shiite majority residents.

<sup>59</sup> During a one-on-one interview near the shore in the Sidon, conducted in September 2018.

measures adopted by some municipalities, especially in urban areas of a homogeneous sectarian nature like Tyr (Op. cit., Carpi, et. al., 2016, pp.2-3).

The complexity of the scenario even required aid agencies and humanitarian organizations to pay more attention to area-specific sensitivities and deliver development projects that factor local dynamics into their programs (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014).

#### c) Refugees' distribution in numbers: The Where and Why of their settlements' location

In Lebanon, there is a geographic dimension to how well-settled the Syrian refugee community are. Things like, low rent, high employment opportunities, low cost of living and commute were all, even a sectarian consideration was deliberated, contributing to the level of their vulnerability, as previously maintained. Therefore, it is crucial to present the following data on the Syrian refugees' settlement in Lebanon.

For the statistics behind Syrian refugees' demographic distribution in Lebanon, we resorted to the annexed Figure 1 entitled: "Mapping of the Refugee Population in Lebanon" based on available data on the distribution of Syrian refugees registered on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (UNHCR, 2018g). On a total population of 952,562 Syrian refugees, the annexed Table 6, illustrates the percentage of the Syrian refugee population by governorate in Lebanon, as we calculated. In numbers (UNHCR, 2018c),<sup>60</sup> the population of Syrian refugees living in Beirut and its urban metropolitan area of 85 square kilometers only, is 18,999 registered at the UNHCR by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and 231,162 individuals registered in Mount Lebanon governorate (UNHCR, 2018c).<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> A detailed set of data for each governorate separately are not available for the latest published map of registered number of Syrian refugees mentioned in the paragraph above, and to which belongs Table 4 for September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Instead, for a detailed account of each governorate's number of households, the author resorted instead to earlier detailed data available for a previous map report dated July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> By July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the number of individuals registered in Mount Lebanon governorate, used to be 235,480, including 54,798 household (a drop of 1.8%).

Mount Lebanon provides a backdrop to the capital, where work opportunities are highest at the national level (VASyR-2017, p.9), and when the percentage of the Syrian population registered in those two governorates are combined, they come in 1<sup>st</sup> place in hosting refugees, with 26.5 percent of the Syrian population registered by the UNHCR located there (Op. Cit., Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2017, p.141).<sup>62</sup>

The Bekaa valley and the Baalbak-El Hermel governorates host 338,577 individuals by September 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 (UNHCR, 2018d).<sup>63</sup> When combined, those two governorates alone host the highest concentration of the refugee population in Lebanon (amounting to 35.5 percent), followed by Akkar Governorate in 5<sup>th</sup> place individually (11 percent), as one of the governorates that is witnessing an increase (1.3 percent within a two months period) of the number of Syrian refugee residents there, with 104,296 individuals (UNHCR, 2018a).<sup>64</sup> Going back to the previously discussed *rationale* behind Syrian refugees' choice of their settlement location, when combined those three bordering governorates to the Syrian territories have come to host almost half of the total population of Syrian refugees registered at the UNHCR (46.5 percent) (Op. Cit., Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2017, p.140)

The landscape of Syrian refugees' concentration is now changing at the governorate level, as between September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and July 31<sup>st</sup> of the same year—a period of two months only—the number of the Syrian population registered to be living in Beirut at the UNHCR dropped by 2.63% (514 people) from 19,513 registered Syrian individuals, including 4,990 registered household, to 18,999 people (Op. Cit., UNHCR, 2018c). This may be due to refugees' being

---

<sup>62</sup> Used to be ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> place hosting refugees, with 29 percent of the Syrian population registered by the UNHCR located there by July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, therefore indicating a higher 'retention rate' of Syrian refugees in the capital and its suburbs compared to other governorates where refugees seem to be relocating out from.

<sup>63</sup> Used to host 340,592 individuals, including 76,358 household by end of July of the same year (a drop of 0.6%).

<sup>64</sup> The governorate used to host 105,727 individuals, including 25,562 households.

repatriated to a country of permanent asylum, have gone back to Syria, or stopped pursuing registration at the UNHCR due to diminishing financial incentives to do so. However, the numbers presented in this section also indicates a local displacement among Syrian refugees, who seem to be moving Southward (2% increase of the refugee population there) or to bordering areas to Syria in the North, such in Akkar. The significance of the percentage comes with the short period of two months between the registered data by the UNHCR.<sup>65</sup>

## B. The Importance of a Pre-crisis Social Network

Due to the historical complexity of the Syrian-Lebanese relations, the geographic location of the Syrian refugees and their settlement is of particular significance pending the existence of a pre-crisis social network or not. Moreover, another element of significance pertains to their time of arrival to Lebanon, which means we must distinguish between those who came early at the outbreak of the war, those who came after 2014,<sup>66</sup> and those who had been in the country for over two and three decades.

Depending on the period of escalation of the combat in Syria around their geographic areas of residence, Syrian people made-up of families, parents, children, aunts, grandparents, cousins, and neighbors of all social backgrounds, took refuge in Lebanon with whatever valuables they were able to carry. Apart from wealthy Syrians who moved straight to high-class residential areas of the Capital, like Ramlat al-Baida at the coast or the vibrant town of Hamra, those fleeing remote areas in Syria, like Deir ez-Zur and Qamishli, settled directly among Lebanese and Palestinian societies in low-rent neighborhoods (Shoufi, 2015). But, to answer who informed their choice of

---

<sup>65</sup> Table n. 6, entitled: "Percentage of the Syrian refugee population by governorate in Lebanon."

<sup>66</sup> After one week of the Lebanese government introducing measures to curb the influx of the Syrian refugees in June 2014, the number of refugees entering Lebanon legally dropped fiercely from 8000 to 3000 people a day after (Haid, 2015).

residence? In the following, we highlight the role of Syrian refugees' social network during their forced displacement influencing their decision of where to settle in Lebanon.

In migration theory, social networks are defined as being “sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin.” (Massey et al., 1993, p.448) A classic sociological definition of a network considers it as “any social group held together by direct, personal knowledge and interaction between people, established through regular face-to-face, telephone or online contacts.” (Vacca, et. al., 2018, p.73)

This network of social interactions and personal relationships involve friends, relatives, and virtual contacts of people who may have been met in the physical dimension or who belong to the virtual world only, yet with whom the connection is made possible through social media platforms. Regardless of their nature, social networks are seen to have influenced the protracted refugee crisis as they contributed to the information experience and social digital connectedness of the Syrian population, who have been torn between internal displacement, as part of the refugee wave in neighboring host-countries or have made it to a refugee-migrant welcoming country.

## a) Linking geographic distribution to Employment and Housing

### Beirut

The 19.8 square kilometers agglomeration of Beirut cannot be clearly divided on geographic sectarian lines, however, there are areas of exclusive Christian, Muslim and Druze residents around its outskirts and surrounding governorate of Mount Lebanon (Annexed Figure 1).<sup>67</sup> The surface area of Beirut and Greater Beirut, where 42 percent of Lebanese businesses are located, amount to

---

<sup>67</sup> Annexed Figure n.10 entitled: “UNHCR Mapping of the Refugee Population in Lebanon.” (UNHCR, 2018g).

233.2 square kilometers. With a population density of 6,200 inhabitants per square kilometers in what only represents 2.2 percent of Lebanese territories (Faour, and Mhawej, 2014, p.943), this informs how compact the city is with hospitals, schools, universities, job opportunities, services, and entertainment facilities conveniently available to its residents. Beirut residents are diverse at the sociopolitical level too, however, its average expenditure is higher than other governorates, which attracted wealthy Syrian refugees who either had the capital to open a business in the city or have had a preexisting social network of close relatives (cousins, uncles, aunts) who would help in finding cheap accommodation in low-income neighborhoods of Beirut.

In terms of their *employment*, Syrian nationals have been working in construction sites for more than thirty years before the crisis, but with Greater Beirut and Mount Lebanon having had a demographic expansion resulting in increased housing demands, this attracted low-skilled newcomer Syrian refugees who had no pre-established social network in the country (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014). 60 percent of the male population in Beirut fall in the age range of 20 to 29 years old, and there is a higher male population in the capital (52%) than females (48%) (VASyR-2018, p.19). This not only evidences the higher availability of job opportunities in Beirut, but also prompts the existence of working age single male Syrian refugees who either have their families living back in Syria or in smaller Lebanese cities of a lower household expenditure rate.

According to the latest data by the UNHCR portal, there are 207,286 Syrian refugees living in Beirut, which amounts to 23.5 percent of the total number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon (UNHCR, 2018h). The Syrian refugees' living in Beirut and Mount Lebanon amount to 20 percent of the registered refugee population at the UNHCR (Ajluni and Kawar, 2015, p.34). The vast majority of Syrian refugees work in low to medium-skilled jobs, as defined by the ILO

to be involving simple and routine physical tasks (Ibid.). In a study conducted by Oxfam in 2017, only 4 percent of the Syrian respondents had written contracts compared to 30 percent of the study's Lebanese respondents (Leaders consortium, 2019, p.11).

However, it is less common in Beirut for the Syrian refugees to work without a contract or as informal workers because the established businesses there are far from being micro enterprises more common to employ refugees under illegal conditions.<sup>68</sup> Despite that, according to the Human Rights Watch, the Syrian refugees face exploitative treatment on all Lebanese territories regardless of signing a work agreement. Where Syrians had reported not filling legal complaints against Lebanese abuse either due their missing legal status, work permit, or out of fear for losing residency. Moreover, they do not believe that the Lebanese judicial system would bring them justice, which further deepens their disadvantaged status and increases the exploitative incidents they face (Bobseine, et al., 2016).

At the level of the residential arrangements and *accommodation* types of the Syrian refugee families living in Lebanon, among the conducted focus groups discussions, the participants who lived with their parents stayed in private housing,<sup>69</sup> with male figures staying home after marriage and females moving out to their in-laws' in Beirut. Single male participants who came to Lebanon without their parents had a shared room rented along with other Syrian nationals especially in the South and Tripoli (5 to 10 people in one room for 100 USD or 50 USD each). While those whom we encountered living in informal settlements<sup>70</sup> were located in Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa.

---

<sup>68</sup> Most commonly defined as working without contract, without work permit, in unregistered businesses, or not receiving national security (Leaders' consortium, 2019, p.9).

<sup>69</sup> Those are rented apartments of an average size of 2.2 rooms, a kitchen, and amenities.

<sup>70</sup> By definition, informal settlements constitute non-residential buildings, such as unfinished buildings and tented spaces. Those are most likely to be changed (13%) compared to residential shelters, and non-permanent facilities (11% and 6% respectively). (Op. Cit., VASyR-2018, p.49)

According to the VASyR-2018, Beirut has the highest proportion of overcrowded shelters at 45 percent where “The average surface area of refugee homes was 41 square meters, typically including two rooms, with six people sharing the living space in such a way that three to four people shared a room.” (Op. Cit., p.48)<sup>71</sup> This explains why one third of the respondents to this study did not want to specify their home size or give clues about its condition, yet it is reported in the VASyR-2018 that 84% of refugees’ shelters had damaged roof, 70% lived in spaces that are in danger of collapse, and 52% had damaged columns in their place of residence (Op. Cit., p.46).

The following anecdote from the field highlights different dimensions of the plight of Syrian refugees at the level of their housing and their residential experience in Beirut: Upon conducting the first interview with her, Ruba, was living nearby the place where we met for the interview. She is 24 years old, newly married, and living in an apartment along with her husband and two brothers-in-law, their wives, and children. She was satisfied about it, as otherwise, she said, she would have been bored without no one to talk to. During daytime, she spent her day with her two sisters-in-law and their children. However, on the second occasion that we met Ruba, she and her husband had relocated from that place she had lived in *Hai l Lija*, Beirut along with her in-laws specifically because “rent is too expensive in Beirut.” As part of 15% households who had relocated to cheaper accommodation in 2018 (an increase of six percent in one year),<sup>72</sup> Ruba moved 73 kilometers away from the capital city of Beirut to Qalamun, located 1 hours away in the North governorate where she is closer to her own family living in Tripoli. Even though we did not see her new apartment, Ruba expressed not being satisfied with it, saying: “*the only good thing about this current apartment is the view.*”<sup>73</sup> She then informed us that they will leave it as soon

---

<sup>71</sup> See annexed Figure 2, entitled: “Percentage of households living in overcrowded shelters.”

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp.5, 49.

<sup>73</sup> During a one-on-one interview in Beirut, conducted on April 23, 2018.

as they find a better place, adding her concern that it will take some time before they find a suitable place because, as she continued saying: “*there is high demand on small-sized apartments,*” so they could not find even the current one they lived in easily. It is worth noting here that Ruba found this place through the connection of one of her husband’s friends, which testifies to refugees’ mobile phone use and their heavy dependence on for assistance in their day to day lives. Moreover, Ruba’s mention of the dimension of time, that they will have to wait a while before moving out again, prompts the inconvenience of having to move, including what it entails of feeling unstable and unsettled. In fact, the average number of times in which the Syrian refugees have had to move houses is more than 1.5 times in 2013 already, with a significant increase in later years (Beirut Research and Innovation Center, 2013). Also, Ruba noted that she has been feeling more bored now that she lives alone. Indicating that it is not regarded as a *compromise* in the Syrian family to be sharing space with relatives: Besides having someone for company while the husband is at work, it is actually taken positively at numerous levels, including lower financial burden born by rent and shared cost of living and cooking, etc.

Central Bekaa (a region to the East of the Lebanese coast)

As per the UNHCR Syrian refugee response portal, as of July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the Bekaa valley is host to the highest number of Syrian refugee population in Lebanon (38.4 %) (Op. Cit., UNHCR, 2018h). There are on average 63 Syrian refugee in the Bekaa governorate to each 100 Lebanese citizens (Op. Cit., Ajluni and Kawar, 2015, p.34), and some areas have even a higher proportion of Syrian residents than Lebanese—one reason previously stated is the existence of the Masnaa border crossing checkpoint with Syria. In such cases as in the town of Aarsal, there have been sectarian conflicts between adjacent Sunni and Shiite populated areas, which not only undermined

the security of Lebanese territories but also provoked local hostility against the Syrian refugee community (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2019, p.56).

54 percent of the Syrian refugee population living in the Bekaa are below 18 years old and the size of the household in the valley is larger than those families living in Beirut (4.8 members in 2017) because of the high cost of living in the capital and the size of its apartments there (Op. Cit., VASyR-2018, p.19). Moreover, agricultural lands are widespread in the Bekaa, they account for 49 percent of total used agricultural areas in Lebanon, along with its main livestock production area and dairy farm industry that amount to 44 percent of the total farming land. This attracted the refugee population of a larger household size<sup>74</sup> to work in cultivating, farming, and picking up agricultural produce, which explain why 74.8 percent of children work in the agriculture sector according to the UNICEF's Labour Survey in 2019 (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2019, p.46). In addition to the availability of construction work sporadically scattered across the valley, as well as manufacturing and industrial facilities located there (43%), attracting cheap low-skilled manual labour (Investment Development Authority of Lebanon(b), n.d).

The Syrian refugees in the Bekaa lived in *accommodation* facilities depending on their household income: Either they could afford formal apartments or resorted to informal tented settlements and camps.<sup>75</sup> As we interviewed a Syrian family living in a tented setting in the Bekaa in June 2018, it is insightful to describe their domestic lifestyle inside the tent to not only shed light about the minimalist lifestyle they are leading but to better understand the argument

---

<sup>74</sup> 7 to 9 members in one family, larger than the average Syrian refugee family size of 4.9 members. Additionally, each dwelling hosted 6.7 persons as a mean number of people per dwelling, which indicates that the household residents included members of extended family, not only the nuclear family. (Ibid., p.19, 66.)

<sup>75</sup> Tents are made up of a collection of old fabric previously used as potato bags, advertising canvas, plastic tarps, thin wood plates or transparent nylon. (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2019, p.66).

pertaining to the importance of their mobile phones and how it came to play a fundamental function in their lives, specifically given the scarcity of the resources available to them as described below.

The tent is located behind a big mall in an industrial neighborhood in the city of *Taanayel*. It is located seven minutes away by car from the dairy farm where all 5 male members (aged 25, 23, 21, 16, and 15 years old) of the family work, however it is not within walking distance from the farm because the roads in the Bekaa are wide and distances are far, spread along a surface area of 1,433 square kilometers compared to how compact is the municipality of Beirut and Sidon (of 18 km<sup>2</sup> and 7 km<sup>2</sup> respectively). The participant refugee family paid only \$100 USD for renting the space from a Lebanese landlord, and it was the family who set up the tent themselves, after having lived just meters away from a bigger informal settlement that used to have a majority of Iraqi refugees. After that most of the Iraqis had been resettled in Canada and the US, the tents became populated by Syrian newcomers, with some Iraqi refugees still living there until their repatriation, ultimately.

We completed the interviews outside the tent for lack of air inside as they explained to me. Cross-legged on the floor, the futons we sat on are also the ones they used for sleeping. The tent inside is only furnished with carpets covering the sandy ground underneath and an old TV set with antenna. But the room is wide, separated from another room with a hanging floor carpet as well. The bedrooms also have those futons we were sitting on outside. Those were a donation by the UNHCR and there are more futons than there are family members from what we observed. The tent is divided into 3 room partitions, to each son and his wife one room while the single siblings and grandchildren sleep with their grandparents in the biggest unfurnished living room area where the TV is placed. The toilet is an old model not a seat and it is located outside the tent near the kitchen counter where we had sat initially. All 5 male members of the family work at the dairy

farm and share their salary with their father at the end of the month. Behind the tent, the family brought livestock from the farm and collectively bought others to produce dairy products to accommodate the big family in reducing the household expenditure. This is specifically necessary in the Bekaa where 41% of the household income was spent on food and 74% of the residents there reported being severely food insecure (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2019, pp.39, 41). Alongside livestock, chicken and pigeons were raised in simple wooden huts, in addition to one rooster, one turtle and two rabbits, surrounded by several plants and bushes that served to define the property size.

At the level of the socioeconomic status, the Syrian household expenditure in the Bekaa was reported lower than other governorates with local districts variations (highest in West Bekaa, then lower in Hermel and Zahle, respectively) (Ibid., p.41). Those findings also imply that children in the Bekaa governorate suffered their family's low SES, which reflected in the low level of educational pursuit among children, and the high child labour rates and child marriage (Ibid., p.43). Moreover, this grim scenario contributed in their being exposed to social violence and discrimination, given their lack of formal education and need for work, which indorses their exploitation (Ibid., pp.50, 56).

## Tripoli

Tripoli is the second largest city in Lebanon in terms of population, it is located only 30 kilometers away from the Syrian border. It is home to the second Syrian-Lebanese entry point, the Arida Border Crossing, through which the Syrian refugees had fled for refuge since 2011. The metropolitan city of Tripoli is located North over an area of 42 square kilometers, it hosts the highest number of residents living under poverty line,<sup>76</sup> with 70 percent of its labour force working

---

<sup>76</sup> Serving on less than \$2.40 USD per person/day according to the United Nations (Op. Cit., Parker and Maynar, 2018, p.12).

in an underpaid industrial sector and in wholesale trading activities (mainly furniture, olives cultivation and olive oil export) (Investment Development Authority of Lebanon(c), n.d.). In addition to peoples' struggles pertaining their health, housing and education, other challenges swamping residents there, include: high unemployment, a struggling economy, and a weak infrastructure. This has contributed to the emergence of pockets of poverty of higher than the national average rate (Ismail, et al., 2017, p.5), and radicalized groups since the Lebanese civil war according to the UN-Habitat report of 2017 (Op. Cit., Parker and Maynar, 2018, p.12).

This gloomy situation was further amplified with the influx of Syrian refugees whom, as of July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, have reached 236,448 registered by the UNHCR portal, representing 26.9 percent of the overall Syrian refugee population living in Lebanon (Op. Cit., UNHCR, 2018h). As a result of the unequal competition for jobs, the overwhelmed labour market and strained infrastructural services, tension rose against the refugee population and the city witnessed violent battles, especially in the areas of Wadi Khalid and Abu Samra (Op. Cit., Parker and Maynar, 2018, p.13). Hence checkpoints, were only mentioned in the city of Tripoli as a mother of 52 years old stated:

*“I’m especially afraid from checkpoints [that they would stop any of her children without their legal papers] because it’s expensive to keep our papers legal and [that] to go to the Lebanese General [Directorate of State] Security is a whole [different] story [i.e., a challenge, of its own].”<sup>77</sup>*

In her short observation, the participant made reference to four fundamental challenges facing the Syrian refugees all over Lebanon, but most intensely in Tripoli: insecurity, destitute, irregular

---

<sup>77</sup> During a group discussion conducted in her home in Tripoli, in July 2018.

residency and mistreatment, all of which compound refugees' vulnerability and imply this mother's feeling of constant fear for her children.

First, out of the 91 participants to the questionnaire, only she was the one cited worrying about checkpoints. Those security checkpoints were enforced as part of the Lebanese security plan following the violent eruptions that had occurred in 2014 Tripoli as a result of political divides between the pro-Syrian Alawite community living in Jabal Mehsen and the newcomer Sunni Syrians of Bab el-Tebaneh, on the grounds of their conflicting stance on the Assad regime.<sup>78</sup> It's worth noting in this context that residents of the city of Tripoli are also Sunni Muslims and have initially empathized with the Syrian community before the deterioration of the socioeconomic and security situation there, which strengthens the stance that the challenges faced by refugee communities living anywhere in Lebanon is born by the multilevel of strains hitting the host Lebanese of minimal basic local resources, capabilities, and infrastructure, rather than a response to Syrians' personal religious affiliations. Surely, Syrian refugees have reported exceptional instances of abuse of a religious dimension in certain Christian municipalities in Lebanon (International Crisis Group, 2020), however, one cannot deny the majority of Christian communities' support for the refugees. Similarly, one should not mistake the Lebanese Sunni political parties' stance against the Assad regime as a sympathetic attitude towards the Sunni Syrian refugees' animosity to Assad. In fact, refugees recognize this, according to the VASyR-

---

<sup>78</sup> The Alawites are themselves Syrian nationals, they had been living in the city of Tripoli since the Lebanese civil war of 1975. They came to assist the Christian Maronites against the Palestinian Liberation Army, hence their presence date back to the times of the Syrian hegemony over the Lebanese political and security scene until came the official Syrian troops withdrawal from the country in 2005, following the assassination of late Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri as they were accused of the incident. Alawites are estimated at around 50,000 people living in Tripoli alone, they reside mainly in the neighborhood of Jabal Mehsen (Irani, 2016).

2018, where they reported competition for jobs, resources, and services as the main sources for the tension with their host community (Op. Cit., p.32).

Second, the participant observation made reference to the high cost of legalizing their status and renewing their documents for residency. She insinuated in her statement that all family members have no valid residency documents or work permits and hence, they live in constant fear from being caught. In fact, the Overseas Development Institute released a working paper in 2018 stating that 75 percent of the Syrian refugees living in Lebanon lacked legal residency status (Grandi, et al., 2018, p.7). To refugee families in the Northern city of Tripoli, however, this extra source of expenditure particularly constrained them where 9 out of 10 resident refugees living there had reported borrowing money to cover essential needs (Ibid., p.98). Even when it comes to food consumption, as detected by the VASyR-18, the North registered the highest food-related coping strategy by governorate, as well as the highest level of food-insecurity (Op. Cit., pp.121, 130). It is understood how such a socioeconomically strained scenario would push the refugees living in the North towards adopting a measure to reduce their burden through child marriage, where most incidents took place in Tripoli at 34% compared to the Bekaa (a governorate east of Lebanon), El Nabatieh (a city in the South) and Beirut (27%, 26%, and 23%, respectively). (Ibid., p.37)

Points three and four are intertwined below:

Third, in May 2014, three years after the start of the Syrian crisis, the UNHCR reached its first million registered Syrian refugees, rendering Lebanon the highest per capita host of refugees in the world (LSE Middle East Centre 2014, p.13). This is when the Lebanese government took

steps to effectively reduce the influx of Syrian refugees and hence changed its policy response towards the newcomer refugees, after that their impact was too large to deny.

It was only until then that the then formed National Interest Government voiced its concerns over the massive influx of Syrian refugees in such a formal framework as its Ministerial Statement, under the leadership of the then appointed Prime Minister Tammam Salam on February 15, 2014 (The Republic of Lebanon, 2014). Going from a full-fledged open-door policy to an undeclared series of measures to restrict the flood of Syrian refugees that culminated finally in the official pronouncement of tightening measures. As a reflection of this, in June 2014, the Government pursued three goals in its Policy Statement relative to the status of Syrian refugees:

- “1) deny access to Syrians coming from areas which are not contiguous to Lebanon;
- 2) review the status of refugees and remove refugee status from those who are in Lebanon for economic reasons or who have travelled back to Syria since arriving in Lebanon;
- 3) promote the establishment of camps inside Syria or in the no-man’s land between the two countries.” (UNHCR, 2015c, p.3)

Along these lines, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities declared that as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2014, the Syrian refugees with Refugee status would lose their status upon their return to Syria, if they wished to re-enter Lebanon. By June 4<sup>th</sup>, the Minister of Social Affairs denied entry for those refugees coming from areas considered safe or under Syrian government control (OCHA, 2014, p.4). It goes without saying how this has contributed to the vulnerability of the refugees and rendered their pursuit for legal documents a dreadful and expensive requisite “due to complex bureaucracy, prohibitive paperwork and high fees or inconsistent application of policies.” (Op. Cit., Grandi, et al., 2018, p.7)

Four, besides the expensive maintenance of a residency status and work permit, the refugees seeking legal documents have reported bad treatment they faced by the staff of the General Security Office (hereafter, GSO) and the ISF. They also expressed negative sentiments of indignity that they felt going there, especially after mid-2015 when restrictions to refugee employment were adopted by the Ministry of Labour (Op. Cit., Ismail et al., 2017, p.7). When their most basic human right of being recognized as resident refugees, capable of working without the constant threat of being caught or deported, they became more exposed to exploitation, abuse, humiliation, and mistreatment, which hampered their movement and denied them from living a dignified life in displacement (Op. Cit., p.15). On a more positive note, the GSO allowed for the children who have reached the age of 15 to 18 after entering Lebanon to apply for a temporary residency permit, so they could have access to healthcare, education, and freedom of movement (Ibid., p.12).

The complex situation in the city of Tripoli, made the refugees report having made the least frequency of daily interaction with their Lebanese host at 27% compared to other geographic areas (Op. Cit., VASyR-2018, p.31), including the predominantly Shiite-populated South, which once again weakens the argument that presents refugees' place of residence or choice of residence as factored by a sectarian or religious dimension. One of the results of their vulnerability, they also reported feeling hopeless about their current situation and that of their future prospects, as per the VASyR-2018.

In terms of their housing, the Syrian refugees living in Tripoli majorly reside in low to substandard rented apartments, with a lower percentage of them living in informal tented settlements compared to the ones described in the Bekaa. It is worth noting that the VASyR-2018 found a correlation between the types of residence and the percentage of refugees holding valid

permits, where the more modest is the accommodation the more likely it is for the refugee family to be lacking legal papers (Op. Cit., p.25, 26). Interestingly, Tripoli has witnessed a higher focus by international NGOs following armed conflict to reduce tension between local host and newcomer refugees,<sup>79</sup> which was reported to have stabilized the situation and slightly improved residents' overall status compared to 2017 (Op. Cit., VASyR-2018, p.10).

Sidon and Tyr (cities in the South)

The surface area of the metropolitan South is of 934 square kilometers where 11.2 percent of the total number of Syrian refugees reside, according to the UNHCR portal on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 (Op. Cit., UNHCR, 2018h). Sidon, Tyr and Jezzine constitute the main cities in the governorate: Sidon is considered under the patronage of the mainstream Sunni Future movement, Tyr heavily populated by Shiite and Jezzine mainly Christian (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014). In terms of business activities, the South majorly relies on agricultural production (fruits, olives, and citrus, respectively) followed by industrial produce.<sup>80</sup> The Syrian refugees living there, have either arrived in their early days of displacement or have moved to it gradually as they have escaped the Bekaa's harsh winters.

Although the South has the second highest *unemployment* rate after Akkar (53% and 54%, respectively) among adults, but for the YSRs between the age 15 and 24, we found highest employment rate (37%) compared to other governorates, mainly working in construction (36%)

---

<sup>79</sup> As a means of example of one of the programs implemented in Tripoli to help building vulnerable community resilience, is the one funded by the US Government's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), entitled: The Integrated Shelter and Protection Improvements programme for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Tripoli. The 4-phased program (2015-2019) was aimed to enhance cohesion between both communities and to provide a connection between residents and external stakeholders (municipality and CSOs). (Op. Cit., Parker and Maynar 2018, p.11).

<sup>80</sup> Industrial firms in the South represent 8% of the total number of companies existing in Lebanon, mainly involved in producing agro-food, furniture, machinery, and electrical appliances, respectively. (Investment Development Authority of Lebanon(d), n.d.).

and agriculture (28%) (Op. Cit., VASyR-2018, p.5, 109, 114, 115). In fact, refugees in the South were reported to have the highest percentage of holders of residency permits (38%) as opposed to the lowest being in the Bekaa (10%) (Ibid., p.25). Another positive figure is that of having the lowest number of child marriage instances in the South compared to other governorates (the highest being registered in the North) (Ibid., p.29). This positive image was also experienced by local and international NGOs working there, where “[t]he administrative structure, civil society capacity, and security situation are facilitating a more efficient and locally embedded humanitarian response [in the South] than in other areas.” (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014)

In terms of their *housing*, similar to house sizes in the Bekaa, the VASyR-2018 reported the South having bigger houses than the ones in Beirut and Tripoli (Op. Cit., p.12). Now when it comes to refugees’ freedom of movement and integration, the heavily securitized region of the South has made refugees feel subject to close scrutiny and control, with the highest percentage of curfews reported there (Ibid., p.33). Hence, the refugees living there had the highest percentage of negative description to their relationship with their local host and reported the highest percentage of feeling tension and low level of tension, compared to other governorates (least tension being registered in the Bekaa) (Ibid., p.32). However, the refugees then reported competition for jobs to be the main reason for this tension not their experienced treatment nor religious or political background.

## b) Timeframe and a pre-established social network

Although it is difficult to detect a specific date for the spillover effect of the influx of the Syrian Refugees into Lebanon because they had crossed the border to their neighboring host in a consistent manner since end of April 2011 with varied intensity—pending on when the fights in certain parts in Syria intensified and quelled—relevant to battles on the ground between April and

September of 2012 for instance. Nevertheless, the World Bank identified July 2012 (Schöpfer, 2015), as the time when the material spillover onto the social and economic Lebanese sectors were detected. This date signals the start of the Lebanese change of their perception about the Syrian refugees, victims of war, which took longer to be tangibly reflected on the grounds, practically until after the burst of the Arsal incident, as previously maintained.

It is important to stress the point here that the Syrian refugees have settled in poor neighborhoods of low rent, getting them in close geographic proximity with the Lebanese—and low-skilled expat communities—of blue collar who were most affected by their presence. For instance, in a study published jointly by Oxfam and others in 2016, some poor Lebanese households, who are typically short-term and seasonal semi-skilled laborers working in agriculture, construction, and the service sector, expressed “that their annual incomes have reduced by 25–30%.” (Ibid., p.10) Hence, following on the relatively brief description of the impact of the Syrian refugees’ influx, the initially praised Lebanese government non-encampment policy (Op. Cit., Janmyr, 2016b, p.7) created a worse set of problems for the Syrian refugees and subjected them to more exploitation by the Lebanese system and community according to numerous reports (Yahya et al., 2018, p.13; Op. Cit., VASyR-2017, p. 14). This explains refugees’ feeling of lack of integration in the Lebanese society (Lewig et al., 2009, p.36), which also plays a role in strengthening their social networks as well as pushes the young refugees into assuming a more active role in their mobile use, therefore directly influencing their social capital as will be detailed further in Part III.

One interesting occurrence to be noted in this context before we move back to the flow of refugees’ arrival periods, pertains to the historical relations between the two nations. Marianne Madoré’s study in 2016, investigated the causes of social stability and relative peacefulness in

Beirut despite the overwhelming local strains, felt by both Syrian refugees and their host. She identified one of the reasons for the relative accord in already low-income neighborhoods, such as the overpopulated Eastern suburbs of the Capital, to be stemming from the controlling and policing of public spaces undertaken at the level of local communities. Opposite to what one would think, the author showed that the previously mentioned passive imposition of unofficial curfews and rules of conduct in public spaces (Madoré, 2016), including for instance guidance of where to gather and how to behave in public, are among the major factors of stability in those neighborhoods.

Going back to refugees' periods of arrival, we were able to detect two different patterns presented in the following that are closely tied to their social networks.

#### *First batch*

The first wave was registered at the Lebanese Masnaa border crossing, located in central Bekaa, following the first Syrian government forces wide-scale military operation in Dar'aa (Van Vliet and Hourani, 2012, p.18), only one month after the start of the peaceful demonstrations in Syria (Rabil, 2016, p.23). This batch constitutes a refugee population of Syrian people with few to no information of a particular destination to settle in, or of the gravity of their displacement, as detailed below.

At first, their forced circumstances to flee seeking refuge and safety in neighboring Lebanon, relied on their preexisting social network.<sup>81</sup> In that case, the *rationale* behind the geographic point of destination they targeted initially when making the forced move, is dictated by the area where their friends or relatives already lived in Lebanon, in the assumption that this would help them establish themselves more easily and with less cost (Op. Cit., Massey, et. al.,

---

<sup>81</sup> Annexed Table n.7, entitled: "YSRs' stated conditions and reasons for their flight to Lebanon".

1993, p.449). Their move to the neighboring country also goes in-line with reducing the risks that migration, as an alternative, would have entailed, as well as lowering its social, economic, and emotional costs, as established by MacDonald and MacDonald in 1964 who referred to such a deliberate act of moving as ‘chain migration.’ (Dekker and Engbersen 2012, p.5)

Other Syrian refugees who made it to Lebanon in 2011 without a pre-established network, chose to remain close by the Syrian territory; as they perceived their displacement to be temporary, they located themselves in close proximity to the border, particularly in the Bekaa valley (Op. Cit., OCHA, n.d.)<sup>82</sup> in convenient distance to Syria, then in Northern Lebanese cities like Tripoli and Wadi Khalid as primary destinations (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014) for Syrian refugees since the war intensified by March 2012 (Migration Policy Centre, 2016).

Moreover, following the escalation of the violence in other Syrian towns, those Syrian workers who had been living and working in Lebanon brought their families and relatives to where they stayed (International Rescue Committee, n. d., p.2).<sup>83</sup> Those may or may not be mobilized into Lebanon following threat to their safety. According to a joint report between WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF, from a total of 4,105 households of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon between 2013-2015, 78 percent came to Lebanon in the form of complete family units (VASyR-2015, p.22). However, these refugees of a pre-established social network of family, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances, were not necessarily at direct security risk in Syria.

---

<sup>82</sup> The Bekaa Valley comprise of mostly wide fields of barren and agricultural lands. The poor Bekaa region hosts 69% of the total number of unofficial settlements in Lebanon (2,564 Informal Settlements) making it the largest concentration of Informal Settlements in the World, with a population of 365,555 registered refugees.

<sup>83</sup> “North Lebanon: 194,000 (33%); Bekaa: 197,000 (34%); Beirut and Mount Lebanon: 111,000 (18%), South Lebanon: 74,000 (13%).”

Some reports posited that some Syrian families who had made the commute to Lebanon may have been encouraged by the initial benefits of aids and assistance offered by the UNHCR for holders of the Refugee status. Evidence of that lies in that by November 2015, 603,423 refugees were receiving monthly payments for food until the numbers changed following September of that year (UNHCR, 2015a, p.2). When the UN amended the number of those who can receive food assistance, limiting the payments to a maximum of 5 people per household, the new rule directly registered a decrease of 22 percent of the number of recipients in August. And a further reduction of 12.65% from those receiving food assistances was noted compared to figures from January and March of the same year (Ibid.). Another reason, encouraging taking refuge in Lebanon when security is not directly jeopardized, may also be explained by the exchange rate of the Lebanese Lira in comparison to the devaluating Syrian currency (The New Arab, 2016).

#### *Later batch*

After that, the later batch of Syrian refugees had started realizing that the war may be taking a more serious turn with the defection of 3,000 Syrian military officers (Khaddour, 2016) to join opposition groups and the militarization of the crisis by 2012. In fact, very rapidly after the militarization of the Syrian war, refugees crossing into Lebanon went from a couple thousands in March 2012 to 40,000 refugees by July of the same year (Weesjes, 2016),<sup>84</sup> when the world witnessed the “largest refugee outflow since Rwanda genocide,” with an average number of 6,000 people a day fleeing conflict zones in Syria (Ibid.).

By then, their motivation in seeking a settlement-destination, perhaps even choosing it by that time—as a mindful cognitive deliberation a couple years into the war—became primarily

---

<sup>84</sup> This is termed exodus by the Natural Hazards Center in Colorado.

based on their networks' accounts of higher work opportunities, lower rent, and lower living expenses. Only some cases of Syrian families preferred to move to certain areas based on "political, religious or cultural affiliation" as previously noted in the geocentric analysis of their primary place of residence (Lebanon Support and UNDP, 2015, p.17). However, for the Lebanese community at large, a Syrian citizens' sectarian or political affiliation—as Sunni Muslims, yet regardless of their pro-revolution or pro-Assad views—did not contribute to their integration and did not facilitate their acceptance by the Lebanese community once their situation became protracted and negatively perceived by locals.

The exception to this general local sentiment, albeit passive, is present in the Lebanese South being mostly populated by Pro-Hezbollah affiliates, where the Syrians living there felt higher social compassion from the local residents but still faced similar exploitative working conditions as other parts of the country. In fact, Southern municipalities were among those localities who registered curfews limiting the free physical mobility of the Syrian refugees, being mostly an emergent trend in Lebanese rural areas of homogeneous residents, regardless of the sectarian affiliation of the Lebanese residents' there (Op. cit., Carpi, et. al., 2016, pp.2-3). Similar examples were registered by authors Rosita and Daniel (2016), where among the Christian and Alawite communities living in the Northern rural area of Tal 'Abbas, the local Lebanese residents there felt more suspicious about the presence of Syrian refugees in their villages for socioeconomic reasons related to work, crime levels, and security problems, rather than for political or sectarian differences (Di Peri and Meier, 2016, p.19).

Nevertheless, the Syrian refugees in Lebanon travelled from their hometowns in Syria to relocate in various regions in Lebanon. The Figure 3-1 indicates the distribution of Syrian refugees

in Lebanon by region of origin.<sup>85</sup> In fact, the geographic distance from where most refugees came from in Syria to reach Beirut as a final destination is not farfetched; crossing from governorates of Homos (181.2 Km), Hama (231.5 Km), Aleppo (363.2 Km), or Idlib (335.6 Km), where 80 percent of the Syrian refugees originate from, takes a short ten hour drive by car from the farthest mentioned distance—if it wasn't for the numerous checkpoints distributed today along the road. While the remaining 20 percent (Op. Cit., World Bank, 2013, p.26) come from the capital of Damascus (116.7 Km), and the governorates of Daraa (225.2 Km), Hasakah (690.2 Km), and Deir Ezzor (545.3 Km).

To continue their journey, the Syrian refugees rented apartments around low-income to poor neighborhoods in the capital and its suburbs, then when the rent increased driven by demand due to the continuity of the crisis, newcomers have settled southeast, towards Aramoun, Bchamoun, and the vicinities of Mount Lebanon directorate. Finally, they kept heading southwards of Sidon, the capital of the South governorate, mostly towards the Palestinian camp of Ain al-Helweh there, then to Tyr (or *Sour*), before scattering around local cities.

It is worth noting here, as previously mentioned, that these overpopulated cheap locations and neighborhoods have also come to host the most extremely vulnerable cadasters of both refugee and local population at the national level (Op. Cit., Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2017, p.10) They have registered the most refugee households living in informal settlements (VASyR-2017, p.22; Op. Cit., Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2017,

---

<sup>85</sup> Annexed Figure n.11, entitled: "Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Place of Origin."

pp.140, 158),<sup>86</sup> and have the highest proportion of households with food-insecurity according to numerous reports (Ibid., Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2017, pp. 73,79).

In the North governorate, particularly El Minieh-Dennie and Tripoli, UNHCR registered 143,929 Syrian refugees (15 percent of the refugee population), (UNHCR, 2018h)<sup>87</sup> granting it 3<sup>rd</sup> rank at the national level. And finally, the South and Nabatieh governorates interestingly registered a 1.6 percent increase in their refugee population, within two months between July and September, 2018, with 115,599 individuals registered living there (UNHCR, 2018e).<sup>88</sup> However, what is alarming in this witnessed internal displacement is that when combined, the North, Nabatieh and the South account to a 27 percent increase of their situation as areas where poverty levels are highest, both from among the local population and registered refugees at the UNHCR (Op. Cit., Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, 2017, pp.102, 141).

Fleeing their war-torn country, the Syrian refugee journey to choosing their geographic place of residence is well summarized by Gustafsson from the Guardian journal, who writes:

“For many Syrians, the Palestinian camps are among the few spaces that are affordable. A small portion – those with savings, or jobs that pay enough – rent apartments in Beirut and other cities. Others seek shelter wherever they can – on rented farmland, and in empty houses and disused garages [...] Many other Syrians – caretakers, construction workers and keepers of small shops – simply sleep where they work.” (Gustafsson, 2016)

---

<sup>86</sup> Among whom, 43 percent live in Bekaa, 34 percent in Baalbek-Hermel and 13 percent in Akkar, of the total persons registered as refugees by the UNHCR living in informal settlements.

<sup>87</sup> In July, the percentage accounted for 26.1%, and the number of registered individuals used to be 145,810 including 35,113 household (a drop of 1.3%).

<sup>88</sup> The South used to be less populated by end of July 2018, with 10 percent of the refugees living there, including 117,500 individuals, of which 25,591 were households.

His excerpt does not to indicate that a preexisting social network is not a determining factor in Syrian refugees' place of residence. In fact, the author pinpoints about the historical relations that binds the two countries and describe the long-term relationships that facilitated Syrian refugee transition to their neighboring country.

### c) Disseminating information by a better-informed network

To help explain, the forced Syrian migrants who later-took refuge in Lebanon built their decision on *information* shared by their already established “migration flows,” (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014) made of members of the family, kinship, expats, and neighborhood ties who constitute what is termed in migration studies as: nodes of a person or a group's social network. To understand the possibility of *knowledge* and *experience dissemination* among refugees' social networks that enables newcomers to make better informed decisions prior to their move, it helps looking at how the influx of the Syrian refugees accelerated over a relatively short period of time given the magnitude of the numbers: “In April 2012, there were 18,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon; by April 2013, there were 356,000, and now, in April this year [2014], 1 million. Every day, UNHCR staff in Lebanon register 2,500 new refugees” (Dobbs, 2014; Op. Cit., Ajluni and Kavar, 2015, p.34).<sup>89</sup> Today, however, even though Syrian people still come to the Lebanese borders for refuge, their arrival comes at a much slower pace ever since the Lebanese government reconsidered its “open-doors” policy in January 2015 (UNHCR, 2015b). Hence, it is important to stress that for this later-batch of Syrian people's influx to Lebanon, the shift in their accessibility to precise information regarding their move, have allowed them to think ahead. To plan their move

---

<sup>89</sup> Annexed Table n.8, entitled: “Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR in Lebanon end-2012 to mid-2014.”

beyond the framework of geographic proximity, as previously indicated by those who were forced to their displacement early on at the onset of the crisis in Syria.

Therefore, when it comes for the Syrian refugees to strategically decide on their final settlement destination, the great significance of the new batch of refugees' existing networks lies in the latter's valuable *insight* when pinpointing novel factors to be considered in such a key decision. The newcomer Syrian refugees' social network therefore turns from being their *raison d'être*, as facilitators to the settlement process at an initial stage to their settling in Lebanon, to becoming: a more efficient social network (Light, et. al., 1989, p.2). One that is even more experienced, more knowledgeable and informed of the Lebanese whereabouts and context, and most importantly, an inside informant who has developed a proper acquisition of their own personal needs as refugees there. From this perspective, work availability and rental price came to be realized by the older batch of settlers, as two factors of major priority to newcomer refugees when making a targeted decision towards a specific settlement area. Such was indicated by Light et al. in the following: "Efficient networks expose every job and apartment that exist in some immigrant-receiving locality or region, thus maximally facilitating the introduction of new immigrant newcomers into them." (Ibid. p.2)

Hence, after having the highest concentration of Syrian refugees occupying the poorest urban areas of proximity, like the Bekaa valley (eastern Lebanon), Akkar (northern Bekaa), Wadi Khaled (the extreme north), and even reaching the Palestinian camp of Nahr al-Bared in Tripoli (Al-Saadi, 2014), the Syrian refugees strategically moved further West towards Beirut, the country's economic capital, in response to an impelled survival economic mindset to locate themselves closer to greater Lebanese labour market opportunities, and as advanced by their better versed social network (Op. Cit., Van Vliet and Hourani, 2014).

With respect to an analysis of the building and accumulation of social capital linked to refugee families' displacement and social networks, the longer refugee families' length of stay in Lebanon had been, the more social capital they had accumulated. Hence, it is worthy of mention how social capital has a time dimension to its increase, and that by extension, the longer refugees' social networks had been in Lebanon, the better informed their guidance and advice were with regards to newcomers' settlement. However, unlike refugee families' deteriorated relation to their Lebanese network caused by their protracted plight, their social capital with the Syrian network was maintained due to the collective experiences and community support of their refugee peer members, as Coleman explained previously. Meanwhile, the YSRs said that they engaged in creating new ties not just strengthening existing bonds with their networks, where the individual is left to consciously engage in using available resources to turn them into other forms of social capital, explained in part III, or at least maintain the social capital they already amassed by their families.

To this effect, while investigating the causes of social stability in Beirut, Madoré's previously mentioned study of 2016 showed that the Syrian refugees' ability to recover from their lived trauma into developing a sense of normalcy in their new surroundings in Lebanon, allowed them to feel as though they have become locals. In reference to their accumulated social capital in the host-country, Madoré speaks of an "adaptation mechanism" that enabled refugee families to build new narratives, in addition to developing a certain degree of anonymity within the local Lebanese community where they chose to live (Op. Cit., 2016).

Along these lines, our investigation also found that the closer a Syrian family adapts to local society, the quicker it integrates during displacement. As among the low-income refugee families surveyed, their experience of having to move to low-rent neighborhoods has exposed them

to a scenario necessitating their close-proximity in neighborhoods of a high density among foreign residents of different ethnic backgrounds (including Palestinian, Ethiopians, Sudanese and other unskilled, low-, to medium-skilled blue-collar workers living in such overpopulated neighborhood of low rent). This Syrian families' exposure to a new setting of unfamiliar lifestyles coupled with their financial hardships, allowed for a greater cultural exchange and openness to others, resulting in the gradual dismantling of traditional cultural norms leading to a more successful local integration among the young refugees as will be further investigated through the course of Chapters 5 to 9.

To conclude, the above presented sections on the importance of a pre-established social network highlights one of the significant findings of our research: Inequality of hardships exists among refugee families living in Lebanon depending on previous social network, factor of those families' social capital. This situation analyzing the plight of the Syrian refugees is particular to Lebanon as a host-country and was only made possible due to the historical relationship that joins the Syrian to the Lebanese nations, as well as elements engulfing lingual, cultural, and religious similarities. It is in this scenario of having a pre-existing long-established social network that has significantly facilitated the plight of post-conflict "newcomer" Syrians and has in turn impacted mundane things like their housing and employment, of a great deal of importance during human adversities. Except that those seemingly trivial attainments, which all refugees can eventually acquire with or without their network, are on the contrary, important to bringing back *normalcy* into a refugee family's life, as soon as possible. Hence, our empirical research supports that the availability of a pre-established social network strongly influences refugee families' wealth and in turn significantly impacts YSRs social capital, as will be covered in Part III.

## II. Syrian refugee families' social capital

### Introduction

The necessity to shed particular attention to YSRs' experience, stems from the bigger problem facing Syria today: The loss of an educated generation of children (Op. Cit., Deane, 2016). Typically, the youth population and children would gain their social skills through schools and within the family, however, Syrian children have had an important part in their cognitive and social development, completely disrupted (Op. Cit., Chopra, 2018, p.11). They are supposed to be leading the future of their country once they eventually return, after the settlement of the conflict in Syria. Yet, in their unfortunate case, since they have been refugees for the greater part of their childhood and some have been in fact born in war, they could not have the necessary conducive environment for them to lead healthy lives, allowing them someday to positively contribute to their own society (Op. Cit., DeJong et al., 2017).

In such a grim context, family gains greater value. It receives greater importance for its potential influence over its members' wellbeing during a great time of distress in this life crisis, impacting children, in particular their education, health, safety, and growth, among others. We had highlighted in the literature review the importance of family, especially emphasized in refugee and migrant studies. This stems from the fact that due to the distress of forced displacement, refugee children as a portrayed vulnerable community, are evidently heavily dependent on their parents for their survival and support.

As all such elements were explored in Part I, the importance of this Chapter 4 is in its addressing of the importance of the family role in the life and wellbeing of YSRs. There exist several definitions for family in literature, and the importance of this social unit for the wellbeing

of society is extensively scientifically inspected. Indices that cover refugee parents' educational level, socioeconomic conditions, and social network have been found to have played a significant influence on YSRs' own social capital as evidenced in the previous and the following section.

To understand refugees' narratives of their disassembly, reconstruction and redefinition of their lives, family relations, and personal development, one must analyze what helped Syrian parents raise their children in a way that their offspring would receive their parents' teachings, employ available family resources, and reciprocate family concord during times of distress.

Our understanding of Coleman's social capital stresses the importance of abstract and material resources in helping to develop an empowered generation of individuals, capable of leveraging their resources in gaining information, support, and abilities that would enable them to fulfill the highest potential of their human development. In other words, in what form did the parents transmit their social capital to their children. Subsequently, how were notions of obedience, filial piety, care, reciprocity, and concession/sacrifice exchanged among generations and were intuitively trusted by family members to be granted, received, transmitted, exchanged, employed, and expected back.

We had also previously delineated in Chapter 3 the three dimensions of social capital by Coleman being: the obligations-expectations dynamic; the informational exchange between parents, children, and their social network; and the reinforcement of good norms and sanctioning inappropriate behaviors (Figure 12).<sup>90</sup> Those represent the core strength of Syrian refugee community living in Lebanon, which our results have traced through the course of Parts II and III.

---

<sup>90</sup> Annexed Figure n.12, entitled: "Catalysis of social capital in a refugee context."

One of the most important organic capitals available to refugee youth is their parents' social capital. It originates from within their families and can be leveraged from across their communities through their parents' social network. The Syrian refugee families hold strong moral norms and family values, as other indices of social capital. They function in a traditionally conservative yet highly cooperative environment where reciprocity and cooperation are the standards of intergenerational relationship and behavior, stemming other social capital characteristics.

Strong family relations of trust have yielded more autonomous Syrian youth that aspire to change their circumstances as evidenced in our data analysis. Families plant the seeds of autonomy and individuality within their adolescents. Autonomy serves as the building block for decision making and constructing healthy levels of confidence and self-efficacy. It also allows children to connect more freely with social networks and to learn civic engagement through participating in community events. Families that allow a greater latitude to their adolescents provide better chances for them to achieve higher levels of youth empowerment. Skills like problem solving, critical reasoning, and self-expression are positively correlated with higher levels of autonomy (U.S. Congress, 1991, p.39).

Moreover, Parents' prioritization of their children's wellbeing and the Syrian community's attentiveness to their neighbors' children inside the camp or in individual apartment complexes, is an illustration of a Syrian community's social capital represented by social cohesion and neighborhood collective efficacy (Gibson, et. al., 2006). Being surrounded by this collaborative structure allowed the Syrian refugee youth to develop a sound understanding of their role in the mosaic, vis-a-vis their parents and their community as will be evidenced in the following.

## A. Household Income and Families' Experiences

It was previously showcased in the literature review how one of the biggest implications of great importance to the Syrian war, pertains to how it interrupted the youth population at a critical developmental age of their life, which has affected both their personality and psychological growth. At the personal developmental level of young refugees, as will be later described in the context of displacement and its embedded consequences of vulnerability, anxiety and instability, psychologist Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes the results of disrupting a child's development.

He argues that in the case of the occurrence of a significant developmental impact to what he terms a child's "ecological transition" into a new unfamiliar environment, such in the case of the current forced migration undergone by the YSRs, the child's development is interrupted and so is his ability to learn, grow and adapt to the new setting (Van Hatch, 2014, p.21).

This may contribute to children's vulnerability and compromise their resilience and ability to adapt and assimilate in host countries, among other implications to their development. But what about refugee families' income influencing these registered perspectives, and how does this important variable play at the level of children's education, stress, safety, gender roles, and parent's perspective of their children's prospects?

A refugee families' SES is in fact a significant indicator of substantial weight. It has been linked to a wide range of negative psychic, cognitive and health conditions that affects the youth, and impacts their personalities across communities (Op. Cit., DeCarlo et al. 2011). As mentioned in the literature review, for instance, a line of research has established that individuals who have been raised in low-income households, have been subject to higher abuse and neglect (Op. Cit., Ondersma, 2002). Hence, resulting in lower educational attainment levels (Op. Cit., Sheridan;

McLaughlin, 2016; Op. Cit., and Russell et al., 2016), higher recurrence of delayed speech development (Op. Cit., Purcell-Gates, et al., 1995), and lower rates of school graduation (Op. Cit., Reardon, et al., 2013; Op. Cit., National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

In light of the above, the purpose of the following is to describe Syrian refugee families' SES and what factors contribute to its formation in the context of refugeehood. This would allow us to introduce a distinction between wealthy and non-wealthy refugee families whose social capital impacts children's way of living relevant to Coleman's notion of the family, being a key contributor to children's social capital. To explain how parents of a wealthy and non-wealthy household take care of their children, we will not only incorporate statistics on the income of Syrian refugee families, but we will cover topics related to parents' values, norms, and gendered narratives, to deduct relational expectations.

#### a) Defining wealth among the Syrian refugees

The existing literature is empirically confirmed as we noted traits of the above-mentioned findings among our interviewed YSRs. Hence in our analysis, we made a clear distinction of families' income level to precisely capture the effect of such on the YSRs' experience. Children's answers to the semi-structured survey also stressed the influence of the family background and demographic indicators on their lives. Including elements pertaining to their age, gender, birth order, parents' education, household composition (Op. Cit., Halpern, 2018), among others that will be discussed more in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

While economic wealth may seem like a stand-alone factor, several indices contribute to it. These include the presence of a family member working in Lebanon prior to 2011, the family's date of arrival to Lebanon since 2011, the number of family members, the number of male

members inside one household, the number of members registered to school, and the family's geographic place of residence within Lebanon as detailed in Chapter 4. The family's SES also influenced the rented space which is detailed contextually through the course of this dissertation.

In light of the above indices and for reasons laid out gradually in the previous and following sections, this research defines a wealthy Syrian refugee family as one with a pre-established social network, which members' aggregate-income has allowed children in the age of school to pursue their educational attainment, and whose financial situation did not push family members to contribute to the household income—which otherwise would have led the family to go into debt or destitute. These factors have shown to have paused a significant impact on YSRs' experience as refugees and future aspirations, pushing them to react in certain ways as will be deliberated in Part III over their use of mobile phones.

#### b) Families' aggregate income and its effect

Before the Syrian civil war erupted, the Syrian workforce, mainly employed in agriculture and construction projects, represented 17 percent of the labour supply in Lebanon with a peak number reaching 600,000 to 700,000 Syrian laborers during the Lebanese rapid economic reconstruction after the civil war (Traboulsi, n.d., p. 28). In 2014, OCHA reported that the Syrians constituted 27 to 35 percent of the labour force (p.15). Notice in our analysis that those Syrian refugees who have had prior work experience in Lebanon, have also had a greater Lebanese social network to resort to after the outbreak of war in 2011. And as previously mentioned of the effect of Syrian families' social network on refugee families' move to Lebanon, then, those are the refugee families who belong to our wealthy case studies.

The family's generated income and overall economic situation has depended on the number of family members, particularly the number of male members within the household influencing family's aggregate income. Similarly, we confirm other literature that award boys a higher value compared to girls in refugee communities (UNHCRb, n.d., p.71). This is because, the higher male labour force exists within a single household, the higher is the monthly per capita income. And subsequently the more likely it is for the family to survive hardships maintaining their livelihood and meeting expenses during this life crisis.

This is especially true as studies have reported that child labour contributes up to 25% of the family's income and that working children come from low-income families, to which belongs the vast majority of the refugee families' experiences (Hawamdeh and Spencer, 2001). In fact, the body of literature has established a strong correlation between child labour (Op. Cit., Hawamdeh and Spencer, 2001) and poverty. Rendering the number of male members in one refugee household of key importance to families' survival, as statistics report boys to have engaged in child labour more than girls (Inter-Agency Coordination, 2018, p.1).

Other cases influencing family income comes as a result of the trauma accompanying their forced displacement. The YSRs developed more frequent somatizing forms of stress, presented in their feelings of anxiety, insecurity, distress, and depression, which have created complex health symptoms that were reflected biologically (Yoshikawa et al., 2012). This forced refugee parents and siblings capable of work, to search harder for work or to take on debt—a negative coping measure resorted to by poor refugee families especially (VASyR-2018, p.90).<sup>91</sup> As a result, this

---

<sup>91</sup> 87% of the Syrian refugee families in Lebanon borrow money or receive credit to provide for their household needs, with an average debt of US \$798 (Yassin, 2018, p.45).

manpower spent an additional number of hours outside home, therefore also reducing YSRs' bonding ties with the family.

However, it is worth making a distinction here between the experience of a refugee family member's illness occurring in a wealthy versus a family of low SES. In the former, the bonding ties among family members increase to attend to the sick individual until their recovery, which also applies to non-refugee families. Whereas in a low-income refugee situation, the compromised health conditions of a family member strained already limited families' financial resources. Even though, the UNHCR is completely responsible of refugees' cost of medicine and treatment, yet allocating time and worry until the members' recovery, in addition to the temporary cost of losing a potential labour force, in the case of the sick person being a male, have been expressed being additional burdens to a refugee family life working to make ends meet. The reason being that in such a case of family member's illness, given the additional mounting health stressor that engulfs all members of the household besides basic daily struggles, the fewer time spent among family members has the effect of overwhelming the family, leaving no room for bonding ties to develop.

While in the absence of family illness, our empirical evidence registered that social bonding ties increased among families of low SES more than their wealthier counterpart, this situation of illness has also shown to affect the refugee family's cohesion: It promoted distance between its members since each is preoccupied following their expected gendered role. This trait was typically prevalent among wealthier young refugees not their poor counterpart, however while boys looked for additional sources of income, the opportunity for female refugees to enter the labour market increased among lower SES families granting them greater freedom. However, instead of this being a reason to celebrate as was expressed by other refugee girls permitted to

work, in this case their increased role underlying a family member's illness was undesired by the interviewed refugee girls.

One possible explanation to that may be due to the existence of a household-vulnerability factor detected within the household of a low-income refugee family. It indicates that driven by destitute, the YSRs have been submitted to exploitative work conditions, and their families resorted to negative coping measures, such as child marriages and child labour, as presented earlier in the literature review section on the situation of YSRs living in Lebanon (Op. Cit., Hawamdeh and Spencer, 2001).

The need for incurring more income has forced both young boys and girls to assume roles and responsibilities traditionally associated with the opposite gender among economically struggling Syrian refugee families—to a much lesser extent among wealthy families. Gender roles and norms have thus become more volatile in Lebanon among low-income families due to the engagement of females in the labour force, about which, Victor Turner mentions how following liminal conditions, relationships undergo negotiation and change (Matar and Helmi, 2020, p.144).

Consequently, research noted that young refugees have been witnessing the changing nature of their gender roles in Lebanon. Where refugee girls are increasingly joining the workforce to help support their families (Op. Cit., DeJong et al., 2017, p.23), and males are pushed to assume chores within the household—an odd realm to many Syrian boys. Including cleaning the house, preparing meals and shopping for household goods: activities that are typically associated with the female gender.

In fact, while the percentage of female participation in the labour market in Syria, prior to their forced displacement, has been estimated at 12.9% in 2010, which is considered among the

lowest worldwide (Marzouk et al., 2013, p.20), the young girls of a low-income refugee family living in Lebanon have been specifically granted more freedom to express themselves domestically and join the labour force. The latter was also made easier due to Lebanese labour market setting being of a more open nature and more inclusive to women compared to the more conservative Syrian social structure. Finally, Syrian parents have indicated that their children are growing too quickly and assuming increased responsibilities, hence, they perceive them to be missing out on the enjoyable years of adolescence (Op. Cit., DeJong et al., 2017, p.23).

#### c) Syrian families' values: Raising children's obligations toward the family

As mentioned in the literature on parents' role in the healthy upbringing of children, our refugee parents raised their obligations-expectations to children by following traditional gendered roles themselves. While the mother spent more time with her children, the father devoted the majority of his time to work, without compromising on his parental role of an authority figure and family provider. This better informed the young children of their expected tasks and role in life, as students, siblings, workers, and future professionals following predispositions of their upbringing in Syria. This was shown to have reduced children's traumatic response of their experienced displacement and facilitated their lives in Lebanon to contribute to their future.

Due to their forced displacement, parents' social capital was significantly reduced, hence, the exceptional scenario compromised YSRs' chances at potentially obtaining the benefits of their parents' social capital in its numerous forms. Including the benefit of having access to the resources of refugee families' local and intercontinental social networks, made up of extended family structures, local communities, and close friendship relations.

Then, we point in the following to the existence of a largely strong family relational dynamic within a refugee household that is born by the circumstantial emergency of the family's forced displacement due to war, which applies regardless of families' economic status and wealth sensitivity. As the situation of a disaster has been shown to strengthen refugee family members' relations not so much associated to family's wealth as much as the bonding and closely knit ties engulfing the family paying tribute to families' traditions and values, as will be empirically explained through in the following.

According to Coleman, refugee families' strong social capital, including community members' sharing of similar experiences of their forced displacement, their respecting of conventional norms, and a common social understanding of their obligations-expectations patterns, facilitated a form of intergenerational closeness where members understood their role in the bigger picture and assumed shared responsibilities. This reduced social conflict, domestic disputes and contributed to the realization of individual members' outcomes to serve the benefit of the family unit and refugee community, with great reliability to their support.

Other authors spoke of family values, norms, and traditions to have created a benchmark of projected social exchanges that are valuable to all members of an interaction. Anthropologist, Denise Lewis for instance, wrote about an intergenerational struggle for the retention of parental traditions, customs, and power positions by means of a stronger frequenting of religious events,<sup>92</sup> traditional eating, dressing, and an intentional community proximity (Lewis, 2001, p.9) to have

---

<sup>92</sup> Interesting argument on the purpose of religion: "Citing a seven-year study by the rand Corporation in which participants who used more free medical care did not become significantly healthier, the writers argue that the purpose of medicine is as often to signal concern as it is to cure disease. They propose that the purpose of religion is as often to enhance feelings of community as it is to enact transcendental beliefs." (Lanchester, 2018)

provided models of reference for the young refugees from Cambodians to follow in their new host (Ibid., p.20).

Similar to the case of the Syrian refugee families, among other authors Joseph argued that the strong role of the relationality in Arab families solidifies the nuclear bond even under strenuous conditions such as displacement. Where families tend to exercise collective action in decision making and their children are taught the concept and practice of obligation, since early childhood. In this case, relationality is defined as “a process by which persons are socialized into social systems that value linkage, bonding, and sociability.” (Joseph, 1993, p.12) Hence, each member of the family including parents and children have sets of obligations that are learned through everyday socialization.

Confirming such delineations, Hudson indicated that the family in Arabic language means *usra* denoting a confinement within a controlled environment where everyone knows what is expected from him or her (Hudson, 2008). Obligations therefore are mutual where members expect the advancement of each other through each fulfilling their set of expectations. This creates a constructive environment where members serve each other to achieve their goals establishing a sense of prolonged connectivity. Therefore, displacement does not necessarily demolish this logic of continued connective and collective relationships but strengthens it when family members each do the appropriate thing: their obligations.

The most noted aspect of the refugee parents-children relation that is independent of families' wealth, pertains to YSRs' *obedience*: When asked about their negotiation technique should they desire something perceivably negated or unacceptable by their parents, the vast majority of the young highlighted over and again just how important it is for their relationship with

their parents to be of no tension, irrespective of both gender or family's SES. Hence, making them often give up something they had wanted, as voiced by Abdallah of 18 years old: "*I would talk to them, and if they don't like it, I would change my mind because they know what's best for me.*"<sup>93</sup>

The reason for that as expressed by our YSRs, pertains to their strong regards towards the wellbeing of their families. As they reported prioritizing the family's interest before their own without hesitation, also signaling strong bonding ties. Family interdependence and members' respect and obedience for the elderly among refugees as part of their filial piety values—a concept that will be addressed in detail in Part III—have also been detected among Cambodian refugees and asylum seekers to the United States (Lewis, 2009, p.380).

## B. Parents' Education

The purpose of this section is to describe how the difference in social capital between the wealthy and the non-wealthy Syrian refugee families influences YSRs' education and prospects for the future. The aim is to stress how refugee families' SES not only influence their children's participation in the Lebanese labour market as previously discussed, but also in their schooling opportunities. Since parents' attitude in encouraging or discouraging YSRs' schooling is linked to their own educational attainment, this section will contribute to an understanding of how parents' background and system of beliefs impacts YSRs' mobile phone use later in Part III.

The literature review section has already described the grim reality facing Syrian refugees' educational attainment. However, even prior to their forced displacement to Lebanon or elsewhere, it seems that the education level of the Syrian population was already relatively low at the national level, especially high among female participants compared to their male counterparts

---

<sup>93</sup> During a one-on-one interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

(Syrian Arab Republic, 2010). Therefore, education as a standalone variable was not the focus of our interviewed families, particularly as those coming from rural areas in Syria, such as the outskirts of Homs governorate, had rarely any formal education if at all.

Drawing data on the educational system in Syria before the crisis from a UNDP study in 2012, it seems that the system was already characterized by a high dropout rate of 10% among both Syrian male and female school students. Hence in Syria, each person's social network is perceived to be far more important for employment than a young person's qualifications (Gebel, et al., 2012, p.3). This mentality among Syrian families in Lebanon will also prove relevant later in the section of young refugees' reliance on their social networks in finding jobs and seeking other forms of help and resources. Furthermore, in terms of school enrollment, official numbers coming from a multidimensional poverty report in Syria between the years 2001 and 2009, show that 24 percent of the Syrian population were deprived from school enrollment in 2009, with higher numbers registered in Deir-ez-zor, Al-Rakka, Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, and Idleb governorates, at the national level of Syria's educational attainment (UNICEF, 2014).

The number of school-aged Syrian refugee children (3-18 years) living in Lebanon is 488,000, only 57% of whom aged 6 to 14 years old go to schools (UNHCRa, n.d.). This rate drops to more than half among older refugee children, who constitute part of our sample size (15-18). Beirut city holds the highest enrolment rates because of schools' availability and their proximity to residential areas. Being the capital, employment opportunities are higher as well, which facilitated for the Syrian parents keeping their children in school. Especially since UNHCR, UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereafter, UNESCO) and other bilateral donors established in 2016 the Reaching All Children with

Education (RACE) plan: Providing free schooling, books, stationary, and uniforms, even commutes at times to Syrian and Lebanese children up to grade 12 (Abla and Al-Masri, 2015, p.8).

The situation is different between Northern (Tripoli), Eastern (Bekaa) and Southern Lebanon (Sidon and Tyr) where in surface size, these areas are more residentially widespread making it harder for parents to commit to sending their children to schools. As reported by the UNHCR, VRSyR-2018 and confirmed by our interviews, it is often stated by refugee parents that the cost, distance, and inconvenient commute to public schools as prohibitive reasons for their children's schooling (Op. Cit., UNHCRc, n.d.).

However what concerns us in all the above is how does it reflect on children's prospects in Lebanon for education, work, and otherwise replicating the closest possible *normal* lives they lived in Syria despite families' displacement to Lebanon. Since their education in their host was completely free, one of the main reasons why 78% of the YSRs aged 15 to 17 were not registered in school (Yassin, 2018, p.81), seems to be due to refugee families' perspective with regards to the immediate value of schooling and the traditional gendered norms relevant to education.

As evident from national statistical figures published by Syrian governmental agencies before the war, the sociocultural perspective of the necessity of children's education seems not to have gathered great social adoption. Particularly relevant to the low percentages of schooling registered in rural areas where agricultural and farming industries are prevalent and where typically lower formal employment opportunities exist beyond the regional needs of the local market.

Hence, while boys were encouraged to contribute financially to the household income (Op. Cit., UNHCRd, n.d., p.63), the Syrian sociocultural and economic markup did not provide a sound reasoning between their delayed participation in the labour market and their prospects for

professional success following their educational attainment (Op. Cit., UNHCRc, n.d.). In fact, when comparing the figures between those children who get sent to school and those who do not, from among the body of literature, often refugee parents are reported to choose that their adolescent boys—not girls—should search for work instead of enrolling in school (Op. Cit., UNHCRc, n.d.), which justifies why our sample size of this age group constitutes mostly working boys out of school from among 24 respondents aged 14 to 17 years old.

When it comes to refugee girls' prospects for the future, while studies have reported the importance of education for girls at the level of their future earning potentials (Op. Cit., Bartels et al., 2018), their education seems to decrease in numbers compared to boys' enrolment rate after the age 12 to 14. However, it seems that following sociocultural norms, the Syrian girls were not expected to work after receiving formal education, but rather get married starting their secondary level schooling, which explains the high dropout rate at that stage in their schooling.

To support the above stated with our empirical data, the annexed Table 9, entitled: "Parental Education Levels," displays information on parental educational levels among the Syrian refugees participating in this dissertation. The importance of parents' education and their involvement in their children's school activities, lies in the wide effect of a functional family model on its children's school performance. Especially among refugee families whose youth are of greater need to familial support: Where parents' involvement was found to facilitate refugee family's integration and to increase refugee members' contact with locals. In fact, such a positive engagement would bring favorable effects on the host community's understanding of refugees as Professor of Psychiatry, Stevan Weine believed "it can promote school level changes as teachers and administrators gaining a greater familiarity with refugee families, better communication with

their students' parents, and better collaborative partnership with parents regarding refugee children's educational planning." (2008, p.9)

From among our YSRs only 10% reported that one of the two parents have some level of education, mainly high school or less, and 41.5% reported that their parents had no formal education at all. This statistic warrants significant attention due to its associated effects on the academic pursuit of the young refugees in Lebanon, as will analyzed in the following. About 49% of the YSRs reported that their parents are both educated, high school or less in most of the cases. However, there seemed to be no significant link between educated mothers and fathers, where 55% reported that their fathers possessed some level of education compared to 52.9% having had their mothers formally schooled, which mirrors the Syrian sociocultural norms and values.

For the sake of demonstration, in two brief case studies our empirical research reported a negative correlation between girls' education and marriage. Similar findings of which in the literature are presented in the coming section, however, we have detected one additional factor in the relation between those two in reference to the importance of a mother's approach to their children's decision to give up on their schooling. During our field research, in one case we encountered two YSR sisters who had both dropped out of school and were helping their mother at home.<sup>94</sup> In this non-wealthy family living in a one-bedroom house as daughters of a generator working in the South. The two daughters divided house chores since they had reached Lebanon until the elder among them got married. And in another case of an equally poor family, the mother refused that her daughters help her around

---

<sup>94</sup> Geographically, one being in the Bekaa and another in the South.

the house, and instead forced them to get schooled because she held great importance to her daughters' education, as she expressed during the focus group discussion.<sup>95</sup>

Additionally, we also observed a pattern among our respondent mothers who answered similarly, implying first that a mother's relatively young age (early forties) allowed for such a stance against their dropping out of school, as they did not yet physically need their daughter's assistance completing house chores. Another reason for that we hypothesize, pertains to mother's limited education, which may have influenced her decision: as she must have realized the importance of her daughters' education for their future when herself was not educated and regretted the outcomes of her life.

Moreover, to emphasize yet again mothers' role in their girls' decision opting out of school, one mother was quoted having to choose between educating either one of her two children: her daughter, or her son. When it came to being faced with such a tough decision, the mother educate her daughter instead of her son for the associated future risks involved with having a non-educated daughter in terms of dependency and livelihood, as compared to a boy: "A boy can find work in places a girl can't. To work, she needs to have her education." (UNHCRd, n.d.)

The following, however, is aimed to describe other reasons mentioned in our survey as well as noted in the literature on refugee children's education and the perceived challenges they face impeding their pursuit for schooling when structural conditions do not apply. Including the language of teaching in Lebanon, their skipped grades, feelings of discrimination, and concerns over girls' security as explained below.

---

<sup>95</sup> In the South, during a focus group discussion outside the house, in June 2018.

In parallel to the material taught in Arabic, the Lebanese public school system delivers scientific subjects, like physics, math, and biology, in the French language. The educational system in Syria relies on the Arabic language exclusively, which made it more difficult for the Syrian refugee students to adapt to the Lebanese system, especially in remote areas of less refugee-dense population where trained Syrian teachers were not available to deliver a more familiar, Syrian-centric education model to the Syrian students. Hence, while there have been several training programs for Syrian teachers to teach the Syrian curriculum in Lebanese public schools on two daily shifts, (morning shift starting 8am and afternoon shift starting 2pm to attend to the number of students given limited school facilities) the difference in the language of teaching and system of education has increased refugees' dropout. As painted by a 20-year-old girl in the South, recalling her experience: *"I lost my friends, [and] I had to learn every subject in French while back in Syria it was optional."*<sup>96</sup>

The above challenges also reconfirm Syrian students' feeling of being treated with inferiority at school, having an accent and struggling with their studies. And made them feel discriminated against and bullied in numerous recorded instances of school in both Lebanon and Jordan, where local children were warned by their parents not to play with their Syrian peers for having "lice and scabies" in their heads (UNHCRc, n.d.). Syrian children also faced several displacement episodes with the majority from among our sample having been displaced for more than 3 times on average, inside Syria and then moving through Lebanon. This is expressed by a 15-year-old participant in Beirut: *"I used to go to school, but not anymore. My parents offered to*

---

<sup>96</sup> During a one-on-one interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

*send me [back] but I wanted to stay with them [at that point] and they agreed. Now it's too late to enroll back in school.”<sup>97</sup>*

To conclude, it is important to note that being submitted to structural and organizational discriminatory measures, in the form of what is shared above of the language barriers to schooling for instance, or the local prejudice resulting from refugees' protracted refugeehood, not only indicates a low account of Syrian refugee families' social capital impeding YSRs' schooling and submitting them to work but may also have hampered their quest for opportunities to enhance it.

Hence, when refugee parents decide to prioritize their children's education over potentially having them contribute domestically at home for girls or outside home through boys' labour power, they had in mind the full picture of what they think is best for their children. Assuming this, then, parents' decision becomes not only contingent on their own educational level, the majority of whom are not educated,<sup>98</sup> but also dependent upon their outlook about what will lie beyond their children's schooling. Making them judge over whether or not they should encourage their children to invest in their education despite what has been reported above of all the difficulties abound or supporting their journey into the labour market for immediate financial gratification, or even conceding to lower marriage conditions, seems to stem from a combination of variables that ultimately did not contribute towards pushing education forward but sacrificing it, at least for the short term and perceivable future.

---

<sup>97</sup> During a focus group interview in Beirut, conducted on April 23, 2018.

<sup>98</sup> See Annexed Table entitled: "The Effect of Parents' Education on Children's Employment, by Age Category and Gender."

### III. Children's prospects as young refugees

To give a clear image of the diversity of our YSRs who come from various socioeconomic backgrounds and have experienced different individual circumstances influencing their living conditions in Lebanon, we combined in the previous sections the income and education information relevant to their family-bound settings: parents' education, household income, depending on family size and the number of male members in the family. We have also, investigated other important variables, including their own education and prospects for the future driven by sociocultural consideration based on national statistics, international reports, and our empirical results. Sharing their personal viewpoint, the following contains an account of the family-bound indicators that have influenced our YSRs differently relevant to their age category (those who fall between 14-17, 18-21, and 22-25).<sup>99</sup>

#### Family bound indicators for <14-17< years old young refugees

Family size and number of male members in the household varies to each specific respondent, the number of siblings to our 64 YSR participants formed an average of 7 members to each household. The YSR boys of this age group were all single, but a number of them were already in a committed relationship that they mentioned in the context of their dream, and the reason why they would stay up late at night. Their counterpart girls, however, were married as early as 15 years old, with only 5 registered girls who were still single out of the total 24 respondents specific to this age bracket.<sup>100</sup> Understandably, none of the girls reported of having a lover or a fiancée or made mention about them throughout the interviews.

---

<sup>99</sup> Chapter 3 holds a description of the reasoning behind which we had divided the YSRs into these three age groups specifically.

<sup>100</sup> See Annexed Table entitled: "Gender of the Targeted Sample, by Age Category."

When it comes to their educational attainment, in line with their gendered role, none of our YSR boys of this age group was in school except for one, all the rest worked full time (1 schooled boy out of 13 YSR boys of this age range). The majority of their girl counterparts remained in school (5 schooled and 2 stayed home out of those 11 YSR girls of this age range), while the remaining 4 young girls had been already newlyweds by age 16. Even one among them had already been a mother of a two-years-old child by that age, which means she had conceived her baby when she was still at the beginning of her teen.

The role that Syrian parents' social capital could play in their children's lives vis-à-vis marriage was that they would provide them the opportunity to continue their schooling. Since only wealthy families could send their offspring to school, then, parents' economic capital could delay their children' age of marriage should they afford it—more on this in Chapter 5. Moreover, as part of Coleman's theories on obligations and expectations and Syrian refugees' traditions, culture, and norms, parents' social capital could also influence *how* their children reciprocated their expected duties in family support: encouraging boys to work, pushing girls out of school and into marriage or to participate in the labour market as described below.

Similarly, parents' perspective of the necessity of their children's education (i.e., prioritizing it over potentially having them contribute domestically or outside home through their labour power) played a key role in their children's schooling. All they needed done was to commit to sending their children to school daily, by either arranging for their commute<sup>101</sup> or seeking schools' availability at a location convenience to their place of residence. And while this may seem easily attainable, the following explains how parents' efforts towards providing education

---

<sup>101</sup> Some neighborhoods had busses funded by the UNHCR to pick up and drop off refugee students to school and back home.

for their children stems from their financial security and fundamental believe in the educational system, i.e., their social capital.

Since their education in Lebanon was completely free but still school enrolment rates were low, it seems that refugee families did not quite perceive the immediate value of schooling, especially for boys as previously explained. Since work was regarded socio-culturally as one of the traits of manhood, all YSR boys willingly took to the Lebanese labour market and worked to assist their parents regardless of their families' financial need. This may have influenced refugee boys' views to their education: As they seem to have developed a negative association between their school years and their perception to their childhood years. They associated school with a distant time in their perception of the past, a time when they had been still "innocent," as they expressed.

Seeing it as such, it rendered it impossible for them to find a greater value for themselves, for their image, for their purpose during family's hardship, than financial contribution. Hence, boys claimed the responsibility of assisting in the household income since their forced displacement. Their taking on themselves such an *honorable* task is led by their considering of themselves as element of support to their family's survival—also encouraged by their parents and siblings. This prevented them from realizing the fundamental value of schooling, beyond the immediate financial and social remunerations of working, as an effective member in the household.

This is subconsciously expressed by Abdallah, who said: "*I was still in school. [I was] Still a kid when I came here [to Lebanon].*"<sup>102</sup> At the level of the refugee family's household income, Yassin reported that in this age bracket of adolescent YSRs living in Lebanon, 20% have some

---

<sup>102</sup> During a one-on-one interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

sort of work (Op. Cit., 2018, p.45). When it comes to our sample, this was majorly informed by the number of male members in the family and the size of the household to facture the number of dependents relying on this manual labour in each family.

Another factor is related to boys' birth order: while only three of this age range registered being the eldest in their family,<sup>103</sup> even as young as 14 to 17 years old, they still felt like they had no choice but to work reflecting sociocultural gendered expectations. In fact, the result of our analysis shows how male siblings took it on themselves to work, while unemployment was strictly exclusive to the YSR girls of all age ranges.

An example of the above shows the elder boy in a household being pressured to work and step up to his parents' expectations. Yaser of 17 years old is the eldest boy in a nuclear family of 10 people (5 boys, 3 girls and two parents). And although we conducted the interview with him away from his brothers and parents, his answers were almost identical to those of his parents. As the eldest, we feel that he had kept up to the level of trust and filial piety that his parents had entrusted him with. His mother spoke about him as their peer, as though he is not a young boy of 17 years old anymore. *"Every day, he woke up alone and went out to search for work from 7am to 5:00 or 6:00pm, until he landed work"*<sup>104</sup> his mother had said to us in praise of her son.

Stemming from his mother's encouraging appraisal and his father's high expectation of his son, one may interpret Yaser's high sense of responsibility—acting on his own at the age of 17 without

---

<sup>103</sup> See Annexed Table entitled: "Birth order, by Age Category and Gender."

<sup>104</sup> During a focus group interview in Beirut, conducted in April 2018.

guidance from his parents or anyone he knows, after the family's forced displacement to a neighboring place unfamiliar to him and all his family together—following Dewey and Knoblich's inference of Yaser's sense of agency leading his action to seek work. They argue that Yaser's use of his agency stems from his wanting to control his new environment through action: In this sense, his voluntary act of seeking work has a “predictable effect,” which he draws from his parents' encouragement as the needed “external stimuli” for his act (Dewey and Knoblich, 2014).

In fact, when it comes to boys' education, research argues that not only does financial distress push the boys to work, but also there has been detected feelings of freedom and dignity associated with work (Op. Cit., El-Ghali, et al., p.24). This explains the reason for the higher dropout rate of boys from schools than girls (24% vs. 22%, respectively), especially after age 15, according to Habib et al. (2019b, p.50). Hence, while the girls of a refugee family with relative financial ease were left to maintain their scholarly pursuit until they got married, the boys chose to assume income-generating activities rather than education, regardless of whether they needed to contribute financially to their families' wellbeing or did not (Bartels, et al., 2018). A single working boy of 15 years old in Bekaa, Jomaa, implied for instance how work helped him see the world in a more favored manner, as he said exclaiming: *“I was in school [back in Syria], then I opened my eyes working [in Lebanon]. I'm never going back to school [again]!”*<sup>105</sup>

Along the lines of their brothers' joining the labour market to participate in the household income being regarded as an honorable, freeing act of reciprocity to the families' obligations-expectations indebtedness, similarly, when it comes to refugee girls giving up on their education, their schooling rate may be alarmingly low because of their self-proclaimed dismissal of their

---

<sup>105</sup> During a focus group interview in Bekaa, conducted in June 2018.

educational pursuit as a source of financial and logistical burden on their parents. However, parents' acceptance of their girls' giving up on their school education highlights the family's implied endorsement of their daughters' obligations-expectations contribution. Because the concession made by those girls is substituted by their feeling of accomplishment through the strengthening of family cohesion and reciprocating other family members' forms of support.

On a different level of sociocultural influences, the gendered aspect of YSRs' choice on *how* to reciprocate support to their parents also appears to follow sociocultural norms as the expectations from boys following gendered roles left no room for them but to work regardless of their age, birth order, or family's income as previously argued. However, when it comes to girls, the dimension was more complex: not only stemming from parents' sociocultural considerations but also pending the family's socioeconomic needs.

If they had not been the eldest in the family, girls of this age category studied irrespective of their parent's education from among our sample because their schooling was completely free and paid for by the UNHCR. However, their schooling opportunity still depended on two factors: their parents' social capital and girls' birth order. The eldest daughter for instance, either found herself coerced to work when the family is in need or to give up on her schooling staying home to help her mother instead.<sup>106</sup>

Either way, their self-proclaimed responsibility, as analyzed by Coleman pertains to the mechanisms that generate social capital underlying refugee parents' sociocultural traditions (Kindler, 2015, p.5). Even though parents never officially asked their daughters to make such a compromise of her educational attainment, the female daughter took it upon herself to assume this

---

<sup>106</sup> See Annexed Table entitled: "Birth order, by Age Category, Gender and Education."

role. As one married girl, aged 16 years old said: “*We are not blind, we can hear, see and feel how hard it is for one to make it here. We’re thankful to the men around the house [her two brothers-in-law and her father-in-law] for providing for us.*”<sup>107</sup> However, this must also be encouraged as previously evidenced in the literature review by the Syrian cultural norms of gendered discrimination in access to education, where the ratio of girls’ enrollment in school is less than that of their male counterpart at the national level (Habib, 2018, p.3).

It is noteworthy to add here that refugee girls’ staying at home debunks Coleman’s argument that the establishment of daycare automatically reduces social capital in society. The scenario of refugeehood pauses an exception to the typical modern-day factors enumerated by Coleman as reasons for social capital reduction, including daycare. What was reduced of social capital since their displacement in fact has been substituted by a more active engagement in community work among YSRs at the level of individual Syrian family units or neighborhoods, doing favor to each other more during disaster as will be investigated in Part III.

Moreover, we registered an additional two more ways in which schooled children of this age reciprocated their parents and male siblings’ financial support and caretaking. By focusing on their schoolwork, making sure to get the highest grade and performing the best way they could in school. Where in their book of 2015, Abdul-Hamid et al. registered how underprivileged Palestinian refugees outperformed private school students despite having less resources to operate at the UNRWA schools (Abdul-Hamid, et al., 2015).

Another way they shared with their young and older siblings as well, is by adopting the notion of filial piety; following parents’ rules and regulation to core, paying highest tribute to their

---

<sup>107</sup> During a focus group discussion in her parents-in-law’s house in the South in September 2018.

fathers especially, and their unquestionable obedience to their mothers—following patriarchal norms even though their authoritarian role has been compromised during displacement—as well as respecting their points of view even if they did not agree to it. This is also reflective of the trust that tied children to their parents contributing to stronger refugee families’ account of their social capital.

To conclude, it is clear how at the level of family members’ interaction, positive traits of social capital were evident through parents-children’s reliable act of reciprocity even at the youngest age bracket we analyzed. Where Coleman’s obligations-expectations paradigm was successfully embedded in family members’ sense of responsibility towards the family unite, which applies to older YSRs as well. Hence, promoted by sociocultural norms, religious beliefs, and the recognized multiple benefits of social capital, our analysis confirms Coleman’s writing that what is recognized as “good” behavior in a refugee family, was not so much enforced by a domestic system of reward and punishment (1988, pp.104-106), as much as it was encouraged and motivated by family members’ understanding of the importance of family cohesion and each members’ role in peril. This is also portrayed among our YSRs when each family member expressed recognition of their siblings and parents’ value—and of their friends—exemplified in the act of care for each other, which successfully defined relationships, roles, and favorable conduct.

#### Family bound indicators for <18-21< years old young refugees

At this age range, our YSR girls were almost all married: From 7 YSR sampled girls, only 2 were in their final year of schooling at age 18 and aimed to pursue their bachelor’s degree later, and only one by age 21 was looking to graduate from university as a Pharmacy undergraduate student.

With the exception of one divorced among them by age 20,<sup>108</sup> the 3 educated girls stayed single because they actually came from a family who could afford their education. In fact, by this age category and from our experience, if the YSR girls were not pursuing their education they had certainly been married already.

Relying on their parents' social capital the refugee girls of 18 to 21 years old who could attend school or university level education had a family of a high SES or were endowed with a family that believed in the necessity of education. In our analysis, we found that the Syrian refugee parents who sent their girls to school had certainly either one of the two parents educated because contrary to families among whom both parents were not educated, the number of refugee girls receiving schooling increased only when either the father or the mother were educated from among our sample.

Moreover, a refugee family of a household income that could meet the basic expenditure of a proper residence and food for its members came as a result of either having had the breadwinner father of the family working in Lebanon since long before the start of the incidents in Syria in 2011, having been successful in relocating or operating their existing business to Lebanon, but most recurrently is having a larger male to female ratio inside the household.<sup>109</sup> However, to each rule its exception. In the above particular cases, the father of the soon to be pharmacist and her 3 younger sisters, the father could afford a house for his daughters in Beirut and a proper income that could be invested beyond the family's daily survival needs and basic level education.

---

<sup>108</sup> Without any children, Kunuz had gone back to her parents' tented settlement in the Bekaa where she lives with her parents, siblings, and sisters-in-law, all three helping out around the house.

<sup>109</sup> Meaning that the number of working male siblings was larger than that of females, hence making it easier for them to afford the household expenditure at relative ease.

Most interesting, however, the schooled girl living in Tripoli that is looking to enter University, relied on her family's belief in education to mobilize all members of the family to realize their sisters' education; as her father was not able to work and her family consisted of only one eldest brother in a large family of 8 adults in total and one 5 years old nephew, despite coming from a classic-case refugee family of low SES, she had the two older sisters already graduated from university in Syria. Their prior education and shared belief with their parents in its importance—evident in its outcome of their working as well—enabled them to work in a Syrian school nearby in the afternoon to contribute to the household income. And since one of them was already married, her husband living with his in-laws also contributed equally to the household income. Her case is important because it discredits the arguments made by families who did not send their girls to school under the pretext of financial constraints or who opposed their daughters from contributing to the household expenditure.<sup>110</sup>

However, this positive instance of families' mobilizing towards fulfilling a female family members' education despite families' low SES, must be placed in the macro scheme of the official data on girls' education prospects of this age group. As it seems that the numbers of refugee enrollment are more alarming in the post-secondary level than it is in the secondary level of their schooling: During 2016-2017, only 6% of the female refugees older than 18 years old, have enrolled in higher education (UNESCO, 2017, p.3). This is also confirmed by other reports and reflected in our sample where 95% of the age category between 15 and 24 years old were not enrolled in formal education (Op. Cit., El-Ghali, et al., 2017, p.15).

---

<sup>110</sup> If there were a number of male siblings working and the household income made up of their aggregate effort sufficed, those families were not in a financially strained situation that necessitated their female members to work.

Another exception was registered to this in relation to the eldest single refugee girls who wanted to enroll in school and had their parents' approval of it: Instead of giving up their schooling, the female ratio inside a household helped girls avoid their domestic expectations in exchange for their education. This is the case where the daughter-in-law lived with her in-laws, when the single refugee girls wanted to study, they were replaced by their sisters-in-law to attend to house chores. Again, this was never verbally agreed, but was undertaken orthodoxically, such in the example of a family in the South where a 16-year-old daughter-in-law replaced her 15 years older sister-in-law to go continue her school education.<sup>111</sup>

On the other hand, following sociocultural beliefs underlying patriarchal societies, marriage was thought to be more important in the lives of female refugees than their education. It typically occurred relative to family members' birth order whereby the eldest would be traditionally asked for marriage followed by their younger sister and so on, which also applies to young men but at a much less restricting manner should a younger brother's marriage precede his older brother's matrimony. This has been the case traditionally before and after displacement, however, what changed after the refugee crisis relevant to the circumstances of their refugeehood is the negative coping measure developed by refugee families with the emerging of the phenomena of child marriage discussed below.

The importance of marriage in the lives of our YSRs is also evident by the fact that from among a total number of 27 Syrian refugee girls that fall within our targeted age group (14-25) only 12 girls were unmarried<sup>112</sup> and more pronounced is the number of unmarried females who

---

<sup>111</sup> During a focus group discussion in the South, conducted in September 2018.

<sup>112</sup> Those are aged: 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25.

are older than 25 years old; where only one respondent, Fatmeh of 33 years old, was unmarried from among 14 older female participants that we had interviewed.

It is noteworthy that Fatmeh holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Syria and her father came to Lebanon 30 years ago and has been in the country ever since. He currently owns a vegetable shop that is adjacent to a high-income neighborhood in Beirut, which justifies the family's relative financial wellbeing. Fatmeh's four younger sisters of age 14, 16, 18 and 21 years old are also educated and still single.<sup>113</sup>

It is understandable, therefore, that wealthier Syrian families who sent their girls to schools, whether back in Syria or in Lebanon, not only delayed their children's age of marriage but also provided them with better prospects for their future (Op. Cit., Kabalan, 2016, p.12). One negative element of significant importance in the Syrian context of marriage and education was expressed by our respondent parents who had reasons to believe that the more their girls got educated, the lower their chances were in finding a proper potential partner in matrimony. Therefore, risking that they may not find a match for their educated girls impeded them from encouraging their girls' schooling, they reported.

Interestingly enough, another aspect raising the value of marriage among refugees was registered through our analysis. There seem to be a correlation between the male YSRs who came to Lebanon after 2017 (relatively recent entries despite tightening border procedure) and a new marriage contract they had spun recently, because after that date, it had become harder for male

---

<sup>113</sup> The youngest two of whom attends a Lebanese public school, Razan aged 18 years old is left to choose the field of study that she wishes for her Bachelors, while Zahraa of 21-year-old is in her 4<sup>th</sup> year of a bachelor's degree in pharmacy at the Lebanese University. She was an intern at a pharmacy by the time we interviewed her.

refugees to enter Lebanon for work without having someone from inside the Lebanese territories working on their papers. Hence, after the implementation of border restrictions to their entry, it seems that the refugee young men found a way inside Lebanon by means of marrying one of their relatives, neighbors, or acquaintance. This way, through the help of their wife's parents and the facilitation of the needed papers from inside Lebanon (including accommodation, sponsorship, and finding an employer etc.), the young men entered the neighboring country on a spouse permit. In fact, even from among our YSRs respondents, some expressed the same intention to marry abroad, which is backed by numerous literatures. However, this approach to marriage was not registered by any of their female counterparts.

In contrast, the YSR boys who were not yet married between 18 and 21 years old, were certainly in a committed relationship that is more mature by this age, to the point that a number of them had already approached her parents for their official union. The rest of the married young men in this age group (4 out of 13 within boys of this age category) had already been expecting their first or second child. The Syrian boys and girls relied on their mothers in search of a suitable partner from among the Syrian refugee community, where marriages happened locally, based on kinship, acquaintance, or geographic proximity from among neighbors.

Two from among our YSR boys had been dating Lebanese girls that they had met around their workplace and neighborhood of residence. Their experience is worth noting as it showcases locals' stance vis-à-vis intercultural marriage and implies refugees' integration prospects. Upon asking for her hand in marriage, the boys reported facing resistance from her parents against their matrimony, but that this was not enough for both of them to give up on each other. They continued talking and have been in this situation for 2 years already. However, they also informed us that they have been working harder to secure a better financial status overtime in the hope that they

would have a better chance next time they go asking for her hand with their fathers. Note that the father's involvement implies family's approval of the intercultural union from the part of the Syrian family, and the boys' aim to strengthen their financials denote that they believed that the union could happen pending a stronger financial empowerment.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that although only two from among our girl participants were married to Lebanese men by their consent—those will be mentioned in due course—according to literature the phenomena of child marriages are almost exclusive to refugee girls. In fact, this cruel practice has been identified as one of the pressing challenges facing the young refugees, while some went about regarding these occurrences as casualties of the war in Syria (Tello, 2018). The average age of YSRs taken to marriage is reported to be 16, while numerous studies registered marriages occurring at a younger age. With the higher victims of child marriage being girls, 60% reported giving birth to their first baby while under 18 years old. Moreover, about 35% of the YSRs who married when they had been under 18, indicated that the arrangement was made between the families due to perceived dangers associated with sexual violence against girls and a desire from male members of the family to preserve the honor of the family. In 25% of the cases, both married couples were below 18 years old, and over 66% of the married children had left school (Ibid.).

Finally, the difference between boys' birth order in this age category is not as significant as their younger siblings of 14 to 17 years of age because all young men were expected to have started working and contributing to the household income by this age. Hence, contrary to their female peers, they did not feel as though they had to give up their schooling solely due to their displacement as we will detail in Chapter 6. Similar to other authors, Yassin mentions that "Before the onset of the Syrian conflict, 26% of Syrian youth were enrolled in tertiary or post-secondary

education. This percentage has dramatically dropped throughout the years. Although 100,000 Syrian refugees between 18 and 22 years old are qualified for university, only 6% are currently enrolled and able to get their education” in Lebanon (Op. Cit., Yassin, 2018, p.81).

Finally, when crossing the data between YSR parents’ education and their work, with a gendered perspective to depict the gendered dimension to education, it seems that parent’s education has less significance in discouraging the work of boys because those felt compelled to work regardless of their parents’ educational background—or financial status for that matter. As previous maintained, their educational drop out is more in line with how they were expected to reciprocate based on sociocultural accounts rather than being strictly in response to their parents’ financial need for them to work. For instance, Refugees’ will for financial independence is captured by an 18-year-old boy in the South who said:

*“They [his parents] didn’t ask me to leave school. I chose to leave [answered previously: due to his school not being registered, and hence, when he realized his degree wouldn’t be legally accredited, he said he stopped studying “for nothing.”] and work because I wanted pocket money. I now work and help with the rent. I also smoke, play football with my friends and pay for my own personal expenses, which was never the case up until now [i.e., up until he started working in Lebanon].”*  
*He then concluded: “Life in Lebanon is very expensive.”<sup>114</sup>*

For this last remark alone, it is worth stating that it is after he started contributing at home, while paying for his own expenditure, that he realized how expensive it is to survive in Lebanon. This is partially one of the reasons why their displacement and their having to work has stolen away

---

<sup>114</sup> During a one-on-one interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

their childhood, as these realizations would typically occur in later stages of life, perhaps most evidently after becoming a father and bearing the expenses of raising a child.

#### Family bound indicators for <22-25< years old young refugees

Bound by their gendered obligations-expectations norms, the single young ladies' experience of their refugeehood at this age in particular are most dependent on their parents' SES than their male peers, married-, and younger counterparts. This is because their educational pursuit, work prospects, and marriage at such a mature age are contingent on their families' socioeconomic background.

Our results show how essential is the refugees' sociocultural traditions facing hardships. By this age, the majority of YSR ladies were newlywed (3 out of 9 ladies in this age category) or already married with children (4 out of 9 ladies). Only a few exceptions among them were single and working (2 out of 9 ladies). Notice how none of them were still single, pursued a higher education or were not married yet by age 22 while still at home.<sup>115</sup>

Interestingly, now that they moved to their husbands' household, living with their in-laws, single cousins, uncles, aunties, or within a nuclear family for those refugee families of a higher SES who could afford it, parents' influence over their daughters was naturally replaced by their husbands. As those expressed feelings most empowered in the presence of their husband compared to the answers of their single peers who admitted the role to their fathers when asked about their source of power. And the single young men from among them majorly replied with the name of the person who is the subject of their romantic affection. Interestingly, after marriage, the young men mainly chose to elect their fathers and male siblings, as sources of their power. And the busier

---

<sup>115</sup> See Annexed Table entitled: "Employment, by Age Category, and Gender."

outside home the young men were, the more their answers mirrored their pragmatic take to life matching their lives' responsibilities, as they enumerated: knowledge, work, and experience, being sources of their power. Also influenced by the religiosity of their parents, some respondents had been consistently matching their parents' answers looking from a religious perspective to our questions. Those among whom are married reported God to be their source of strength going through life, while the mothers of older children answered that their children were the source of their strength, again mirroring their mothers' answers.

In either case by this age range, the vast majority of the young ladies had been married and bound to their domestic responsibilities of raising their children following gendered patriarchic norms. Although the married young ladies expressed feeling freer after marriage than under the roof of their parents, they still assumed traditional expectations: Similar to their mothers' assumed role, they were home-bound and adopted their expected responsibilities as caregivers and housewives. Thus, even under their husbands' guardianship they were still restricted from seeking of opportunities to strengthen their social capital outside home.

While the young married men of 22 to 25 years old were expected to have been working for a long time by this age, their birth order was not significant to them pushing them into the labour market or out of the educational route. Only 4 from among 11 respondents in this age range were either fathers already or were expecting their first child by the time of the interview. From their part, the married young men<sup>116</sup> led a busy life to make ends meet. In the context of their financial contribution and relative financial success the more money they made, the more they said

---

<sup>116</sup> 4 of whom falling at the younger spectrum of the age bracket, being married already by age 22.

their family *trusted* them, which indicates refugees' high regards to monetary success following Coleman's indicator of YSRs' social capital.

Noteworthy, is their gendered roleplay adopted from their parents' mode of living as well: being the breadwinners at home and relying on their wife to raise the children. A more family-oriented attitude was also registered among new fathers of a higher SES, while the refugee young men of low SES struggled to secure their family's livelihood, they too ended up staying away from home for long hours. However, this should not imply that gendered markups were kept clearly separate among refugee new parents because in fact, substantial changes in the domestic relational dynamic have occurred under the circumstances of their forced displacement as will be detailed in due course.

On the matter of their marriage and in relation to the question on the ideal age for marriage among girls of this age category, the answers had been dependent on girls' level of education: the higher their educational level was the higher they would set the margin for marriage. For instance, a single young lady of 25 years working in the Bekaa said that the ideal age for marriage to be between 30 for males and 20 for females. Same applies to Noor, another one of our educated respondents who works part-time in Tripoli teaching English in a school for Syrians nearby. As she is herself 24 years old, her answer reflected her education as she thought the ideal age for a female to get married is starting 24, and 27 years for men.

## Conclusion

The categorization of wealth among the Syrian refugees in Lebanon is only specific to countries where the refugee host-country had been employing a foreign cheap workforce for decades to accommodate the need of its economy prior to the irruption of a war in the country exporting

workers. And where through the course of the long relationship between the two nations, there has been reliance on mutual benefit of some sort of socioeconomic exchange that allowed the formation of a strong social network that applies to the case between Lebanon and Syria.

In this Chapter 4, we covered refugee families' commute to Lebanon and the role of their social network in influencing YSRs' experience of their displacement affecting their lives opportunities. We indicated the functions of families' social capital and the way it is disseminated from parents to their offspring. We thus, highlighted certain family-bound indicators drawing from Coleman's notion of social capital, including household income, parents' education, family norms and traditions affecting gendered responsibilities by age and birth order.

While in this chapter we defined and illustrated the difference in living standards between wealthy and non-wealthy refugee parents by stressing the influence of a parents' social capital (income and education) on children, we aimed to prepare the background that would explain how YSRs' different experiences would reveal themselves impacting their reaction to their refugeehood in the next two chapters. Since these factors have had a significant influence over young refugees' experience at multiple aspects of their lives and future as refugee youth. Thus, the following two chapters will aim to understand how the young refugees create their own capital given their families' wealth status, as we analyze their subjective perspective to their circumstances, including their views on their education, work, marital status, and family responsibilities.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Where Tradition is Respected: Children's Lives in a Wealthy Family**

### Introduction

After having been forced to escape their home country Syria, the YSRs grew up in Lebanon as refugees and have had specific experiences as their childhood was stolen from them. Only a limited number of papers have voiced the perspective of the youth population on their experienced lives as refugees, a rare exception to this is DeJong et al., study in 2017. However, we need to shift our attention from a family's perspective to a young people's point of view to understand how the YSRs go through their refugeehood in Lebanon through the use, accumulation, and creation of social capital.

Our empirical data lies in that YSR respondents are between the ages of 14 and 25, but the majority of whom had come to Lebanon seven years prior to their participation in the survey in mid-2018. Hence, we develop our argument based on the fact that their critical cognitive and psychological properties were compromised due to war, as they were forcibly displaced in their

early childhood and adolescent age, when major influences on their identity, self-esteem and behavior is usually formed (Op. Cit., Nakeyar, et al., 2018, p.188).

In fact, the majority from among the young refugees we interviewed, had been in the country for more than 6 years (37 YSR from among 64, representing 58%) and 46 from the total number of YSR participants were younger than 17 years old when they came (representing 72%), specifically 30 respondents from those 46 were even young than 14 (representing 65% in total).<sup>117</sup> As for the year when they had arrived, 36 respondents came between 2011 and 2012, at the outset of the crisis, the number arriving in 2013 decreased but doubled back in 2014 right before the Lebanese government had imposed tight restrictions on their entry, which reflects in a substantial decrease of the number of YSRs entering Lebanon with their families as of 2015.<sup>118</sup>

As we continue the analysis of YSRs' social capital in relation to their families and lives from the viewpoint of Coleman's social capital, in the following Chapters 5 and 6 we draw the distinction clear based on families' wealth while incorporating young refugees' own perspectives to their lives and prospects. Including accounts of the age and gender inequalities that bind their experiences given sociocultural norms and traditions, as well as their circumstantial living conditions at work, and in school, as they attempt to overcome the perils of their refugeehood as a refugee youth population.

## I. Age and Gender Inequalities

We present in the following an account of variables expressed by our sampled YSRs with respect to their lives and experiences in Lebanon. It highlights their thoughts, reflections, and feelings for

---

<sup>117</sup> See Annexed Table entitled: "Report on how long the YSRs had been in Lebanon."

<sup>118</sup> See Annexed Table entitled: "Report of the number of respondents' that came into the country per year."

being refugees for the first time in their lives, and how this reflected with respect to their school, work, friends, the society hosting them and other aspects of their lives. It also includes account of how they approach their responsibilities towards their parents from a gendered angle given families' wealth and SES. The aim is to trace the forms of social capital transmitted by refugee families and analyze their values based on Coleman's notion of social capital.

## A. Positive attitude to displacement: Young refugees of <14-17<

### *Girls' perspective*

Favoring the Lebanese way of living, given the more loosen sociocultural norms, is another factor that not only applies to YSR boys, from among whom some expressed it saying: "*the best that could happen to me is to stay in Lebanon,*" but was shared by our girl respondents of higher SES especially. The following observations from a 15-year-old girl shows just how welcoming this age group is to the changes they experienced in Lebanon:

*"We sort of "woke up" in Lebanon. We became more mature here and started to do things that are older than our age, such as paying attention to our clothes and makeup. We are so much more open now. We also started going out here, at least once a month with the family, [and finally,] I didn't used to play outside home back in Syria."*<sup>119</sup>

As an observer several points are noteworthy of mention in the context of the mother's reaction to her daughter's narrative, also relevant to Coleman's work on family members' obligations and roles. Even though this girl is living her normal age judging what she shared, we noted her mother interrupting her daughters' anecdote to discourage her and try to convince her that her dreams of

---

<sup>119</sup> During a one-on-one interview conducted outside her house in the South, in September 2018.

becoming a youtuber will not come true. Then after her daughter finished, the mother turned to us saying: “*I wish she remained young. She was smarter, more conscious, and mature. Now she doesn’t listen. I feel that her mobile made her dreamy, as she asks me now: “Mom why am I not like those people on YouTube?”*”<sup>120</sup>

This not only illustrates intergenerational gap of perspectives, but also implies parents’ fulfilling of their role as best they could. Based on her sharing of what most alarms her from her daughters’ dream: her question “*why am I not like those people on YouTube?*”, we analyze that the mother’s insisting recurrently to discourage her daughter’s dream is not motivated by an intention to crush a dream but comes as an attempt from her as a mother who should *know best*, to reduce her daughter’s disappointment. Especially given that she must not even understand the monetizing potentials of a successful YouTube channel. Moreover, her wishing for her daughter to listen to her advice, describing it as the *mature* and *smart* thing to do, illustrates the parents’ raising their children following traditional sociocultural norms and the natural resistance of their children to it the younger our respondents were, specifically coming from wealthy families.

On their changed behavior, Sheikha, for instance, a newlywed girl of 16 years old shares that she felt she had become more patient in Lebanon, and closer to God.<sup>121</sup> However this applies to both schooled and unschooled girls of a wealthy and non-wealthy family. The only gendered difference that was remarked compared to their male counterparts, is that girls grew more religious in Lebanon, to help them cope with their disrupted lives whereas boys were busy making a living.

In terms of girls’ perception of their future, a 15-year-old schooled girl perceives “*a beautiful future*” to herself, which brings forth a significant difference registered between schooled

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> During a focus group discussion in Beirut, conducted on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.

and unschooled girls. Similar to boys, schooled girls of this age group did not express feeling stressed either. Since their lives did not change dramatically from when they were in Syria compared the unschooled girls, the relative successful replication of their lives at home given their parents' high SES reflected in a more positive take to their lives than the girls who had to drop out of school since their forced displacement. This positive attitude also reflected in the way these young girls received the connotation of the word refugees, because as they mentioned, the girls attending school were not being referred to as such among their peers, friends, and locals.

### *Boys' perspective*

The YSRs of 14 to 17 years old have displayed a positive attitude towards almost all the questions that we had asked. From their interpretation of the word refugee, not assigning it a negative connotation, to considering the hardships that their families are facing as *fait accompli*, something one must come in term with and move on, with actually a better perceivable image to their future prospects in sight as per their answers. It is clear in their response that their adjustment to their disrupted lives is tolerated faster than their older counterparts.

Even in reference to being called a refugee, Ahmed of 17 years old said: "*It bothered me at first, then I got over it. [but at first,] It felt as if I were an insect.*"<sup>122</sup> Similarly, boys of a higher SES did not feel the same level of calamities associated with their experienced refugeehood as their poorer counterparts. This was made reference by the 35-year-old brother of a 16-year-old boy interviewed in the South, who said: "*If you have financial means, this word means little to you as you are treated better.*"<sup>123</sup> The family had been in Lebanon for over 30 years and had recently

---

<sup>122</sup> During a focus group interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

moved their home appliance business from Syria to Lebanon, with a sum of economic capital when war erupted.

While older YSR respondents wished for war to end, for their family members to stay healthy and safe, for them to return to Syria, YSR respondents from this age group had wishes more suitable to their age as Jomaa of 15 years old working in a farmland in the Bekaa wished “*to become the most famous singer in Lebanon,*”<sup>124</sup> and Hadi working in Lebanon as a mechanic of 17 years old, wished to “*travel and get accepted to a Football school in Europe.*”<sup>125</sup> Having those big dreams are signs of a relatively healthy child development related to traits of confidence and competence, even when left unrealized in the future (Packer, et al., 2020). For a more practical, realistic, and attainable wish a single boy of their same age, dreamed to “*buy a car, get married to the lady I love, and own a house*”<sup>126</sup> without specifying if his plans were to be realized in Lebanon or back in Syria.

Another possible reason for their positive take to life in Lebanon pertains to the higher margin of freedom that YSRs were assigned in Lebanon compared to that in Syria. As Bader, a single working boy of 16 years old in Beirut, succeeded in escaping school and its associated “*disciplined classroom,*”<sup>127</sup> (symbolizing physical freedom) for the pursuit of work (symbolizing financial freedom). He narrated his adventures back in the suburbs of Aleppo, boasting about his reputation of being the troublemaker in his neighborhood in Syria.

To state a few of his tales, he spoke about the time he swam naked in the nearby river at 5:00am, the time he opened the gates for the cattle to “have their freedom,”

---

<sup>124</sup> During a focus group interview in Bekaa, conducted in June 2018.

<sup>125</sup> During a focus group interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> During a one-on-one interview in Beirut, conducted on April 23, 2018.

and the time he damaged the water pump of the well on purpose to stop it from waking him up at night. But most importantly, he told us how much he hated school, but every time he escaped, he was punished by his parents to return to school, until he came to Lebanon in 2011, adding: *“that was the last time we fought about school in the house.”*

At this age range, the difference between two single YSR boys of 17 years old to have two completely different opinions on their experience in Lebanon, maybe understood in the difference of their birth order at home and the number of household dependents in each family. The eldest of a family of 8 members at the age of 17 would say: *“It’s more negative than it is positive, no matter what “good” came out of it.”*<sup>128</sup> While the second male to a family of 5 members only, believed that his experience is *“positive overall. Here [in Lebanon], I learned how to deal with people and that there are different kinds of them. I also learned to drive here in Lebanon.”*<sup>129</sup> One point in line, related to the general positivity of this age category lies in the former recognizing the existence of some positive aspects to his situation, when he admitted the potential “benefit” to his displacement. This same respondent admitted to becoming calmer, *“as if God put patience in me in Lebanon. I wasn’t like that in Syria,”* which portrays a sign of YSRs’ maturity, which was also experienced by his younger brother of 16 years old who was “less friendly,” according to his own description.

---

<sup>128</sup> During a one-on-one interview in Beirut, conducted on April 23, 2018.

<sup>129</sup> During a one-on-one interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

## B. Mounting responsibilities: Young refugees of <18-21<

### *Young men's perspective*

Similar to their younger counterparts, the YSRs of 18 to 21 years old have also displayed a genuine engagement and positive attitude to the majority of our questions overall, including being in favor of their mobiles and recognizing its necessity in their lives in general, which will be addressed shortly. They were not bothered by the word refugee or displaced, and considered both words synonymous, not assigning an offensive connotation to their use. The exception to that was registered at this age group among boys of a lower SES who had been married already and even among married boys of a wealthier background. Their answers overall on multiple topics seemed either more realistic or pessimistic than their younger siblings and peers of the same age who had not yet held the responsibility of a marriage and who expressed not feeling discriminated against at work or on the streets.

The Single boys that we interviewed of relative wealth and higher SES also worked in accordance with their families' sociocultural expectation, which brought them satisfaction despite their displacement and living in much better circumstances than their non-wealthy peers. They conveyed not experiencing discrimination in Lebanon either. However, as mentioned above, at this age the married boys of a high SES, started feeling the growing responsibilities of parenthood and their increasing challenges living in Lebanon. It rendered their answers and views closely similar to their financially struggling counterparts of a lower SES. As a result, it seems that marital status influenced how married refugee boys regarded the notion: refugee. As one married father of 19-year-old explained saying: Being a refugee *"It means that we're not home, but what [Lebanese] people don't understand is that in all cases, I would want to go back [to Syria] it's not*

*like I wish to stay [here, in Lebanon].*<sup>130</sup> Not only is their perception regarding their refugeehood negatively affected, but also their feeling of alienation and disintegration were stronger, which made them express wanting to return to Syria eventually.

Drawing from a thematic analysis of their observations there were recurrent registered remarks that young refugee boys of a high SES falling within this age range still felt unwelcome in Lebanon. However, the frequency of their reporting drops significantly low when compared to their poorer boy counterpart and married young girl respondents of equal wealth status. Moreover, their views were the closest registered to the single educated refugee girls who had still been in school (i.e., whose lives had been disturbed the least from among their peers), as shortly discussed. A possible explanation to this brings attention to Coleman's expectation-obligation theory, as it could be inferred from YSRs' views of their situation that children's undisturbed lives allowed them to stay hopeful facing hardships, while the wealthier a situation they could attain, the less likely it is for family turbulence to occur. Thus, keeping the young from feeling unwelcome.

#### *Young ladies' perspective*

At this age range, the girls had already been engaged, newlywed, expecting mothers, mothers of one or two children, or even divorced (aged 20). From among 7 respondents in this age group, only three were still single and pursued their schooling.<sup>131</sup> The prospects of educated ladies were limited: Similar to their 36 years old eldest sister—who finished her Agricultural engineering degree in Syria, she could not get married for lack of a proper educated match for her in Lebanon—once they finish their schooling, they could pursue their bachelors, but after that, they had limited

---

<sup>130</sup> During a one-on-one interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

<sup>131</sup> Siblings of a wealthy family of 18, 20, and 21 years of age.

prospects to work in their degrees in Lebanon, while in Syria they were not expected to work especially coming from a family of high SES.<sup>132</sup>

Sharing their perspective about how important education is for them regarding the person approaching them for marriage, these schooled young YSR ladies shared that they received marriage proposals but found it hard to be approached by equally educated Syrian men in Lebanon. They complained that these potential partners had missed the chance of continuing their education or had only reached secondary school level and never pursued a university degree. They also reported that this was not due to their displacement to Lebanon but that men had dropped their education from the time they were still in Syria.

In fact, according to the Syrian Youth Transition Survey conducted by the Syria Central Bureau of Statistics (n.d.), the percentage of young boys dropping out of school in Syria was substantially higher than that of their female peers both in basic elementary and secondary level education even from before the refugee crisis of 2011.<sup>133</sup> Where in numbers, the percentage of enrollment among the girls was registered at 70% compared to only 50% among boys (El-Ghali, et al., 2019, p.13).

Furthermore, the girls objected that on average, the age of the men asking for their hand in marriage is around their thirties, more than a decade older than our girls had been at the time of the interview, to which they opposed but their parents found no problem in. Interestingly, we had the chance to meet those educated young refugee boys during our field interview. The young boys were not looking to marry Syrian refugee girls present in Lebanon but networked among their

---

<sup>132</sup> More on this will be covered in the comparison between wealthy and non-wealthy refugee families and YSRs' prospects.

<sup>133</sup> Annexed Table, entitled: "Education level (in %) of youths leaving education for the first time by gender and rural-urban divide."

social network to find single young refugee girls already living abroad looking for marriage for them to leave the country. To those young men, the educational level of the young ladies they approached for marriage was secondary to them, should they have been accepted as asylum seekers or were already on a refugee status in a foreign country.

At the level of their feeling unwelcome, the girls of this age range had grown sensitive and sentimental about their current reality as refugees. Especially among those who did not go to school. Despite having much fewer interaction with local Lebanese than their siblings, they would still share the opinion of their parents regarding the perceived negative connotation assigned to this noun. *“Yeah, it’s not easy for us to take [it] when it’s commonly used as an offensive description”* said a 20-year-old girl.<sup>134</sup> Those ladies did not register a higher level of religiosity after having been forcible displaced, not as single girls nor as married or newlyweds, which was also independent of their families’ SES. A funny trait that the new mothers of this age group shared was their reporting having short temperament, getting angry, and losing patience of their situation the most, without exception. Their answers came contrary to the response of their older counterparts whose children were already older and more independent to take care of themselves alone.

### C. Faced with their abject reality: Young refugees of <22-25<

#### *Men’s perspective*

Comparing their answers to the male counterparts of lower SES, this age group of men falling between 22- and 25-years old age bracket were the least optimistic about their situation than the younger men interviewed of equally high SES. However, they share with their wealthy peers not

---

<sup>134</sup> During a focus group interview in the South, conducted in September 2018.

having experienced discrimination against them by “the people we know,”<sup>135</sup> as one specified referring to his social network only not to include the Lebanese society in general.

Moreover, the men of a higher SES expressed having no intention to leave Lebanon because their business has never been better since they moved. They also voiced that they were only a couple hours away from Syria, implying having options and feeling empowered to act in case their situation changes and that they had to return back to their home country. Those young men also showed stronger family ties and closer connection to family compared to their younger peers. They also claimed to be more patient towards their ordeal as they expressed a deeper sense of religiousness, as stated by a 25-year-old businessman in Tripoli: “*We need to be patient. This is a calamity, an ordeal. It needs strong faith.*”<sup>136</sup>

By this age only 6 young men were still not married from among 11 respondents of this age category surveyed. However, those single men were already either engaged or in a committed relationship. For this, their mobiles had a greater significance to them, and they expressed more attachment to it than their married male counterparts. This reflects clearly in their positive attitude to most questions assessing their relation to their mobiles, contrary to the other married young men in their age group who recognize its necessity for business communication only, and not entertainment or other functions as will be analyzed in Chapters 7 and 8.

### *Ladies' perspective*

Feeling more frustrated than their younger counterparts of a high SES, the ladies of this age expressed feelings of defeat about their refugeehood. Many of the ladies at this age are already

---

<sup>135</sup> During a one-on-one interview conducted on the streets of Tripoli, in August 2018.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

married, either have one or two offspring or were newlyweds and expecting a child. Only two were still single: One worked as a cashier at a mall (aged 25) and one taught English at a nearby school for refugees (aged 24). From what they described, being a refugee meant for them the absence of human security to them and their parents. Hence, constantly fearing for their dignity, for their shelter, for their food, for the future. This was shared by both ladies of a high and low SES, who expressed feeling hunted by fear and being unwelcomed in their temporary host.

## II. Wealthy Family Leading a Conventional Lifestyle

We witnessed the success of wealthy heads-of-household in maintaining traditional customs despite displacement. The more refugee families were able to replicate a regular life to their children, such in the case of a vegetable shop keeper, a home-appliances owner, and a toy-store owner, the more changes in the gendered roles and responsibilities among family members remained untouched, keeping family dynamics as though the family was still in Syria.

### A. Education

Several literary work, including DeJong et al. drawing from a series of focus group discussions with YSRs aged 10 to 16 years old living in the Bekaa, observed that adolescent girls valued education as a means for a better future, but they understood their challenges to educational attainment being safety as a top concern for them and their families, including reported fear from bullying, exclusion, discrimination, and assault (Op. Cit., DeJong et al., 2017, p.23).

When it comes to the YSR girls of a wealthy family background from among our respondents, those maintained their schooling and ran a typical school-student life routine involving complaints related to their final examinations, hard materials, and strict teachers, as worries were voiced during our survey. Some of those 18-19 years old refugee girls, who decided

to pursue university level education and bachelor's degrees, submitted their papers to the Lebanese University as the cheapest available option. Should they overcome the tough entrance exam, they would have equal chances of success as any of their Lebanese peers of their age.

In the case of the Syrian citizens of a most wealthy background, who cannot be assigned the status of refugee for their wealth, they applied to most prestigious schools, such as the American University of Beirut. While their refugee girl counterparts who could not afford the high tuition fees, their agency was unraveled by their pursuit for scholarship as a way to premium education or educational opportunity abroad by means of several competitive scholarships targeting the Syrian refugee youth and offered by numerous international donors (Op. Cit., El-Ghali, et al., 2017, p.24).

An interesting aspect among our rare encounter of single boys from wealthy families who had continued their schooling, pertains to their personal activities being different from their married working peers of similar financial standing. As the former spent the majority of their time outside, contrary to married men. Furthermore, those single boys in school held their friendships at a greater value without having to compromise on their time spent with the family.

## B. Work

In terms of family members' domestic relations, financial comfort among Syrian refugee families allowed families of a high SES to reproduce the same social order and division of labour between genders that existed in Syria prior to displacement. Without a financial burden hunting their daily life, as previously mentioned not even feeling the weight of their refugeehood or feeling discriminated against, the YSRs of this family model did not realize the urge of having to react to the hardships of their refugeehood or felt the need of having to work exceptionally towards the

best interest of the family rather than their own. This is why the YSRs of this model did not feel the need to contribute to the survival of their families compared to youth of a lower SES. Thus, as a general pattern, while the latter has had to hustle outside home to barely make ends meet, the former simply had either to attend school or join the labour market—pending their age range and birth order. And when asked about their relationships with friends, they preferred to stay among family instead of joining friends after work.

As previously mentioned, relevant to wealthy family models the YSR boys' work was not motivated by families' need as much as the young refugees' own purpose: fulfilling their sociocultural obligations-expectations. Hence, for the wealthy boys since their family's capital helped them maintain successful businesses in Lebanon (owning a restaurant, a vegetable store, or a home-appliances shop in a high-income area), they did not even have to share their salaries to contribute to the household expenditure. Instead, they saved their income for their sought-after marriage or treated their mothers and children, depending on their marital status.

One interesting example to showcase is that of Zakariya, a boy aged 17 years old, working with his uncle selling vegetables during his summer vacation, despite being registered in school and having a great social network of family members who had been in Lebanon for over 15 year. He is part of the 18.3 percent of the Syrian children who work in Lebanon while pursuing some form of schooling according to UNICEF (2019, p.48).

Zakariya's family fulfilled multiple matrices to his ability to focus solely on his studies: First, they were financially relatively at ease. Second, the parents had preexisting social networks in Lebanon through his uncle's and grandfather's network. Third, his nuclear family had arrived in Lebanon since 2012 (i.e., only

one year since the start of the crisis). Four, even the family's geographic place of residence is in Tripoli, which is the cheapest city in terms of living- and rental-cost compared to other locations in Lebanon. Finally, despite all those conditions being met for him to be able to focus on his education for not being expected to work, Zakariya still chose to work full time with his uncle.<sup>137</sup>

In such a case model, the father's responsibility to provide, as the sole breadwinner traditionally, was now supported by his male offspring after war. Hence, boy's contribution to the household income assisted the head of household performing his traditional task, allowing him to fulfill his role supporting the family. Therefore, wealthier Syrian households maintained the closest replica possible to their traditional Syrian family lifestyle, function, and values but on Lebanese territories.

In the context of the difference between YSR boys' contribution relevant to their families' wealth, since both joined work irrespective of their families' need for their financial contribution, then the only registered difference we have found is that the boys of a wealthy family background were not compelled to share their salaries and did not have to accept any form of work they found (like working in construction sites or in agriculture). Instead, they occupied more service-oriented functions that required less hard manual labour, including working in retail, as cashiers, inside stores or working with their relatives-owned shop. In fact, the jobs they landed are illustrative of not only their parents' high SES but also of their social capital. Since to attain such line of work amidst an exploitative job market that would underpay them for being Syrians, their employment must have entailed a heavy reliance on an empowered social network compared to their refugee boys' counterpart of a lower SES. Those had no such a support system given the absence of a

---

<sup>137</sup> During a one-on-one interview in Tripoli, in July 2018.

strong social network, and the limit of their choices for better work conditions when their families are in financial need, leaving them to accept any form of formal or informal employment.

When it comes to the dimension of their birth order, the eldest male in a wealthy family found himself not compelled to work as much as *wanting* to work even if he were of a relatively young age (Samara, 2019). This applies to the boy mentioned above in Tripoli. It is noteworthy to look at official data, where only 7% of the refugee children of his age (falling between the age of 15 to 18 years old) were registered as working while attending school. As this percentage represents the lowest age group doing both, education, and income pursuit, it conforms that the good fortune of this 17 years old boy described above, did not render him obliged to choose between continuing education or seeking work, yet still his choice was to find a means of income of any sort besides formal education. While the highest age bracket of working students was detected among those who are between 8 and 12 years old (57%), followed by children between the age of 12 to 15 years old (24%). (Op. Cit., Habib et al., 2019b, p.51)

### C. Family functions, friendships, and circumstantial priorities

Wealthy families were able to draw upon their accumulated financial resources from having the father or male children working in Lebanon for over decades before war started, and were therefore, able to maintain closer ties with the family when their forced displacement occurred without having to sacrifice home for work. However, as store owners the fathers still had to work for long hours, and having the means, they could afford to locate their place of residence a couple minutes walking distance away from their shop. They were also able to keep their YSR daughters in school without raising their expectation of girls' domestic responsibilities.

Children of both genders in a high SES family displayed a more family-oriented lifestyle. They reported enjoying family gathering and the occasional outings that all family members partake on. Friendships are of significant importance in the lives of refugees too. However, the married young men among them especially, significantly reduced their outings after work, almost eliminating going out with friends, which also applies to married working men of a low SES. This is not to say that they eliminated completely having friends but that their school friends for instance, which is exclusive to girls as previously argued, remained bound within the context of school. And their friends from work gathered on extremely rare occasions.

Exchanged visits among female friends only happened occasionally provisional to the close geographic proximity of those relationships. While hosting classmates at home was limited to the closest friendships, after that the parents had established safety of their children and approved of the morals and upbringing of the friend before being permitted inside home. As for visiting friends in the neighborhood from among refugee girls, those had to be accompanied by their mothers as a form of protection against strangers but wrapped under the pretext of socialization. The latter occurred much more frequently than the hosting of classmates' visits.

When it comes to the boys, school friendships are limited because very few of our YSRs remained in school after their displacement, as previously reported in the literature review and described above on boys' education. As an exception, the educated wealthy refugee boys were the only ones registered to join family's occasional outdoor activities while simultaneously maintaining a busy outdoor schedule with friends. Their approach to life, activities, and response were analyzed as close to possible to living a regular teen life despite refugeehood.

However, as for YSR boys' friendships that are born away from school, we noticed a more work-oriented lifestyle among boys of a wealthier family who insisted not having other activities away from family, besides work.

For instance, from among three young respondents working for either their father's or uncle's vegetable shop and carriage, working for their brother's home appliances store, and distributing internet and cable network services (at age 17, 16, and 24, respectively). All three spent all day at work and only came back home to their families late at night. Such in the case of Saad, the 24-year-old father of two, living and his wife with his parents and sisters in Beirut. Married boys of wealthy family background like his, returned home for "comfort and recharging"<sup>138</sup> right after work, as most of them asserted, stressing the great deal of family importance.<sup>139</sup>

Even though the first two were still single, yet their priorities were clearly set as being family-first and work-second, inspired by their fatherly models. Hence, single boys in wealthy families spent less time at home only because they were busy pursuing their business outside or that of their fathers, uncles, and relatives. At home, the single YSR boys of a higher SES spent more time using their mobiles devices, contrary to married young refugees who reported only using it for work, but their use of it is reported different than their poor boy counterparts who invested more efforts into reviving weak relationships: Bridging new ties.

Consequently, a family's relative wealth influenced YSRs' chances of integration in the Lebanese society, and assisted in their identity formation (Op, Cit., Lewig et al., 2009, p.36). But

---

<sup>138</sup> During a focus group discussion in Beirut, conducted on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018.

<sup>139</sup> While their poorer counterpart also emphasized the importance of their family unity, they were presented more chances to act in accordance with their beliefs, given the family's ordeal.

most importantly, it impacted their experienced level of stress, which was reduced the more the family could afford financial relative ease. Because lower levels of domestic stress have been associated with more stable family structures enhancing bonding ties among its members. The more refugee families were able to replicate a regular life to their children, simulating the one they were forced to leave behind, the less stress the children developed and the better equipped they were to deal with the present stressors they faced. This also reflected in their more optimistic answers about their future prospects, which illustrates a closer-to-regular experience that they have had at the level of their passing through life stages: from childhood, to adolescence, to young adulthood as refugees.

Additionally, our empirical research also found that higher SES among refugee families contributed to a registered increase in the level of preparedness of their young children for their future. And that in those family models, intergenerational power-negotiation efforts were less experienced domestically as well. This was managed exceptionally well by the refugee mothers as moderators of the difference in viewpoints between parents-children and facilitators of the interrelational dialogue between children among each other in a wealthy family background.

This brings us to a less favorable side to families' wealth: In this model of high SES, fathers did not spend as much time with their children because they expected mothers to do their job, only summoning them in urgent domestic situations. Even though they had been physically at home more often than their counterparts of lower SES, as part of the female gendered role under the patriarchal order that is prevalent in the Syrian culture, it fell under the responsibility of the mothers to manage the house and maintain intergenerational family accord. For instance, as shared by several of our respondent mothers, to witness less family feuds and insure domestic stability for the proper functioning of family dynamics, since fathers also did not invest much in reinforcing

good behaviors and sanctioning inappropriate ones due to their leading a busier life than refugee families of a lower SES, the mothers opted to keep children's mischief away from their husband.

One important element to add in this scenario pertains to the fact that despite patriarchal refugee parents' capacity to sanction misbehaviors and reinforce good norms among their offspring, more Syrian families of a higher SES reported to us their children's mischief compared to their peers of a lower SES. Smoking for instance, was more prevalent among YSRs of better economically endowed families. However, the reason for that may not have to do with more disobedient children among young refugees of a high SES but pertains more to the parents' higher expectations from their children, which is also supported by the literature on refugees' resettlement (McMichael, 2011).

As it seems that the priorities within a wealthy family are different from their non-wealthy counterparts, specifically because the former parenting model have exerted bigger financial, social, and human capital in acquiring more resources to provide better for their children, hence, they disciplined them more strictly over a low performance in school, for instance, rather than a juvenile misconduct, like smoking. Finally, in wealthy family models, since every member was busy playing their traditional role, family members received less individual support compared to families of a lower SES. This further reduced their feeling of reciprocity towards the collective unit of the family, yielding weaker family ties at the domestic level thereby weaker bonding overall.

Another negative implication to the high-income refugee households pertains to the traditional low gender equity among Syrian refugee family members highlighted in Chapter 4. As higher stress levels at home between YSR siblings and girls-parents' relation has affected the

incumbent domestic relations among Syrian family members living in Lebanon. This is due to the influence of the Lebanese environment at school, which offers females better opportunities for work and mobility overall, especially influencing schoolgirls of a wealthy Syrian family who were privileged to continue their schooling in Lebanon unlike their peers of a lower SES who could not afford it. Besides being allowed to study, girls of a higher SES wanted to work or acquire greater autonomy and independence, but faced prohibition by their fathers, husbands, or male siblings, for allegations related to their security. This in turn created more domestic problems and somatizing cases among families of a higher SES.

Hence, we choose to counter argue the positive relation that Madoré previously mentioned in the context of Syrian refugees' *normalcy* and integration in the local society. On the basis that for a family to reach normalcy in exile, our analysis showed that families of a high-household income were more successful than their counterpart refugee family of low income in replicating a parallel model to their lives back in Syria—one that is as close as possible to their social norms, cultural traditions, and orthodox lives. However, high-household income families' success in this endeavor is in fact accompanied by a general pattern of distancing themselves from the local community, as described by Madoré's so called "adaptation mechanism," rather than a means to building dialogue with their new setting, allowing for cultural exchange with their host (Op. Cit., Madoré, 2016).

Going back to Coleman's social capital, another expectation of reciprocity was expressed by girls at the level of their obedience to their parents and their special attendance to their demand for constant communication to ensure their safety once the girls left home alone for any reason. As Manar's following statement holds a latent dimension of communicating to her parents of her

safety when outside: *“I must respect now the freedom that my parents have granted me by informing them of my every move.”*<sup>140</sup>

In fact, when it comes to YSRs’ feelings of safety, the young respondents, both girls and boys, marked the places where their family and community members exist as the safest to live in, compared to areas of higher concentration of Lebanese, which we believe not only portrays the level of their *dis-integration* in the Lebanese society but also presents one of the factors granting additional importance to the role of social networks in YSRs’ lives and increasing their dependence on it away from home.

Finally, at the level of our YSRs’ housing, unlike what one would expect, wealthier families did not automatically have their offspring living in separate houses from their parents after marriage. As we noted from among our married participants, regardless of the breadwinners’ income-level, married couples and their nuclear families lived with their in-laws. However, the longer the family had been in Lebanon, the more respondents said they would consider renting another house nearby when families’ financials could afford it, which had not been the case of any of our respondents, eight years since the start of the war in Syria by the time we had interviewed them.

## Conclusion

To understand how the YSRs have created their own social capital within the boundaries of their families’ wealth, we presented in Chapter 5 a description of how they have lived and maneuvered their new lives as refugees *vis-à-vis* their education, work, marital status, and family

---

<sup>140</sup> During a focus group discussion in the family’s home in Tripoli, in August 2018. She is an 18-year-old recent school graduate.

responsibilities imposed by the circumstances of their refugeehood.<sup>141</sup> Results show that the Syrian youth have successfully received and adopted their families' cooperative values illustrated by their evident reciprocation of their expected intergenerational relationship and have mobilized positive behavior towards their family. Hence strengthening family bonds and contributing to its social capital, with different dimensions registered through the course of the analysis between married and single YSRs, as well as the highlighted gendered considerations.

As we aim to paint a vivid comprehensive picture of the heterogeneity of the refugee youth experience, between the different social capital of the wealthy and non-wealthy families, we address in the following similar variables faced by YSRs of a lower SES and their reaction to it. By the end of Part II, we would have clarified that the two most important variables to have played the biggest role in YSRs' seeking of social capital, are that of their age, to which they have no control over pertaining to their birth order, as well as their family's household income, to which they could contribute to as will be the topic of investigation of Part III on their mobile phone use.

---

<sup>141</sup> Annexed Table n.10, entitled: "Indicators influencing YSRs' reproduction and vulnerability, as informed by their families' SES"

# **Chapter 6**

## **Opportunity of Change: Children's Lives in a Non-Wealthy Family**

### Introduction

One of the important findings of Part II pertains to what we believe has influenced the proliferation of social capital among YSRs derived from that of their parents; prior to their displacement, Syrian parents had provided their children with vital information about their traditions, culture, homeland, and future prospects. The strengthening of young refugees' personal identity following gendered patriarchal norms assisted in the reinforcement of cultural values and the sanctioning of divergent attitudes and actions. After their displacement, refugee parents tried to instill in their children the Syrian sociocultural norms and behavior that is prevalent across the Syrian refugee community. They did it to the best of their abilities, but the displacement compromised their position as caretakers and providers to their children, particularly among families of a low SES. The shifting social gendered structures is illustrated in the increasing numbers of female refugee participation in the Lebanese labour market and informal economy despite traditional norms, as reported by the

International Rescue Committee in 2019 (Kabir and Klugman, 2019, p.11; Mhaissen, and Alaa Aldien, 2020, p.8).

Due to their disrupted lives and the loss of means of living, refugee families' novel circumstances have created loopholes of needs that the family as a structural entity needed to fulfil, hence, making way for change at the level of intergenerational family dynamic, typically sacred within traditional patriarchic family models. This breakthrough highlights the importance of the experiences that had taken place within the household of families of low SES, which provides the necessary circumstantial needs for change to occur. While this is otherwise difficult to achieve among wealthy refugee family models, as discussed in the previous Chapters 5, the present Chapter 6 will address this issue from the standpoint of young refugees of a lower SES.

## I. Education, Work and Values in a non-Wealthy Family

### A. Education

To exemplify empirically how the alarming data mentioned in the previous chapter on refugee girls' low prospects for education reflects on our sampled young girls, we point out that when crossing data between the age of our YSR respondents and the average time of their families' arrival to Lebanon, those from among whom we interviewed at age 14 had been 9 years old when they had dropped out of school upon the start of the war in 2011, assuming they had not stopped even earlier before moving to Lebanon.

As we had previously pointed out based on our analysis of the empirical data that the general pattern of obligations-expectations among YSR girls seems to expect that the eldest daughter of a low SES, or second eldest after a brother or two, would typically assume domestic responsibilities, while her younger sisters (<14-17<) remained in school. After giving up on their

education some mentioned realizing at some point later in their new reality that it was “too late” for them to return to school, even after things had long settled for the family in Lebanon. Hence it is understandable why the girls almost collectively expressed, with some noteworthy exceptions discussed below, not willing to enroll back to school after their arrival to Lebanon despite that their schooling is free.

Whether their decision came willingly or compulsorily as will be debated shortly, in their defense we argue from Coleman’s viewpoint that it was only natural for those girls who happened to be the eldest among their siblings, to act on their obligations-expectations and make the sacrifice. We also propose that such a passive acceptance of their ‘fate’ can be explained by female obstructions indices occurring at the Syrian sociocultural level: whereby our female respondents could not recognize “subtle and implicit practices and social structures [...] because these practices are deeply woven into everyday life and are a normal part of living.” (Oyserman et al., 2002, p.7) And finally, we believe that due to their traumatic flight to safety, their capacity to think long term was reduced and likewise are notions of their future currently absent in their short-term deliberation about daily matters. This explains how, unfortunately, none of our respondents thought of what would happen to them at a later stage in life if they ever went back to Syria with no education.

With the exception of only a few respondents, the vast majority of the girls did not note their misfortune of having been pressured to make the sacrifice as the eldest female, not even at a later stage in their routine lives in Lebanon. The reason for this, we assume could be pointed by some literature that propose young refugee girls could not effectively resist their sacrifice, as confirmed by Western literature on the role of women in Southern cultures and societies, where the “household, and work or services performed within the ‘home,’ have traditionally been

conceptualized in Northern thought as constituting the ‘feminine’ private sphere.” (Op. Cit., Pacitto and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013, p.16) This also indicates why the young boys from Syria did not want to be spatially associated with the house, regardless of families’ SES.

When speaking of their earlier mentioned “Kingdom” being home, those girls who stopped attending school, who spend their day doing house chores and domestic work, who answer their mothers’ orders in the morning and listen later at night to their siblings’ school tales and juvenile mischiefs, must have been at least slightly satisfied with the current arrangement they live in. This is not to say that they did not complaint about their current situation at all, as they mentioned detesting their birth order specifically because of their having to help around the house, doing house chores to complete required domestic work.

However, most importantly noted in our analysis is other girls’ reaction to their expected roles and present lives as refugees. As we also notice in the interviews that some did express complaints about their missing chance in fulfilling their education or at least expressing feeling it was ‘unfair’ to them to have had no choice but to make such a sacrifice. The notion of *remorse* registered among some girls we interviewed was relevant to their age: The older our young girl respondents were (<18-25<), the more they expressed the feeling towards their decision to drop out of school. As presumed a self-proclaimed responsibility according to Coleman tied to their birth order, and since only a few girls ended up with these feelings, we support that the Syrian girls do not value their education appropriately similar to their parents as previously argued. Hence, influenced by their cultural upbringing, they did not realize its beneficial potential in their lives and for their future.

Additionally, although implicitly backed by their parents, the girls believed that it is due to their displacement that their circumstances constrained them to a home-bound life until marriage.<sup>142</sup> In this case, they imply that their sacrificing of the traditional student life that they had back in Syria, must not have been motivated by their wanting to contribute in this negative particular way at least, to the family unit, as much as it was due to circumstances that have left them misinformed of other potential ways to showcase their *wanting* to appease families' hardships. However, relying on Coleman's views of their obligations-expectations, we believe that it was in fact due to latent sociocultural drives that the girls had once at a younger age bracket commit a reactionary act that now seemed to them irreversible by the time that they had realized their loss.

We believe that when they express their feeling that the “train [of education, of marriage, etc.] has passed them,” it illustrates once again socially bound limitations and not what they assume it to be circumstantially imposed restrictions to their going back to school, since their schooling is free and their marriage prospects not ideal, as per their claim. Hence, the older the young refugee girls become the more they realized that they would have rather chosen another way to reciprocate to their families instead of giving up on their education, as expressed by a few.

Another important aspect to this age nuance, pertains to the effect of YSRs' order of birth among their siblings on their acquired social capital (Op. Cit., Samara, 2020). As it seems, girls who did not go to school, stopped meeting new people, and resolved to a domestic role similar to that of a housewife, have thus also lost the chance to build on their existing social network as opposed to their younger schooled sisters. This important aspect to our dissertation will be devised

---

<sup>142</sup> During a one-on-one interview conducted in September 2018, in her house in Sidon in the company of her mother.

more in detail in the context of YSRs' use of mobiles in reaction to the vulnerabilities of displacement that they are faced with in Lebanon.

With regards to YSR boys' educational pursuit among non-wealthy families, we had explained how schooling was not even an option to wealthy refugees, let alone those coming from a poor SES. The youngest we encountered from among our low-income Syrian boys had dropped school at the age of 15 years old, but the literature shows figures that indicate those families have had their boys working by age 11 on average (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2019, p.46). This demonstrates that among YSR boys of a low SES the weight of work is assigned higher value when compared to schooling as a form of family contribution.

When it comes to boys' relation to school, only one from among our YSR boys had been still in school at age 17. We had previously discussed his case choosing to work selling vegetables helping his uncle instead of staying at home during summer break. His case is worth further investigation relevant to his social activities away from family and his friendships developed in school—as opposed to the rest of the boy participants whose friendship was bound to work or their neighborhood of residence.

During the interview Zakaria made several references to a girl he is dating, to whom he expressed his wishes to marry despite his young age when answering of the best thing that could ever happen to him in Lebanon. Interestingly, however, when Zakariya was later asked to name the people he feels “most at ease with” and “most capable,” he answered to both questions that it is in the company of his friends from school that he feels most comfortable and the most empowered. In fact, when comparing the results of the interviewed boys and girls closely, his answer is aligned with schooled girls but does not conform to his young male peers working or to

the non-schooled girls of his age whom, due to their more limited social network, considered their sources of comfort and strength to be members of their families alone.<sup>143</sup>

## B. Work

In relation to the families of a low SES, the YSRs had to display a level of autonomy and financial independence from their parents in order to help the family survive (Op. Cit., Habib et al., 2019a). Each member had to make gender-specific compromise to elevate the hardship of the situation on their family, while fulfilling their purpose and gathering value that would be recognized inside the household. What brought to our notice the value of work specifically, is our young refugees expressing feeling most fulfilled following their financial contributions during displacement.

The high value assigned to work stems from YSRs' perception that is based on traditional structural norms and expectations of the specific behavior that would hold highest value and relational status vis-à-vis other family members and in support of the family unity. For instance, having more employment opportunities among the boys served as an important factor assisting newcomer refugees, as maintained in an Australian study conducted in 2009 (Op. Cit., Lewig et al., 2009, p.36). It additionally allowed them a more successful integration experience into the local society.

However, there exists a gendered dimension to this physically straining action most likely undertaken in unfavorable working conditions due to the low-skilled nature of refugees' labour market. This grants advantage to boy refugees who could perform any form of work without compromising their sense of security. Moreover, within the literature, studies have pointed to

---

<sup>143</sup> Boys answered "the family" in general rather than naming specifically either one of: their mother, father, brothers, sisters, or wife.

several other gender barriers keeping refugee girls from assuming a more active role in the Lebanese labour market.

The traditional patriarchal system that perceives females as caregivers and treats them as subordinate beings in need of protection, also assigns heavy concepts of honor and shame to their conduct (Op. Cit., UNHCRd, n.d., p.41). For this, as a patriarchal precondition to their financial contribution in the household, contrary to their brothers, the girls of a low or high SES had to first overcome the obstacle of having to receive the permission of their fathers, husbands, or older siblings before they could join the Lebanese labour market. However, it is worth noting that when all those structural and sociocultural impediments are overcome, whether motivated by their economic need—for the most part—or stemming girls' desire to contribute financially to their families despite not being culturally expected to do so, women participation rate in the workforce has increased in 2018 (Op. Cit., VASyR-2018, pp.1, 2). Yet, the UNHCR still reports that it is more difficult for girls to find a job than refugee boys (Op. Cit., UNHCRd, n.d., p.41).

Moreover, data from the UNHCR report on female heads of households, showed that girls' working conditions were tougher than those of boys: they had less breaks, worked for less pay, did not receive their pay on time, had higher chance of being exploited (Habib et al., 2019a, p.1), and did more house chores domestically than their brothers and husbands (Op. Cit., UNHCRd, n.d., pp.12, 34). To resolve these conditions, marriage was sociocultural considered a solution, which directly explains the emergence of refugee girls' child marriages.

Additionally, boys enjoyed higher mobility assigned to them by the family's sociocultural norms and were even expected to venture the outside world in search of work. Hence, the refugee boys had higher chances of employment granting them a higher recognition inside the family for

their role contributing towards the family's financial wellbeing as opposed to their girls' counterpart whose home-bound contribution instead was assigned lower value and taken for granted.

Similarly, based on our data, even when parents did not expressively share the burdens of their struggles in keeping their traditional responsibilities towards their children in a refugee new paradigm, offspring of a financially struggling family soon picked up on their emerging new roles and responsibilities to contribute to the restoration of the family's wellbeing. Such recognition of self-proclaimed new tasks happened in direct forms, in the act of boys "choosing" not to register in school but to work instead irrespective of their parents' socioeconomic status, and in girls completing their education with high marks or attending to domestic chores, relevant to the their family's income as will be described below. This confirms UNICEF's study which reported that out of a total of 4,377 surveyed children in 2019, 59.8% made themselves the decision to work, not their parents, adding family support to be the main reason for their work (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2019, p.47).

Under such circumstances of low SES, the refugee boys from all 4 geographic areas surveyed,<sup>144</sup> have had to grow beyond their age as family therapist, Dr. Satir, considers self-proclaimed responsibility "an ingredient of maturity." (Op. Cit., Gomori, 2017, p.3). In terms of the nature of their work, the YSRs boys surveyed worked full-time in the food service, working in a farm, a restaurant, a supermarket, a bakery, a juice shop, a mall stand, owning a carriage and selling vegetables.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup> Even among those we encountered who were as young as 13 years old working but who are not included in our analysis.

<sup>145</sup> Those being 18 male respondents out of the targeted 37 male participants, who fell between the ages of 14 and 25.

When it comes to the variable of their birth order, similar to their eldest girl counterparts who had to give up their schooling, the eldest boys of a non-wealthy family from among our YSRs found himself having to work even if he happened to be of a relatively young age. Those we encountered were as young as 16-year-old from among our sample group and 13 years old from those younger participants in the focus groups who are not included in our analysis. Both were resident of Tripoli, the city holding the highest number of people living below poverty line.

### C. Variables influencing traditional family models

Similar to other existing research such as the one conducted in 2008 by Weine on Bosnian youth (Op. Cit., 2008), we confirm on numerous occasions through our empirical investigation how valued and highly regarded families are placed among YSRs, especially those of low SES. As the refugee youth coming from these family models exhibited thinking of the wellbeing of the family as a unit: Prioritizing it over their own and acting in its support through all other aspects of their lives. For the sake of example, which was cited in more details above, the YSRs of low SES expressed clearly being aware of the changes that has accompanied their refugeehood and were willing to take on new responsibilities to help their parents, without having the latter compelled to verbalize such an expectation.

At the level of the gendered roles among the YSRs living in Lebanon, studies of Syrian families and youth have highlighted several observations concerning changing gender roles and norms occurring in Lebanon relative to the community's new geographic residence (Masterson, et al., 2014, p.25). First, among families of a low SES, girls have gained further freedoms of movement and finance in Lebanon compared to their situation prior to their forced displacement.

Second, since the economically struggling Syrian families had to adapt to their new circumstances away from home, new forms of relationships emerged to the typical Syrian culture of rigid gender-roles. For instance, new family models developed opposite to the strictly male-headed household to families with no fathers (either for being lost at war, or away for combat) whereby females and their offspring were now the new heads-of-household. The VASyR-2018 report mentions every 1 in 5 Syrian refugee houses being headed by females, which not only resulted in Syrian women gaining more independence and empowerment, but also subjected them to a great deal of need for the support of humanitarian agencies and partners to the relief of the Syrian refugee crisis (Op. Cit., pp.1, 2).

Third, as a result of the difficult situation that low-income Syrian families face in Lebanon, the amount of control exercised by male heads of household decreased overtime among non-wealthy refugee families especially. This is also partly due to the more open outlook towards women in Lebanon compared to Syria, which seems to have helped the Syrian heads of household be more lenient of their restrictions over their daughters and wives. As such was highlighted by Madoré's previously mentioned research while investigating the different mechanisms that helped Lebanon absorb a large wave of newcomer Syrian refugees without steering local unrest.

She found that social peace in Lebanon may be stemming from the refugees themselves who gradually learnt about their host-community from as simple of a social activity as going to the local market as a public space. As the Syrian men she interviewed explained to her their "shock at [Lebanese] women's presence in public life or the normalcy of people drinking alcohol in the streets," which she argues to have introduced Syrian men to new family lifestyles and gendered behavior (Op. Cit., Madoré, 2016).

In a family of low SES, marriage naturally takes higher importance besides the weight assigned to it in the frame of a patriarchal society as previously explained. The way in which stay-at-home girls of a low-income family have approached their marriage arrangement, seem to have rendered it a form of negative coping to their previously discussed self-proclaimed domestic functions. While their parents on the one hand, accepted it as a measure perceived to be taking them out of family destitute and considering it a solution to the potential sexual abuse and sexual violence that the refugee girls are more prone to under the dire circumstances of their refugeehood. The single unschooled girls on the other hand, although they rarely desired their prospect match, they sought it as the only means to escaping their home-bound expected responsibilities and helping reduce families' financial load. Child marriage thus took the recurring form of a social ill plaguing the refugee population in destitute, a phenomenon known in the literature to be one of the main factors hampering refugee girls' education.

With this regard, in 2017 Mourtada et al. have also noticed changing marriage practices in the Syrian refugee communities: Given their small living spaces and humble settlement residence, girls were exposed to marriage and marital relationships in closer proximity compared to those existing in Syria before moving (Mourtada, et al., 2017), which was also highlighted by another study published by the Women's Refugee Commission in 2016 (p.16). In these research, since the parents and some girl respondents perceived marriage as a way out of their hardships, then the parents expressed being more tolerant towards the spouses' age difference than they would have been back in Syria. They were also more willing to accept lower dowries for their daughters in Lebanon because they believe their daughters are at a greater risk of being sexually harassed if not married, as suggested by yet another research (Op. Cit., Bartels et al., 2018). While Syrian girls

have reported much quicker marriages bypassing engagement, even within one week of the family being approached by someone for their daughters' hand in marriage (Ibid.).

The YSR boys too had their share of the marriage discussion. The youngest age to be married from among our YSR boys was at 19 years old. However, boys' approach to marriage was registered much more systematic and regarded as an opportunity for immigration using their social networks as previously explained. Based on a few options they have, refugees can either return to Syria to end their status of refugeehood, physically move internally inside Lebanon if they were not comfortable staying in a particular neighborhood or geographic location—be it due to high rent or any other reason pertaining to their residence in Lebanon, which rarely did respondents complained about<sup>146</sup>—or seek asylum abroad. Even though this third option was least feasible it, was still pursued as a possibility by Hasan of 25 years old in the South: He had started seeking a white marriage opportunity with a pre-existing contact from among his Syrian social network in Tyr. Hasan's determination despite hardships is illustrated in his statement: *"I'm constantly trying. Always on the lookup for a way but I don't have the money to make my passport even."*<sup>147</sup>

This is when the YSRs' social networks come into play again in the lives of our young respondent: There exists an intercontinental social network of Syrian refugee migrants who made

---

<sup>146</sup> Complaints registered by our respondents were more of a general nature, stemming from their state as refugees, which can only come to an end, pending solution in Syria. Meanwhile, participants complained mainly about the Lebanese governments' expensive renewal papers for instance, their low income, and the unavailability of cheap commute options between their work and their often-remote houses for the cheaper rent they could afford. One parent respondent in the South did mention though, the high cost of healthcare and schooling compared to Syria—even though as previously described, she must have been talking here about the commute to schools because Syrian children's schooling is offered for free in public schools—as she stated: *"You know, 100 USD per month was enough to get my kids to school and take them to the Doctor when they got sick."* And apart from Hasan, who had already moved from Tyr to Sidon as previously indicated, we did not register complaints pertaining to refugees' relationship with their Lebanese neighbors or any particular ill-treatment came to our attention that would encourage them to relocate their geographic location of residence.

<sup>147</sup> During a one-on-one interview near the shore in the Sidon, conducted in September 2018.

it abroad, and who represent a successful model of a situational change towards a better one, as expressed by our YSRs living in Lebanon. Especially since, rather unsurprisingly, there was strictly no Syrian respondent who did not have 2 to 3 relatives living outside Lebanon.<sup>148</sup> The most popular countries where respondents had the most relatives and acquaintances are Germany, Turkey, and Canada, to which our YSRs often made comparison with, as a point of reference of a potential alternative to their current situation in Lebanon.<sup>149</sup>

Finally, finding it easy to be employed and “*make money in Lebanon*”<sup>150</sup> through their social network, also presented a compelling reason to stay in the country until further notice, as explained by Bashir of 18-years-old. In fact, the relative easiness to find work in Lebanon is a matter of popularity, it was reported by several few other boys, including another young man of 20 years old, who heard from his social network that this would not have been the case in Turkey where the working conditions are harder and the pay lower, he said.<sup>151</sup>

## II. Openness and Potentials for Growth

Poorer families needed the help of every able-bodied individual among its members regardless of their gender, to the point that the UNHCR reported having one in five working males and one in ten working females employed in more than one job (VASyR-2018, p.5). Even though not ideal, but it is in such a family model that the prevalent gendered inequality pattern was challenged enough to successfully mitigate the traditional Syrian family norms. And this, in turn, raised gender equity during displacement among lower-income refugee families, as analyzed below.

---

<sup>148</sup> Annexed Table n. 11, entitled: “Most mentioned countries where respondents’ social networks exist.”

<sup>149</sup> Other countries recurring 1 to 3 times, as enumerated by our respondents include USA, Belgium, Austria, UK, Norway, Finland, Denmark, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Egypt, UAE, and Qatar from the Arab World. Based on the data that we compiled of the total number of interviews.

<sup>150</sup> During a one-on-one interview conducted in Tripoli, in July 2018.

<sup>151</sup> During a one-on-one interview, conducted in the South in September 2018.

In such a context, every cooperative act and affective thought was received, and reciprocated by family members, including sharing resources and extending help, both in kind and in cash. Members have reached out to their social networks, gathered information relevant to their new scenario, provided help when they could, sought better employment, cheaper rent, and some even have engaged in seeking future migration options by connecting to individuals from their social network for the potential of helping them out of Lebanon through marriage, as previously maintained.

## A. A gendered aspect to friendships: A compromised source of social capital

### Introduction

Friendships for YSR boys were forged at work where they had more opportunities to grow their social capital than the girl counterparts; for YSR girls, their relation to the outside world was restricted to the company of other family members running errands, meeting with the family's local social network and enjoying family outings. However, away from family, girls' only contact to the outside world was through school, which exclusively applies to schooled girls among our girl participants.

This limitation to the physical framework in which boys and girls are free to operate seeking the potentiality of social capital away from their families, places non-schooled girls at a disadvantage compared to their schooled girl siblings and working boy peers. The latter enjoyed more mobility and could more freely create and be part of other groups and social settings that would allow them to potentially increase their social capital and were even encouraged by sociocultural norms to do so following gendered obligations-expectations and patriarchal

traditions as we explain below. The other way in which this has translated was detected in the accounts of refugee girls' friendships and memories of the past that have been of a higher significance to them than their boy peers as described shortly hereafter.

### *Boys' replacing school with work*

In terms of school friendships among boys, the Syrian refugee students were segregated from their Lebanese counterparts by attending the afternoon shift to receive education following the Syrian curriculum. Those classes were majorly attended by the Syrian community, hence there were few chances for Lebanese-Syrian friendships to be forged. However, the refugee boys that attended the morning shifts, had a much greater chance to interact with Lebanese students, except that their experience was of reported bullying and discrimination, even though not prevalent everywhere, this limited the forging of intercultural friendships (Op. Cit., Abla and Al-Masri, 2015). Nevertheless, both Syrian boys and girls who could not make friends at school, had a bigger chance of success playing with Lebanese children in their neighborhood. Knowing where they lived and who were their parents, the local parents did not mind that their children would play with their Syrian neighbors' children, allowing for friendships to flourish, except in central Beirut where fewer open spaces exist for children to play and interact in the neighborhood.

According to the ILO, 73 percent of the children under 18 years old engaged in a form of work (Op. Cit., Ajluni and Kawar, 2015, p.29). Hence, from among our sample, the boys working had even lower opportunities to make Lebanese friends. And when asked who their friends in Lebanon were, several boys reported hanging out with the senior people in their community or close to work ever since their arrival to Lebanon. Others reported having friends from their

neighborhoods, with whom they played football and hung out with, facing the seaside.<sup>152</sup> These were the only activities that the boys reported making friends with away from their family's social network without access to schooling.

In fact, our sampled YSR boys of 14 to 17 years old often found work first through their fathers, elder brothers already working, cousins, or their families' digital social networks. However, by that age, in the absence of a car or a cheap means of commute, they had still been physically bound to commute to work and back home with others.<sup>153</sup> At this young age, they found jobs in the informal sector working in factories,<sup>154</sup> or worked in the service sector and other low-skilled jobs.<sup>155</sup>

Either way, the nature of their work, the low paid wage they received, and the hard manual labour they performed of tasks, gave the YSRs of this age range limited opportunities to make friendships from among their equally underrated peers or senior coworkers. However, in such an environment, while they could not develop their friendships during work hours for them to eventually be able to gather after work, but some of them whose work was closer to their place of residence did mention meeting in groups to walk back home sometimes and then separated gradually to each their way.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> The sea has had a special place in the anecdotes of YSRs. We registered it as a coping technic as the young refugees explained recurrently frequenting it when feeling "suffocated" at home and "trapped" surrounded by its walls. Hence, they went there as a form of meditation or contemplate into their past, present, and unknown.

<sup>153</sup> Such as working in construction sights, farmlands, vegetable shops, home appliances stores, and gifts' shops.

<sup>154</sup> Unskilled workers worked in luggage and bags factory, plastic factory, and clothing factory. Those are typically the youngest of our respondents, because they are the ones more likely to work in the underpaid informal sector, under unfair, or illicit work conditions according to the ILO in 2015. The semi-skilled YSR boys worked in retail stores, in a bakery, in agriculture, or rented their own corn stand or vegetable carriage (Op. Cit., Ajluni and Kawar, 2015, p.4).

<sup>155</sup> The semi-skilled YSR boys worked in retail stores, in a bakery, in agriculture, or rented their own corn stand or vegetable carriage.

<sup>156</sup> Three of our respondents in Tripoli (two boys of 15 years old and one of 16) were walking back home from work, the eldest seemed the most tired but there was a smile on their faces as they answered our questionnaire.

The older they got, the more they were able to seek employment away from their older brothers and made friends with coworkers who similar to their age group [18-21], could enjoy more freedom to share moments outside work. This is when Abdallah, of 18 years old, spoke of meeting his friends to play football weekly and who informed us that he had started in Lebanon making friends with elderly people outside work. As he explained, by talking kindly to them and frequenting their stores if they needed his help for free initially, he gradually started spending more time at their shop to speak about life in general and learn from their experience about the most important things in life, he said.<sup>157</sup> Abdallah's forged friendships with the Lebanese elderly people is an indicator of his active engagement in creating bridging ties with the local community. His extrovert personality offers him the potential to ultimately encounter or be introduced to someone working at a local or international NGO, which could later serve him as a linking tie.

Finally, the eldest male YSRs from among our sample [22-25], expressed having friends in general but opting most days to go back home to their families. Since by this age, they already had a child or two, as the owner of a vegetable carriage of 25 years old reported: *"I got married, I have a baby now! I also take care of Mom and my sister. Where do you expect me to go?"*<sup>158</sup>

### *Girls' anecdotal experiences of the past*

However, the problem pertains to the girls who did not report to school. Those reported not having friends their age except at the digital level by communicating with their social networks, as will be explored in Part III. Those girls reported feeling closer to their siblings and sisters-in-law. As

---

<sup>157</sup> During a one-on-one interview conducted in Sidon, in September 2018.

<sup>158</sup> During a one-on-one interview conducted in Tripoli, in July 2018.

for their feeling of integration within the Lebanese society, they reported not having Lebanese close friends but ones they occasionally greet with in the neighborhood.

One young refugee girl of 14 years old mentioned that the Lebanese girls acted differently from her: She gave the example of her Lebanese neighbor from school whom she stopped seeing because she was not accustomed to her behavior. She continued describing the relationship that this Lebanese girl had with her parents, as being less obedient than our young respondent Syrian girl, which made her feel uncomfortable around her “friend” and decided to stop seeing her outside school.<sup>159</sup>

However, as noted earlier, we would like to share in the following a description of the journey to school as narrated to us by several non-schooled girls that we had interviewed during our fieldwork in different geographic locations across Lebanon. The combination of their anecdotes gathered a vivid image of their nostalgic school commutes and friendships in their homeland, which they expressed could never be replicated in Lebanon.

Facing challenges adapting to a new school environment, away from their accustomed language, friends, teaching style and overall home atmosphere, refugee schoolgirls glamorized their educational journey back in Syria. In their memory, their commute between home and school was full of laughter and fun. They had a lot of memories of when young girls met at a focal point in their neighborhood and waited for their friends to gather before walking in groups to a nearby school. They were of all ages so even the youngest among them felt safe in the journey, along with their parents, expecting them to protect each other. The girls knew the neighborhood very well, they knew the shops and the best route to their destination. Sometimes they took a longer

---

<sup>159</sup> In the South, during a focus group discussion outside the house, in June 2018.

road to pass by the best breakfast served or the cheapest there is. They recognized each other by heart from the neighborhood and kept each other in check so no one gets missing or is late to join the convoy of students. They knew where each of them lived, how many other siblings they had, in what grades they were, whose teacher will be teaching them next year. Hence, they exchanged valuable information and help on how to deal with strict teachers and hard subjects. As well as they shared their worries over hard subjects, frequent exams, and grade assessments. Not only that, but the group also gradually increased the closer they got to school as other schoolgirls ran to catch them on the way, picking up bits and pieces of the ongoing topic of discussion of the day. At the end of the school day the group of friends, maintained a nearby focal point to stay together or waited at the gate until everyone had gathered. They took their journey back sharing stories of what had happened during the day, expressing their hunger, and sharing the food and water left among them. Then gradually decreased in number bidding each other farewell, trusting they will be able to repeat the journey again next day of school.<sup>160</sup>

Against these memories, those interviewed schoolgirls', their parents, and brothers, worry about girls' safety and security in Lebanon. Our interviews also confirmed what is widely discussed in the literature of how parents' concern over the safety of girls and female members of the family representing one of the key reasons encouraging child marriage and girls' unschooling, therefore, trapping Syrian females in their cradle. A female Syrian refugee for instance, would

---

<sup>160</sup> Respondents from Damascus, the capital, sometimes said they had a school bus picking them up from home and dropping them back at the end of the day. Whereas those who lived in more rural areas of Deir Ezzor or Homs outskirts had a smaller group of people accompanying them, if any, because the houses they lived were scattered along a wide land surface. Up to the point that they described not being able to even see their nearest neighbors' house in plain sight. However, they knew each other and everybody else around them very well, most of whom were cousins and great cousins of one family and there were only a few numbers of known families back there.

now finish her school or her work and directly returned home on a calculated ticking clock to avoid “burdening” her parents with her safety. Said 18 years old Manar and her 24 years old sister, Noor:

*“There used to be security and safety in Syria. We could go back home at 2am from my brothers’ or our uncles’ house without fearing anything or anyone. Now we are in constant worry. Also, we were familiar with the merchants of our neighborhood. We knew where to go when we wanted this or that. [...] In terms of safety, schools were close to our houses so if we’re not paying attention to them, our neighbors did until they [the children] arrived. Also, schoolgirls used to always be in groups, we gathered somewhere and walked to school together. Today, we can’t even trust the chauffeur driving our kids. We have to be careful. That’s how we came to carry great responsibilities. Even before, when I was still in University, I didn’t worry about taking public transportation to University.”<sup>161</sup>*

Considering the above, when compared to the Lebanese dropout rate, a World Bank study found that the Syrian children fail to remain in school twice as much as the national average level of Lebanese children. A popular tendency starting among Syrian children over 12 years old (UNHCRc, n.d.). The reflection of this on girls’ social capital is substantial: Not only are refugee girls missing out on their childhood, learning and future prospects for a respectable career, but they are also growing dependent on their parents and brothers for survival. Their social network in Lebanon consists of those friendships they had forged during childhood in Syria and when they are not attending school or working, their relationship and social interactions with the world outside their families’ is minimal.

---

<sup>161</sup> During a focus group interview in Tripoli, conducted in their home on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

This was expressed by a 16-year-old girl who did not attend school since she arrived in Lebanon. In her answer about what has changed in her life since her family moved, she described the domestic chores that she never had to do back in Syria when she was still studying: “*Now that I’m [unschooled, staying at] home, I should do things [that] I didn’t do back when in Syria. Like doing the dishes and cleaning. [Back then,] I used to study only all the time.*”<sup>162</sup> When answering what she would choose to change in her current situation in Lebanon, she did not wish to return to school, instead, she automatically answered wanting to be able to work. One indicator to her answer pertains to the higher value placed on work as opposed to education. But also, it seems that she has chosen to specifically contribute to reducing the family’s financial burden because since she is staying at home all day, she must be hearing her mother complain about their current destitute and lack of resources compared to what they owned back in Syria. As parents often made statements that started “we used to have,” “we used to own,” on multiple occasions during interviews. Hence, she must have therefore, concluded that money would have, at least, contributed to solving the family felt material difficulties. Her answer in fact, was recurrently noted by other girl respondents as well, who wished to contribute more to the household income because of their poor circumstances.

However, let us assume Coleman’s understanding of social capital being a credit/debit “slip” of family support (Op. Cit., Coleman, 1988, p.104). He argues that at the cost of accepting new domestic roles and outside responsibilities among all family members in the refugee household came the insurance that all members of the Syrian refugee family would work towards

---

<sup>162</sup> During a focus group discussion with her near the Cornish in Beirut in April 2018.

a common purpose: ensuring the family's wellbeing and its ordinary functioning for members' common interest, at least until the lifting of the family crisis.

While we could see the general point that he attempts to raise explaining the precalculated intentions behind social interactions, we choose to raise a point against its general application. We understand that because of refugee families' sociocultural criteria of gender role and traditional norms depending on birth order, age, and the family's SES—all of which are natural elements that could not be relegated to actor's agency but rather designated by birth—*it is a refugee girl that ends up at the losing side of the equation*, regardless of how she approaches her use of her family's social capital, countering the promised gains purporting what the notion promises to its seekers.

First, when making attempts to use her family's social capital by pursuing an education that could be afforded by refugee families of a high SES, based on our results, this ended up costing girls of a wealthy family, the maintenance of their disadvantageous status quo, domestically, compared to their male siblings in a patriarchal society. Second, when she acted towards contributing at home, she lost her education and automatically reduced with it not only prospects for a better future, but also her prospects of pursuing social capital beyond family.

This latter point on refugee girls' education is of double importance, in line with Coleman's views. First, Coleman argues along numerous other scholars that education is one of the resources YSRs could employ as cultural capital to grasp opportunities, and without basic education, their voices will be kept unheard and their participation in the labour market, civil society, and the building of their own future, undermined.

Second, Coleman's understanding of how social capital functions, necessitating relationships to be extended for its favored outcome to be realized (Op. Cit., Kindler, et al., 2015,

p.5): highlighting here the potentials of social networks. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that being home-bound automatically reduces girls' cultural capital and undermines their ability to extend social capital that could have helped them realize their aspiration. They could no longer be active members of their community, and similarly their desire to help their parents financially, something they expressed wishing to do according to their answers, were impeded. In fact, with a limited social network of old friends, old acquaintances, and new neighbors alone, constituting the structural relational elements of non-schooled girls' social networks, the cognitive component of their social capital alone could not lead to realizing potential outcomes, no matter how ambitious or tenacious they could have been.

For social capital to be attained, the surrounding environment needs to be prepared for it beyond rigid norms and traditional accounts. Therefore, encouraged by their parents and their entire surrounding, refugee boys were much more successful in gathering social capital. But also, this is why mobile phones present a tool worth examining. In certain cases, it facilitated those barriers to be overcome and challenged regardless of the gender of its user. And this is where lies the significant role of YSR girls' mobile phone use, which gave them access to a social network beyond the physical realm that shackles them. This aspect will be investigated in the following Chapters 7 and 8.

## B. Gradually changing stereotypical images

When comparing refugee girls to their boy counterparts in Lebanon, working and having permission from parents to be able to undertake even the most basic of tasks of grocery shopping on behalf of their mothers for example, endorses gender imbalance and engrains stereotypical imaging of females' social domestic role in the head of both young refugee boys and girls. "In a

patriarchal society, and with the help of an institutionalized political law, the breadwinner of the house used to control the family. Whereas the Syrian female used to bear a biological responsibility in the family,” says women’s rights activist Sabah Hallaq.<sup>163</sup> Making mention of stereotypes and the deeply rooted culture of patriarchy, we would like to share a personal anecdote of numerous purposes describing the latent hardships engulfing YSRs’ lives.

During fieldwork in the Bekaa in June 2018, we visited one family of 16 members living in a tented settlement on a private land—i.e., not a camp setting.<sup>164</sup> During my second visit and right before sunset, we accompanied the 5 girls and young adults (of 11, 19, 20, 22, 24 years old) alone, to walk along a nearby abandoned half-paved street, with no access to cars for being still incomplete. Without anyone around us but scattered trees on one side and nearby concrete informal houses on the other. We could only see closest to us a number of cattle being shepherded by a 12-year-old boy, and the YSRs’ tented-home getting farther, yet still in hindsight. The farther we went, the more we saw the girls acting more freely and seemed more at ease to speak their mind, sharing with me anecdotes of how and where they had met their now husbands: “Under that tree he said he loved me” the eldest among them, Nadima, said laughing. However, one thing we noticed, they kept checking the time and looking back to where the tent is, seeing if someone had followed us

---

<sup>163</sup> Interview with Sabah Hallaq, Syrian Women League and independent consultant, Damascus, 25 April 2008. (Esther van, 2013, p.117).

<sup>164</sup> The nuclear family of 10 members (three girls—one of whom was married, the other is divorced with no children—five boys and both parents), had their parental grandmother living with them, two daughters-in-laws, and three grandchildren. On the day of our interview, when the day turned darker, as we were about to leave, the housemaker would not let us exit the tent without promising her to return for lunch the next day. Even though we tried fiercely to convince her otherwise so as to not overburden them, we eventually accepted her kind invitation with great reserve, as it seemed we had no choice but to agree to dine or sleep there. The same scenario had happened to us once before in an informal building in Beirut and we agreed then on staying for dinner on that day.

from the boys, or if anyone of them were waving for us to get back for being late to walk.

Just one day ago upon conducting our interview, the family had drawn a beautiful image of strong bonding, understanding and affection between its members. Based on their narrations of how they managed family finance, how they acted in unity and extended help to others outside home (for marriage, for moving, running errands...), it seemed to us that they acted like a beehive in support of the family unit. They had dissolved their individual self—not even asking for their favorite food to be prepared for instance—giving more than receiving, not only to their family but to the community around them. And in one day, we were there, experiencing girls’ reaction without filter and seeing clearly in the eyes of those sisters and wives, how much they are terrified from the sight of either one of their brothers or all, or even from either one of their parents or both. We could not tell, and they would not express it or point to it, except that we reckon, in a patriarchal society it is the norm that women’s honor and reputation is closely supervised and violently justified. Hence, their father, brothers, and husbands, as well as their mother in fact, may be seeing that as a group of girls, like us, walking alone may lead to a scenario that would require their protection of us at any moment. This is not based on our rationale but on women refugees’ normalization of the rhetoric that they are vulnerable and in need of protection. Hence, when 72% of Syrian men consider it necessary “to defend their reputation with force,” (UN Women, 2019, p.3) it becomes culturally justified by norms of masculinity, for brothers to keep an eye on their sisters and wives in fear of abusive men. Feeling overprotected, women are left to deal with their own weary, anxious lifestyle of suppression, expected to accept suffocating from their layered clothing, limited space inside home, controlled mobility and constant supervision as means to their protection (Yasmine and Moughalian, 2016).

Finally, when it comes to cultural norms and how it has been undermined in the Lebanese context, being exposed to the Lebanese culture, the girls said that they believed I am “lucky” for being able to wear “one pant, one T-shirt and the color pink.” They continued complaining that they had to wear a number of layers on top of each other, which is unbearable in the summer. Especially that they had to wear it all day, while cooking and working, since they lived in one house. Then they mentioned how much they thought their eldest, Nadima, was lucky for marrying a Lebanese who “lets her wear what she wants.” Interestingly, they continued that she would still have to wear layers when she comes to visit her parents. Adding, in resentment and disbelief: “*imagine, she has to put on her overall traditional cloak (aabaya), covering everything down to her toes, even though she is coming to her brothers’ and sisters’ house. There is no brother-in-law living with us!*” On a positive note, the girls thought that there is actual hope for their parents to change: They spoke about how if their parents stayed 10 more years in Lebanon, they will be gradually more open, “adopting the Lebanese mentality.”

Notice how the YSRs are rationalizing the matter in disbelief, even contending the religious rationale behind it because their parents’ authority when it comes to this matter at least, does not have a religious reasoning to back it. However, their reaction to such illogic argumentation is to passively accept it and voice a complaint to us, an outside observer they had just met yesterday.<sup>165</sup>

While the eldest among them who is already married, backed by her husband of “Lebanese

---

<sup>165</sup> It is noteworthy to indicate here that disclosing sensitive information is not typical to a conservative Syrian household. Members of the Syrian refugee community were raised to maintain silence around family issues, revealing family secrets is considered a violation of social norms. (Spencer, et al. 2015, p.47). In worst cases, according to the UNHCR, any form of weakness in the family is usually kept confidential because informants would fear the possibility of facing abuse by male family members for bringing disgrace and shame on the family reputation. This is a problem mostly faced by humanitarian agencies that address refugees’ mental health and domestic violent abuse. (Inter-Agency Assessment, 2013, p.24).

mentality” and living away, who is technically privileged to take action protesting family’s suppression, Nadima on the contrary, decided to respect her family and reduce potential clashes by wearing what they want her too when visiting them. Even though she should technically be “protected” by her husband once she left her family’s house to be under his ‘custody.’ Therefore, it seems that influence between the Lebanese-Syrian culture is minimal at this stage with possibilities of change, as the girls explained, especially as the YSRs favored the Lebanese model. However, their inaction for the time being, has contributed to the maintenance of gendered stereotypical image of women’s role in a patriarchal society, which existed in Syria and is replicated in Lebanon. In fact, on numerous occasions during interviews, both male and female respondents made reference of disbelief about the independence exhibited by Lebanese female members (Op. Cit., Madoré, 2016) and normalized by their Lebanese counterpart, without clear evidence of stark influence at the family level, except among households of a low SES, as purported in Chapter 6.

Interestingly then, we asked again a question in my survey to draw a more transparent answer than the previous day since the YSRs were opening to me: In response to the question about parents listening to their children’s opinion, Nadima told me that before marrying her Lebanese husband, she used to sneak out the tent to meet him at the nearby tree where he first told her he loved her. For a whole year, they remained trying to take the approval of her parents’ before they finally accepted. Her parents in fact wanted her to marry her cousin but she refused. She said she did not want him because he was not free about what she could wear and did not let her walk out after sunset. Nadima expressed wanting to marry the Lebanese even though he has two children and would not agree to divorce his wife.

To her, he was educated, would let her choose the color of her cloth, and allow her to give Arabic lessons to a school nearby once a week. This was something she had finally convinced her parents to let her do it on the condition that she had to return home right after so they would not worry, she said. Right after that she was done with her anecdotes in evidence that their parents would sooner or later listen to their opinion, her 21 years old brother Hasan, came at sunset to summon us back home just like a shepherd would gather his cattle, walking behind us to ensure that not one of us gets astray.

From these anecdotes, one can understand that parents' or brothers' surveillance of their sisters is not constantly high-guarded all day long, taking turns among male siblings in their protection. As Nadima was able to "escape home" on multiple occasions to meet her lover nearby, this may also insinuate her mother's semi-approval that her daughter's gone missing occasionally and that the remainder of her sisters and in-laws, fully backed her escape with lies to justify her absence. Additionally, Nadima's relationship was not kept secret for long, as the couple approached the parents for an entire year before they finally agreed to their matrimony. And her parents did not exercise their power to force her into marrying a family relative. On the contrary, when deliberating Nadima's choice of a husband, the Lebanese asking for her hand in marriage was already married with two children but Nadima based her assessment over the potential lifestyle that she could be leading as his wife, compared to her cousin who would have replicated her current state and style of living. Her refusing of the latter model with a steadfast will and the success of her endeavor, not only portrays her agency in exercising her will, but also undermines the image of the inflexible Syrian refugee parents' model portrayed in the majority of the literature of a rigid Syrian patriarchal family structure.

### C. Girls' social capital: Realizing the shackles within

Recently, the concept of a female breadwinner leading a female-headed household has emerged among the refugee population. We had described the challenges they faced in the literature review compared to those headed by male in Chapter 1. However, here we would like to argue that their existence also presents an opportunity for cultural and traditional norms' change even though their vulnerability was strongly recorded at multiple levels in the VASyR-2018. One observation made by a female-head of household stopped us to reflect her statement: "When left alone, you have to push boundaries and make things happen. When you are weak, you are done. You have to be strong to defend yourself, your kids, and the household." (UNHCR, 2014, p.12) Although the number of female-headed households is increasing, with more refugee women filing for divorce and detaching from uncomfortable housing settings with relatives, given the special support granted to them by multiple agencies, none of the sampled YSR girl participants in our interview falls under this category.

Even though single-headed households are described in literature to be suffering lower socio-economic status, our data confirmed different results at the level of the refugee family's social capital. The positive dimension identified in a single-headed refugee family pertains to girls' becoming agents as their labour power was needed to cover the scarcity of family resources—discussed in due course. When observing the YSRs girls of a high household income, we conclude in our analysis that those among them who expected their family's support and sought their family's social capital, ended up losing opportunities that could have enabled use of their agency, prompting girls to become agents of their own lives. This was pinpointed in description of South Indian women whose destiny within a patriarchal society was seen as a "trade-off"

between earning their autonomy and freedom of mobility in exchange of the fruits of their parents' material wellbeing (Still, 2017, p.8).

Account of the above displayed indicators focus on the patterns, beliefs, and behaviors created within refugee families and their intergenerational transmission, particularly addressing the social and symbolic values that are exchanged in different *milieu* (Lewis, 2005, p.30). This is also described by Family therapist, Virginia Satir, as being part of what she terms, “[t]he personal iceberg metaphor” (annexed Figure n.13) and explained further in her own account of the Satir model:

*“...when we become our own choice makers. Recognizing and accepting the personhood of our parents, we can accept and respect our own personhood, and our freedom to choose and be responsible for our decisions and actions.”* (Gomori 2017, p.2)

The closest that may have been, is 20 years old Kunuz who is now divorced living back in her nuclear family. However, since she does not have children, her return to her family in the Bekaa must have been estimated to be the best option for her livelihood. With no adult offspring with her, her survival alone would have submitted her to risks of abuse, violence, and exploitation of all forms, by other men who would have perceived her as an easy target due to lack of protection from the traditional family members (Op. Cit., Spencer, et al. 2015, p.4). During the interview Kunuz was mostly silent, her answers resembled those of a young single but shy girl of her age without much difference except for giving short answers of a general negative tendency and feeling closer to God.<sup>166</sup> The family around her did not seem to discriminate against her, but when

---

<sup>166</sup> For instance, checking yes in confirmation to all the negative behavioral, emotional, and psychological changes that she thought had fallen upon her since she moved with her family to Lebanon, including: feeling anxious, stressed, less patient,

informing us of her divorce, the story was narrated briefly but held heavy cultural patriarchal meanings:

It seems she was married to her cousin who divorced her only because her elder brother had just divorced his wife, who happens to be the sister of Kunuz's husband as well, her cousin.

That was all they spoke about it, but her tragic divorce is not considered reprehensible by her family for multiple reasons: One, she is a victim in her own divorce, two, she did not have children to complicate matters, and three, as it was caused by her brother, her return home was not regarded as bringing shame to her family's reputation, which is widely reported on divorce instances in refugee communities. In this case, Kunuz escaped the stigma but fell victim to another aspect of the Syrian conservative patriarchal society, which justifies the subordination of women and their treatment as human of lesser worth than men. They are perceived to have no control over their own safety, cannot make their own choices or even stop the more culturally privileged men from intruding into their personal lives and enforcing unwanted changes to it. Her brother's inability to exercise his culturally bound responsibility to so called "protect" her this time, did not undermine his masculinity because he was merely making a choice to divorce another woman of lower worth, and his sister only happened to be a collateral loss of his righteous judgement, not to be questioned. The underlying causes of Kunuz's misfortune is due to "the attitudes, beliefs, and structures in which there is gender discrimination and an imbalance of power between genders." (Raistick, and Maglietti, 2014, p.9)

---

sleeping late, drinking more coffee, etc. Or answering "sometimes" to: getting depressed, feeling desperate, and seeing nightmares.

Under such circumstances and pertaining to our investigation of YSR girls' social capital, the question of unrealized agency arises again. Facing more challenges than their boy counterparts, refugee girls face multiple inherent structural challenges before they are able to think of their agency, let alone exercise their agentic self (Asaf, 2017, p.110). As part of the cognitive component of their social capital, i.e., social norms, reciprocity, and trust as incorporated in the definitions of both Bourdieu and Putnam (Op. Cit., Kindler, et al., 2015, p.5), the challenges of YSR girls start from within, inside the domestic safe space of their family, underlying its structure. In the space where girls expressed feeling safe, their indoctrination of having no control over their lives, of being subordinates to their brothers, who are more capable than them in exercising their will and venturing freely the depicted dangerous outside world, takes place in how girls see their capacity in retrospect to their surrounding social norms. Under such a setting of normalized patriarchy, not being able to wear the color they want, to walk past sunset, to wear fewer layers in the company of their nuclear family, even being unjustly divorced, the girls are repeatedly reminded that they have no power in their hands to control their fate. With time, when these norms are internalized, girls would stop resisting them even though they can clearly identify what Coleman calls "consumerist motivations." (Ibid.) He believes that the family's bounded solidarity and internalized norms are sources of social capital, to which our findings support on the evidence that although the YSRs from the Bekaa were able to pinpoint the patriarchal oppression they faced, but instead of standing against it, they attempted to find ways to bypass it. What Nadima did using her agentic self is to: identify her marriage to the Lebanese as a way out, pursue her plan to emancipate her family life by keeping patient and resilient to her choice in dismay of her cousin despite parental pressure, which finally resulted in her reaching her goal. This way, instead of

jeopardizing what constitutes a source of social capital for her, her family's support, she chose to abide by her family values when she visited home after gaining her semi-independence.

However, in this context, what we may dare to oppose Coleman pertains to what would come after that YSRs internalize their family norms and accept the conditional solidarity that accompanies their acceptance of subordination in exchange of their psychological wellbeing and material consumerist motivations as sources of social capital. To explain this with practical examples, when observing the YSRs we encountered of a high-household income, respondents' answers showed that fully pursuing family's support as a source of social capital, may end up bereaving wealthy, educated YSRs from pursuing a better future. This applies to both genders but was detected among YSRs of a higher SES. For instance, Nadima who comes from a low-income household, was able to stand against her parents given the looser traditional norms in her family caused by a bigger household need of her labour force. As earlier explained, Nadima identified with great capacity her family's vice, made the judgement to find a way out of her situation, and pursued it with strong agency.

Zahraa on the other hand, is a pharmacist of 21 years old. She is single and one year away from her BS degree. Her abidance to the consumerist motivations has led her to the path of her eldest sister of 36 years old, Fatmeh who is still single and living at home, with no motive to start a day doing nothing. Although she holds a degree in Agricultural science from Syria, unless Zahraa, identifies that her internalization of family norms, under the pretext that those are sources of social capital as per Coleman, will lead her to her sisters' fate. This is not only relevant to the Syrian refugee situation but could extend to any system that functions on patriarchy, because by essence this system of toxic masculinity, does not prioritize women's wellbeing. Hence, it will leave Zahraa at the end of her journey, enjoying her family's social capital without realizing that

it is the price to her unconditional obedience and unrealized dreams, as her sister's model seems to project.

## Conclusion

It is worth recapturing the significance of Part II considering its importance in the rational development of key findings that were highlighted through the course of its chapters. Our empirical research has showed in Chapter 4 how refugee families' financial wellbeing reflects in the existence of a pre-crisis social network as a key component to their social capital. We have also detected other factors constituents of social capital, pertaining to refugee parents' education and income. These have impacted YSRs' experience as refugees in Lebanon, relevant to their educational pursuit, work opportunities, marriage, and at the personal level of their overall wellbeing.

We also argued that family relations influenced by their SES, has also made way to new family forms and a disrupted sociocultural model benefiting the young Syrian girls' future prospects, as discussed relative to Coleman's work on social capital. However, what we concluded in discussing several case studies, is that even though girls' low SES could challenge existing impediments to their equal treatment with their brother, their action underpins internalized gendered notions of what could and could not be attained, what should and should not be pursued.

Hence, we revealed that the refugee girls have always ended up at the losing end of the equation: Whether they accepted their parents' social capital or took the matter of their lives in their own hand—even with the support of their parents to such. Because of the structural patriarchal society that surrounds them dictating their choices and limiting their possibilities at the unconscious level. Then, no matter how/what the girls end up doing/being (single, married,

learning, working, staying home, etc.) as long as they are dependent on their family to protect their sense of safety, then their agency is inevitably bound futile stemming from sociocultural background and self-limiting traditions.

The importance of these components put together, specific to such an interesting Syrian-Lebanese case, lies in that it perfectly showcases how YSRs become agents by means of a detailed analysis of their mobile phone use, explored in the following Part III. Where we will analyze how the YSRs employed their parents transmitted social capital and transformed it to new forms of bonding, bridging, and linking ties using mobile to appease their hardships. This is especially important to note when attempting to answer how does the YSRs react to their stressors in the Lebanese host, as it insinuates that while the YSRs living in Lebanon did not feel it compulsory to leave their neighboring country, they still attempted to improve their lives by means of their use of mobile phones.

## **PART III**

### **Mobile Phones and Youth's Agency –**

### **Creating social capital**

## Introduction

In a refugee situation, as the literature presented in Part I, the children particularly have been reported to be most vulnerable to their refugeehood, not only due to their traumatic experiences, disruption of their lives, and the numerous implications underlying their displacement, but especially the consequences of all this that has injured their family's supportive function. The overarching results registered in Part II is of children's heavy influence by their families' wealth, shaping their experience as refugees in Lebanon. Including prospects of their education, work, income, and values, as well as their settlement experience, social network outreach and future.

As YSRs reminisced about the quality of the life they had back in Syria, being incomparable to their state in Lebanon, we wondered if they would act upon the numerous push factors they are faced with in the Lebanese context, prompting young refugees to become agents. Of course, not all YSRs were expected wanting to eventually return to their homeland, and some even assessed their new conditions as being better than when they had left, but our concern in the present dissertation is to bring forth the role of their mobile use in such an existential deliberation, which will be covered through the course of this Part III.

However, in this Part III, we will focus on how the YSRs reorganize their lives during their displacement and we will estimate the effect of their mobile phone use on the creation of their social capital. Endorsing the potentiality of social capital made possible for access and accumulation through mobiles as opposed to its initialization as a resource relying solely on physically existing social networks. Finally, we will discuss Granovetter's seminal work on the strength of YSRs' weak ties and its particular importance in the lives of YSRs. Especially given

the few resources they have of a great potential function, realized by their positive outcome to their prospective future defying all odds with an unwavering agentic attribute.

At the theoretical level, YSRs' specific usage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) will contribute to a better understanding of the agentic mechanisms undertaken by children, who despite being dependent on their parents, are still able to help them and seek their personal wellbeing, all the while attempting to secure a more favorable future for themselves. The results of their use of the device will be empirically explored through the course of Part III, as signaling the formation of stronger bonding ties among YSRs' nuclear family members and bridging ties in relation to their social networks. Furthermore, the study contributes to the ICTs literature by reading through young refugees' use of available technology, in ways that hold an underlying possibility for this vulnerable population to ameliorate their life in exile, dealing better with their realities and adapting to it by means of social media applications (from here onward: SNS apps). Finally, to serve the objective of this research endeavor in answering the question: Does the use of ICTs contribute to the development of young Syrian refugees' agency? The following two interconnected variables were examined: Smartphone, social media use and YSRs' agency.

# **Chapter 7**

## **Heavy Use of Mobile Phones and of Social Networks**

### Introduction

When the option of going back to Syria is of zero viability, how would YSRs react to such a situation with the help of their mobile? Studies shows that the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are cognizant that their journey back to their homeland is fraught with challenges, and thus, most participants expressed their fear going back for viable reasons.<sup>167</sup> Those concerns highlighted in the study pertain to fundamental needs among refugee communities for a normal life.

Similarly, when the option of remaining in Lebanon is approached with its own institutional, structural, legislative, economic, and sociopolitical challenges, as presented earlier in the literature review of Part I and Chapter 1 of Part II, we visited various literatures in search of

---

<sup>167</sup> See the large area of reasons perfectly laid by a study undertaken on this subject, entitled: "Journeying Together." (University of Saint-Joseph and the Jesuit Refugee Service, 2018).

generic indicators that may help us understand the core factors that may instigate an act of response to the numerous stressors that our young refugees face daily.

We found studies that identified culture, economy, lifestyle and family, acting as pull forces endorsing a decision to remain in a host country due to family's social and psychological significance to refugees (Ho, et al., 2016).<sup>168</sup> However we would like to hypothesize that YSRs' experiences being influenced by their parents, has prompted them to employ the families' social capital and available resources to alternatively use their mobile to help themselves and their families overcome the challenges of their refugeehood. It has helped them create a better future without having to go abroad or away from family to do so.

It is worth highlighting here a latent portrayal of hope among our YSRs that the previously mentioned family therapist Virginia Satir, considered as "the ingredient of change" which is "possible internally." She argued that each and every subject has innate "internal resources to move beyond our basic coping level." (Op. Cit., Gomori, 2017, p.2) Something we would like to explore among our YSRs' use of mobiles in the following part.

Hence, in this chapter, we will start with a philosophical introduction on the controversial topic of human-machine interaction. We aim to attempt at covering certain aspects of the relationship that has flourished from the initial functional and practical combination of the material world hosting software, and later artificial intelligence, to presumably serve humanity and facilitate certain aspects of society, at least at the initial level. Then we will discuss the mobile device as ICT, describing some of its features and transition from fitting in one room to fitting in users'

---

<sup>168</sup> For more on this, see theory on global mobility by Toren 1976 and Gmelsh 1980. Also check: Froese, F. J. (2012), Suutari and Brewster (2000), and Jackson et al. (2015), among others.

pockets, before we conclude this chapter with a description of how technology has facilitated communication between humans and thus expanded social networks, exponentially.

However, before we dive into that, it is important first to set a clear definition of several terms that will lead our discussion: the difference between mobile phones, social media, social network,<sup>169</sup> and social networking sites (SNS) in the following. We had previously defined *Social Media* in Chapter 2, as being all internet-based platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which allow users to produce and receive content as well as interact virtually.

The definition of *Smartphones* according to a global survey conducted by Jacob Poushter et al. at Pew Research Center dealing with in-depth Digital data of more than 230 countries, describes a smartphone as simply being any mobile device that can access the internet and other applications (Poushter, 2018, p.4). Finally, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, SNS refers to “A dedicated website or other application which enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc.” (Oxford Dictionaries(b), n.d.). To distinguish between mobile phones and SNS, we note that the former is a tool of communication, a mere device that is widely available in modern day societies, while the latter is the medium via which communication is made possible benefiting all users of mobiles for the widespread use of SNS apps.

---

<sup>169</sup> Social media and social network are used interchangeably in our text to simply mean the digital platforms of daily use that refugee communities have access to by means of their smartphones. Those are used for different purposes (communication, networking, seeking information, etc.) but we are most engrossed by their easy accessibility and widespread to have had an influence on YSRs' lives, as we hypothesize and propose in this dissertation.

## I. Human-Machine Interaction

A simple google search with the three words typed: human machine relationship, breeds 531 million results. With the most recurrent technical jargon in the industry being: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Robotics, Neural Networks, Network security, Cybersecurity, Automation, Optimization, Internet of Things,<sup>170</sup> Cognitive Technology, Deep Learning and Natural Language Processing, among others. From our understanding of what is heavily deliberated globally and often contested throughout academic public panels and within secretive governmental bodies and high-ranked state authorities, as a simplistic definition, AI is a technological advancement in the field of computer science that promises to replace tedious and repetitive tasks requiring human attendance with machine (i.e., robots powered by intelligent software).

### A. Artificial Intelligence

AI is presumably programmed to emulate human learning and reasoning, to take decisions ideally performing such tasks that are data-driven and algorithmically coded into the machine. It is therefore based on a precalculated, and supposedly expected optimal performance of a task. ML is simply a subset of AI that allows machines to gather data and detect patterns that it can learn—yet it does not need to be programed to do so (Tegmark, 2018).

With an abundant list of catchy book titles written by prominent scholars in the field, the authors on this subject are divided between those who feel a euphoria over the prospects of this technological advancement and those who believe it will lead humanity to a dystopian future.<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> Is a network of physical devices that are connected to the internet. Those have built-in sensors, software, and technologies that allow them to exchange data with other devices and systems on the internet. (Tegmark, 2018)

<sup>171</sup> Some of the prominent books addressing AI include but are not limited to: “Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence” (2018) by MIT professor Max Tegmark, “The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology” (2005) by

The web search also resulted in data driven reports and articles produced by established research institutes, thinktanks and national authorities, consultancies, and scholars.<sup>172</sup> With titles along the lines of: “An Evolving Partnership: The future of man and machine,” (Toussant, 2018) and “Industry 4.0: Bringing the human-machine relationship to the next level,” (Kazutoshi, 2018), it is undoubtable that this is *the* century’s debate. And the most critical aspect of its implication over the world we live in as human being, indisputably pertains to its regulation and by which authorities.

Once governments, world powers, visionaries, entrepreneurs, manufacturers, technical professionals, business owners, managers, and executives realized the potentials of AI application in learning about the consumer in mimicking human behavior, it became imperative for them to learn how to capitalize on the technology’s disruptive potential in every industry, rendering the masses heavily reliant on this tech at a disadvantaged position as powerless consumers, as will be further elaborated below.

The application of AI to the masses has been heavily implemented and readily adopted by mindless consumers in search of practicality and convenience, through our overt reliance on mobile phones. The technological advancement is, therefore, already part of our everyday lives with every time we thoughtlessly use face- or thumb-recognition to access our phone securely. Or whenever one uses google and google maps hands-off, via the technology of speech recognition

---

inventor and futurist Dr. Ray Kurzweil from the Singularity University and Director of Engineering at Google, and “The Master Algorithm: How the Quest for the Ultimate Learning Machine Will Remake Our World,” (2015), by Professor Pedro Domingos at the University of Washington, among others. For a more exhaustive list of authors, see: (Gossett, 2020).

<sup>172</sup> Such as for example: The National Association of Manufacturers founded in 1895 (Rao, 2020), the Aspen Institute founded in 1949 (Khan, 2020), and Accenture business consultancy founded in 1950, only to name a few.

as we ask Siri, Alexa, or Google to get us to our destination, call a friend or even make an appointment with one command.

Perhaps it is human approach to the machine that is rendering the topic controversial: The fact that we are easily adopters of technology without suspectedly assessing its possible positive and negative implication onto our lives. Especially on abstract concepts of freedom versus independence—not to speak of the total reliance on the device to the point of relinquishment of freewill—and privacy where the line between the public and the private at the level of the grid, is yet unregulated or well-defined to protect powerless consumers from losing their personal rights in the face of the powerful reliance on a machine. Especially since the software has become increasingly intelligent in understanding our thought process and therefore, arguably influencing our judgement and undermining our freewill. The positive and negative implication of mobiles will be discussed below.

## B. Mobile phone as a device

### Introduction

As part of the Digital Revolution, advances in software, hardware, and information technologies<sup>173</sup> required machines (i.e., computers) that processed exponential applications that grew gradually more sophisticated, complex, and intelligent through AI (since the 1950s to 1980s), ML (1980s<sup>174</sup>-

---

<sup>173</sup> Giving birth to the first commercial web browser in 1995, the World Wide Web as a medium enabling real-time communication and the immediate exchange of information at no cost. (New Economic Thinking, 2021)

<sup>174</sup> As of the beginning of the 1980s, following the great depression, IT firms pulled away from focusing their services in IT research and development for the military to a more commercial use for the first time. (Op. Cit., New Economic Thinking, 2021)

2010s,), Deep Learning<sup>175</sup> (2010s onward driving AI boom), and Neural Networks (traced as early as 1960s but gaining most recognition since 2000s) (Schmidhuber, 2015, p.86).

The multiplex tasks that the software could carry necessitated for devices to work at a greater performance doing more complex commands and taking larger computing power within shorter time—making headway for advances in cloud computing.<sup>176</sup> Given the escalating intersection between human being and their gradual reliance on devices to manage their complex societies, machines also needed to be rendered wireless using advances in networking and telecommunication technologies. Moreover, they had to be produced at a more manageable size to be carried more conveniently and at a more affordable cost for a wider adoption of its commercial potential uses.

### *The birth of mobile phones*

While mobile phones started with the sole purpose of enabling people to communicate on the go, the multiple uses and widespread adoption of several technological advances such as the internet, Personal Digital Assistances (such as smartwatches, pads, and tablet PCs, etc...), pagers, and desktop computers encouraged the consolidation of all those technologies into one device that is multipurpose. This gave birth to the mobile smart phone and mobile internet and with it the revolution of application development, including SNS. With apps having different purposes and stand-alone capabilities, nearly all applications now use the internet, AI, and ML algorithms to tailor its application and advertisement to its user needs via digital mobile phones. As tech-tycoons aim to increase users of their digital services and social media apps to monetize on their purchasing

---

<sup>175</sup> Deep learning is part of ML, it is the process of computers extracting layers of data while learning from them to produce an output. Neural Networks is the method to achieve deep learning, it reduces the time to perform computations (Tegmark, 2018).

<sup>176</sup> According to Microsoft, it “is the delivery of computing services—including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence—over the Internet (“the cloud”).” (Microsoft, n.d.)

behavior, the combination of ubiquitous computing,<sup>177</sup> AI, and ML, have raised global controversial debate over IBM, Microsoft, Intel, Facebook, Amazon, Netflix, Google's (FANG) ethical use of mobile apps, influencing behavioral trends towards more consumerism and dependence on their digital products.

We are not tech experts to address the technical aspect of smartphones, mobile specs, and the technologies involved in its software development and production, however, as common users of the device certain questions about its functionality and shape still spring to mind. At the level of its functionality, this aspect will be covered in detail from the perspective of refugees as users of the device.<sup>178</sup> Yet, from an esthetic point of view as a user, one may philosophically ponder on the reason why it is made rectangular not round or oval shaped, per se. How it went from being heavy, having to be assigned an entire room, to being much reduced in size to fit perfectly in ones' pocket? And what triggered the change of its keyboard from button to a touch screen, among other such mind-intriguing contemplations.

To begin with, perhaps what cannot be debated across all human revolutions is humanity's natural inclination towards demanding innovative products and services featured with a higher ease of use for mass adaptation. Historically, machinery needed to produce at a faster pace and at lower cost, which was constantly achieved by the commercial market. Similarly, in an information society where information has become as valuable as once agricultural and industrial produce were revolutionized to accommodate societies' advances in machinery: The ICT industry was put to

---

<sup>177</sup> Also known as pervasive computing. It refers to the surrounding of invisible interconnected technologies (including sensors and PDAs, etc.,...) everywhere in human life environment. It is contested because it is debated that human's overreliance on machine embeddedness in everyday life use for convenience would result in human's overdependence on computers. (Yoo, and Lyytinen, 2003, p.1)

<sup>178</sup> Employed in the Information Technology (IT) sector to mean a set of performance capacities that a computing device or a software application could perform for the user of an electronic device.

test. As a means of delivery to this information age commodity, mobiles could not reduce their advances in technologies to carrying messages and performing remote tasks in the cloud. They required sophisticated specifications and applications that would also reduce clutters in human life and improve their organization, leading to the optimization of their productivity and time-efficiency—the presumed fundamental aim of every technological revolution. The more mobiles achieved this, the easier it was for humanity to succumbed to the novel digital technology without fair resistance to its implications on their human species.

Hence, instead of having to remember everyday to put on our watch, to buy an alarm device along with a calendar to keep with our professional meetings, personal promises, and yearly resolutions, smartphones were made all-encompassing. Instead of having to sit in front of a desktop or register formally to a physical class institution of required deadlines, prerequisite restrictions, and sanctions to delayed submission, smartphones were made remote. Instead of curbing our drive for professional development, the upskilling for our resumé, and the whimsical seeking of new material out of personal interest or for entertainment, smartphones were made accessible anytime, anywhere, using any digital device available. And instead of having a limited space of a keyboard to press onto several times per letter to get our keyboard/keypad command noted for execution, a less resistant typing of a digital message was made sensory to allow that even our most mundane demands using digital mobile are performed using state-of-the-art technology, swiping up, down, right, and left to perform.

### *The dark side of mobiles*

Before we probe any further, it is important to highlight the negative aspect of mobile phones and SNS use to inform the readers of the latent risks associated with mobiles' mass adoption. There exists a dimension of complexity in relation to the dissemination of reliable information among

refugees and the availability of trust in their virtual social network, or lack of both thereof. As crucial relationships surrounding YSRs interactions in their daily lives, the typical social ecosystem of existing physical players as part of refugee children's social network, include family members, relatives, friends, neighbors, school classmates, members of their sports groups, work colleagues and other marginal acquaintances. Their virtual network is more complex to maneuver, however, its threat lies in what we had mentioned in the literature review of the *dark side* of social capital discussed by scholars, where the virtual world has been associated with risks to refugees' security including their falling victims of smuggling, organs trade, human trafficking, among other aspects of organized crime (Van Deth, and Zmerli, 2010).

Other factor of concern pertain to YSRs' controversial adoption of the technology and overdependence on the device: Their use of mobile phones amidst the fast dissemination of information, news, and rumors, using audio, video, pictures, and text, depending on the level of their adoption, have not merely served the practical functionality of communication and entertainment of mobiles for instance, but have also submitted YSRs to forms of social stressors, such as, cyberbullying and peer pressures, health risks like sleep deprivation, and allowed for closer parental scrutiny (Milijic, 2019; Thompson, 2019; Archer, 2017).

## II. Refugees and Mobile Phones

On the connection between our young refugee studied sample and their relation to the digital device, we reckon that after their forced displacement, the Syrian refugee families understood that for them to successfully overcome their hardships, they had to maximize the use of their available resources, be it concrete or abstract. For this, at first, they needed each other: they needed family members to be physically safe, initiating their plight towards secured land. Their material

belongings, however, give insight into underlying value they saw in concrete forms, when carefully choosing what to take and what to leave behind. In addition to a few clothing, shoes, and some other lightweight valuable items they had been able to carry often hastily under war circumstances, their mobile phones are unconsciously recognized as among the essentials of the modern-day world and could not have been left behind. To highlight just how much more important their mobile is recognized to be, other items of more sentimental and material value may have been of smaller in size and of lighter weight, yet those were most likely abandoned indefinitely, which justifies that the mobile device is considered a resource. Given this descriptive background, the following covers the functional aspect of mobile phone use by the YSRs. As we note wealthy and non-wealthy young refugees have similar use of their mobile. It helps them manage their stress better and to detach from their harsh realities, as they are still children after all.

## A. YSRs' common use of their mobile

### Introduction

Being left to battle their dreadful calamities in the context of their forced displacement, the relationship between young refugees and their families became complex: On the one hand every individual in a refugee family must undergo their own burdens, having to adapt to the new imposed scenario and go through personal hardships while remaining, on the other hand, under their parents' dependence and traditional rule. The young must also deal with extra layers of anxieties pertaining to an unpromising prospect of their future without their family's conventional support-function. It is in such a context that young refugees' mobile phones became of a particular significance to them, as highlighted in previous literature. This has been initially what intrigued our academic curiosity to investigate YSRs' use of their mobiles, presented in Chapters 7 and 8,

which also uncovers indicators of an emerging agentic trait displayed through their mobile use, elaborated finally in Chapter 9.

It is under these circumstances that we hypothesize that YSRs reacted to the distresses of displacement by focusing on strengthening family bonds, maximizing the use of existing social capital, and building new ties. All this was made possible by the way they employed available resources to them: the mobile phone as a tool that helps them build their own lives and choose the role to play. They also surround themselves with supporting elements of social capital from among their family, friends, and social networks.

The YSRs use their smartphones as a tool that helps them carry on with their lives, appease their frustrations, overcome some of the challenges they face, and even seek change beyond their realities living in exile. It also sheds lights on the use of social media as a possible facilitator for not only the building and creation of social capital but also as an indicator of YSRs' agency in action within a less traditional Syrian family-structure as will be discussed in the next Chapter 8. However, in this Chapter 7, we will only go through the ordinary uses of mobiles by YSRs to facilitate their lives and the life of their families by extension.

To discover the functional applications of their mobiles, we tracked how heavily respondents used their device. Be it for communication, to make 'necessary' phone calls, as a calculator, flashlight, calendar, GPS, alarm, gaming tool, camera, entertaining device (music, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram), search engine, and a space for expressing their thoughts (via WhatsApp or Facebook—hereafter, FB). Results showed that the more heavily they used it, the more dependent they were on its multiple features, the less they later registered having a negative

perception of its potential harmful effect on them (inquired in the following question in the survey design).

### *Usage combination*

The number one reason reported by our YSRs for owning a mobile phone, pertains to its use for communication and entertainment, as most essential mobile features. A great exemplification of this came from a 19-year-old girl interviewed in the South, as she said: *“I started to use it for communication and [the way I use] it turned into entertainment now.”*<sup>179</sup>

While some YSRs claimed to be totally unattached to their mobiles, replying with that the device meant *“nothing”*<sup>180</sup> to them. Others contradictory responses reported considering the device as *“a necessity,”* and admitting that they *“depend on it,”* or that it is their *“everything.”* This being the case of both male and female respondents such as Waleed, a 21-year-old single male respondent in Beirut, who said:

*“It’s my everything. I can’t live without it”* and a 48-year-old mother living in Beirut with her daughter in Turkey saying: *“I can’t live without it, I de-stressed a lot when I bought it, before it I was very emotionally stressed.”*<sup>181</sup>

Unlike what one presumes, those who replied that they had bought their mobiles for necessity are never too young (at least older than 18 years old) because in fact the YSRs falling within the age

---

<sup>179</sup> From a one-on-one interview conducted outside her house in the South, in September 2018.

<sup>180</sup> Older YSRs [between 22-25 age range] displayed much less attachment to their mobiles than younger YSRs [>14-17< and <18-21< age range, respectively]. As we noted that users who only used it for work or who otherwise expressed that the device meant *“nothing”* to them, majorly consisted of older YSRs and older subjects than our targeted sample of YSRs, as displayed in the annexed Table 12 entitled: “Report of the most important usage of a mobile phone by age-range.” Although it is interesting how from a gendered perspective it seems that similar to working fathers who reported having no time to *“waste”* over their mobile, mothers of very young or very old children as well, were not too attached to their mobile besides its regular use for communication purposes, as expressed by 52 years old female parent in Tripoli saying: *“I only pick and hang up. That all it is to me.”*

<sup>181</sup> During a group discussion in the family’s house in Beirut, in May 2018.

bracket of 14 to 17 years old, identified the reason for owning a mobile<sup>182</sup> as being for entertainment purposes, even admitting that “*It’s a trend,*”<sup>183</sup> as expressed by 15 years old Noor who stated this as a reason to owning her mobile.

### *Communication*

When asked whether they used the multiple features available in a smartphone—what they are accustomed to call it: a touch screen device—respondents displayed a true maximized usage of their device. Both the regular use of a cellphone as a mobile device, conveniently carried by the user to *make* and *receive* phone calls on the go, coupled with its widespread usage to *stay connected* on SNS, like WhatsApp,<sup>184</sup> received almost unanimous positive answers as a usage report. In any case, it is not debated that these two methods of usage combine the two most widespread and recognized values for the mobile by all age groups and regardless of gender among refugee users.

This came only with 4 registered exceptions from among our 64 YSR respondents, who only reported using it “sometimes” or “rarely” for *communication*.<sup>185</sup> Relegating the reason for that limited use to their leading busy lives. Their perception of their mobile was contingent to its use and their marital status; therefore, the age bracket of those respondents was older than 18. Among them, the male respondents used it for work purposes and recognized its functional value as being only tied to communication for work without engaging in its entertaining aspect. They considered it a practical necessity and dismayed other users’ heavy dependence on it.

But one should note here a gendered nuance of what *busy* entails between boy and girl respondents; the 3 young boys who reported being too busy to use their mobile outside work, were

---

<sup>182</sup> Annexed Table n. 13, entitled: “Reasons for buying a mobile.”

<sup>183</sup> From a focus group discussion conducted at her in-law’s house in the South, in September 2018.

<sup>184</sup> More on the specific social media platforms used will be addressed in due course.

<sup>185</sup> The age of those respondents is: 17, 19 and 25 years old male participants, and one 16 years old girl.

of a relatively wealthy family background. Whereas the girl who reported leading such a busy life, referred to her domestic responsibilities having already had a 3-year-old baby to take care of as young as 16-year-old herself—thus, having been married around the end of her 12 years birth date at best. As she mentioned being too overwhelmed with her baby as well as her house chores obligations, living with her in-laws.

Other functional uses pertain to day-to-day needs that differed among our YSRs as explained in the following: A *calendar* for example is most used among 14 to 17 years old respondents who were still in school, or by older young subjects of the 22-25 age range at the end of each month when expecting their salaries to be paid and their debts to be due, as they expressed saying. Same applies to YSRs' use of a mobile *calculator*. However, the *flashlight* usage comes in handy during electricity cuts, especially reported use among young refugees who lived in the Bekaa, the South, and Tripoli, since “electricity” cuts are more frequent outside the capital, Beirut.

### *Entertainment*

Using their mobiles to take Pictures, Videos and to listen to Music is another rampant use of mobile not only among our YSRs but also the total number of Syrian refugee participants to our survey. However, it is clear in the annexed tables, how the YSRs adopt much more heavily these mobile functions compared to older respondents.<sup>186</sup>

Notice that employing it as a *Camera* device is more widely adopted by older respondents as well as our YSR sample, as opposed to listening to *Music* over it. Perhaps as we noted among older respondents' answers on the notion of power<sup>187</sup> a higher level of religiosity was expressed

---

<sup>186</sup> Table n. 14, entitled: “Participants’ mobile usage as a camera by age range.” Table n. 15, entitled: “Participants’ mobile usage as a music device by age range.”

<sup>187</sup> As will be later detailed.

by that age group of refugees. This may have influenced their perception about listening to music using their mobiles as an act of lower religiosity, especially among much older generations of parents. This is best expressed by 40 years old and 48 years old parents who, when asked what they watched on YouTube, the mother answered saying: “*to listen to the Holy Quran, and religious lectures.*”<sup>188</sup> While her husband said he “*watch[es] football matches [using it], how to raise animals [videos] and [then he made sure to mention finally that he] listen[s] to the Holy book in the [pet]store*”<sup>189</sup> that they run in the same building.

Another reason for no-use pertains to those same YSRs who had, relegated their limited use of their mobile in general to their busy living, therefore regarding the act of listening to music as a waste of their time.

The above observations bring us to an interesting reading of the use of mobiles as a music device versus as a camera device, from a gender perspective. Considering the annexed tables,<sup>190</sup> YSR girls use their mobiles as a camera much more than they do as a music device, while boys are more consistent on its specific uses. To the latter, there is no usage preference: They would either report being “too busy” and therefore, not use it for neither music nor camera purposes, or they would admit to using their mobiles equally between its two available features: to take pictures and listen to music depending on situation—listening to music in their solitude while employing the camera function during their outings or when they felt looking good, as expressed by Bader, aged 16 years old.<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> During a focus group interview in the South, conducted around September 2018.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Annexed Table n. 16, entitled: “Participants’ mobile usage as a camera by gender” & Table n. 17, entitled: “Participants’ mobile usage as a music device by gender.”

<sup>191</sup> During a group discussion in the family’s house in Beirut, in May 2018.

### *Multiple occasional functions*

GPS usage seems absent from among the entirety of the respondents from all walks of life, including most common uses of seeking direction through maps or tracking family and friends' locations. The very few respondents who did use it,<sup>192</sup> however, seemed to be more outgoing and may be put in a situation whereby they would have to meet a friend somewhere new, unfamiliar to them, then they would use it out of necessity. The remainder of respondents as frequently reported, only commute between their job and home sites. With a particular concern raised among YSRs living in the South and Tripoli: The former having lived in a small city of a high concentration of a Shiite community tracking his mobility under security pretext, and the latter living in another area of a sensitive sectarian nature that is Tripoli, but which had witnessed the flaring of a couple bloody clashes between Alawite Syrian refugees and Lebanese Sunni host, as presented in Chapter 4.<sup>193</sup> As Noor of 24 years old reported when describing her 52 years old mother living in Tripoli and concerned over her health and wellbeing: *"Mom used to live her life. She used to go out more often now she's always home because she feels unsafe."*<sup>194</sup>

Noor's statement brings forth an interesting highlight of refugees' nostalgic perception of their lives back in Syria, their feeling of safety there is relative to their experience at a time before they had gone through forced displacement. Because even though both parents and children agreed that they felt safer in Syria than in Lebanon, parents from that time had bought their children (both boys and girls) mobile phones when commuting long distances inside their home country. They

---

<sup>192</sup> One respondent in Beirut confirming such, and two in the South reporting using it "sometimes."

<sup>193</sup> By March 2012, new refugees started settling mostly in Northern Lebanese cities like Tripoli and Wadi Khalid. This later ignited sectarian conflicts and clashes between Alawites and Sunnis in the country's second largest city, Tripoli, between August and December 2012 leading to the death of 17 people. For a timeline of major events in Syria, see: Migration Policy Centre, 2016.

<sup>194</sup> During a group discussion conducted in her home in Tripoli, in July 2018.

thought it is necessary, safety-wise, for their children to have a means of communication while outside.

Using the mobile as an *Alarm* was dismissed by most respondents either referring to their mothers' as fulfilling such a task or claiming to have a biological clock covering the need for one. As expected, married respondents with children never need one because of their children's habits of waking up early.

When it comes to *Gaming*, the numbers may seem subtle, but it is clear in the annexed table<sup>195</sup> how after 17 years, young refugees shed their mobile uses and change their habits from gaming to other activities. Some of which were mentioned by the YSRs as doing: sports, dancing, and going out more with their friends—albeit the latter pertaining strictly to male respondents as will be detailed in the analysis of question number 17. Substituting mobile use with activity, however, is well explained by Abdallah, an 18-year-old single respondent, living in the South who said: “*I used to play Fortnite but not anymore. I now go out with my friends more often.*”<sup>196</sup>

### *Coping tool*

Finally, besides the technical skills they gathered using mobiles, the YSRs registered a ray of usages of SNS platforms that range from communication to *stress relief*, to *networking*, to entertainment and even *learning*. These have been enumerated below in the context of YSRs' heavy reliance on the device using SNS as opposed to their parents' resistance to social media platforms. By doing so, the following attempts to answer if the young refugees use their mobiles as a coping technique to the situation they are living in, and how so. As well as showcasing the

---

<sup>195</sup> Table n. 18, entitled: “Participants’ mobile usage as a Gaming device by gender.”

<sup>196</sup> During a one-on-one interview conducted in Sidon, in September 2018.

significant potentials of mobile phone usage in the hands of a vulnerable group in terms of gathering social capital, which will be deliberated thoroughly in the next chapter.

## B. Social Networking Sites: Specific usage among YSRs

In addition to the functional and technical features of a mobile phone, the applications embedded in the device are of extensive multiple other functions. In our survey, several questions were designed to gather information about the types of social media platforms used by our YSR sample, the uses and gratifications associated with them, as well as users' perceived usefulness of those devices and SNS apps. Conventional uses of SNS apps. Include their use for: Entertainment, communications, information seeking and social networking, among others. Those have also been included in the questionnaire and focus groups discussions, as presented in the methodology section of Chapter 3. We also aim to contribute to the ICT research by investigating the effects of smartphones and social media platforms, (such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, Viber, Tango, Imo, Snapchat, among other similar information sharing applications) on familial ties and inter-family relations in a refugee context. Similar endeavors are scarce, especially non have investigated YSRs' use of cellphones and its effects on family ties and the proliferation of social capital.

Perhaps the most anticipated part in our analysis pertains to YSRs' use of their social media platforms and SNS. In this section, we tap for the first time into YSRs' use of YouTube (hereafter, YT), FB (checking it, meeting new people using it, and searching for friends on it), WhatsApp (as

a space on which they would potentially express their thoughts virtually,<sup>197</sup> besides FB as well), Instagram for their entertainment, and finally for their use of the Internet.<sup>198</sup>

### *Google search and access to information*

With only 7 YSRs from among our sample still registered in school, the majority of those reported using their mobiles to make various searches pertaining to their learning. Other reasons to connect to online information portal, include the following responses expressed by our YSRs: “*searching for the meaning of my dreams*”<sup>199</sup>; “*everything I need to know*”<sup>200</sup>; “*I like searching for cars*”<sup>201</sup>; “[I] *search for how to lose weight.*”<sup>202</sup> Finally, as a funny brief anecdote, similar to fulfilling the function of an alarm, one boy mentioned his mother being his personal “Google” device, saying: “*No [I don’t use the internet for information], I’d ask my Mom.*”<sup>203</sup>

### *YouTube*

YouTube will be more thoroughly investigated in the context of YSRs’ SNS platform preferences, however for now, we have detected some of the interests of our analyzed sample as follows: Most of the boy and girl participants associated YT with watching movies and Arabic series.<sup>204</sup> Followed by a recurrent answer of using the platform to listen to music, expressed more by girl respondents than boys, with some exceptions noted. For instance, while Israa’ watched “*YouTube all the time, [and] especially songs and trending videos*”<sup>205</sup> Hamza, said: “*I watch series and*

---

<sup>197</sup> For further details, check Q.5 analysis.

<sup>198</sup> Any form of search engines that connects them online fetching for information they deem needed, either Google or Bing, but we mentioned Google being most known worldwide.

<sup>199</sup> During a focus group discussion in Aziza’s family house in Bekaa, in June 2018. A newly wedded girl aged 19 years old.

<sup>200</sup> He is a single male of 25 years old. Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> During a one-on-one interview at his workplace in the South, in September 2018. He works with his brother of a relatively wealthy background at 16 years old.

<sup>202</sup> She is a 15-year-old girl who is still single but without schooling. Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> During a one-on-one interview at his workplace in Tripoli, in July 2018. He is a 25-year-old married male of a relative wealthy background.

<sup>204</sup> Including: Zakariya and Mohammad, aged 17 and 21 years old respectively, both are single male and live in Tripoli, then Ahmad, Hasan, and a thirds male who refused to share his name, of 22, 25 and 20 years old respectively, all three are single male and living in the South.

<sup>205</sup> Israa’ is of 15-years-old. She is a single girl living with her nuclear family in Tripoli.

*[listen to] music while working.*<sup>206</sup> Other respondents also watched “*hair braiding styles, [and] trending videos,*”<sup>207</sup> “*and sometimes I learn how to cook something I miss from my mother’s hands.*”<sup>208</sup> At the level of age range, the YSRs who expressed to be using mainly YT on their mobile, are between the ages of 14 and 19. We will investigate this further in due course, but this age range seems to be most consumed in their mobiles.<sup>209</sup>

Finally, as we previously discussed of the noteworthy role of music in refugees’ lives, so was expressed by 15 years old girl when it comes to spreading a state of being, as she said: “*I listen and share music,*”<sup>210</sup> which adds the dimension of their *agency* employed in their act of sharing, as opposed to watching YT passively and individualistically.

#### *WhatsApp and FB*

Sharing on WhatsApp and FB happens in certain instances as tabulated by the following answers: Mothers mainly shared pictures of their children (ex. 22 years old Sanaa, mother of two). Respondents who were in love or who were just recently married, expressed sharing love messages, expressions, and love songs to “gift” it to their loved ones.

Example of such is registered by 22 years old Nadima who said she shared that sort of quotes “*all the time for my husband,*” and so answered her brother when asked: “*Of course [I share similar messages], for my love*”<sup>211</sup> (Hasan 21, single). While 20 years old Fadi expressed sharing when he is at his best: “*sometimes I share*

---

<sup>206</sup> Hamza is a single young adult of 21 years old living in Tripoli. But this was also the answer of Laila and Noor, two girls aged 16 and 15 years old, respectively. Laila is married and Noor was single and they both live in the South.

<sup>207</sup> During a focus group discussion in Aziza’s family house in Bekaa, in June 2018. A newly wedded girl aged 19 years old.

<sup>208</sup> During a one-on-one interview with Mohammad near the shore in Tripoli, in July 2018. He is a 21-year-old single male.

<sup>209</sup> 15 years old single male respondent in Tripoli and Fadi, single male respondent in the Bekaa. In addition to 15 and 19 years old single females in the South, both are married, said YT to be the main application they use when it comes to a mobile functionality to them.

<sup>210</sup> During a one-on-one interview with her in the South, in September 2018

<sup>211</sup> Both interviews conducted in the Bekaa in June 2018, during a focus group interviewed setting.

*pictures [of myself] when I'm feeling handsome or when I'm happy, or [attending] at an event for example.”<sup>212</sup>*

Then, we asked, what could be possible reasons for respondents not to *share*? And we found that some reasons pertain to the platform itself, as WhatsApp was said to be more trusted than FB, as expressed by Manar of 18-year-old, who said: “*Yes [I share] but not over FB.*”<sup>213</sup> Whereas Mohammad of 21 years old, who works selling vegetables on a carriage, honestly reported what was keeping him from sharing his thoughts, as he said: “*No [I don't share anything over FB or WhatsApp] because I can't read or write.*”<sup>214</sup>

This was discussed by Danah Boyd in her seminal book: *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. The author analyzed how teenagers in the US pivot their internet use and sharing over FB, between privacy and publicness. She found that to achieve *privacy*, they had developed their own tactics using SNS public space by either going with a structural strategy: To protect their right to express themselves without being judged by their peers, they grouped virtual people in certain categories with no common access between group members or access to what they share in each separate group. Others social digital strategies involved sharing content that is impossible to be understood by all their FB friends, who have no access to a certain context that the teens are referring to, including parents and relatives. Or that they controlled the meaning of what they shared by posting emblematic content that only their generation would comprehend while others would fail to grasp. (Boyd, 2014, pp. 55-75)

---

<sup>212</sup> During a one-on-one interview at Fadi's workplace in the Bekaa, in June 2018. He is a single male of 20 years old.

<sup>213</sup> During a group discussion conducted in her home in Tripoli, in July 2018. She is a single female respondent in Tripoli.

<sup>214</sup> During a one-on-one interview with him near the shore in Tripoli, in July 2018. He is a single male participant in Tripoli.

Yet we found other reasons that can be relegated to personality matters such as: “*I don’t like to tell people how I feel, I’d rather keep it to myself.*”<sup>215</sup> However, it seems sharing one’s thoughts or state of being as a ‘status update’ over WhatsApp or “tell your story” over FB, seems less resisted in the virtual realm, as respondents confirmed in their answers. Most interesting observation in this regard came from Mohammad who admitted to his act of virtual sharing despite recognizing himself as someone who is generally reserved to venting off his feelings, as he said it clearly: “*Yes I do [share over WhatsApp and FB], even though I don’t like to tell people how I feel.*”<sup>216</sup>

Then, what about if respondents used FB to *meet* new people? Well, the answer is most probably not, except among some YSR boys who did not admit it openly themselves, but insinuated it jokingly, or even were oftentimes testified by other members within the setting of a focused group discussion. This is apart from 21-year-old Mohammad, who said: “*I met a girl I had never met before,*”<sup>217</sup> when asked about this.

The most informative questions on the *most popular SNS apps* used by the YSRs are numbers 6 and 7, which also inquired about the *frequency of use* of those most visited platforms. Initial, subjects answered the dichotomic inquiry pertaining to their general use of the following applications and SNS: Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram,<sup>218</sup> Twitter, Skype, Viber, Tango, Imo, Snapchat, LinkedIn, or none of the above.<sup>219</sup> Then, they reported the most frequent usage of these platforms by order. Finally, while YT’s unanimous and universal usage has been attested, the YSRs were later inquired about the frequency of their use of specific platforms that share common

---

<sup>215</sup> During a one-on-one interview at Samer’s workplace in the Bekaa, in June 2018. He is a single male of 25 years old.

<sup>216</sup> During a one-on-one interview with him near the shore in Tripoli, in July 2018. He is a 21-year-old single male.

<sup>217</sup> A single male respondent in Tripoli. Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> For further inquiry of its effect on users’ psychology, See: Lee, 2018.

<sup>219</sup> Annexed Table n.19, entitled: “Respondents’ general use of SNS and social media platforms.”

features to understand the reasoning behind their specific preference to certain SNS.<sup>220</sup> While the implications of those applications will be discussed in the following chapter but to state it here briefly, literature has linked alarming health concerns to the excessive use of mobile devices.<sup>221</sup>

In terms of YSRs' most used SNS app., all respondents used WhatsApp the most for its widespread use among family, relatives, peers, and locals.<sup>222</sup> Then, when it comes to pairing their usage reporting, the two most used applications show preference of YT over FB among refugee respondents. To register social media users' preferences of SNS that gets our YSRs' retention span as mobile users of their own, comparing the tables clearly show the unsystematic usage of those applications among refugee respondents: A two-pair usage reporting of social media sites, loses many users compared to a threefold choice reporting.<sup>223</sup> For instance, using WhatsApp then FB or WhatsApp then YT as a pair, lost 4 and 3 users respectively, in the threefold of usage preference table annexed. Moreover, using YT then FB as a pair, was dismissed tremendously in a threefold user preference, going from 13 respondents to only 3.

Along these lines, one cannot dismiss the refugees' use of FB as reported zero in the table pertaining to its use as a stand-alone platform, because the social media platform did not gain their trust to begin with, as expressed by some, yet is still used in compliance with other SNS apps. For when it comes to their usage, those platforms are assessed based on their function rather than the community's view over them, no matter how negative this may be.

---

<sup>220</sup> Question 7 covers information about YSRs' use of their mobiles at night. Including, the expressions, quotations, and thoughts they share online (religious and others), and to whom is it targeted.

<sup>221</sup> For more on this, see: Ncube and Dube, 2016; The Economist, 2018; & Blankenship, 2018.

<sup>222</sup> Annexed Table n. 20, entitled: "Respondents' usage frequency of the one or two-most used SNS platform on their mobile phones, by age-range."

<sup>223</sup> Annexed Table n. 21, Respondents' usage frequency of the three-most used SNS platform on their mobile phones, by age-range.

In fact, only WhatsApp enjoys utmost refugee-user loyalty compared to other SNS applications, like Viber and Imo for instance. 30 respondents still replied mostly using it without having the need for pairing it even with other platforms, this is partly due to its widespread and far-reaching use among refugees' social networks. As Laila, aged 16 years old, has pointed out: "*WhatsApp has made our life so much easier. We can communicate with the people we love as if they're not away.*"<sup>224</sup>

To finish with the above, it suffices to say that FB may not be the go-to application when it comes to sharing thoughts and family pictures, but it still is of weight when paired with other SNSs as well, in light of the comparison between a single, two-fold and three-fold preference among refugees reporting of their frequency of usage.

However still, we investigated further on the frequency of specific social media platform usage, such as their WhatsApp-use versus FB-use, and to register the frequency of that, we inquired of the number of times respondents checked their WhatsApp and FB accounts. The results show that most of the respondents use WhatsApp heavily and much more than their use of FB,<sup>225</sup> as other tables indicated above.<sup>226</sup>

Finally, at the level of *Internet use*, it goes without saying that the Internet is accessed via Google search engine especially among respondents who are still studying.<sup>227</sup> However, communication studies Prof. Lemos argues that despite YSRs' information-extension with greater

---

<sup>224</sup> During a focus group interview at her in-laws' house in the South, in September 2018. She is married and a mother of a toddler.

<sup>225</sup> Annexed Table n. 22, "Respondents' usage frequency of WhatsApp, by age range," and Annexed Table n. 23, "Respondents' usage frequency of FB, by age range"

<sup>226</sup> A study by the Pew Research showed that "smartphone ownership has become a nearly ubiquitous element of teen life: 95% of teens now report they have a smartphone or access to one. [...] 45% of teens now say they are online on a near-constant basis." (Anderson and Jiang, 2018)

<sup>227</sup> Annexed Table n. 24, Respondents' usage frequency of the Internet/ Google, by age range.

access to information at their fingertips, this does not guarantee their potential autonomy to translate that acquired information into action (Op. Cit., Jungbluth, 2017, p.59). It may be worth noting that in cases where the young subject chooses to act on the information accessed, such an information advantage when compared to refugee parents, would reflect not only in YSRs' decisions pertinent to their moving to a more favorable location inside Lebanon, but also encourages them to seek migration opportunities abroad, the challenges of which were previously maintained (Dekker, 2018).

In fact, as part of *network* migration,<sup>228</sup> migratory systems and the importance of social capital (de Haas, 2010), refugees' endeavor for change has prompted some of our YSRs to work on conserving money until any prospects of a journey abroad presents itself. In the help of internet access and their mobile device, they would maintain an online pre-established or pre-existing connection with someone from among their social network who already made it overseas, or they may seek to forge new ones (Op. Cit., Dekker and Engbersen, 2014, p. 408), be it through online dating apps or by referrals from their social network. In such cases, marriage schemes and family reunification papers would eventually help them reach those destinations, as noted by multiple studies, and mentioned in Part II as well on YSRs' approach to marriage.

To conclude, in the above series of questions, we covered respondents' mobile usage and their applications preferences. The results of which are of tremendous importance to understand the role of the existing mobile applications used by the Syrian refugee communities and the SNS infrastructure deployed before investigating further into the mobile' influence on YSRs' lives, with respect to their family relations and in light of the change in behavior and responsibilities they

---

<sup>228</sup> Previously called: chain migration.

witnessed after reaching Lebanon. As we registered in our survey how YSRs reacted to the distresses of displacement by describing their use of SNS above, we also noted the strengthening of their family bonds. Hence, in the following Chapter, we will be looking through their bonding and bridging ties, as a framework of analysis underlying their maximizing of the use of their existing social capital while building new ones, all made possible through their mobile phones as discussed below.

# Chapter 8

## YSRs' Ambivalent Use of their Mobile Phones: Between Family and Oneself

### Introduction

Although the existing body of literature has identified the role of family ties in facilitating the production of social capital through social networks, education, and work, limited research has explored the effect of mobile phone as a tool contributing to the accumulation of social capital among vulnerable communities like refugees. As refugees need every capital possible to mitigate the abject living conditions they face, the aim of this chapter is to describe the forms of domestic ties by analyzing how YSRs use their mobiles purposefully: In activities related to supporting their families, on the one hand, but also helping themselves on the other (covered in a subsequent section).

In the following analysis we will present how in a scenario of rupture to their ordinary lives imposed by their forced displacement, the new domestic family dynamics described in the previous

chapter, have also influenced mobile phone use differently among refugee children relevant to their families' SES. The thematic analysis of the data gathered from our field research yielded two important facets underlying the quality of family ties in such a disastrous scenario: Strong and weak bonds are contingent to family's wealth, which has in turn influenced YSRs' mobile phone use. Resorting to the support of their local social networks, the mobile exposed young refugees to more economic opportunities and work, hence contributing to their financial wellbeing. Moreover, by providing free and accessible entertainment and communication features, it reduced their domestic stress levels and granted them a virtual space for their needed temporary escape from their harsh realities. In Part III, we show that by providing access to the world of the internet at their fingertips, mobiles facilitated their educational pursuit, and offered more opportunities for gender equity among families of a lower SES by facilitating refugee girls' purposeful networking, as mentioned previously in Part II resulting in an increased social capital.

Details will follow, however here it is important to note that the 3 indicators we look into for the assessments of the strength of family ties pertain to the following constructs of social capital: Bonding ties for survival; bridging ties as a horizontal endeavor relevant to YSRs friends, peers, and weaker social network of refugee, migrants and asylum seekers to Europe, Canada, and the US; and Linking ties that are more vertical concerning people who are not on an equal footing with them—including aid agencies staff, local humanitarian officers, influential Lebanese agents, or those in close relations to people of power among others.

## **I. Forms of Ties**

### Introduction

The importance of family in YSRs' lives has gained great appreciation, which has increased in return their susceptibility to its strength, when things are undermined inside the family fort.

However, the literature supports that the accumulation of social capital, especially effective during a major rupture in children's lives, could help young refugees substitute the families' compromised support functionality with other forms and sources of support to eventually reduce their domestic stress and external hardships. This was addressed in Part II pertinent to our YSRs' increased opportunities and prospects the more their families had gathered social capital pre-crisis.

Along these lines, family's social capital was also reflected in YSRs' ambivalent mobile phone use. Where, in addition to registering two distinct uses by the YSRs: the *ordinary* and the *specific* use, relevant to the task requesting completion,<sup>229</sup> we have also noted that there exists a different *target* to their use of mobile: being *family-centric* (i.e., amplifying their social domestic relations) as opposed to its private use for *cocooning* (i.e., serving their personal needs, interest, and wellbeing). This is the main objective of this Part III, where we explain how different YSRs' mobile use is compared to their families: where, based on YSR families' SES, we have covered the forms of ties negotiated at the level of their social capital, relevant to their family-use versus personal-use of the mobile device.

### A. Becoming agents: Variables that come into play

To begin with, we must understand that as our YSR sample include boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 25, the majority of whom had come to Lebanon some 6 years on average before we undertook our survey, thus, they arrived as children as young as 8 years old or as adolescents of 19 years of age. And as children do naturally, they relied on their parents for multileveled support described in Part II. However, given the precarious unexpected situation that the family encountered as refugees; the youngsters swiftly realized that their parents themselves needed help

---

<sup>229</sup> As above detailed in Chapter 7 on their common use of the device (calculator, alarm, camera...) and specific SNS adoption.

after the family's forced displacement. With the role of parents disrupted, the YSRs were compelled to assume a bigger role in their new imposed lives. It is in this context that we present in this chapter how mobile phones were employed by anxious YSRs, not only to help their families, but also to reassume charge of their lives and future.

Unlike the household living expenses that are successfully met by families of a wealthy SES, poorer young refugees needed to work to assist with their families' survival in the new environment, hence, prompting the families' collective cohesion to strengthen after their forced displacement to Lebanon (Op. Cit., Lewis, 2001, p.10). In families where need ensued, every member, as previously maintained had to exert an effort for families' survival and unity during calamity. This is what Weine (2008) has called the display of families' *togetherness* that he had detected among Bosnian refugees as well.

In these families, as part of Coleman's obligations-expectations narrative, the young refugees had recognized the hard work of their parents born by their obligation to provide them with the best possible living conditions in Syria. And when need arose, when parents no longer could realize their obligations or at least faltered on their delivery to their maximum ability. Given the circumstances, the YSR took it upon themselves to pay back for their expected part of the relationship, only much earlier than non-refugee children would have.

We argue that the above family conditions have paved the way allowing YSRs' to become agents of their own lives evident through their specific use of their mobile phone, which is particular to their circumstances and only exclusive to refugee children as opposed to non-refugees. Through the strategic use of their mobiles for the purpose of strengthening family's overall wellbeing, the YSRs have employed their mobile phones and SNS to either seek

employment opportunities to contribute financially to the income of the household or explored other possible ways to aid differently towards the strengthening of family ties, among others uses covered in this Chapter 8. By so doing, they have presented evidence of their active agency, hence, allowing them to negotiate a stronger domestic role inside the household.

With regards to YSRs' agency, unlike their parents, the young refugees have attempted to become agents and change their realities at multiple occasions. Such as in their active seeking of information, as one of the resource components of social capital bearing fruit of the potentiality of generating other forms of capital. By so doing, even as an attempted display of action, they illustrated a pragmatic effort to react against what their parents seem to have normalized about their constrained circumstantial context: A destiny that the parents found themselves one day forced to accept as refugees in neighboring Lebanon, yet a contested fate by all possible means from the part of YSRs.

It goes without saying that the use of agency is far more complex to reduce to several components. However, our empirical research traced age categorical differences and gendered considerations, stemming from cultural norms (Op. Cit., Coleman, 1988, pp.117-119) and an embeddedness of a complex social structure of relations,<sup>230</sup> as significant variables influencing the chances for the use of agency and proliferation of social capital among YSRs.

For instance, from an age perspective, we had described how 14 to 17 years old young refugees were bound by their birth order, and the ratio of family dependents from among the young girls who would typically, under a patriarchal society, rely on their father, male siblings, brothers-

---

<sup>230</sup> Borrowing Granovetter's work on the effect of personal relations and networks on purportedly impartial social and institutional transactions as in the debatable functionalist world of economic institutions (Op. Cit., Coleman, 1988, p.97)

in-law, male cousins, depending on the number of their household.<sup>231</sup> 18 to 20 years old are limited by their marital status among boys and by their families' SES among girls, as detailed in Part II.

What is noteworthy, however, is that from a gendered perspective, the boys' culturally encouraged obligations-expectations of having to work was expressed not having caused them as much distress as their increased duties after displacement and change in their marital status. Especially in light of the uncertainty of their stay in Lebanon and the high cost of living following their marriage when the responsibilities of parenthood were added to their obligations.

Another gendered factor restricting agency pertains to girls' limited mobility, hence, reducing opportunities for their extending of bridging ties that could later be strengthened. And what is even less possible is their pursuing of linking ties, that have been exclusive only in practice to women heads-of-households according to our analysis. This disparity in the agentic prospects between refugee boys and girls has been the fruit of the sociocultural values of a patriarchal system of relationships, which we cover in great details within this Chapter 8.

In light of the above, and since the young refugee boys' and girls' agency is more dependent on their family's existing social capital than their own choosing, given that prospects for the quality of the food they consume, their place of residence, level of their education, as well as of their employment opportunities, are dependent on the families' socioeconomic and cultural status, as maintained in Chapter 6. Then, social capital seemed more relevant to investigate YSRs' mobile phone use than through the concept of their agency.

---

<sup>231</sup> i.e., depending on who lives with them under one roof besides their nuclear family.

We considered social capital to be the mediating factor between YSRs' agency, mobile and social media use, especially among fervent young users of the device. And choose to address the concept of social capital further and employ it as a useful theoretical framework to our proposed analysis of YSRs' mobile use. We conceptualized the notion as constituting the resources and benefits available to members of a social network and its underlying operational structures, be it physical or virtual (Op. Cit., Coleman, 1988, p.98).

In our analysis, social capital is measured by looking at the short term and long-term assistance attained by a young refugee, as well as in the quality of each of their direct relationships with family, friends, and the broader local and intercontinental community of their Syrian and Lebanese networks. But before we probe further, it is worth noting that although social capital has benefits it also comes with a cost as concluded in Chapter 8, exemplified in YSRs' prospects for change in their sociocultural norms based on their families' SES: Where the higher that was attained, the less likely it became for change to occur.

### B. Specific social capital: Bonding, Bridging, and Linking ties

All three forms of social capital were described in detail in the literature review section. In the following however, we aim to justify our specific analysis of YSRs' bonding, bridging, and linking ties, which may yield specific benefits to the YSRs at the domestic level, such as obtaining full access to family members' smartphones, resources, and support, among others. Or promise potential resources and emotional support extended outside the family, among others enumerated in detail relevant to the benefits of bonding and bridging ties. While linking ties purports the ties extended to a resourceful social network, detailed in the following.

### a) Bonding

As a display of social capital, social bonding inside the family structure was regularly noted during our focus group discussions. It was particularly observed that sibling ties among YSRs seemed strong and that there existed a nonverbal, subconscious, sense of unwavering support, reliance, and trust—social capital traits—among each member of the family as described in the following.

Consistent with social learning theories, adolescents are said to learn better through socialization, which in the case of YSRs happens through observing the appropriate behavior from others, especially in a country where some sociocultural norms are different from what they were accustomed to in Syria. Shared such anecdote of a collective lesson learned by the family, contributes to the increasing of family members' bonding.

One informative anecdote illustrating the above was shared by Hamza of 17-years-old, who mentioned the time when they had first arrived in Lebanon, not knowing what *Nescafé* is, he opened one sachet of the readymade coffee mix normally designated for one mug and used it to a family size teapot of boiling water instead. He explained he did this for several times before one of his brothers saw someone else using it for one mug and informed the family about it. Hamza and his family did not have an expectation of what the taste would be like and therefore, did not know that what they drank was diluted. They thought it was supposed to be “*colored water*” that is to be drank “*in the morning*” and that promises the effect of “*waking people up,*” as he explained laughing.<sup>232</sup>

---

<sup>232</sup> During a focus group discussion in Hamza's house surrounded by his family, in April 2018.

Another point of relevance to the above shared narrative is that bonding ties improved YSRs' cognitive power: As parents teach their children to increase their awareness concerning their environment and the problems facing their household, the YSRs understood their surrounding challenges at a younger age than they would have discovered reality, had they not been through displacement. Hence, communication with family members and relatives, improved YSR's understanding of their social status as refugees placed in an exploitative environment. This was also informed by their own experiences and from hearing news and anecdotes of how their host-society treats some refugees now and then. Hence, the need for each other was solidified, further stressing family bonding.

Bonding ties in social capital directly influences the YSRs' emotional wellbeing, as it improves their levels of confidence, self-efficacy, and self-disclosure, all of which are positive requisites to their feelings of accomplishment and wellbeing according to renowned social cognitive psychologist Albert Bandura. Family members advise, coach, and train each other on how to dress, behave and speak at home and in public, especially since they are placed in a different culture of distinct costumes. Members' assistance extends to helping with schoolwork and the development of social skills essential for their functioning outside of the safe home environment. Such a relation of trust and reliance flourishes bonding ties among members of a family (Bandura,1994).

Within the family structure of interrelationships, upon inquiring about whom from among their family members the YSRs felt most at ease and comfortable with, the results portrayed a gender aspect to their answers as follows: Given the culturally justified patriarchal subordinate relation of the sisters to their brothers, refugee girls expressed feeling most comfortable and understood in the company of their family, specifying their mother, sister, and husbands, with no

mention to either male family members. While YSR boys felt most at ease among their family,<sup>233</sup> friends, mother, wives, or fiancée, followed by their brothers, respectively. Additional answers by boys that were missing from girl respondents pertains to the comfort of being alone or with God, to feel at peace, despite that they had not reported.

At the level of intergenerational exchange, the above mentioned applies to three types of exchanges reported by Lewis (2008) occurring domestically among Cambodian refugee families in the US. Those include:

“Instrumental exchanges are those task-oriented activities such as shopping, driving, preparing meals, or other actions associated with daily life. Affective exchanges include [...] other emotional aspects of relationships that are centered on love, care, kindness, advice, and other social supports. Symbolic exchanges include ideas, advice, identity and spirituality as well as food, music and clothing that serve as unifying markers of belonging to a particular group.” (Op., Cit., Lewis, 2008, p.699)

Keep in mind that in a refugee context, several obligations-expectations models customary to a normal parents-children relationship, are absent from the refugee family unit due to the family-life disruption by war. This is especially felt among young refugees of a lower socioeconomic family status, which has been noted in our empirical research to have actually contributed to stronger family ties as we evidence in this section. We believe that the reason for this indicates a form of a family emergency response to experienced hardships.

---

<sup>233</sup> Family, as a generic description, was chosen by boys twice as much as their girl counterparts whose answers were much more specific during the interview process.

Bonding ties during refugeehood have also improved the capacity of YSRs to contribute to the decisions typically taken by the father, mainly as the sole breadwinner in a non-refugee patriarchal scenario. Stemming from the reciprocal relationship of respect to the bonding ties strengthened among members of a refugee family during displacement, many youths actively engaged in emotionally and psychologically supporting members of the family and financially assisting with the household expenditure. The result has been for the young refugees to take part in the family's decision-making process, as recognized by the respondents.

When it comes to discipline; parents and children jointly shared the responsibility of rectifying deviating conduct to the best of their capacity. Each member of his own attempted to renounce inappropriate norms displayed by ones' older or younger sibling without exceeding one's natural birth order of respect. Hence, every member's role and responsibilities were increased in this sense. While keeping the structures of respect between members, parents engaged more heavily with the family following values that are most important to them: like sanctioning children's inappropriate behaviors, renouncing smoking, staying up late at night, and receiving bad grades at school, etc. The aim of such an act is to reinforce socially acceptable values and avoid bigger trouble jeopardizing the family unit's wellbeing, and also helped develop a sense of a collective action that strengthened family ties. Coleman supports that social capital encourages favorable social conduct, he argues that the higher the family's social capital, the less likely it is for discouraging penalty to even occur.

All such positive action exhibited towards each other by virtue lowered the levels of domestic stress at the individual level. This is because every family member in the new scenario sought to help the entire family unit, rather than himself or herself, first. Such was expressed by a 38-year-old respondent who have been in Lebanon for 16 years by the time we met her, she cited

the importance of family ties, family relations, family support, elderlies' patience, sharing children's responsibilities and the burdens of refugeehood, in the following:

*“When we migrate, we move away from our families, who otherwise would have kept our kids with them when needed. The eldest would tolerate our kids and our grandchildren [as well would do so]. You can’t expect [to find] this outside [meaning abroad, away from family].”<sup>234</sup>*

Another trait specific to the relationship between members of poor refugee families, involves a feeling of empathy among all family members since their move from Syria with meager financial resources. Since then, refugees' perspective to life had changed due to their harsh experiences and journey, making members of these family models most grateful and mindful of the importance of a strong family unit and each member in their lives.

Along these lines, YSRs exhibited extra care for their grandparents, parents, and siblings who in exchange reciprocated such behaviors, hence, strengthening the family's bonding ties. Everyone became a counselor supporting one another as members of the obligations-expectations relation. They engaged in more sympathetic and empathetic acts such as buying new cloth for their younger siblings, sharing the cost of groceries, rent and household expenses, among other forms of expenditures essential for family functioning. In addition to providing advice, they did not hesitate to go the extra mile by contributing financially when a young sibling for instance needed money to buy a motorcycle for commute rather than take public transport, which was thought to be more financially cost-effective in the long run.

---

<sup>234</sup> During a focus group discussion with her near the Cornish in Beirut in April 2018.

Likewise, YSRs of low-income households reported spending more time at home and enjoying being with the family, while increasing their interaction with all family members. Compared to their wealthier counterparts, those although could afford to stay at home for long hours, even prioritizing family over friends, yet each member resolved to their own task while home. They took more responsibilities in the new refugee scenario and engaged in higher patterns of trust-exhibiting behavior and reciprocity towards family members, such as for instance YSR boys' reduced scrutiny of their sisters' mobility. In fact, Syrian families of a low SES registered higher social bonding and bridging ties, rendering those families stronger and of a healthier intergenerational domestic relation compared to their counterparts of a non-refugee background. (Op. Cit., Lewis, 2009)

It is noteworthy that studies have granted particular attention to parents of a strong personality, especially of the influence of the mother on their children's resilience, confidence, and strength. (Op. Cit., Baker, J.R. et al., 2019) Similarly, when it comes to refugee parents, the mother, rather unsurprisingly as also reported in previous studies (Op. Cit., UNICEF, 2019, p.37), scored higher importance than the father as explained on the concept of filial piety. As a mediator between the patriarchal strong fatherly figure and the newly empowered young refugees, she made sure to reduce the generational gap and dissipate any intergenerational clash that may arise, hence, insuring stability at home. This strong relationship not only enhanced family bonding ties, but also increased the reciprocal tendencies for kindness between family members.

Our findings also stress the importance of the collective investment of all family members, each in his/her own way, towards the shared common interest of family's wellbeing: Enabling the "formation of an effective organization," according to Granovetter. (1973, p.1373) We have noted

particularly that a family's low economic status has facilitated the strengthening of family ties and the creation of bonding capital among its members in Lebanon.

To this effect, on the strengthening of young refugees' bonding ties and its effect on families of a lower SES, our YSR siblings shared anecdotes about secret love stories, smoking and dating in secret, even mischief shared by some female respondents,<sup>235</sup> that they covered against their parents' knowledge. Such a kinship cooperation must be typical in any family structure, except that in a Syrian family such a conspicuous disengagement of traditionalist patriarchal norms is not customary, especially among the majority of our respondents coming from rural areas (annexed Table 3-4).<sup>236</sup> Of course, this does not apply to all respondents in any case, but was at least noteworthy, especially among focus group participants whom we visited again, up to three times as trust was built beyond the first established interaction.

Noteworthy, in this context is another influence of refugee families' wealth on the domestic intergenerational fights that rather frequently occur among refugee families (Miller, et. al., 2020). From our study of the bonding ties engulfing refugee families, we hypothesize that families of a low SES will emerge from the experience of their refugeehood with a weaker structural relational dynamic bonding its members, the longer their refugeehood persists (i.e., the longer they are in destitute, the weaker the bonding ties will become among poor families). This complies with other literature such as the one by Lewis (2001), who added a time variable to his analysis arguing that family quarrels will especially emerge with the next generation of refugees, if their refugeehood persists. In the case of the Syrian refugees, those who have been born in Lebanon will become

---

<sup>235</sup> Only shared by older female participants than their siblings, otherwise they would not have been able to openly narrate such stories of mischief in the company of their brothers.

<sup>236</sup> Annexed Table n.25, entitled: "Report of respondents' reported area of origin and period of arrival to Lebanon."

adults with a refugee identity in the next 10 years period that does not comply with their parents' norms and moral values, the author argues:

“changes in self perception and reconstruction of identities and understandings of family roles occurred at different rates between generations (Foner 1997; Gans 1997; Kibria, 1999) based on individual and collective understanding and sharing of past and present experiences (Halbwachs 1992).” (Op. Cit., Lewis, 2001, p.10)

Bonding ties also promotes YSRs' local *engagement* with their surroundings but was more sought after by refugees of a lower household income, which resulted in an increase of their bridging ties compared to their wealthier counterpart, as we discuss in the following.

From a gendered perspective of a non-wealthy family on the vulnerabilities of displacement, eldest YSR girls approached their self-proclaimed obligations-expectation towards their family in the act of their giving up on their education, indicating stronger family bonds than among wealthy families whose members did not have to make the same sacrifice. The implication of their actions has not only costed them the loss of social capital, both bonding and bridging, since they did not go to school, stopped meeting new people, and resolved to a domestic role similar to that of their homemaking mothers, but have also lost them the chance to build on their social network as opposed to their younger or male siblings.

However, in the context of their refugeehood and contrary to this image, at the level of the quality of family ties (i.e., stronger bonding ties), our findings showed that in terms of gender equity,<sup>237</sup> the more girls and boys were able to contribute to the family's wellbeing, the stronger

---

<sup>237</sup> Annexed Table n.26, entitled: Social capital indices among respondents.

the family bonding ties were and hence, the more social capital was experienced among all members of the family (Shonkoff and Garner, 2012). Therefore, female YSR who were able to land a part-time or full-time position, mainly working in schools, at the mall, giving private lessons or as domestic workers, registered a more satisfactory arrangement than the refugee girls who could not work or who could only attend school.

Our working young ladies expressed that they could not compromise their household responsibilities as a condition of their participation in the labour market by their fathers or husbands and were able to attend to it through careful and tactful planning. While those unmarried yet were restricted to working in the mornings only so they could get back home before dark, the married ones with children either worked in the afternoon, after that their husbands were back home to care for the children in their absence, or left home with their children in the early morning to drop them to school and arranged for their safe pick up later: Working mothers whose job required them to return home a couple hours after that their children finish school, found a reliable arrangement to bring them safely home until she's back from work. She thus, either asked the consent of her husband to collaborate by picking them up after his work shift, or with his consent as well, entrusted a member of her close social networks to bring them back home in her absence.<sup>238</sup>

The effect of this is the strengthening of the bonding ties in the family since a double income contributed to reducing the family's experienced stress. Moreover, note that besides females' unexpected financial contribution, mothers remained vested in the care of their children, which has reduced the resistance of male family figures to let them work: Illustrating cultural

---

<sup>238</sup> This task has been often carried out by the working mother's sisters, sisters-in-law, female relatives, or nearby neighbors who would stand in support and empathy for that working mother.

values and gendered responsibilities. Noteworthy, sometimes, single and educated YSR girls were restricted by their parents to working in ‘decent’ jobs (teaching, assisting in managing the afternoon Syrian school-shift), and not as domestic workers (in cleaning or cooking part-time for their Lebanese neighbors). Because that would reflect negatively on male members not able to provide for their household, as seen by the surrounding social structure and patriarchal cultural norms.

Most importantly, when YSR girls could work, they got to be exposed to essential information and experiences that helped their children, especially daughters, and themselves navigate their way around experienced hardships in their lives. Such as, educating the children on the sectarian nature of Lebanon, prompting them not to converse of this sensitive matter with any Lebanese they may know to avoid problems. YSR girls’ work not only strengthened the family bonding as equal contributors, but also as a model of women empowerment since children perceived their working mom or sister to be of great significance. Also, boys’ bonding with their working mothers was strengthened as they came to realize first-hand how a lady who is not required to do so, attempted to mitigate the economic hardships facing the family. This increased the affective emotional connection between children and their parents generating a stronger obligations-expectations bond, necessary in our analysis.

Interestingly in contrast, our survey detected the weakening of bonding ties by YSRs of a low SES due to their internal battle between obeying traditional family values and family hierarchy on the one hand and having to deal with the stressors of their circumstances unsupported by their parents, on the other, as described below. But first, it is important to state that YSRs’ complaints about their parents were shy from being expressed openly, we only detected them during our thematic analysis in their anecdotes related to complaints about: having no friends when they

moved to Lebanon, feeling they would have been better off in any other place than this host-country, stating that they had no say in their parents' decision to move to Lebanon—were their family not coerced to do so by war of course.

Another given that was found to weaken refugee families' bonding ties, pertains to the near constant absence of male figures at home. As part of their gendered role, the boys, fathers, and husbands spent most of their time outside working hard to provide for their household or contribute to it—in the case of our youngest respondents. However, while this has allowed male refugees to connect with others in the outside world, granting them a greater opportunity for social exchange within their community and with the local Lebanese—signaling bridging ties as will be described in due course—the effect of this absence at home lowered bonding ties inside the family.

#### b) Bridging

YSRs have admitted to a change in their behavior after displacement: The majority reported feeling more agitated and easily angered, while others experienced having a louder voice, growing feelings of isolation and episodes of sadness, among others. Since the responsibility to rectify children's behavior falls to their parents, in cases of domestic quarrels, which erupted sometimes between siblings or the parents themselves, when the young refugee's conduct is challenged by the authority of the parents, the former is left at an impasse: Having to deal with their feelings of strong intensity without being able to react in defiance to the highly regarded and respected familial structure of both fatherly and motherly figures.

The interesting effect to this is that, following those episodes the YSRs recognized the importance of extending bridging ties beyond essential bonding ties for their survival at any given trouble: be it domestic-born or caused by their surroundings. Hence, our findings report that YSRs

also use their SNS to specifically provide them with a supportive atmosphere that mitigates the effects of negative parenting and the chronic stress generated by their adapting to their refugeehood, as will be more elaborated in the following section on their personal use of the device. Especially as their instant virtual access to family members and friends aided YSRs to feel safe and secure in their precarious environments.

Dr. Boyd supports that the use of mobile phones by teenagers is more inclined towards their socializing than their networking activities in the US. She argues that by means of their mobile, the teenagers are looking to understand the world around them. Similarly, the YSRs being placed in a country that they do not quite understand yet, their quest for answers necessitated that they ventured beyond their family circle, hence, prompting teens to activate their bridging ties.

Be it with their school friends (especially among YSR girls); their neighbors (regardless of gender but with fewer restrictions to that among boys); their sports-club team members (limited to YSR boys only); and their relatively easy access and adoption of their friends' friends as their own (regardless of gender, but much more easily attainable to boys given that they enjoyed more opportunities outside home), was also greatly facilitated by their mobiles. These groups were reported by our respondents to be the sources of their information outside home.

They relied on them to explain the problems that purports them, provided them with a subjective opinion of their surroundings, highlighted their available resources, and the strategies and options at hand should they need support, overall describing the challenges facing them at the individual, household, and community levels. However, the above group of connections outside home comes with a gendered limitation to YSR boys only as the physical level. As refugee girls

were more restricted in their mobility, it is the refugee boys who expressed seeking those bridging ties almost exclusively.

By the same token, YSRs engagement with social groups in their surroundings, from among neighborhood committees, sports club teams, and colleagues at work, increased their bridging ties. Their increased social networks could potentially be used to grant them more access to obtain information on employment in the refugees' local communities. It also helped them build bridges with potential resources that could assist also in their migration process should they decide on that route.

Moreover, YSRs' relation with the outside world, accessed through their virtual social network, rendered the young better informed than their parents due to the wider sources of information available at their fingertips. Information is a valuable source of social capital that could potentially be turned into other forms of capital via securing employment, housing, education opportunities for oneself or for younger siblings, or even getting by with daily necessities with less time, effort, and resources.

YSRs' advantage at the level of information seeking and sharing pertinent to their mobile phone use, has contributed to the rising of positive relationship among family members. Through their individual seeking of information, each member presented himself/herself as an important source of possible valuable knowledge and reliable support. Hence, besides the bridging ties implicit in this way, bonding ties were strengthened inside the family, on the one hand, and their social network, on the other.

Additionally, mobiles serve as facilitators for family members to exchange information, news, and resources for the wellbeing of the entire community. They facilitate the creation,

maintenance, and proliferation of social capital at the YSRs' individual level, which extends its benefit to the nuclear family and community levels. At the family level, siblings gathered their limited financial resources to contribute to the household expenses. However, at the community level, the refugees engaged in sharing important information on affordable housing, potential employment opportunities (Uzelac,2017), and aid agencies' services, among their neighbors, friends, and greater social network. They vividly joined social events of weddings and funerals, where their Syrian identity is reinforced, and when need be, they would willingly and with no reluctance, collaborate their available resources for the improvement of the life of a peer in distress from among their Syrian community, such as when babysitting the children of a neighbor working couple. This sense of community strengthens family bonds further and the Syrian refugees' overall social fabric and contributes to bridging capital as well.

In line with the above, we argue that contrary to the young refugees of a wealthier background, who seemed more family oriented for limiting their outing after work, the boys of a non-wealthy family were encouraged by its members to engage more actively in the local community. The former had a clear gendered division to their responsibilities, which ended after work. Hence, they could focus on their business outside home, but once they are back, they had more time on their hands to take care of themselves, while their wives, daughters, and sisters managed domestic affairs. In contrast, the young boys of a low SES sought to contribute to the families' income and to facilitate families' hardships as their life-purpose. Hence, they had more incentives to strengthen their networks and seek more opportunities to forge new ties, increasing their social capital.

By bridging ties with aid agencies and following their media portals, the YSRs were also exposed to information about how to prevent sexual diseases, how to attend to their personal

hygiene and protect themselves from public health hazards, as well as other measures shared on how to enhance one's overall mental and emotional well-being. Such topics were otherwise undiscussed among the refugees' family members and social networks, which encouraged YSRs to maintain a line of contact with aid agency personnel and necessitated bridging ties with them.

It is important to note that the reason behind this form of engaged participation outside home, have been encouraged further by the need of a poor refugee family to exploit all types of additional resources provided by their surrounding community: Maximizing the potential of social capital. Because such occasions are treated as resources facilitating the interdependent support of refugee communities, as evidenced in numerous data. Hence, we have noted that YSRs of a lower SES were more likely to seek communal activities, attend local meetings, organizations, and events, and more likely to pursue information on international organizations' resources available, to help them and their families.

Along the lines traced above, one interesting aspect of families' bridging ties pertains to its potential in enhancing youth's civic engagement, which will be later investigated in Chapter 9. As YSRs' social networks hosted and disseminate information about local meetups and group gatherings, which typically feature aid sponsors and resources that may help them and their families, the young refugees irrespective of their gender partook in most such assemblies. The higher levels of trust and reciprocity they felt towards those community level mobilizations, the higher their frequency and intensity of their voluntary engagement became, hence strengthening community bridging and bonding ties. Another result of this was demonstrated in YSRs reporting more likely to take collective action in response to their social network calling. And in the framework of these events of civic engagements, the YSRs' communal identity was formed and

strengthened, as they observe collective participation and learn of the exhibited high levels of solidarity among members of their Syrian social networks.<sup>239</sup>

We also noted that YSRs' bridging ties are heavily reliant on their gender, age, and the number of family members in the household, rather than the variable of family's wealth alone. We bring forth two gendered examples of this in the following:

When it comes to bridging capital with neighbors, friends, classmates, and peers, our findings registered traits of an expressed sense of isolation among some YSR boys working full time. While only a few working YSR boys reported having football friends that they had met in the neighborhood and with whom they hold a football friendly game once a week, others could not extend a bridging relationship with their neighbors so as not to "raise headache" to their parents, according to 15 years old Jomaa in the Bekaa.<sup>240</sup>

However there exists two variables to look into more specifically, one pertaining YSRs' age range, where everyone between the ages of 14 and 17, were still less independent than other respondents, aged 18 years old and above. And two, relevant to the number of siblings that YSRs have, where the greater the number is in a household, the less likely it is for the young refugee to seek out bridging relationships elsewhere. Moreover, we have noted this pattern to be especially enforced among families of boy brothers, who did not feel the need to connect with other male friends outside home.

---

<sup>239</sup> Annexed Figure 14, entitled: "Smartphone use, Social capital building and youth empowerment."

<sup>240</sup> During a focus group interviewed setting conducted in the Bekaa in June 2018.

Finally, we have noted some of the young girls who attended school placing their friends at similar ranking to their own family members when it comes to feeling most at ease with. Such is illustrated by one of our YSR girls who has witnessed neglect from her own siblings, upon applying for her Bachelor submission form. The important part of her anecdote is that she has first and foremost turned to her older sisters for help—hence has attempted closeness to her informed bonding network, as both of whom were University graduates—but when she has found little concern from them, which they later justified to being busy during that time, she has turned to her female best friend who has readily agreed to help her. Therefore, strengthening bonding ties to her bridging connection of a network.

To conclude on YSR's agency and their bridging activities; we have captured based on the above two significant findings as follows. One, that since the frequency and intensity of YSRs' engagement with their community is high, this signifies a strong trait of their active agency at play. Two, that YSRs have exhibited more interest than their parents in elevating the quality of the relationships with their siblings, parents, neighbors, and their extended virtual social network, through their act of heavier digital engagement with them, which in turn also feeds in the strengthening of their bridging ties. This also indicates the strengthening of their social bonding capital, as well as it insinuates the different understanding of the constructs of social capital between the family view and then that of their own.

#### c) Linking:

An especially important concept to consider when treating the quality of family ties, especially in the context of such an interruption to family life as war, is that of *ambivalence*. Connidis and McMullin, among others, addressed this through the course of their lengthy research careers and synthesized that family exchange is far more complex than it is observed, and that the family unit

combines expectations, relational power, and contradictions, coexisting with each other as fundamental family traits (Connidis and Barnett, 2019, p.21). We hypothesize that this dimension of ambivalence was majorly witnessed among non-wealthy refugee families, where the clear structure of traditional family roles was disrupted, leading to the strengthening of the family's bonding ties, contrary to what one would anticipate. However, what is even more promising is that families' incumbent vulnerabilities and uncertainties also facilitated young refugees' active quest towards looking outside their families, and onto bridging and linking new relations as addressed below.

YSRs' linking ties represent a rare form of capital that also took a gendered dimension of exclusivity to refugee boys. As refugee girls were restricted in their mobility, they could not partake freely in events or create relationships that had the potential to employ their linking agency. With all forms of sociocultural norms and restrictions lifted to boys in a patriarchal society, the refugee boys had a higher chance pursuing this form of capital.

Some expressed seeking linking ties beyond the formal bridges we enumerated above: They have created new links of connections that they sought after in their neighborhood or in the social and geographic vicinity of their work. The young boys accompanied senior people, whom they perceive as worthy to learn from: the "much-experienced" elderly, according to the young boys.

And while this linking tie took on a physical form of a relationship, it created a strong bond with a seemingly empowered Lebanese or Syrian individual representing boys' agency in action. The use of mobile in this case was paralleled with the young refugee seeking new ties, without

interrupting his virtually nurtured communication with his peers at the same age, or even at the level of his geographic proximity with a friend, a neighbor, or a sports team member, for example.

Moreover, as previously maintained, every time the boys of non-wealthy families extending bridging ties inside their neighborhoods, they also automatically increased their potential of building linking ties with aid agencies close to refugee communities. We registered that in some cases the YSRs were able to extend linking ties with aid personnel resulting in their access to further resources. And when the YSRs understood the latent opportunities embedded in their civic engagement, they also sought it more actively for potential rewards. It is noteworthy to point out that their arbitrary relationship with aid agencies, beyond a formal exchange of regular information of their livelihood, represents one of the limited reported uses of mobile phones among YSRs to initiating linking ties with a prospective party whose connection has the potential to turn informational assets into financial opportunities, according to the definition of social capital.

However, what is more important to note is that when humanitarian agencies and NGOs detected active YSRs in their community, they recognized the potential of promoting them as internal agents of change and community experts. Hence, by investing in them and sharing valuable resources and information, they also enquired of community needs and were able to apply better tailored humanitarian responses. This also serves the promotion of the mission the agency aiding refugees. As activities with insider participants involvement from among grassroots initiatives were more successfully implemented than the projects imposed by those NGOs of a top-down approach, as per numerous literatures.

## II. Support to Family: Family-centric Mobile Phone Use

### Introduction

Social capital is not only an outcome of Syrian family's displacement but has existed abundantly in the closed Syrian patriarchal community and among families. However, it was compromised due to war and has undergone change with the disruption of strong family values and social dynamics. In the previous section we introduced the forms of ties and enumerated the social capital that is sought after by the YSRs as opposed to that of their parents. It seems from our results that the strongest social capital of all three forms is bonding ties, as it is used at the domestic family level to strengthen the family unity, which represents the last fort to face refugee families' total insecurity. And used once again to solidify the newly created ties abridged among YSRs' greater social networks of friends and neighbors, motivated by their circumstantial need for resources.

#### A. For family's wellbeing

The YSRs employed their mobiles to help their family and by doing so they reinforce family bonds. However, the young refugees do not just stop there, because they are engaging with the outside world, they soon discover that their current situation may prolong, and that their parents fall at an information disadvantage in the setting of their refugeehood: Not having answers to many of their questions regarding their disrupted lives, not having answers relevant to local Lebanese *habitus*,<sup>241</sup> and barely struggling to maintain the family's most fundamental survival needs—and majorly even missing to accomplish that without the vital help of their offspring. Therefore, the young refugees started connecting with other networks outside that of their families and actively engaged in

---

<sup>241</sup> Bourdieu defines habitus as being the "...system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action." (Richardson, n.d.)

building new ties away from home. Leading subsequently to the continued circle of active creation of bonding, bridging, and linking ties.

We show that social media have afforded YSRs the chance to develop certain practices in relation to their families hoping to overcome their refugeehood and live as normal of a life as possible despite their displacement, we argue that this endeavor was undertaken following YSRs' specific use of their smartphones helping them produce bonding, bridging, and linking ties, hence, increasing the social capital available to them. Hence, we present in the following a family-centric use of mobiles by the YSRs, including its influence on the quality of family ties, in terms of strengthening or weakening bonds within a refugee household covering the relationship between family members.

#### *Financial contribution*

Following their forced displacement, the family's economic hardships have made YSRs in Lebanon achieve a unique realization at such a young age compared to their non-refugee peers: The importance of parents in a broader, deeper sense of their capacities and limitations. During their refugeehood, they realized for the first time, the direct effect of a family's financial status on the child's wellbeing, opportunities, and prospects, after they witnessed firsthand the exorbitant living expenses in Lebanon.

This prompted the young refugees to go beyond merely attending to their parents' emotional needs of reassurance and regular communication, onto taking on the role of financial contributors to the household. This was evident in the new responsibilities that YSRs assumed in Lebanon at the level of seeking employment and sharing other family burdens, among others. Using mobile, their undertaking reflects that SNS use have carried positive effects on the young

refugees' attitude and behaviors towards their family, even facilitating their financial participation among other self-initiated behaviors, as described below.

Beginning from the economic front it is noteworthy that YSRs' financial contribution to the house stems from their inner feeling of being obligated to reciprocate their parents' kindness, as stipulated by Coleman on the obligations-expectation relation they share as a family. YSRs have leveraged the use of social media and social networks to solidify their sense of economic autonomy, especially among low-income households. An endeavor that was positively perceived in the entire family and solidified through parental gratification.

#### *Searching for a job*

For instance, having made a financial commitment to his household back in Syria by taking on the role of a breadwinner to five family members at home, this 23-year-old young adult said with a high pitch for emphasis: *"of course they do whatever I tell them to!"* in response to a question regarding his parents' trusting his opinion on matters of high importance to family. This trust in his voice that his contribution working as a construction worker, enduring it alone for his family to survive back in Syria, shows the amount of gratification they must have expressed for his hard work, and him realizing that his sacrifice is not going unnoticed through their valuing of his opinion.

Interestingly, it is through financial contribution that the bonding relationship between the YSRs and their families seems to have strengthened ties, up to the point of reporting successfully increasing the status of female heads of households (VASyR-2018, p.101). For this purpose, the YSRs reported using Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, and Tango, all of which are platforms for communication to gain access to their social networks and theoretically seek information about

job openings and potential employment opportunities aimed to support their families' and personal wellbeing.

### *Relying on themselves and learning*

The YSRs perceive their endeavors aiming to uplift the economic status of their families as being desirable for family's survival. As such, they would engage in trying to fix broken things, help with manual labour around the house, and distribute house chores. With this rationale in mind, their viewing of videos on YouTube took the function of learning how to perform small construction projects and handy jobs, besides fundamentally using it for their sole entertainment.

By doing such simple things on their own, the YSRs thought to save the associated unaffordable cost of hiring a professional to perform the task. Hence, several young respondents reported about their learning in Lebanon how to fix leaking pipes, change car tires, and treat the smell of mold of a non-ventilated apartment, among other skills that they had no intention of adopting back in their homeland. Therefore, YSRs, especially those of a lower household income, have engaged in a host of practices aiming to alleviate their family's hardships, which was made possible through their use of mobile phones.

### *Sharing with family members*

When it comes to family, bonding ties are generated and strengthened when family members collectively engage in sharing phones, SIM cards, accounts, and information on their phones with other family members, regardless of the internal power dynamics, structure, and hierarchy within the household. It is strengthened further as family members talk to each other more, and support each other, including those living abroad—also indicating the extension of family's bridging ties. Moreover, family bonding teaches youth how to properly act both at home and in public and

provides them with clues as to what is considered appropriate communication, behavior, and social conduct both inside and outside of the family household, especially among lower income families as they must deal with the outside more often than families of a wealthier background.

In addition to the previously laid indicators highlighting family bonding as a form of social capital inside the refugee family structure, we have noted that even as far as coping strategies would go, some YSRs have reported adopting new habits after displacement that did not necessitate their having to leave their house—especially so among refugees of a wealthier background. Where those young refugees have reported drawing more often, dancing more, or singing more, none of which necessitates having to be done outside the familiar, safe realm of the family.

### *Searching for information*

The YSRs reported searching for information and sharing news with their social networks. Using mobiles relevant to their families, the purpose of resorting to their virtual networks is to learn from them about different things of interest to YSRs and their families. Including the place of the local market around their arrival and the busy streets that they could frequent in their neighborhood.

Shared by both wealthy and non-wealthy young refugees, the nature of the information they sought finding, would ease families' hardships, and strengthen family ties. To this effect, YSRs were reported in our interviews to have engaged in more conversations with their family members and relatives, living both in and out of Syria since the start of war, to inquire about their safety and wellbeing. Hence, SNS apps. as a prime tool of communication, have increased bonding ties among family members, friends and the overall refugee community sporadically scattered worldwide—also signaling bridging efforts and the underlying use of their agency.

## Importance of Communication for closeness

In Lebanon, the YSRs have affordable access to audio and video calling apps., featured through WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, where they maintain strong family bonds and extend bridging ties with siblings, close and weak extended relatives living around the globe as part of their social network. This confirms the existing literature on the dependence of refugee communities on communication apps. The communication features available through these specific SNS platforms were unanimously noted by our YSRs, as illustrated in their most frequent use of these apps., previously presented in Chapter 7.

Moreover, communication among family members and refugee communities worldwide was not solely driven by the strengthening of family bonds and bridging ties. The importance of the device and SNS platforms pertain to their capacity not only to reduce stress or in some cases even to increase it, as such was reported by Eritrean refugees. Where, pending families' SES and precarity of their situation back in home, emotional hardships accompanying family dispersal could be increased. This has been reported to be the experience of Eritrean refugees in Italy who were overwhelmed by the expectations of their families back home and felt guilty that they could not help (Belloni, 2019).

Our empirical research also indicated that YSRs texted, called, and video chatted with their parents, especially mothers, siblings, and relatives more often than they would otherwise normally have. Hence signaling a facilitating feature contributing in the strengthened of bonding and bridging ties: A potential increase in prospect to amassing social capital. The young refugees admitted that this was especially possible due the low cost of such communication mediums, only requiring internet connection compared to the fees associated with regular phone carrier services, as recurrently registered in our survey, its efficiency was, therefore, most registered among poorer

families. Therefore, YSRs' smartphones are vital resources that keep them going through their hardships, by ensuring them constant and affordable means of contact.

We registered an additional dimension to mobiles' communication function: It not only alleviate some common challenges that young refugees had been facing with regards to communicating with their loved ones as previously maintained. In the case of our YSRs of both SES standing, they reported that those SNS platforms mitigated the high levels of worry and appeased parents' psychological suffering for missing loved ones, especially among mothers. It is due to YSRs' easy and affordable access to their social networks at any time that the parents enjoyed seeing loved ones in real-time from behind a screen. Such is the case of Um Mohammad,<sup>242</sup> skyping with her daughter who got accepted as an asylum seeker to Britain with her husband. The mother of 52 years old informed us that while talking to her daughter in exile, she oftentimes forgets to turn off Skype and carries on with her cooking, as if her daughter is living with her still at home and never left.<sup>243</sup>

This quick and borderless outreach is not to be taken lightly by the reader. We had extensively explained the number of hurdles and challenges facing refugee families in their day-to-day lives. At the macrolevel, YSRs' easy access to their virtual local and international social network is of tremendous psychological help to them and their families. They reported feeling empowered that they could make such international calls without at no direct cost—a component of significant value to them. In fact, access to their social networks not only promised information and the potentiality of bridging more ties or linking new ones, but it also allowed them the capacity

---

<sup>242</sup> A nickname of reverence given to address the parents following the name of their eldest son, in a respectful way. The literal translation in Arabic is: "The mother of Mohammad."

<sup>243</sup> During a focus group discussion in her home in Tripoli, in September 2018.

to consult those members of their social networks who had been staying longer in the country or who could offer significant help on matters distressing them.

Lending them an ear to talk to, some advice they could not had thought of, even offering financial support at times if needed, suggests a problem-solving feature of the device during crises. This not only contributes to their emotional wellbeing and strengthening of family ties—much like bonding capital as previously mentioned—but also provided the YSRs with additional information about how to face certain problems. Such as who to turn to for legal help, for health check, for school enrollment, for work, among others. Finally, it is important to note that this use is maximized among wealthy families of a larger social network and a bigger pool of information resources, at least initially. However, it motivated YSRs of fewer limited resources, to act on their agency more effectively as will be defended later in due course.

Moreover, pertaining the above features and analyzing YSRs' use of their mobiles in avidly initiating communication with their family and social networks, we also registered that their use pattern portrays a sense of recognition, responsibility, and obligation towards their parents as they came to realize during displacement, earlier than their non-refugee peers, the importance of family cohesion and unity. This also contributes to the development of Colman's sense of obligations-expectations bond between parents and children (Milteer, et al., 2012), which has been revisited in Chapters 5 and 6, when we analyzed parents' expectations of their children and vice versa, especially registered among families of low SES leading to the strengthening of their bonding ties.

However, from a negative perspective as seen from parents, it is in response to parents' complaints that we could evidence YSRs' overuse or heavy use of their mobiles, to which most parents agreed from among families, of both a high and a low SES. However, wealthy refugee

parents almost exclusively complained that their children spent most of their free time behind the mobile screen. While parents of a lower SES only complained that this was the case among their youngest family members, even younger than our sampled 14 to 17 years old range.

Interestingly, we argue that this simple change in points of view among wealthy and non-wealthy families alone holds multiple implications on YSRs' mobile phones use and the potentiality of domestic structural changes in the family dynamic. The accused wealthy YSRs justified their action—their “overuse” of the device as per their parents—with their intent to keep contact with their friends and network of relatives spread worldwide. It is noteworthy to point that their argument against their heavy use of mobile is in fact similar to how YSRs of a lower SES reported using it but was perceived totally differently by their parents, as argued below.

Meaning, that it may seem that children of a non-wealthy family background had more diverse approaches to their use of mobile, which is true in part as expressed above on how wealthier refugee families enjoyed a greater social network and thus, a bigger pool of information to benefit from, prompting young refugees of a lower SES to use the mobile more actively to capture their disadvantaged position in terms of family's social capital. However, besides that dimension, their use of mobile is for the major part identical with refugee children of a wealthier background.

In this case, it is parents' attitude towards their children's mobile use that may have influenced children's maximized use of the device, allowing for the potentiality of social capital to materialize. In other words, parents of a lower SES recognized the potentiality of their children using mobile being turned into social capital. And when parents displayed trust towards their children sharing the hardships of displacement more profoundly than wealthier families, parents' attitude towards their children's act of mobile use may have contributed to encouraging the young

refugees to maximizing use of their mobile and pursuing more avidly the potential benefits reaped from increasing children's social capital.

Therefore, when children sought to increase their social network virtually, possibly creating more opportunities for them to enhance their social capital—with the potential of the latter being turned into material or financial benefits for the family—the parents trusted that their children's use of their mobile is born of necessity leading to benefit the entire family unite. This in turn allowed YSRs to have more chances of proving their contribution, of changing their roles, and creating more opportunities for the accumulation of their social capital. In addition to other means they had taken, like reporting to work or giving up on their schooling for instance. The following will present more details on how this dynamic came into shaping YSRs' mobile phone use and family relations.

## B. Cocooning: Mobile use for Self-benefit beyond family

### Introduction

After having described in the above how YSRs attended to assist their families, the purpose of the following is to demonstrate how, as agents of their own lives, young refugees help themselves and attend to their personal wellbeing by employing their device in certain ways: Born by their circumstances as young people but also, as refugees for the time being.

The following section presents a detailed account of YSRs' personal or private mobile phones and social media use-patterns, including its influence on the quality of family ties, in terms of strengthening or weakening bonds within a refugee household covering the relationship between family members. It will, inform how YSRs have benefited from their family's social capital, discussed in Part II, and employed it in different forms *outside* the family to help them create and

build their own social capital using mobiles. This section will thus, present evidence of their quest for social capital while illustrating their agency at the same time.

a) *Solution to stress, fear, loneliness, and advice*

Following their displacement, refugee adolescents felt no longer able to resort to their parents for information or emotional support “*for fear of overburdening them,*” as indicated by the UNHCR in its study on young refugees’ mental health (Hassan, et. al., 2015, p.17). Hence, amidst uncertainties and the stressors of their refugeehood, as young refugees have had to deal with their own individual difficulties, they resorted to their mobile to relieve their anxieties by creating a virtual world of their own.

Rampant among war-affected communities (Op. Cit., Miller, et. al., 2020), following episodes of a domestic intergenerational power fight occurring within the refugee household the YSRs have resorted to their devices to cope with their frustrations and to dissipate negative generated feelings and thoughts. By seeking gratifying uses on SNS and social media platforms, including watching movies and listening to music via YouTube, browsing family and strangers’ profiles over Facebook, and communicating with their peers from among their social networks by WhatsApp to distract them and dissipate their bleak scenario, all these activities also signal potential bridging ties.

Following such incidents of a fight, while the above laid uses of a mobile do ameliorate the young refugees’ mood, it also indicates two underlying important constructs to be discussed; not only did the YSR realize once again the importance of bridging new capital to resort to in cases of domestic distress, but more interestingly the young did not react defyingly in their dealing with the family status inequality between them and their parents during disputes. On the contrary, in

fact, the YSRs unanimously reported accepting the beat and took to isolating themselves behind their mobile device. This evidences the respect that engulfs the child-parent relation and the authority of the former, regardless of the intensity of children's stress, their gender, or birth order.

Second, as it was revealed once again to them,<sup>244</sup> this adopted attitude by young refugees also informs us that YSRs psychologically realized that they needed to increase their social capital away from family, prompting them to resort outside: Bridging new ties and understanding the importance of social capital in a more pragmatic way, hence actively seeking it. Unlike their parents of a higher social positioning and domestic power.

It is in the context of YSRs' need for an escape from their domestic stressors that SNS platforms were found to be providing them with the space needed where they can vent and express their feelings more freely and less restrictively, hence, distracting them from their environment and hardships as young refugees. Henceforth, we hypothesize that mobiles and SNS acted as moderators of the relationship between negative parenting and stress among the young, which has also paved the way to the creation of new ties outside the family structure. As the YSRs were prompted to take a more active seeking-behavior for social support elsewhere during times of distress.

Their mobile phone use, therefore, demonstrates young refugees' respect to the token of *reciprocity* underlying social capital in their helping of their families and their cocooning compartment to help themselves. The concurrent outcome of which is the strengthening of their

---

<sup>244</sup> Referring to our discussion previously in Chapter 7, in the context of young refugees' realization of the limitations of their parents as insufficient sources of information in a new host of different customs than their own. Therefore, sending the young refugees fetching for this channel of capital elsewhere, hence, intensifying their pursuit for social capital. First to feed their curiosity and quest for answers in the middle of great uncertainties in their lives, and second, to better serve their family by extension.

bonding ties, the regeneration of trust inside family, and the manifest respect to family's established expectation, as supported by Granovetter's report of a successful social structure following well-determined sociocultural norms (1973, p.1377).

To showcase the importance of mobile in the lives of young refugees dealing with the stressors of their refugeehood, the device that is both free and readily available in every refugee family's house, includes:

A virtual place to escape to (posting or consuming content on the digital platforms); a digital venting channel (a purpose that can be achieved by either one of two way: Through their posting of content of what they feel, how they think, of their point of view, or their state of mind, which allows them to express themselves; or, by means of extending or initiating a connection with a virtual or physical person that they could resort to and with whom they can exchange information and entertain a discussion with when needed); a reachable person with a shared experience of their trauma (from among a virtual community or their physical social network); and most importantly, a trusted source of advice and compassion (from among their close friends and relatives).<sup>245</sup>

Consequently, while the weakening of bonding ties corroded family relations during times of distress, the YSRs, of both a wealthy and non-wealthy family, reported turning to their friends and social networks to inquire about how their peers were dealing with similar situations, which simultaneously contributed to their leveraging of bridging ties. Hence, in addition to strengthening

---

<sup>245</sup> As opposed to numerous other available people online, with whom they had not established with a strong relation of trust, but with whom they could still relate to nonetheless, depending on the purpose of their initial need for the virtual connection.

their relationships with their siblings and close relatives, forming the networks within their bonding ties, the young refugees sought to extend new relations and establish closer connections among their classmates in school, colleagues at work, neighbors, and virtual social network links that they had come across using mobile. By so doing, every time the scenario of a fight presented itself, they found it reliable to use those SNS platforms at their fingertips to initiate these connections, making all the above psychological drives for connection, not only possible but instantaneous, as well.

In addressing their acts of *filial piety*, the YSRs' personal characteristics and their unfettered compliance with their parents' advice, has been noted in our thematic analysis, as children's obedience to their parents was frequently expressed independent of family's wealth. To this point, we bring forth the French school of Family Exchange theories (Garnier, et al., 2018, p.185), along with relevant mention of what had been previously described in Part I of Bourdieu's notions of capital and habitus with respect to family relations. We have noted the relevance of the collectivist social exchange model,<sup>246</sup> especially when our YSRs displayed clear demonstrations of the concept of filial piety as a bonding social trait in their relation to their parents, which extends beyond financial deliberations and children's personal regards to their individual wellbeing (i.e., prioritizing family ahead of the self). The clearest sign to that was reported by Saad in the following:

*“At the beginning of the events [in Syria], I told Mom I wanted to take my wife by boat to Europe and she agreed. Two days later, she came to me and told me she had thought about it and that she wouldn't survive without me and that God has*

---

<sup>246</sup> Family exchange theory came to emerge out of a synthesis of the social exchange theory by Ekeh (1974) and Rettig (1985).

*only sent her two sons, if I leave her, she'd be left with one, and [then] what if, God forbid, something happens to this one boy [the one who stayed]. She wouldn't be able to take/handle the 'loss' of two boys. So nodded my head, shut up and stayed in Lebanon.*"<sup>247</sup>

This anecdote brings us to one of the most important findings of the implications of SNS on YSRs, pertaining to its appeasing of negative parenting, especially among non-wealthy refugee families of greater circumstantial sufferings. Similar to what has been reported in the literature in Part I, on refugee parents developing chronic stress, affecting their parenting style (El-Khani, et al., 2018; Sim, et al., 2018b), our YSRs felt this the most in relation to their mothers. As a result, our YSRs tacitly expressed—due to sensitivity of the complaint—that their SNS mitigated negative feelings and distresses experienced due to the affected quality of parenting since displacement, as maternal traumatic distress has been shown to have affected children the most, given mothers' psychological significance to this vulnerable population in caregiving and relieving stress.

In fact, YSRs have repeatedly indicated their love for their mothers, exhibiting this in their posting quotes about their importance in their lives on Facebook, sharing pictures of them as their WhatsApp status update, and making positive comments during survey about the significance of their mothers in their life, also with reference to religious and cultural consideration underlying their obedience (Op. Cit., McNatt and Boothby, et al., 2018). Up to the point that a number of refugees expressed that the most they feared in their lives as refugees today is “*losing*” their mother, or even “*saddening her*.”<sup>248</sup> In such a case, when this figure of great importance to YSRs’

---

<sup>247</sup> During a focus group discussion with him in his parents' house in Beirut. Saad is married and is expecting his first child at 25 years old.

<sup>248</sup> Expressed on a number of occasions by the YSR to question n. 15 inquiring about YSRs' biggest fear in their current life.

lives, faced constant financial strains and social stressors: influencing her psychological wellbeing, making her scream more often at the children, criticizing them and resorting to guilt to rectify a child's misbehavior, this consequently negatively affected the young refugees' psychological health (Op. Cit., Sim, et al., 2018, p.5).

Hence, to escape their realities, SNS use among YSRs moderated the relationships between the surrounding challenges experienced by the entire family and the quality of the relationship that ties the young with their parents. As the family goes through harsh living conditions, with inadequate resources like food, water, clothes, sanitation and healthcare, the young refugees have indicated that the use of their cell phones, detailed below, to escape such an abject standard of living and mitigate the additional psychological distresses in dealing with their parents' reaction to their misbehaving as well as their own stressors. Such is confirmed by Ramadan's study of 2017, which also observed that Syrian refugees employed Facebook to develop alternatives to their dire living conditions and to maintain contact with their social networks both in Syria and abroad (Op. Cit., Ramadan, 2017).

#### b) [A needed virtual escape](#)

SNS were also found to be used as a coping tool to appease YSRs' troubles. First, it provided a free digital space where YSRs could express themselves, vent, and act by sharing their thoughts at the virtual level. Second, it served as a space where they could resort to as a means for their distraction, as a tool in search of an escape, of a friend to speak to, of a solution sought after that may be provided by communicating with their intercontinental social networks or in search of accurate information they seek to find on the internet. Third, they helped the YSRs deal with their emotions: As YSRs have reported feeling more emotional due to their melancholy, which is expressed at the digital level in the form of more affectionate writings, the sharing of religious

quotations by either Prophet Muhammad or mentioned in the Holy Quran, or through the expressions, social idioms, and thoughts they share online portraying sorrow or encouraging others of the need to stay patient and strong, for instance. Fourth, YSRs employed available SNS platforms that reflected their character and preferred lifestyles, far away from the financial limitations and emotional stress that surrounds them: They listened to music, played car racing games, and joined virtual football matches. Some even reported seeking new relationships online, romantic escapades and friendships.

This is evident through their use of Facebook and WhatsApp especially, and the posts they shared on these platforms and in their newsfeeds of: places they visited, gathering they enjoyed, events they celebrated in their lives, capturing experiences via camera, as well as the selfies they took with friends and families, as one of the most common uses of mobile among refugee and non-refugee communities. The creation of contents, communicating thoughts, feelings, quotations, pictures, and clips, and the feedback received following their post, activates a feeling of virtual engagement among YSRs and their targeted followers, therefore encouraging them to repeat their digital activity more often. It is worth pointing here that this digital act of publicizing private space is unorthodox to the Syrian traditional values of familial privacy. Because the sanctity of the house was majorly protected, as the head of household, the father was the only one to welcome acquaintances during the night to discuss politics and inquire updates from trusted sources away from the available Syrian or Lebanese mainstream media outlets of a questionable broadcast. It is for the sake of unbiased information, that he made judgement to carefully filter who is granted access inside home from among his social networks. Notice how using their mobiles the YSRs did not have to compromise the family's "sacred space," (Op. Cit., Lokot, 2018) seeking reliable

information. Their judgement of such is based on the strength or weakness of their social bond with their informant from among their social networks.

These actions-reactions of a personal-dimension on SNS apps resulted in a form of digital psychological assistantship and relational support, as well as contributed to the increase of trust among members of the social network after having been granted access to family's privacy. Digital engagement has been therefore noted to breed a sense of warmth and cooperation among family members, relatives, and their wider network, especially among families of a low SES. All of this is linked to decreasing the level of stress that the refugees experienced, but also indicates YSRs' act of defiance to their lingering misfortunes, as they try to normalize their life as possible as they could.

#### c) Positive effects

Moreover, we also registered that YSRs' digital activities invited the reciprocity of the action for a wider virtual engagement and digital participation by their networks, allowing for even more opportunities for YSRs to bridge new ties, besides strengthening existing bonding relations. To exemplify how SNS platforms increases YSRs' bonding and bridging ties, while strengthening collective action and belonging to a virtual social network, we propose the following hypothetical scenario, whereby a refugee would post saying: "I am a refugee in Lebanon because I was forced out of my homeland." Such an observation, a statement, an opinion, a sentence, once shared at the digital level, on Facebook for instance, others may relate to or may oppose it. Either way, this form of communication via social media apps reinforces political engagement and invites the interaction by a virtual social network, also contributing to the creation of new bridging ties.

Interacting with their virtual and physical social network, discussing ideas, sharing troubles, and good moments have improved the odds for the young refugees to strengthen their bonding with friends, and have allowed them the potential of forging new ties. It made them more social and open to join more virtual groups and expand their social network outside the realm of the family this way. Hence, with the use of their mobiles, bridging ties have also improved the emotional wellbeing of YSRs. Since they have learned news from the information posted on their digital platforms and have, thus, been exposed to the reactions of others in the conversations that they had followed. By reading how others have reacted to their own circumstances, may have inspired young refugees not to surrender to their troubles, but instead, it has encouraged them to seek opportunities to solving the challenges of their refugeehood, like others had done in their shoes. This has all been possible through their bridging ties with their networks at the digital realm of their mobiles.

Mobile potentials coupled with the extended bridging ties also enhanced YSRs' cognitive functioning. As they had open access to vital information about the problems they may face, the resources available to them and how to address them, YSRs' social networks, especially, played a pivotal role through their shared and disseminated information of the daily challenges they faced. Even among YSRs who expressed wishing to migrate, their intercontinental social networks coupled with several groups and media platforms provided them with essential information about the migration process they had undertaken and the multitude of problems they had encountered on their journey to asylum, such as having to deal with smugglers, among others. The function of those virtual groups aided YSRs to create a better understanding of the wider political environment that surrounds them and gave them a more accurate perspective of the possibilities available to them and their families. Therefore, bridging ties granted YSRs more information of the risks and

rewards associated with their choices, improving their reasoning, and contributing to more informative decisions they could make.

Mobile use and SNS have not only strengthened familial bonding ties between parents and children, but also brought YSRs closer to bridging ties with their social network in Lebanon and abroad. As an indicator of their agency, the young refugees were able to simultaneously solidify their bonds while creating new bridging ties relevant to the sphere of their extended relation: the household versus the outside. For instance, families were encouraged by their network of relatives and previous neighbors, who are also refugees to Lebanon but residing in different locations, to move closer to their residents, via picture sharing and video clips of the supportive Syrian community that surrounds them.

In such a case, the move into another destination was mainly undertaken by female heads-of-household, who were convinced by their networks' advice and thought best for their children and themselves to move to a refugee settlement where the single headed family would enjoy more social support. Thereby the act of mobility increased family bonds and those relevant to their existing social network, but also helped create new bridges among other vulnerable family units and their offspring living in the new neighborhood. This bonding between YSRs and elements of their greater social network is more evident in the use of SNS by the young refugees, keener on creating these bridging ties and constantly working on strengthening them via systematic communication, much more actively than their parents' use of their mobiles.

Another important aspect influencing their bridging ties pertains to the zero cost of those social media apps. available free to download.<sup>249</sup> SNS assisted YSRs to save transactional costs,

---

<sup>249</sup> Mobile phones have a capital cost that are paid once, at the time of their first purchase. The YSRs expressed either saving for their first device or paying it gradually in small installments, which also reflect how necessary it is for them to prioritize its

otherwise unavoidable away from a face-to-face interaction. Their mobile allowed them to access free platforms, join virtual social networks there, interact with members remotely, share thoughts and post contents at the comfort of their fingertips. This made their participation with the outside world easier and more frequent, allowing for YSR voices to be heard and their perceived goals to be sought after via mobile. Simultaneously, their virtual engagement facilitated the creation of new bridging ties and the maintenance of older bonding relations. As members of a virtual group share more information with each other, it increased the generation of information, it also encouraged YSRs to seek new information to share them as well, further strengthening both forms of social capital. Furthermore, social media platforms allowed users to upload contents of any form (pictures, video, or text) on many available free mediums (Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, Messenger, etc.), hence, increasing their intercontinental social networks and allowing for their communication, exchange, and exposure with the world, as previously mentioned.

Among families of high SES, the YSRs displayed weaker bridging ties as they did not feel obligated or the need to work since their families were financially secured. This reduced their feeling of collective action that their non-wealthy peers were prompted to develop, as a contribution to the maintenance of their family wellbeing. This is not to say that YSRs of a wealthy family did not feel any concern for their families or communities, but to argue that they did not invest much in common activities trying to bring the family closer together or contributing outside, except during holidays and family events.

---

ownership over other expenditures. Internet use and phone plans have a running cost that YSRs complained about its high cost compared to Syria telecommunication quarriers. However, the analysis found that with time, they adapted their internet usage by either limiting its use at home, hence reducing cost, or learning to save on their 3G bundles by only using text and not streaming YouTube with their data plan for instance.

This means that families' relative wealth presented less chances for the YSR to take bigger role than their traditional gendered capacities, leading to reduced opportunities that could have strengthened family relations and bonding ties. Instead, schooled boys reported spending more time on their phones for schoolwork and pursuing entertainment-oriented plans. This in fact contributed to their bridging more ties away from their family as they could afford to pursue extracurricular activities playing football sports with their school friends and neighbors. And with time on their hands, it allowed them to work on strengthening these ties and building on them gradually.

### III. Patterns

From the analysis of our respondents' cellphone and social media uses and gratifications model, we observe the following patterns in YSRs use of their smartphones: a functional pattern, an entertaining pattern, and a social capital facilitator pattern.

The functional pattern of smartphone use among YSR pertains to its primary function as a means of communication. The exchange of information among the Syrian community members pertained to their housing, employment, release of stress, disclosure of negative feelings, bonding with their social networks, among others uncovered in the thematic analysis section relevant to each element analyzed and detected later.

The second pattern relates to YSRs' use of mobiles for entertainment purposes which helps them cope with their stressors and displays their adaptive agency, as explored in the thematic analysis above. The third pattern ties mobile use among the YSRs' to their social capital as will be analyzed in parts, below.

Moreover, we confirm earlier research on YSRs uses and gratifications of smartphones and social media. It corroborates the narrative that Syrian refugees rely on their phones as means of communication. This study is no different from earlier analyses where Syrians, both young and old, reported high perceived importance for smartphones as a lifesaving device connecting them with the outside world. It also gives them the ability to strengthen their emotional wellbeing and decrease the levels of distress associated with war.

We also contradict the uses and gratifications theory findings that entertainment serves as an equally important use for users on social media. While many YSRs reported the use of their devices as tools for entertainment, their pattern of use was driven by their need to service rather than by leisure. YSRs understand the precarious lives they lead and the volatile environments around them, therefore their uses patterns project such a worldview. They use their phones to look for information that help them adapt to their new conditions and eventually settle in a Western country.

Our analysis also contradicts much of the research on the connection between technology and the family. Previous findings concluded that the more use of smartphones, the less quality relationships become within the family. Parents' screen time was negatively correlated with the youth psychological wellbeing in many empirical studies emerging from the West. This study, however, documented a positive association between the use of smartphones and social media and the quality of the relationships among the family. This is due to the shared need to survive and change existing conditions. YSRs, and their parents, understand that they are temporarily living in Lebanon and eventually would move abroad. Therefore, they used their phones in similar ways, communicating with family, looking for employment/education and migration information groups. Further, the screen time per capita in the YSR family was necessarily decreased since sharing was

common in many families. This in turn increased the amount of time spent between the parents and their children strengthening the family bond.

Our results confirm the positive relationship between social media use and social capital creation. YSRs used social media apps to forge new bridging relationships with local and international contacts and organizations. Furthermore, it strengthened bonding social capital since the device allowed the user to spend more time with the family member, through any communications platform. The user has more options to join associations or groups that would offer him or her benefits, outcomes of social capital.

Our findings also confirm earlier analyses on Syrian refugee families finding a great deal of cognitive social capital. YSRs and their families were found to exhibit a high level of shared views and beliefs concerning their present and future livelihoods. Respondents in the study shared the concept of patience as a key driver for facilitating change in their new lives in Lebanon. Learning the new culture, their place in society and the spaces afforded to them by the government, international organizations and others take time. Adapting to the harsh conditions of living, small living spaces, living on a budget, not being able to afford basic needs and being exposed to discrimination. Also, internalizing the thought of eventual migration to a non-Arabic Western country in Europe or North America takes time to be ingrained in the psyche of refugees. To accept the conditions and terms of the refugee lifestyle requires a significant amount of patience. In the words of Razan, a girl aged 18 years old praised change, she said:

*“To me, it’s been a chance to open up and grow. I chose Architecture but had I been in Syria, I wouldn’t have been able to choose myself [speaking of the*

government's educational system of scores when it comes to University]"<sup>250</sup>

Another lady of 25 years old said: "*I'm happy that I'm working now. I'm independent. I couldn't do this back home.*"<sup>251</sup>

There was a shared sense of hope and aspiration among the youth, especially females. Respondents realized that the imminent dangers of being killed, raped, or kidnapped, the ordinary conditions of war, are greatly minimized. They also saw the move to Lebanon as a new chapter where they would attempt to carve its chapters by working hard and attaining good incomes, and eventually settle in a Western country and live in peace and prosperity. They desired a positive change that was rampant across discussions with respondents regardless of the area or family background.

For instance, a 16-year-old respondent said: "*I sort of opened my eyes while here in Lebanon. Before coming I was 9 years old! We saw new things here. Coming from friends, treatments, and [different] traditions. For example, here our friends go out without asking their parents' permission, or that they go out together with their parents even! There is freedom here.*"<sup>252</sup>

YSRs unanimously agreed that safety is their number one priority in life, for them and for their families. The precarious living conditions in camps and overpopulated cheap housing, however, made our YSR respondents mention fear recurrently in their narrative in the Lebanese context of

---

<sup>250</sup> During a group discussion in the family's house in Beirut, in May 2018. She is a schooled single girl.

<sup>251</sup> During a group discussion conducted in her home in Tripoli, in July 2018.

<sup>252</sup> As she was talking about her friends shortly before it, we think that she meant to say that some of her Lebanese classmates or neighbors have their consent from their parents to "go out with someone." We could not tell if she meant a dating scenario or just female friends going out together without their parents' supervision, but she seemed surprised, rather shocked, about the possibility, which is more likely involving a male friend given that friendships from the opposite gender are completely new to the Syrian refugees coming from rural Syria. During a focus group discussion in the South in September 2018.

their experiences. Many also expressed concerns about losing family members in Syria, as a consequence of some relatives' involvement in the conflict or other issues. Furthermore, being chased by the Syrian authorities have also surfaced to be an important safety concern for many, leading to their rhetoric addressing primarily their losing hope and motivation for life, as shared by many elder members of the families surveyed.

Participants also shared a special understanding of the notion of youth. For them, they explained that youth is measured by family ranking and birth order, and so the youngest members in the household were seen as young, independent of their actual age. Moreover, mostly older males expressed other measures of ones' energy, felicity, and high spirit as characteristics of their youth. And in that respect, their narratives about their relatives resettled to Europe, Canada, and the Unites States, described the pictures and videos shared by the latter, as though they looked youthful again. As they could start a new chapter in their lives, enjoy a new beginning, and find safe and satisfactory life ahead of them, as they explained.<sup>253</sup>

In terms of social media, we also found that the use of social media carries several benefits on strengthening family ties among Syrians in Lebanon. It increases sharing behaviors and attitudes enhancing the bonding ethic among family members. It increases quality time spent as a family through screening movies, clips, or family video chatting sessions. It increases the sense of emotional wellbeing where parents and the youth increase the amount of two-ways communications together. It also facilitates the exchange of reciprocal behavior boosting the atmosphere for family cooperation.

---

<sup>253</sup> Annexed Table n. 27, entitled: "Respondents' perceptions about the level of happiness of their social networks."

More importantly, smartphone and social media use has been shown to increase the amount of self-efficacy, leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities for YSRs. This in turn creates more social capital to be used by members of the family. Social media allows YSRs to interact in closed and open environments where they express themselves more freely. They can exercise their leadership skills over virtual spaces, as opposed to their real environments where they are placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This gives YSRs more confidence to take decisions and participate in the making of important decisions by their families. It also allows them to increase the amount of bonding and bridging social capital through the cooperative attitude and behavior projected in social media.

We conclude that YSRs use of smartphones and social media apps is primarily for communication and survival. YSRs live outside of their homeland in Lebanon where an ongoing fierce quarrel is taking place. They employ their phones to evaluate the safety of their family members. They communicate with their family in Syria and abroad to ensure that they are living in stable conditions. They also use the devices and apps to regularly check on their children and parents within their own communities. Further, YSRs use their phones to connect them with the wider world. They look for jobs on it. They seek better education through it. They even look for ways to escape Lebanon and begin their journey of asylum through information consumption and creation on social media.

YSRs of a low SES do not wait for opportunities, they seek it via mobile use. Moreover, we were able to detect that there is limited social capital outside the family unit and that YSRs compensate their vulnerability by growing stronger bonding ties with family members, to survive their hardships. However, this strategy cannot be used outside the family unit, yet despite that, the YSRs still actively engage to seek bonding and bridging ties when possible.

# **Chapter 9**

## **Outside the Family: Weak ties and YSRs' Agency**

### Introduction

In the previous chapters we used the notion of social capital to better understand about the forms of bonding, bridging, and linking ties shifting the relations in a context of displacement at the level of refugee families and the outside world. The outside social network in combination with internal domestic dynamics have proven to have heavily influenced YSRs' lives, which led us to come across the work of Granovetter (1973). Through network analysis, Granovetter explains the macrolevel processes of social exchange, diffusion, and influence, as especially effective during disasters (Ibid., p.1361). He hypothesizes the importance of weak ties, in contrast to strong family

ties, in the dissemination of resources of substantial importance to the lives of refugees in displacement and uncertainty.<sup>254</sup>

## I. YSRs' Social Networks using Mobile: Granovetter's weak ties as bridging opportunities

Inspired by Granovetter's seminal work, we will here explain how the YSRs were able to explore their connections via mobile to turn weak ties into effective agents, contributing substantially in the way that YSRs have been able to establish their lives: working, studying, and living in the Lebanese society.

### A. Understanding YSRs' social network and circumstances based on Granovetter

The concept of social capital has been granted extensive inspection through the course of our investigation. However, as explained in the literature review, other theoretical concepts come into play at the individual level as examined in Morrow's study "Conceptualising Social Capital in Relation to the Well-being of Children and Young People" (1999). Measuring the social capital of the children of single parents and those living in foster care facilities or with foster parents, the author criticized Coleman and Bourdieu for underestimating children's agency. She argues that children and youth are capable of creating their own social capital outside of the family realm. Where in her study, she demonstrates that children's contact with family members, community leaders, and peers outside the household allow them the opportunity to recapture some of the lost capital in their households for not having been born in nuclear families of two (Morrow, 1999).

---

<sup>254</sup> We would use scarcity, but it has not been the faith of all Syrian refugees in Lebanon, to be generalized.

To this effect, broader social networks beyond family such as peers in the neighborhood, school classmates, friendships developed at work, or within a religious setup (attending Friday prayers and frequenting religious institutions for moral support) and the overall surrounding community, influence youth empowerment in numerous ways. Adolescents spend a significant amount of their time socializing with their peers, friends, and virtual networks, especially among families with long working-hours parents (Op. Cit., Lewig et al., 2009, p.33). Such social structures outside the framework of home, affect youth's self-esteem, confidence, and interpersonal communication styles. Youth develop friendships with their peers forming strong and reliable social networks that they can depend on. As their personalities grow, they assemble in different types of friendship groups, which further enhances their communication skills, establishes community values, and in the context of the hardship of their refugeehood, frequent interactions gradually promote communal empathy among peers of similar and less-analogous background (Op. Cit., Granovetter, 1973, p.1361).

According to Granovetter, individuals form closely knit cliques are characterized by higher levels of perceived association and a higher frequency of interaction. They are more likely to connect and form overlapping circles of friendships that think alike and share similarities (Ibid., 1372). He then continues proposing, conversely, that loosely organized crowds of a weaker union display an intermediate level of friendship overlap but have the capacity of diffusing to larger groups due to their bridging ties between two networks (p.1365). To explain how weaker interaction are more effective in bridging social distance, Granovetter writes about how rumors are hampered between friends but proliferate among networks of looser ties (p.1366). This can also be analyzed through Coleman's social capital perspective, where in homophile cliques, the degree to which values, norms, and behaviors are similar is higher compared to crowds of marginal

ties. And the shared ideals within a group increase trust and reciprocity among its members who would vouch for each other and would be willing to support and extend each other's help.

On the other hand, since peers may also lead and influence members to engage in socially inappropriate behavior and nocive conduct, ranging from disobedience, defiance, and smoking to alcohol consumption and drug abuse, cliques and crowds are regularly monitored and regulated through parental and social sanctions. This microlevel scrutiny would endorse proper sociocultural manners and norms for them to flourish at the macrolevel. This is how for instance, the YSRs between the ages of 14 and 17 aspired to model their older peers.

Hence, contrary to delinquent behaviors, good communicative, collaborative, and cooperative conducts among other cultural norms were considered qualities that YSRs mirrored and were more likely adopted despite their disrupted lives and incumbent hardships of displacement. This also signals the importance of the cultural characteristics of social capital inspired from family values, including “compromise, restraint, patience, tolerance, understanding, self-discipline, compassion, empathy, responsibility, friendship, perseverance, honesty, loyalty, trust, faith, and numerous others.” (Claridge, 2019)

However, with the use of mobiles, all that was previously maintained at the micro and macro-level of group interaction and interpersonal relational processes has been able to be globally extended through YSRs' virtual social networks. The introduction of such a powerful means of intercontinental reach and information sharing in the lives of modern-day refugees has proved to be a variable of significant weight especially among the young, as was discussed in the literature review. Coleman proposes that social action aim for the accumulation of capital (Op. Cit., 1988, pp.102, 103), which places YSRs at an advantageous position compared to their parents regarding

their access to social capital: The young refugees' use of mobiles not only allowed them to employ their parents' social network, but also to seek the bridging of new networks amassing more capital than their less mobile-savvy parents. This is made even more advantageous to the YSRs who engage more than their parents in the outside world, seeking information and assistance for themselves and their families in their use of mobile as described in the previous Chapter 8. This agentic aptitude has allowed them to form more friendships of potential "innovation," (Op. Cit., 1973, p.1366) as expressed by Granovetter—referring to the diffusion of ideas of a possible positive, negative, or no outcome.<sup>255</sup> In fact, it is due to what was described in the previous Chapter 8, of the weakening bonding ties among family members and the incumbent stressors of their refugeehood that we have noted the impact of mobile phones on YSRs' bridging ties away from their families as will be analyzed in the following.

## B. The formation of Friendships in the context of refugeehood

The above closing point brings us to discussing YSRs' old and newly formed friendships after displacement, based on Granovetter's work on weak ties. Even though the notion of friendship necessitates a certain proportion of communalities between parties to form, within the context of disasters and calamities, Granovetter argues that sentiments of friendship are developed more easily as a substitute strategy imposed by the underlying continuity of a situation of distress (Op. Cit., 1973, p.1370). One cannot accurately assess the depth of what "friendship" entails among young refugees, but what we do know is that the YSRs interviewed reported that their so-called friendships—those physically present in their schools, work, and neighborhoods, or virtually

---

<sup>255</sup> Ranging from the sharing of accurate information to the dissemination of ideas or rumors.

accessed via mobile—have extended support to them in many domains as they mentioned: emotional support, financial assistance, and informational advice.

Similarly, following Granovetter's argument, YSRs' virtual social network may be that of weak marginal ties, but those relations have gained circumstantial substance given the context of refugeehood and thus, were able to realize the function of a network with strong ties. Meaning that within a contextual relation born out of dire necessity and tragic circumstances a strong relationship can be formed within a social network of distant or "marginal" ties, as Granovetter calls it. From here onward in the remainder of our analysis, we will categorize this interpersonal relation under "friendship" as it serves the important function of bridging resources: an effective outcome that is actively sought after by the YSRs because of its likelihood to reduce their distress. Astoundingly, this was only made possible through YSRs' mobile use reaching out and creating bridges, hence turning the potentiality of their social capital to actual measurable outcomes evident in finding work, cheaper and more appropriate habitat. As well as seeking other possible forms of family support, be it material or emotional as long as it served the family unit's wellbeing.

In support of Granovetter's argument, this friendship is only made possible by means of a collection of weak or marginal ties available in an individual's social network that share tragedy and hardships, such within refugees' experiences and accessed through mobile. As a result, the reciprocal nature of such an exchange even at the virtual level, would still lead to the strengthening of bonding ties among the young refugee community on the one hand, and their weak social ties within their virtual network on the other. This social exchange may also hold the functionality of cementing initial feelings of reciprocity, thus, resulting in a higher social capital for each individual party at play. In fact, Granovetter hypothesizes that weak ties of what he calls: "local bridges" (i.e., acquaintances of weak or negligible ties) are more beneficial than strong ties (constituting

family, relatives, and close friends) in diffusing information, influencing action, and inducing social mobility opportunities (Op. Cit., 1973, pp.1362-1366).

His work has qualitatively explained that strong ties serve a functional purpose of certain dimension of emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocity, which are of particular importance to individuals' wellbeing (Ibid., p.1361). However, he argues that it is through marginal ties, also "connections," that the probability of the flow of information from one point to another is most efficient and has higher transmission probability (Ibid., p.1366). Hence contributing to more connections that have the potentiality of being turned into crossable bridges serving an intended purpose, particularly possible through mobile phones, as explained below.

Unlike strong ties, weak ties may be asymmetric and negative, and the individual reaching a marginal connection via mobile may even partake in lesser time spent and fewer frequency of interaction, but the outcomes of the claim are much more efficient (Ibid, p.1361) when it comes to finding jobs and gaining social exposure in the experience of our YSR sample. Because the YSRs are not like their parents, they do not share similar family responsibilities and are not greatly vested in the identity and life that they had built pre-displacement, making them adaptable and less resistant to change than refugee parents. The YSRs, who were forced into refugeehood, are still hopeful, active, and believe in the potentiality of their action. Unlike their parents, they have confidence in the possibility of change and have proved in our empirical research that they are able to engage with their social networks through their mobiles.

## **II. YSRs' Forging Ties**

We argue that YSRs' perspective on their mobiles and proactive use is specifically geared to bring change to their current situation. Hence, by means of their strategic use of their mobile phones,

we were able to detect indicators of social capital development and use among the Syrian youth, in the way they actively employed their social media accounts and digital networks for the gathering of specifically targeted information about opportunities for the completion of their education or that of their younger siblings, as well as information about rent availability and work opportunities, as will be discussed in the next section.

### A. The significance of weak ties

We understand that it is difficult to prove quantitatively because our sample size is not significant, however, from a qualitative standpoint and relying on the works of scholars who extensively researched social networks and social capital, such as the work of Granovetter on the strength of weak ties and Coleman's seminal investigation of the concept of social capital, we were able to analyze the microlevel action of YSRs in relation to their families and social setting of their refugeehood. We traced empirically the effects of weak ties and the significant role that their social network played in their lives as young refugees of evident agency. Moreover, since children open themselves to the world to reduce their stress, we discussed in Chapter 6 the role of their friendships in Lebanon. However here, we open a prospective look into a covert civic engagement that they may be trailing behind.

#### *Outside family: Bridging ties*

In addition to the family being a key factor influencing social capital, social engagement, and youth empowerment, community groups and religious institutions constitute other social constructs known to foster an empowered youth that is more involved in the local community. When community members share similar values, histories, and goals, they tend to engage more in collective action seeking to solve common problems facing them.

To provide an example on how collective action using conventional norms has the potential to achieve individual positive outcomes: The new returning mothers to Jerusalem from America were reported to leave their children wander at night without worrying much of their safety since the web of norms and obligations-expectations of looking after others' children in that community allow for such an outcome to be reaped (Woolcock, 2001, p.193).

This is particularly useful in the lives of refugees, who consider both family and their social network as a social capital of significant value in the appeasement of their disrupted lives. Hence, the youth model the behaviors of their parents and surrounding community members increasing the practice of their civic engagement, volunteering, and encouraging the development of their tendency to participate in local events opening doors for the establishment of bridging ties. Then, the more youth are engaged in community action and civic activities, the higher their awareness of the problems facing them, and their neighborhoods increase. Moreover, community groups offer another form of emotional support to the local youth who need mentorship, leadership, and training, which our YSRs recognized and sought by bridging ties.

Religious institutions offer youth another structure encouraging their active participation in their neighborhoods, promoting high religious ideals for many members of the youth in a community. Through their religious teachings, religious leaders act as mentors, and teachers, modeling values and encouraging cooperation, filial piety, obedience, reciprocity, and altruism among other morals, also encouraging youths' public interest and civic engagement. Friday sermons illustrate youths' ideal behavior by alerting them of the negative consequences to human delinquencies and reinforcing positive norms and practices. Religious institutions serve as places where the youth learn about their purpose in life, and what it takes to improve their livelihoods

while turning spiritually to their challenges. Such key information helped them cope better with the trials of their refugeehood and were found to have empowered them to develop their cognitive power (Maton and Wells, 1995). Moreover, taking part in community events through religious institutions improved youths' image and confidence as positive members of their community, which strengthened their potential for bridging capital inside their community, giving them access to resources that they could not have access to without gaining their community's trust.

## B. Limited opportunity to create linking ties

When it comes to linking capital, that which involves setting up relations with specific people outside ones' network, who are close to sources of information and resources and that could be potentially turned into other forms of capital, following the definition of the term presented in Chapter 3, we note that YSRs' linking ties purports further investigation beyond what is mentioned in the following, of a form of capital that highlights the disadvantaged position of our YSRs' in seeking this form of capital due to their protracted situation.

It is evident in the following that the linking ties are generally limited among the YSRs, especially among those who come from a non-wealthy family background. Contrary to their more established peers of wealthier families, who had been in the country for over two decades to reap their parents' linking capital. Falling short of their families' social capital built overtime, the YSRs of a low SES had no choice but to be more active in gathering social linking ties, which encouraged them to extend ties with aid agencies and other such humanitarian relief organizations. However, it is important to note that poorer YSRs' ability to extend linking capital is difficult for two reasons: Not only do they fall at a disadvantage due to the element of time, but even the protracted nature of their situation plays against their success in forging such ties among influential elements close

to humanitarian agencies or Lebanese official portals for aid. This is due to the massive number of other refugees seeking to extend linking ties in a saturated local capacity for such.

## Aid agencies and the Lebanese Network

At the literature level, realizing that smartphones supply aid and vital information beyond the doors of a humanitarian agency, some agencies now distribute those devices to refugees because they realized how dependent a refugee—or migrant refugees—life is on their networks (Op. Cit., Dekker and Engbersen, 2014). When NGOs close their doors on weekends, refugees are left to seek their own survival; informing their families of their safety, locating aid agencies through GPS, or as discussed in Chapter 4, inquiring their social networks where to settle, among other uses.<sup>256</sup> Even NGOs themselves found it easier to mobilize local communities for winter cloth and call for volunteer teachers via Facebook (Euronews, 2014). In fact, international organizations and non-state actors have also actively called for the improvement of youth empowerment activities in Lebanon (Op. Cit., Culbertson and Constant, 2015), echoing the important positive gains that this would have on the empowered individual, the family and in community development (Op. Cit., Cargo, et al., 2003).

In fact, according to a study conducted in 2017, the YSRs volunteered in humanitarian work to mitigate their harsh conditions and to integrate better in the local Lebanese community (Op. Cit., Fourn, 2017). The qualitative study, hence, identifies attempts to initiate linking ties, while also registering that for the young refugees, engaging in humanitarian work in their local neighborhoods also indicates another form of attempt by the young to cope with their given

---

<sup>256</sup> For more on this, also see the work of Marie Gillespie, entitled “Mapping Refugee Media Journeys.” The project documents the physical and digital information used by Syrian and Iraqi refugees, as they part on their journeys across different countries before they reach their final destination. (Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance, n.d.)

realities, as it provided the young refugees with a sense of self-fulfillment in addition to the economic incentive offered for financial support. However, despite this positive outcome to both the local community and the refugee youth, the study concluded that YSRs' dream is still to migrate to Europe or North America rather than to remain in Lebanon. The study alluded to many examples where YSRs were the first of their family to leave Lebanon embarking on their migration journeys, because in their perceptions, nothing in Lebanon can compensate for the treasures of migration (Ibid.). This is due to their perceived and evidenced discrimination, exclusion and feelings of rejection experienced in Lebanon.

Our empirical research detected a distinction between: Those who had come to Lebanon prior to the war in Syria or who had previously been to Lebanon occasionally, on the one hand, and those newcomers who arrived since the beginning of the incidents, on the other hand. As the former enjoyed much more benefits from their pre-established Lebanese or Syrian social networks that were translated into: local assistance with work and housing, easier settlement, and an overall quicker state of normalcy to the new scenario after disruption.

The poorer refugees, in contrast, who are relative newcomers to the Lebanese-host, expressed feeling marginalized by the Lebanese society—especially after 2014—and were left with weaker ties of an uninfluential network from among their social relations, while their Lebanese connections were limited to merely shallow acquaintances with the Lebanese community if a relationship were to develop at all.

At the level of social ties, while all three forms of social capital were described in detail in the literature review section and were later thoroughly analyzed, we noted that linking ties specifically, required higher effort to amass and was therefore sought more actively by the YSRs

of a lower SES following its recognized advantages compared to wealthier YSR families. However, despite that those YSRs of a poorer family background created ties with aid agencies' staff and other such humanitarian relief organizations, their linking ties is still much less relevant than that of parents of a wealthier refugee families. Since linking ties required time to build strength into, the parents of a high SES enjoyed an empowered social network leveraging on long-term relations with well-established Lebanese and influential Syrian businessmen.

This places refugee families of a low SES at additional disadvantage because; even today, should their young offspring seek to establish vertical linking ties amidst their protracted crisis, it is much harder to succeed in doing so compared to those Syrian families who have already built strong ties when the relationship between the two nations were better than their current reality and how they are seen as Syrian nationals today.

## Political engagement

After that, the YSRs realized that they may be staying in Lebanon for long and given the previously enumerated impacts of their protracted situation on a fragile country in Part II, it was clear to them that it is not enough to follow news of the battlefields back in Syria, only passively. Their reaction to the growing anxiousness about their everyday security and overall local situation, started in the form of first educating themselves about the local politics in Lebanon and discussing it with their friends. Especially given the sectarian nature of the social divide in their host, a dimension they are not familiar with given that 85% of the Syrian population are Sunni Muslim. They soon noticed that they are not the only ones anxious of the situation, but many others of their friends felt the same way and faced the same challenge in Lebanon, so they started connecting with more friends and establishing new bridging ties outside of their family-relatives social circle.

Hence, their strengthening of their bonding ties with the family, and their establishing of new bridging ties, may be a strategy to strengthen themselves. What were they afraid of? As they communicated their troubles, and many others exchanged their experiences and the fragility of the Lebanese social fabric, perhaps they protected themselves by collecting social capital to be used in the case of the eruption of some sort of a collective anti-refugee movement against them or an organized anti-refugee campaign takes off, translating the sentiments of local Lebanese burdened by their presence. It is important to note here, that their actions of political preparedness, includes their initial following of local news, discussing the topic with their friends and sharing information through SNS. This could be seen as an act of attempted emancipation from their foggy reality rather than empowerment because they are not hostile, they do not want to engage in trouble but rather avoid it, as reported by the young respondents, and reported in other literature as well (Montaser, 2020). In fact, as described in previous Chapter 8, YSRs' willingness to extend help when possible to other members of the Syrian community, is a clear manifestation of successful bridging ties. Similarly, civic engagement and volunteering also mitigates psychological distress, including loneliness and depression suffered from by the majority of YSRs, as it gives the young refugee a sense of purpose and accomplishment. However, at the level of SNS use, when users receive others sharing contents that reflect similar experiences to their own, this also increases the bonding ties within this virtual community, as well as bridging social capital.

Hence, while the parents are busy making ends meet for their household, the YSR is capable of seeking change, actually even needing change. Which leads us to think that perhaps the purpose behind their creation of new social capital is not only aimed to help the family and themselves today, but to empower their position and increase their preparedness tomorrow, in the case of a social backlash was perpetrated against them for instance, or even within a more possible

scenario, in case their exploitative employer opted one day not to pay them a salary or decided to terminate their work suddenly—given that which they hear of injustices and other experiences from among their refugee network.

The question of whether this leads to a more pronounced political engagement and mobilization of those friends in the future, is up for investigation by another research. However, their action may turn into organized collective action without having the initial intent to do so. The reason for that is because before being defined by the outside world as refugees in Lebanon, they are first and foremost Syrian citizens. Unlike their parents, the YSRs did not accept being labeled as refugees, instead they react to the surrounding in their own way and defy it if they want to, in the aim to create their own understanding of their life away from home.

# Conclusion

To conclude, in the course of our empirical investigation, we found that what influences the quality of family ties between those YSRs who enjoy strong intergenerational family bonding, in contrast to those with weaker ties, is detected by means of refugee families' socioeconomic status, social networks, and YSRs' specific mobile use. These measures are analyzed in the context of our young respondents' perceptions of their new roles and changed responsibilities in Lebanon and actions using their mobile phones.

We found that in some scenarios, it is the nuclear (immediate) family that helps young refugees deal with their distress, while in other situations, using their mobile phones, it is their virtual network of relatives and friends. However, as investigated in Part III, we also observed among YSRs a conscious process of building ties and thinking about the future, including an active effort to seek after forging a Lebanese social network, which prompted us to consider the existence of YSRs' consciousness turning their actions into attempts for emancipation. As we have hypothesized that YSRs' use of mobile phones provides evidence for their attempt to create their own social capital.

In this case, the effect of agency is thus brought into the investigation in Chapters 8 and 9, in the context of YSRs' ties to aid agencies (for recruitment, health checkups, financial aid, etc.). Through the course of our inquiry, we have borrowed the notion of social capital in our analysis,

particularly focusing on bonding, bridging, and linking ties to guide our research. However, for future prospects, what about the political use of mobiles? The individuals in our sample were not specifically politically engaged in social movements, but some showed an interest by following and sharing news, as previously described.

## Considerations on YSRs' Future

Finally, to contribute to the theoretical framework of our research, we consider how the use of smartphones and social media assist YSRs to create social capital, thereby allowing them to re-create their own lives.

Social media helps YSRs stay in touch with close family members and strengthens the bonding dimension of their interactions, while at the same time allowing them to bridge new social capital connections with friends, colleagues, peers, and other groups on the web. The uses and gratification's literature has profoundly investigated the relationship between smartphone use and social capital, as discussed in the literature review section. In summary, the relational use of SNS has been positively correlated with all types of social capital.

Mobile phones increase the availability of individuals to their family members and to close friends, something that some users associate with limiting their freedom, as expressed by Manar, aged 18: *"Now we have to inform our parents of our plans every minute when we're away from home. This takes away from our freedom."*<sup>257</sup> However, on a positive note, it also increases the frequency, intensity, and quality of the emotional support necessary for our respondents to seek help when needed and maintains their psychological wellbeing through being connected to their loved ones. For instance, even though Ruba, who is 24 years old, thought the support of her family

---

<sup>257</sup> During a group discussion conducted in her home in Tripoli, in July 2018. She is a single girl attending school.

by means of mobile use could not help her individually, she still thought knowing that her family is happy through phone, would alleviate her mood, as she explained: “*but perhaps when I speak to my family and if they are happy, I would feel better.*”<sup>258</sup>

Ruba highlights the importance of having an immediate connection to family members, and how mobile phones give users access to that connection through a multitude of social media applications, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and many others. Mobile phone therefore represents an opportunity to maintain relationships among family members. For instance, we recognize that many YSRs depend on social media to maintain relations with family members both in Syria and abroad.

Furthermore, in addition to using mobiles for communication and checking-up with family and friends, YSRs also reported having found employment via their social media applications and through their social networks. Mohammad, 21 years old, mentioned getting back in touch with a former employer after not working with him for three years. In addition to seeking cheap rent, as was reported by Ruba (24 years old), Razan (18 years old) reported having contacted her uncle living in Turkey to investigate the possibility of pursuing her education there. Noting that if he were not her uncle, and if she were not going with her older sister, she would not have thought about that possibility, and her parents would not have considered it.<sup>259</sup> Hence, whether for future employment, education or migration, cell phone use has posed great advantages for creating social capital among all populations, and for refugees, in particular.

---

<sup>258</sup> During a one-on-one interview in Beirut, conducted on April 23, 2018. Ruba is a newlywed.

<sup>259</sup> During a one-on-one discussion with her and her sister alone in Beirut in February 2020.

Moreover, social media lowers the cost of sustaining bridging capital. In traditional settings, an individual typically shows up to meetings of voluntary associations to present his or her commitment to the group. Through social media, an individual may join, participate, and lead virtual groups, providing support for each other. For instance, a Syrian living in Beirut might join a group of dedicated voluntary teachers of English as a Second Language, to help improve her English at no cost. In addition, as information in our age is vital, social media makes it much easier for individuals to gain access to quality information. For instance, a Syrian refugee living in Tripoli might befriend an expert on Syrian migration routes and, after a series of phone calls with them via Facebook, be provided with valuable information. All in all, social media use creates better opportunities for YSRs in Lebanon through close and extended social networks.

We have shown that close bonds among family members, friends, acquaintances, and others increase the amount of social capital an individual possesses. Today, individual social mobility and forced migration have both contributed to the dislocation of millions around the world for very different reasons. Nevertheless, the potential outcome may be that an individual leaves his or her home country and settles in another. This naturally decreases his or her social capital since the individual has less contact with family and friends. Friending on social media lessens this impact by offering individuals the chance to refresh their relationships with others, and moreover to strengthen those relationships since they can call or text at anytime, from anywhere. This is especially true for transient populations such as Syrian refugees. Most have family members both in Syria and abroad, and contacting them can be dangerous and costly, since the Syrian authorities are always on the watch. Therefore, social media applications can provide them a less expensive and more reliable method of maintaining their relationships with pre-existing networks and beginning new chapters with new networks in their host countries.

This research has confirmed previous studies and has established a robust positive relationship between online self-disclosure and social capital. When individuals post online about themselves and their experiences, others are more likely to trust them. Individuals may enhance their profiles, image, and content, signaling specific things to different audiences. This is likely to harness trust from either bonding or bridging social networks. For instance, Syrian refugees in Lebanon may get more trust from non-for-profit organizations in Lebanon by disclosing their harsh living conditions on social media applications. This could provide their communities with better services, in any domain. Furthermore, individuals may gain the trust of future partners, employers, or educators where they may receive better opportunities due to their effective use of self-disclosure.

One of the most significant advantages gained by social media use is the improvement of psychological wellbeing. In order for individuals to desire to create social capital, their psychological wellbeing should be strong. Individuals who are struggling emotionally and are unable to trust others easily are unlikely to develop the necessary social capital to improve their lives. This will end up costing them further financial resources, which could be saved by the use of social capital. Therefore, social media use helps individuals better attend to their psychological wellbeing. For instance, YSRs in Lebanon live in precarious environments where social contact is essential. Social media provides them with a readily available resource to call and text their family members and relatives anywhere in the world; they can initiate video chats, increasing their sense of security and emotional wellbeing. Social media provides them with a space where they can express themselves comfortably and relate to similar stories on the web.

Studies of the use of social media by vulnerable populations have shown a robust connection between purposeful or goal-oriented use of such platforms and social capital. And so

did the study of individuals from at-risk groups, like homeless individuals or youths in state care, where the homeless youth have used Facebook and other social media applications to seek contacts, information, and resources for getting shelter and support. They have sought to make contacts in their own communities, seeking help to secure a place to sleep and to locate food banks to fulfill their nutritional needs. Syrian refugees know that Lebanon is not going to be their final destination, and therefore they frequently seek information and resources on migration. YSRs develop skills to seek better information and resources on how to facilitate their lives, from learning about employment opportunities to seeking expertise from online smugglers.

The previous discussion also suggests that using social media can empower youth to develop knowledge, skills, and technical abilities. This is likely to improve youth's self-efficacy and individual autonomy. Syrian families in Lebanon, fleeing the conflict in their country, depend significantly on their youth for income and security. Therefore, YSRs are more likely to adapt to their environment, and their use of social media certainly affects this process. Therefore, the uses and gratifications of Facebook, WhatsApp or any other medium is targeted at securing resources for the family. This entails using social networks for such favors as borrowing money, finding better employment, securing a contact of a reliable smuggler, and gaining access to aid agencies.

All in all, the preceding section documents the positive relationship connecting the use of smartphones, SNS, and social capital. This dissertation has employed this framework to understand how YSRs in Lebanon use their devices and accounts in their quest for a better life. It considers how social media use strengthens all dimensions of social capital: structural, relational, and cognitive. It expects that YSRs' use of social media increases their self-efficacy, making them more independent. It also expects that social media use has a positive effect on the family through the creation, nurturing and sustenance of social capital within the family's social networks. When

asked how YSRs have negotiated their desires with their parents, it turned out that most respondents never even considered going against their parents' decisions. This led to the discussion described above on filial piety.

# Bibliography

- Abdul-Hamid, H., Patrinos, H., Reyes, J., Kelcey, J., & Diaz Varela, A. (2015). Learning in the face of adversity: The UNRWA education program for Palestine refugees. *The World Bank*.
- Abla, Z., & Al-Masri, M. (2015). Better Together: The Impact of the Schooling System of Lebanese and Syrian Displaced Pupils on Social Stability. *International Alert*, 8. [https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon\\_LebaneseSyrianSchoolingSystem\\_EN\\_2015.pdf](https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_LebaneseSyrianSchoolingSystem_EN_2015.pdf)
- Abou-Saleh, M. T., & Hughes, P. (2015). Mental health of Syrian refugees: looking backwards and forwards. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 2(10), 870–871. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(15\)00419-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(15)00419-8)
- Abujarour, S., Bergert, C., Gundlach, J., & Köster, A. (2019). Your Home Screen is Worth a Thousand Words: Investigating the Prevalence of Smartphone Apps among Refugees in Germany. *Conference Paper on Information Systems*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332877829\\_Your\\_Home\\_Screen\\_is\\_Worth\\_a\\_Thousand\\_Words\\_Investigating\\_the\\_Prevalence\\_of\\_Smartphone\\_Apps\\_among\\_Refugees\\_in\\_Germany](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332877829_Your_Home_Screen_is_Worth_a_Thousand_Words_Investigating_the_Prevalence_of_Smartphone_Apps_among_Refugees_in_Germany)
- Ajluni, S., & Kavar, M. (2015). Towards Decent Work in Lebanon: Issues and Challenges in Light of the Syrian Refugee Crisis. *International Labour Organization – Regional Office for Arab States*. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—arabstates/—ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_374826.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—arabstates/—ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_374826.pdf)
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179–211.
- Alencar, A. (2018). Refugee integration and social media: a local and experiential perspective. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(11), 1588–1603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1340500>
- Alencar, A., & Tsagkroni, V. (2019). Prospects of Refugee Integration in the Netherlands: Social Capital, Information Practices and Digital Media. *Research Gate*.
- Alencar, A., Kondova, K., & Ribbens, W. (2018). The smartphone as a lifeline: an exploration of refugees' use of mobile communication technologies during their flight. *Media Culture & Society*.

- Al-Jazeera. (2014). Timeline: Tension in Lebanon. Al-Jazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/08/201381881017230988.html>
- Almohamed, A., & Vyas, D. (2016-11). Vulnerability of displacement: challenges for integrating refugees and asylum seekers in host communities. *Proceedings of the 28th Australian Conference on Computer-Human Interaction*, 125–134. <https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=3010948>
- Al-Saadi, Y. (2014). The Diversion Strategy: Lebanese Racism, Classism, and the Refugees. *Al-Akhbar*. <http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/20121>
- Amiri, Z. (2016). Boundaries and political agency of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. *IOWA State University, Graduate Theses and Dissertations* n. 15655. <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/15655>
- Amnesty International. (2016). ‘I Want a Safe Place’: Refugee Women from Syria Uprooted and Unprotected in Lebanon. *Amnesty International*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/3210/2016/en/>
- Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018). Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018. *Pew Research Center – Internet and Technology*. [http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/?utm\\_source=pocket&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=pockethits](http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/?utm_source=pocket&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pockethits)
- Andrade, A. D., & Doolin, B. (2016). Information and Communication Technology and the Social Inclusion of Refugees. *MIS Quarterly*, 40(2), 405–416. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305229260\\_Information\\_and\\_Communication\\_Technology\\_and\\_the\\_Social\\_Inclusion\\_of\\_Refugees](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305229260_Information_and_Communication_Technology_and_the_Social_Inclusion_of_Refugees)
- Anemona, H. (2015). Traveling in Europe’s River of Migrants. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/reporters-notebook/migrants/hungary-treatment-refugees>
- Asaf, Y. (2017). Syrian Women and the Refugee Crisis: Surviving the Conflict, Building Peace, and Taking New Gender Roles. *Social Sciences*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6030110>
- Azakir, M. (2013). Lebanon Bears the Brunt of the Economic and Social Spillovers of the Syrian Conflict. *World Bank*. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/09/24/lebanon-bears-the-brunt-of-the-economic-and-social-spillovers-of-the-syrian-conflict>
- Beirut Research and Innovation Center. (2013). Survey on the Livelihoods of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *Beirut Research and Innovation Center (BRIC)*. [https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/rr-bric-livelihoods-syrian-refugees-lebanon-211113-en\\_0.pdf](https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/rr-bric-livelihoods-syrian-refugees-lebanon-211113-en_0.pdf)

- Baker, J. R. (2019). Optimising refugee children's health/wellbeing in preparation for primary and secondary school: a qualitative inquiry. *BMC Public Health*, 19. <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-7183-5>
- Balakrishnan, V., & Lay, G. C., (2016). Students' learning styles and their effects on the use of social media technology for learning. *Telematics and Informatics*, 33, 808–821. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2015.12.004>
- Balatti, J., Black, S., & Falk, I. (2009). A new social capital paradigm for adult literacy: Partnerships, policy and pedagogy. *National Centre for Vocational Education Research*, 11. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED507217.pdf>
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran & Friedman, *Encyclopedia of human behavior*. 4, 71–81. Academic Press. <https://www.uky.edu/eushe2/Bandura/Bandura1994EHB.pdf>
- Barnett, A. E. (2019). *Family Ties and Aging*. Sage.
- Baroudi, S. (2015). Syria's Refugees, Five Years into the Crisis. *Lebanese American University*. [http://www.lau.edu.lb/news-events/news/archive/syrias\\_refugees\\_five\\_years\\_int/](http://www.lau.edu.lb/news-events/news/archive/syrias_refugees_five_years_int/)
- Bartels, S. A., Michael, S., & Roupetz, S. (2018). Making sense of child, early and forced marriage among Syrian refugee girls: a mixed methods study in Lebanon. *BMJ Global Health*, 3(1), Article 1. <https://gh.bmj.com/content/3/1/e000509.info>
- Belloni, M. (2019). When the phone stops ringing: on the meanings and causes of disruptions in communication between Eritrean refugees and their families back home. *Global Networks*, 20(2), 256–273. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.wayne.edu/10.1111/glob.12230>
- Bender, J. (2014). These Charts of Syrian Refugees Flooding Into Lebanon Are Stunning. *Business Insider Australia*. <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/charts-of-syrian-refugees-flooding-into-lebanon-2014-4>
- Bennett, W. (2012). Stronger Families, Stronger Societies. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/04/24/are-family-values-outdated/stronger-families-stronger-societies>
- Bhandari, H., & Yasunobu, K. (2009). What is Social Capital? A Comprehensive Review of the Concept. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 37(3). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233546004\\_What\\_Is\\_Social\\_Capital\\_A\\_Comprehensive\\_Review\\_of\\_the\\_Concept](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233546004_What_Is_Social_Capital_A_Comprehensive_Review_of_the_Concept)
- Bizri, A., Fares, J., & Musharrafieh, U. (2018). Infectious diseases in the era of refugees: Hepatitis A outbreak in Lebanon. *Avicenna Journal of Medicine*, 8(4), 147–152. [https://doi.org/10.4103/ajm.AJM\\_130\\_18](https://doi.org/10.4103/ajm.AJM_130_18)

- Blankenship, A. (2018). Heavy Use of Social Media Linked to Mental Illness, Multiple Studies Confirm. *Saving Advice*.  
[https://www.savingadvice.com/articles/2018/05/20/1057106\\_social-media-linked-to-mental-illness.html](https://www.savingadvice.com/articles/2018/05/20/1057106_social-media-linked-to-mental-illness.html)
- Bobseine, H. (2016). I Just Wanted to be Treated like a Person. *Human Rights Watch*.  
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/01/12/i-just-wanted-be-treated-person/how-lebanons-residency-rules-facilitate-abuse>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic analysis. *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*, 843–860.
- Bridging Refugee Youth CS-authored resources (n.d.). Supporting Refugee Families: Adapting Family Strengthening Programs that Build on Assets. *Bridging Refugee Youth CS*.  
<https://brycs.org/family-strengthening/supporting-refugee-families-adapting-family-strengthening-programs-that-build-on-assets/>
- Brog, L. (2014). The Battle for Aarsal. *Institute for the Study of War*.  
<http://iswresearch.blogspot.jp/2014/08/the-battle-for-aarsal.html>
- Brooks, C. (2017). Enhancing conflict resilience of young Syrians. *Peace Review*, 29(2), 170–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2017.1308716>
- Brown, L., & Ashman, D. (1996). Participation, social capital, and intersectoral problem solving: African and Asian cases. *World Development*, 24(9), 1467–1479.  
[https://econpapers.repec.org/article/eeewdevel/v\\_3a24\\_3ay\\_3a1996\\_3ai\\_3a9\\_3ap\\_3a1467-1479.htm](https://econpapers.repec.org/article/eeewdevel/v_3a24_3ay_3a1996_3ai_3a9_3ap_3a1467-1479.htm)
- Burke, M., Kraut, R., & Marlow, C. (2011-05). Social capital on Facebook: Differentiating uses and users. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 571–580.
- Caidi, N., & Allard, D. (2005). Social inclusion of newcomers to Canada: an information problem? *Library and Information Science Research*, 27(3), 302–324.  
<https://marcopolis.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Caidi-Allard-2005-Social-inclusion-of-newcomers-to-Canada-An-information-problem.pdf>
- Cargo, M., Grams, G. D., Ottoson, J. M., Ward, P., & Green, L. W. (2003). Empowerment as fostering positive youth development and citizenship. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 27(1), 66–79.
- Carpi, E. (2016). Refugee Hospitality and Humanitarian Action in Northern Lebanon: between Social Order and Trans-border History. *Urgence Réhabilitation Développement Groupe (URD)*. [http://urd.org/Refugee-Hospitality-and#outil\\_sommaire\\_0](http://urd.org/Refugee-Hospitality-and#outil_sommaire_0)

- Carpi, E., Abi-Yaghi, M. N., & Younes, M. (2016). Crisis and Control: (In)Formal Hybrid Security in Lebanon. *Daleel Madani, Lebanon Support – policy brief*. <http://daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/crisiscontrol-informalhybridsecuritylebanon-report.pdf>
- Carrington, K., McIntosh, A., & Walmsley, J. (2007). The Social Costs and Benefits of Migration into Australia. *University of New England. Commonwealth of Australia, Centre for Applied Research in Social Science (CARSS)*. <https://hdl.handle.net/1959.11/7741>
- Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance. (n.d.). Mapping Refugee Media Journeys. *Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance*. <http://www.open.ac.uk/ccig/research/projects/mapping-refugee-media-journeys>
- Charles, L., & Denman, K. (2013). Syrian and Palestinian Syrian refugees in Lebanon: the plight of women and children. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 14(5), 96–111. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1729&context=jiws>
- Chen, E., & Paterson, L. Q. (2006). Neighborhood, family, and subjective socioeconomic status: How do they relate to adolescent health? *Health Psychology*, 25, 704–714. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.25.6.704>
- Cherri, Z., González, P. A., & Delgado, R. C. (2016). The Lebanese–Syrian Crisis: Impact of Influx of Syrian Refugees to an Already Weak State. *Risk Management & Healthcare Policy*, 165–172.
- Chopra, V. (2018). Learning to Belong, Belonging to Learn: Syrian Refugee Youths' Pursuits of Education, Membership and Stability in Lebanon. *Harvard University*. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:37935847>
- Civil Society Knowledge Centre. (2016). Aarsal Conflict starting August 2, 2014. *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*. <http://civilsociety-centre.org/timelines/27778>
- Claridge, T. (2004). Social Capital and Natural Resource Management: An important role for social capital? *University of Queensland*. <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/literature/evolution/>
- Claridge, T. (2017). How to measure social capital. *Social Capital Research*. <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/measure-social-capital/>
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95–120.
- Coleman, J. S. (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Harvard Univ. Press.
- Colhoun, H. M., Hemingway, H., & Poulter, N. R. (1998). Socio-economic status and blood pressure: An overview analysis. *Journal of Human Hypertension*, 12, 91–110. <https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.jhh.1000558>

- Collin, P., Rahilly, K., Richardson, I., & Third, A. (2011). The Benefits of Social Networking Services: A literature review. *Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing*.
- Connidis, I. A., (2010). *Family Ties and Aging*. Pine Forge Press.
- Culbertson, S., & Constant, L. (2015). Education of Syrian refugee children: Managing the crisis in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. *Rand Corporation*.  
[https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR800/RR859/RAND\\_RR859.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR859/RAND_RR859.pdf)
- David C, G. (1983). *The Republic of Lebanon: Nation in Jeopardy*. Abingdon: OX; New York: NY.
- Davies, P. (2014). Lebanon Copes with a Growing Population of Syrian Refugees. *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*. <https://www.wrmea.org/014-august/lebanon-copes-with-a-growing-population-of-syrian-refugees.html>
- Deane, S. (2016). Syria's Lost Generation: Refugee Education Provision and Societal Security in an Ongoing Conflict Emergency. *Institute of Development Studies*, 47(3), Article 3.  
<https://bulletin.ids.ac.uk/idsbo/article/view/2729/HTML>
- DeCarlo S. C., Wadsworth, M. E., & Stump, J. (2011). Socioeconomic status, neighborhood disadvantage, and poverty-related stress: Prospective effects on psychological syndromes among diverse low-income families. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 32, 218–230.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2009.10.008>
- DeFrain, J. (1999). Strong Families. *Family Matters*, 53.  
[https://uk.upf.org/images/stories/UK\\_PDF/strong\\_families.pdf](https://uk.upf.org/images/stories/UK_PDF/strong_families.pdf)
- DeJong, J., Sbeity, F., Schlecht, J., Harfouche, M., Yamout, R., Fouad, M., Manohar, S., & Robinson, C. (2017). Young lives disrupted: gender and well-being among adolescent Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Conflict & Health*, 14(11), Article 11.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-017-08-7>
- Dekker, R. (2014). How Social Media Transform Migrant Networks and Facilitate Migration. *Global Networks*, 14(4), 401–418.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/glob.12040>
- Dekker, R., & Engbersen, G. (2012). How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. *International Migration Institute and the University of Oxford, Working paper: Vol. n. 64*. <https://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/publications/wp-64-12/%40%40download/file+%&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=jp>

- Dekker, R., Engbersen, G., Klaver, J., & Vonk, H. (2018). Smart Refugees: How Syrian Asylum Migrants Use Social Media Information in Migration Decision-Making. *Sage Journal*.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2056305118764439>
- Dewey, J. A., & Knoblich, G. (2014). Do Implicit and Explicit Measures of the Sense of Agency Measure the Same Thing? *PLoS ONE*, 9(10), Article 10.  
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0110118>
- Di Peri, R., & Meier, D. (2016). *Lebanon Facing the Arab Uprisings: Constraints and Adaptation*. UK.
- Dionigi, F. (2014). The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon: State Fragility and Social Resilience. *LSE Middle East Centre, Paper Series 15*.  
[http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SyrianRefugeesinLebanonSmall\\_1.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SyrianRefugeesinLebanonSmall_1.pdf)
- Dobbs, L. (2014). The number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon passes the 1 million mark. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*.  
<https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2014/4/533c1d5b9/number-syrian-refugees-lebanon-passes-1-million-mark.html>
- Doyle, T., Dotsch, J., Savazzi, H., & Awamleh, T. (2015). Caring for Syrian Refugee Children: A Program Guide for Welcoming Young Children and Their Families. *CMAS Canada*.  
<https://www.teslontario.org/uploads/news/CaringforSyrianRefugeeChildren.pdf>
- Duggan, M., Lenhart, A., Lampe, C., & Ellison, N. B. (2015). Parents and Social Media. *Pew Research Center*, 1-37. <https://www.pewinternet.org/2015/07/16/parents-and-social-media/>
- Dupuy. (2018). Life skills in non-formal contexts for adolescent girls in developing countries. *Chr. Michelsen Institute and Center for Universal Education at Brookings*, report n.5, 41–42. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/6495-life-skills-in-non-formal-contexts-for-adolescent.pdf>
- Duval, J. (2014). Humanitarian Consequences of the Syrian Civil War. *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, 33(8). <http://www.wrmea.org/events-blog/humanitarian-consequences-of-the-syrian-civil-war.html>
- Rescue. (n.d.). Economic Impacts of Syrian Refugees Existing Research Review and Key Takeaways. *Rescue*, Policy brief.  
<https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/465/ircpolicybriefeconomicimpactsofsyrianrefugees.pdf>
- El Araba, R., & Sagbakken, M. (2019). Child marriage of female Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon: a literature review. *Global Health Action*, 12.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2019.1585709>

- El-Ghali, H. A., Alameddine, F. F., S., & Benchiba, S. (2019). Pathways to and Beyond Education for Refugee Youth in Jordan and Lebanon. *American University of Beirut*. [https://www.alghurairfoundation.org/sites/default/files/AGFE%20IFI%20Report\\_Pathways%20to%20and%20beyond%20Education%20for%20Refugees%20in%20Jordan%20and%20Lebanon.pdf](https://www.alghurairfoundation.org/sites/default/files/AGFE%20IFI%20Report_Pathways%20to%20and%20beyond%20Education%20for%20Refugees%20in%20Jordan%20and%20Lebanon.pdf)
- El-Ghali, H. A., Berjaoui, R., & DeKnight, J. (2017). Higher Education and Syrian Refugee Students: The Case of Lebanon—Policies, Practices, and Perspectives. *UNESCO*. [https://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/research\\_reports/20170702\\_refugee\\_education.pdf](https://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/research_reports/20170702_refugee_education.pdf)
- Elihu, K., Jay, G., Blumler., & Micheal, G. (1973). *Uses and Gratifications Research*. Public Opin: Q.
- El-Khani, A., Ulph, F., Peters, S., & Calam, R. (2018). Syria: refugee parents’ experiences and need for parenting support in camps and humanitarian settings. *Vulnerable Child Youth Stud*, 13(1), 19–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2017.1372651>
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook “friends:” Social capital and college students’ use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), 1143–1168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x>
- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What Is Agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962–1023. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28199801%29103%3A4%3C962%3AWIA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>
- Erden, O. (2017). Building bridges for refugee empowerment. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 18(1), 249–265.
- Euronews (2014). Welcome to Germany? The social network response to Syrian refugee surge - reporter. (2014). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32EtJx2FRmY>
- Faith, R. (2016). *How does the use of mobile phones by 16-24 years old socially excluded women affect their capabilities?* The Open University. <http://oro.open.ac.uk/47793/1/BeckyFaithThesisFinalCorrected2016.pdf>
- Fakhoury, T. (2016). Youth Politics in Lebanon. A call for citizen empowerment. *SAHWA Policy Paper*, 11, 1–20.
- Faour, G., & Mhaweij, M. (2014). Mapping Urban Transitions in the Greater Beirut Area Using Different Space Platforms. *Land*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land3030941>.
- Feuls, M., Fieseler, C., & Suphan, A. (2014). A social net? Internet and social media use during unemployment. *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(4), 551–570.

- Find a World. (2016). Sabra and Shatila Palestinian Camp. *Find a World*.  
<http://findaworld.org/2016/02/12/sabra-shatila-palestinian-camp/>
- Fourn, L. (2017). Turning Political Activism into Humanitarian Engagement: Transitional Careers of Young Syrians in Lebanon. *Istituto Affari Internazionali*.  
<https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/turning-political-activism-humanitarian-engagement-transitional-careers-young-syrians>
- Garnier, A., Jubilot, L. L., & Sandvik, K. B. (2018). *Refugee Resettlement: Power, Politics, and Humanitarian Governance*. Berghahn.
- Gebel, M., Bardak, U. D., Johansen, U., & J. (2012). Transition from Education to Work in Syria Results of the Youth Transition Survey 2009. *European Training Foundation*, 3.  
[https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/7A7EF8D0C0B6D7CEC1257AFA006409D3\\_Transition%20from%20education%20to%20work\\_Syria.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/7A7EF8D0C0B6D7CEC1257AFA006409D3_Transition%20from%20education%20to%20work_Syria.pdf)
- Geha, C., & Talhouk, J. (2018). Politics and the Plight of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *The American University of Beirut*. <https://www.aub.edu.lb/Documents/Politics-and-the-Plight-of-Syrian-Refugees-in-Lebanon.pdf>
- Gibson, C. L., Zhao, J., Lovrich, N. P., & Gaffney, M. J. (2006). Social integration, individual perceptions of collective efficacy, and fear of crime in three cities. *Justice Quarterly*, 19(3), 537–564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820200095341>
- Gillespie, M., Osseiran, S., & Cheesman, M. (2018). Syrian Refugees and the Digital Passage to Europe: Smartphone Infrastructures and Affordances. *Forced Migrants and Digital Connectivity*.
- Gimon, M. (2007). *Iraqi Adolescent Girls: Voices to be heard*. Damascus: UNICEF.
- Ginwright, S., & James, T. (2002). From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 96, 27–46.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.25>
- Goldberg, J. (2012). Hillary Clinton: Bashar's Days Are 'Numbered.' *The Atlantic*.  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/07/hillary-clinton-bashars-days-are-numbered/259547/>
- Gomori, M. (2017). The Satir Approach: Essence and Essentials. *Evolution of Psychotherapy*.  
<http://www.evolutionofpsychotherapy.com/download/handouts/Maria-Gomori-Essence-and-Essentials-Satir-handout.pdf>
- Grandi, F., Mansour, K., & Holloway, K. (2018). Dignity and displaced Syrians in Lebanon. *Overseas Development Institute*. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12532.pdf>

- Gustafsson, J. (2016). To Beirut with hope: how the city shaped by refugees makes room for new arrivals. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/feb/04/beirut-lebanon-city-shaped-by-refugees-syria-migration-new-arrivals>
- Haas, H. (2010). The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(10), 1587–1617. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2010.489361>
- Haataja, M., Laajalahti, A., & Hyvärinen, J. (2016). Expert views on current and future use of social media among crisis and emergency management organizations: Incentives and barriers. *Human Technology*, 12(2), 135–164.
- Habib, N. (2018). Gender role changes and their impacts on Syrian women refugees in Berlin in light of the Syrian crisis. *WZB Discussion Paper, No. SP VI 2018-101*, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB). <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/175369>
- Habib, R. R. (2019). Survey on Child Labour in Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees. *American University of Beirut* in collaboration with *the Lebanese Ministry of Labor*. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—arabstates/—ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_711801.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/—arabstates/—ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_711801.pdf)
- Habib, R. R., Ziadee, M., & Abi Younes, E. (2019). Displacement, deprivation and hard work among Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. *BMJ Global Health*, 4(1), Article 1. <https://gh.bmj.com/content/4/1/e001122>
- Habitat for Humanity, (2016). Upgrading Syrian Refugee Camps in Lebanon: Slum Rehabilitation. *Habitat for Humanity*, Great Britain. <https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/blog/2016/9/upgrading-palestinian-refugees-camps-lebanon-slum-rehabilitation/>
- Habitat for Humanity, (2018). Upgrading Syrian Refugee Camps in Lebanon. *Habitat for Humanity*, Great Britain. <https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/blog/2018/03/upgrading-syrian-refugee-camps-lebanon/>
- Hadfield, K., Ostrowski, A., & Ungar, M. (2017). What can we expect of the mental health and well-being of Syrian refugee children and adolescents in Canada? *Canadian Psychology*, 58(2), 194–201.
- Haid, H. (2015). Visa requirements for Syrians: Lebanon continues to destabilize. *Heinrich Boll Stiftung*. <https://lb.boell.org/en/2015/05/05/visa-requirements-syrians-lebanon-continues-destabilize>
- Haider, S. J. (2014). Racial and ethnic infant mortality gaps and socioeconomic status. *Focus*, 31, 18–20.

- Halpern, P. (2018). Refugee Economic Self-Sufficiency: An Exploratory Study of Approaches used in Office of Refugee Resettlement Programs. *Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.473.1584&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Hamieh, C. S., & Mac Ginty, R. (2011). Reconstructing post-2006 Lebanon: a distorted market. *Rethinking the Liberal Peace* (pp. 195–208). Routledge.
- Hanafi, S. (2012). Palestinians in Lebanon: Status, governance, and security. *Accord*, 24, 67–69. [http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Accord24\\_PalestiniansinLebanon\\_0.pdf](http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Accord24_PalestiniansinLebanon_0.pdf)
- Hanifan, L. J. (1916). The rural school community center. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 67(1), 130–138.
- Harvard University. (2014). Running out of Time: Survival of Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon. *The FXB Center for Health and Human Rights*. [https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/01/FXB-Center-Syrian-Refugees-in-Lebanon\\_Released-01-13-13.pdf](https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/01/FXB-Center-Syrian-Refugees-in-Lebanon_Released-01-13-13.pdf)
- Hassan, G. e. (2015). Culture, Context and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Syrians. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/55f6b90f9.pdf>
- Hawamdeh, H., & Spencer, N. (2001). Work, family socioeconomic status, and growth among working boys in Jordan. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 84(4), Article 4. <https://adc.bmj.com/content/84/4/311>
- Ho, N. T. T., Seet, P. H., & Jones, J. (2016). Understanding re-expatriation intentions among overseas returnees – an emerging economy perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(17), 1938–1966. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1088884>
- Hudson, L. (2008). *Transforming Damascus: Space and modernity in an Islamic city*, Vol. 16. IB Tauris.
- Hudson, M. (1997). Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 10(3), 249–250.
- Human Right Watch. (2014a). Lebanon: At Least 45 Local Curfews Imposed on Syrian Refugees. *Human Rights Watch*, 3. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/03/lebanon-least-45-local-curfews-imposed-syrian-refugees>
- Human Right Watch. (2014b). Lebanon: Rising Violence Targets Syrian Refugees. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/30/lebanon-rising-violence-targets-syrian-refugees>

Human Right Watch. (2016). Lebanon: Residency Rules Put Syrians at Risk. *Human Right Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/12/lebanon-residency-rules-put-syrians-risk>

Investment Development Authority of Lebanon(a), (n.d.). Beirut. *IDAL*. <https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en>

Investment Development Authority of Lebanon(b), (n.d.). Bekaa Governorate. *IDAL*. [https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/lebanon\\_at\\_a\\_glance/invest\\_in\\_regions/bekaa\\_governorate](https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/lebanon_at_a_glance/invest_in_regions/bekaa_governorate)

Investment Development Authority of Lebanon(c), (n.d.). North Lebanon Governorate. *IDAL*. <https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/>

Investment Development Authority of Lebanon(d), (n.d.). South Governorate. *IDAL*. <https://investinlebanon.gov.lb/en/>

Inter-Agency Assessment. (2013). Gender-based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on Early Marriage. *UN Women*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/39522>

Inter-Agency Coordination. (2018). In Focus: Child Labour in Lebanon. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67049>

Inter-Agency Mapping Partners. (2016). Refugees in Informal Settlements. *Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon*, V.33, Article 33. [https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1159438/5250\\_1486023580\\_interagency-lbn-iampv33-map-december2016-12-a0-unicef-is-mostvulnerable.pdf](https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1159438/5250_1486023580_interagency-lbn-iampv33-map-december2016-12-a0-unicef-is-mostvulnerable.pdf)

International Crisis Group. (2020). Easing Syrian Refugees' Plight in Lebanon. *International Crisis Group*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/lebanon/211-easing-syrian-refugees-plight-lebanon>

International Monetary Fund. (2014). Lebanon: Selected Issues. *International Monetary Fund Country Report*, 14/238. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2014/cr14238.pdf>

International Organization for Migration(a). (n.d.). International Minimum Standards. *International Organization for Migration*. <http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

International Organization for Migration(b). (n.d.). Refugee. *International Organization for Migration*. <http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

Irani, G. (2016). Lebanon: Mosaic of Sects or Budding Nation-State? *Institute of World Affairs*. <http://www.iwa.org/lebanon-mosaic-of-sects-or-budding-nation-state/>

- Ismail, K., Claire, W., & Cohen-Fournier, N. (2017). Syrian Refugees in Tripoli, Lebanon. *Tufts University*. <https://fic.tufts.edu/assets/Tripoli-FINAL-5-July.pdf>
- Itani, F. (2013). Syria's War Threatens Lebanon Fragile Economy. *Atlantic Council*. [http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/files/publication\\_pdfs/403/lebanons\\_fragile\\_economy.pdf](http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/files/publication_pdfs/403/lebanons_fragile_economy.pdf)
- Jabbar, S. A., & Zaza, H. I. (2016). Evaluating a vocational training programme for women refugees at the Zaatari camp in Jordan: Women empowerment: A journey and not an output. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 21(3), 304–319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2015.1077716>
- Janmyr, M. (2016a). Precarity in Exile: The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 35(4), 58–78. <http://rsq.oxfordjournals.org/content/35/4/58.full#fn-50>
- Janmyr, M. (2016b). The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs*. American University of Beirut. [http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/working\\_papers/20160331\\_Maja\\_Janmyr.pdf](http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/working_papers/20160331_Maja_Janmyr.pdf)
- Jones, K., & Ksaifi, L. (2016). Struggling to Survive: Slavery and Exploitation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *The Freedom Fund*. <http://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Lebanon-Report-FINAL-8April16.pdf>
- Joseph, S. (1993). Gender and relationality among Arab families in Lebanon. *Feminist Studies*, 19(3), 465-486.
- Jungbluth, S. (2017). Smartphone refugees: Mobility, power regimes, and the impact of digital technologies. *University of Tampere*, 15-74. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b528/98298218bc31128fdd1bdb7e52eb048bb870.pdf>
- Kabalan, L. (2016). Urban Inequalities and Poverty in Lebanon. *Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs*. American University of Beirut.
- Kabir, R., & Klugman, J. (2019). Unlocking Refugee Women's Potential: Closing Economic Gaps to Benefit All. *International Rescue Committee and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security*. <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/3987/reportrescueworksunlockingrefugeewomenspotential.pdf>
- Kaplan, G. A., & Keil, J. E. (1993). Socioeconomic factors and cardiovascular disease: A review of the literature. *Circulation*, 88, 1973–1998. <https://doi.org/10.1161/01.CIR.88.4.1973>
- Karner, C., & Parker, D. (2008). Religion versus Rubbish: Deprivation and Social Capital in Inner-City Birmingham. *Social Compass*, 55(4), 517–531.

- Khaddour, K. (2016). Strength in Weakness: The Syrian Army's Accidental Resilience. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 14. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/03/14/strength-in-weakness-syrian-army-s-accidental-resilience-pub-62968>
- Khawaja, B. (2011). War and Memory: The Role of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon. *Honors Projects*, Paper 13. [http://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=history\\_honors](http://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=history_honors)
- Kindler, M., Ratcheva, V., & Piechowska, M. (2015). Social networks, social capital and migrant integration at local level. *The Institute for Research into Superdiversity*. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2015/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-6-2015.pdf>
- Koser, K. (2015). International migration and global health security: five lessons from the Ebola crisis. *The Lancet*, 385(9980), Article 9980. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)60858-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60858-3)
- Kullab, S. (2014). Lebanon Borders Still Open to Syrian Refugees: UN. *alBawaba News*. <http://www.albawaba.com/news/lebanon-borders-still-open-syrian-refugees-un-615315>
- Lanchester, J. (2018). Can Economists and Humanists Ever Be Friends? In *The New Yorker*. [https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/07/23/can-economists-and-humanists-ever-be-friends?utm\\_source=pocket&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=pockethits](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/07/23/can-economists-and-humanists-ever-be-friends?utm_source=pocket&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pockethits)
- Latonero, M., Poole, D., & Berens, J. (2018). Refugee Connectivity: A Survey of Mobile Phones, Mental Health, and Privacy at a Syrian Refugee Camp in Greece. *Centre for Innovation at Leiden University, Data & Society Research Institute and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative*. [https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Refugee\\_Connectivity\\_Web.MB4\\_.8-2.pdf](https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Refugee_Connectivity_Web.MB4_.8-2.pdf)
- LEADERS Consortium. (2019). Dignity at Stake Challenges to Accessing Decent Work in Lebanon. *LEADERS*, Discussion paper. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/69774>
- The Republic of Lebanon, (2014). Government of National Interest. *National Interest Government*, Policy Statement. <http://www.pcm.gov.lb/Library/Files/Policy%20Statement-en.pdf>
- Lee, E. (1966). A Theory of Migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47–57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2060063>
- Lee, S. M. (2018). Does Google Actually Make Us Dumber? That Study — And Many Others — Were Just Called Into Question. *Buzzfeed News*.

[https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/stephaniemlee/psychology-replication-crisis-studies?bfsource=bbf\\_enau](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/stephaniemlee/psychology-replication-crisis-studies?bfsource=bbf_enau)

- Levine, J. A. (2011). Poverty and obesity in the U.S. *Diabetes*, 60, 2667–2668.  
<https://doi.org/10.2337/db11-1118>
- Lewig, K., Arney, F., & Salveron, M. (2009). The Working with Refugee Families Project. *University of South Australia*.  
[https://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/124112%20accp\\_refugee%20report.pdf](https://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/124112%20accp_refugee%20report.pdf)
- Lewis, D. C. (2001). From Cambodia to the United States: The Disassembly, Reconstruction, and Redefinition of Khmer Identity. *University of Kentucky*, Master's Theses n.185.  
[https://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool\\_theses/185](https://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool_theses/185)
- Lewis, D. C. (2005). The Intersection of Filial Piety and Cultural Dissonance: Intergenerational Exchanges among Khmer Families in the United States. *University of Kentucky*, Doctoral Dissertations n. 372. [https://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool\\_diss/372](https://uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool_diss/372)
- Lewis, D. C. (2008). Types, meanings and ambivalence in intergenerational exchanges among Cambodian refugee families in the United States. *Ageing and Society*, 28.  
[https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/92DBAECA5FCC346B087C82045FF2B639/S0144686X08007034a.pdf/types\\_meanings\\_and\\_ambivalence\\_in\\_intergenerational\\_exchanges\\_among\\_cambodian\\_refugee\\_families\\_in\\_the\\_united\\_states.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/92DBAECA5FCC346B087C82045FF2B639/S0144686X08007034a.pdf/types_meanings_and_ambivalence_in_intergenerational_exchanges_among_cambodian_refugee_families_in_the_united_states.pdf)
- Lewis, D. C. (2009). Aging out of place: Cambodian refugee elders in the United States. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 37(3), 376–393.
- Light, I., Bhachu, P., & Karageorgis, S. (1989). Migration Networks and Immigrant Entrepreneurship. *Institute for Social Science Research*.  
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/50g990sk>
- Lincoln, N. D., Travers, C., Ackers, P., & Wilkinson, A. (2002). The Meaning of Empowerment: the interdisciplinary etymology of a new management concept. *International Journal of Management Reviews, Griffith University*. [https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/16760/44333\\_1.pdf?sequence=1](https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/16760/44333_1.pdf?sequence=1)
- Lokot, M. (2018). 'Blood Doesn't Become Water'? Syrian Social Relations during Displacement. *Journal of Refugee Study*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fey059>
- Mackreath, H. (2014). The role of host communities in north Lebanon. *Forced Migration Review*, 47. <https://www.fmreview.org/syria/mackreath>
- Madoré, M. (2016). The Peaceful Settlement of Syrian Refugees in the Eastern suburbs of Beirut: Understanding the causes of social stability. *Civil Society*. <http://civilsociety->

centre.org/paper/peaceful-settlement-syrian-refugees-eastern-suburbs-beirut-understanding-causes-social

- Maitland, C., & Xu, Y. (2015). A social informatics analysis of refugee mobile phone use: A case study of Za'atari Syrian refugee camp. *TPRC*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2588300>
- Marzouk, N. (2013). The Syrian catastrophe: socioeconomic monitoring report. *Syrian Centre for Policy Research*. <https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2013071244355.pdf>
- Massey, S. D., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J. E. (1993). Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 19(3), 431–466. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.667.4527&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Masterson, A. R., Usta, J., Gupta, J., & Ettinger, A. S. (2014). Assessment of reproductive health and violence against women among displaced Syrians in Lebanon. *BMC Women's Health*, 14(1). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3929551/>
- Matar, D., & Helmi, K. (2020). Liminality, gendering and Syrian alternative media spaces: Spaces of War, War of Spaces. *Bloomsbury Publishing USA*.
- Maton, K. I., & Wells, E. A. (1995). Religion as a Community Resource for Well-Being: Prevention, Healing, and Empowerment Pathways. *A Journal of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues*, 51(2), 177–193. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1995.tb01330.x>
- McMichael, C. (2011). Negotiating family, navigating resettlement: family connectedness amongst resettled youth with refugee backgrounds living in Melbourne, Australia. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14(2), 179–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.06.023>
- McNatt, Z., & Boothby, N. (2018). Impact of separation on refugee families: Syrian refugees in Jordan. *UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/63840.pdf>
- Mhaisen, R., & Alaa Aldien, O. (2020). A Gender Lens on Informal Livelihoods in Displacement: The Case of Syrian Refugee Females as Heads of Households in the Bekaa Valley Camps in Lebanon [Research Report.]. *American University of Beirut*. [https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/publications/research\\_reports/2019-2020/20200215\\_gender\\_lens\\_on\\_informal\\_livelihoods\\_in\\_displacement.pdf](https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/publications/research_reports/2019-2020/20200215_gender_lens_on_informal_livelihoods_in_displacement.pdf)
- Migration Policy Center. (2016). Timeline. *The European University Institute in Florence*. <http://syrianrefugees.eu/timeline/>
- Miller, G. E., Chen, E., & Parker, K. J. (2011). Psychological stress in childhood and susceptibility to the chronic diseases of aging: Moving toward a model of behavioral and

- biological mechanisms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137, 959–997.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024768>
- Miller, K. E., Arnous, M., & Tossyeh, F. (2020). Protocol for a randomized control trial of the caregiver support intervention with Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Trials*, 21(277).  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-020-4175-9>
- Milner, J. (2007). Towards solutions for protracted refugee situations: protracted refugee situations: The role of resettlement. *Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement*.  
<https://www.unhcr.org/46934d4f2.pdf>
- Milteer, R. M., Ginsburg, K. R., & Mulligan, D. A. (2012). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonding: Focus on children in poverty. *Pediatrics*, 129(1), 204–213. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2011-2953>.
- Molnar, B. E., Cerda, M., Roberts, A. L., & Buka, S. L. (2008). Effects of neighborhood resources on aggressive and delinquent behaviors among urban youths. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98, 1086–1093. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2006.098913>
- Montaser, M. S. (2020). Investigating self-settled Syrian refugees' agency and informality in southern cities greater Cairo: a case study. *Review of Economics and Political Science*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/REPS-10-2019-0137>
- Morrow, V. (1999). Conceptualising Social Capital in Relation to the Well-being of Children and Young People: A Critical Review. *The Sociological Review*, 47(4), 744–65.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00194>
- Mourtada, R., Schlecht, J., & DeJong, J. (2017). A qualitative study exploring child marriage practices among Syrian conflict-affected populations in Lebanon. *Conflict and Health*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-017-0131-z>
- Nakeyar, C., Esses, V., & J, R. G. (2018). The psychosocial needs of refugee children and youth and best practices for filling these needs: A systematic review. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 23(2), 186–208.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2002). Education Longitudinal Study of 2002. *National Center for Education Statistics*. <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/els2002/bibliography.asp>
- Ncube, L. S., & Dube, L. (2016). Cyberbullying a desecration of information ethics: perceptions of post high school youth in a rural community. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, 14(4). <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JICES-04-2016-0009/full/html>

- Needham, B. L., Fernández, J. R., Lin, J., Epel, E. S., & Blackburn, E. H. (2012). Socioeconomic status and cell aging in children. *Social Science and Medicine*, 74, 1948–1951. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.02.019>
- Newacheck, P. W., Hung, Y. Y., Park, M. J., Brindis, C. D., & Irwin, C. E. (2003). Disparities in adolescent health and health care: Does socioeconomic status matter? *Health Services Research*, 38, 1235–1252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.00174>
- No Author. (n.d.) Chapter 6: Producing social capital as a development strategy: implications for the micro-level. *Research*. <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/42167031/chapter+6.pdf>
- Norwegian Refugee Council. (2014). The Consequences of Limited Legal Status for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *Norwegian Refugee Council Lebanon Field Assessment – North, Bekaa, South*. <https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/the-consequences-of-limited-legal-status-for-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon.pdf>
- Norwegian Refugee Council. (2016). Our country programme in Lebanon. *Norwegian Refugee Council*. <https://www.nrc.no/countries/middle-east/lebanon/>
- Nupur Kukrety, Oxfam, & AUB. (2016). Poverty, Inequality and Social Protection in Lebanon. *Nupur Kukrety consulting firm, Oxfam, and the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs*, American University of Beirut. [https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/rr-poverty-inequality-social-protection-lebanon-200116-en\\_0.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/rr-poverty-inequality-social-protection-lebanon-200116-en_0.pdf)
- NY Times. (2016). Lebanon Shocked Over Sex Trafficking of Young Syrian Women. *The New York Times*. [http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/04/13/world/middleeast/ap-ml-lebanon-syria-sex-trafficking.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/04/13/world/middleeast/ap-ml-lebanon-syria-sex-trafficking.html?_r=0)
- OECD. (2014). Stabilisation System Analysis. *The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/Lebanon%20Stabilisation%20Systems%20Analysis%20briefing%20pack%20FINAL.pdf>
- Ondersma, S. J. (2002). Predictors of neglect within low-SES families: The importance of substance abuse. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 72, 383–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.72.3.383>.
- Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). Empowerment. *Oxford Learners Dictionaries*. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/empowerment>
- Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). Social Network and Social Networking sites. *Oxford Learners Dictionaries*. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/social>

- Oyserman. (2002). Intention, Subjective Norms, and Cancer Screening in the Context of Relational Culture. *Health, Education and Behavior*, 36(5).  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2921835/>
- Pacitto, J., & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E. (2013). Writing the ‘other’ into humanitarian discourse: framing theory and practice in South-South responses to forced displacement. *University of Oxford and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*.  
<http://www.unhcr.org/51efd7c49.pdf>
- Packer, C. R., K., & Lenzi, R. (2020). Hope, Self-Efficacy, and Crushed Dreams: Exploring How Adolescent Girls’ Future Aspirations Relate to Marriage and Childbearing in Rural Mozambique. *Sage Journals*, 35(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558419897385>
- Parker, E., & Maynar, V. (2018). Evaluation of the Integrated Shelter and Protection Improvements Programme for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Tripoli, Lebanon. *UN Habitat*. <https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/20181026-BPRM-Evaluation-Report.pdf>
- Patulny, R. V., & Lind Haase Svendsen, G. (2007). Exploring the social capital grid: bonding, bridging, qualitative, quantitative. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 27(1/2), 32–51.
- Pelling, M., & High, C. (2004). Understanding adaptation: What can social capital offer assessments of adaptive capacity? *King’s College, University of London*.
- Pieloch, K. A., McCullough, M. B., & Marks, A. K. (2016). Resilience of children with refugee statuses: A research review. *Canadian Psychology*, 57(4), Article 4.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000073>
- Pine, J. C. (2006). *Technology and Emergency Management*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Poushter, J., Bishop, C., & Chwe, H. (2018). Social Media Use Continues to Rise in Developing Countries but Plateaus Across Developed Ones. *Pew Research Center*, 4.  
[http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/06/15135408/Pew-Research-Center\\_Global-Tech-Social-Media-Use\\_2018.06.19.pdf](http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/06/15135408/Pew-Research-Center_Global-Tech-Social-Media-Use_2018.06.19.pdf)
- Purcell-Gates, V., McIntyre, E., & Freppon, P. A. (1995). Learning written storybook language in school: A comparison of low-SES children in skills-based and whole language classrooms. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 659–685.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003659>
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). Bowling alone: America’s declining social capital. In *Culture and politics* (pp. 223–234). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rabil, R. G. (2016). *The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon: The Double Tragedy of Refugees and Impacted Host Communities*. Lexington Books.

- Raistick, N., & Maglietti, M. (2014). Reporting on Gender-Based Violence in the Syria Crisis. *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*.  
<https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA%20Journalsits%27s%20Handbook%20Small%5B6%5D.pdf>
- Ramadan, R. (2017). Questioning the role of Facebook in maintaining Syrian social capital during the Syrian crisis. *Heliyon*, 3(12).  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5753764/>
- Reardon, S. F., Valentino, R. A., & Shores, K. A. (2013). Patterns of literacy among U.S. students. *The Future of Children*, 23(2), 17–37. <https://cepa.stanford.edu/content/patterns-literacy-among-us-students>
- Relief Web. (2019). Zaatari Refugee Camp – Factsheet. *Relief Web*.  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/zaatari-refugee-camp-factsheet-february-2019>
- Syrian Arab Republic. (2010). Population distribution (15 years and over) by governorates, educational status and gender (*urban – rural*). <http://cbssyr.sy/work/2010/ALL-2010/TAB2.htm>
- Rupa, S. (2018). Refugees asking for asylum in Canada argue the US is no longer safe. *PRI.org*.  
<https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-09-07/refugees-asking-asylum-canada-argue-us-no-longer-safe>
- Russell, A. E., Ford, T., Williams, R., & Russell, G. (2016). The association between socioeconomic disadvantage and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): A systematic review. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 47, 440–458.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-015-0578-3>
- Sacy, R., Nassif, Y., Hamod, D., & Kiwan, P. (2018). Syrians, Palestinians and Iraqi Refugees in Lebanon. *Journal of Pediatrics and Neonatal Care*, 8(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.15406/jpnc.2018.08.00308>
- SafeWorld, & L.C.P.S. (2018). Building peace into refugee responses: Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Lebanese Center for Policy Studies and SafeWorld*.  
<https://www.kpsrl.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/syrian-refugees-in-lebanon-briefing.pdf>
- Saint-Joseph University & Jesuit Refugee Service. (2018). Journeying Together. *USJ and the JRS (MENA)*. [https://www.usj.edu.lb/intranet/actu/pdf/6803\\_475.pdf](https://www.usj.edu.lb/intranet/actu/pdf/6803_475.pdf)
- Samara, M. (2020). Examining the psychological well-being of refugee children and the role of friendship and bullying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(2), 301–329.  
<https://doi-org.proxy.lib.wayne.edu/10.1111/bjep.12282>

- Sangalang, C. C., Jager, J., & Harachi, T. W. (2017). Effects of Maternal Traumatic Distress on Family Functioning and Child Mental Health: an Examination of Southeast Asian Refugee Families in the US. *Social Science & Medicine*, 184, 178–186.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28515007>
- Schöpfer, L. A. (2015). Lebanon's Challenged Stability in the Wake of the Syrian Refugee Crisis. *Aalborg University*, Master Thesis, Denmark.  
[http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/215295765/Thesis\\_.pdf](http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/215295765/Thesis_.pdf)
- Security Council Report. (n.d.). Lebanon Chronology of Events. *Security Council*.  
<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/lebanon.php?page=all&print=true>
- Selwyn, N. (2012). Social media in higher education. *The Europa World of Learning*, 1–10.
- Shaheen, K. (2016). Dozens of Syrians Forced into Sexual Slavery in Derelict Lebanese House. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/30/syrians-forced-sexual-slavery-lebanon>
- Sheridan, M. A., & McLaughlin, K. A. (2016). Neurological models of the impact of adversity on education. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 10, 108–113.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2016.05.013>
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Garner, A. S. (2012). The lifelong effects of childhood adversity and toxic stress. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 129, 232–246. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2011-2663>
- Shoufi, E. (2015). Lebanon: Syrians Refugees Facing Deadly Winter with Little Aid. *Al-Akhbar*.  
<http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/23244>
- Shuayb, M., Makkouk, N., & Tuttunji, S. (2014). Widening access to quality education for Syrian refugees: The role of private and NGO sectors in Lebanon. *Centre for Lebanese Studies*. <https://lebanesestudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Widening-Access-to-Quality-Education-for-Syrian-Refugees-the-role-private-and-NGO-sectors-in-Lebanon-.pdf>
- Sim, A., Bowes, L., & Gardner, F. (2018). Modeling the effects of war exposure and daily stressors on maternal mental health, parenting, and child psychosocial adjustment: a cross-sectional study with Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Global Mental Health*, 5.
- Sim, A., Fazel, M., Bowes, L., & Gardner, F. (2018). Pathways linking war and displacement to parenting and child adjustment: A qualitative study with Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Soc Sci Med*, 19-26.
- Sirhan, B. (1974). Palestinian Refugee Camp Life in Lebanon. *Institute for Palestine Studies*, 4(2). <https://www.palestine-studies.org/jps/fulltext/38366>

- Sleijpen, M., Mooren, T., Kleber, R. J., & Boeije, H. R. (2017). Lives on hold: A qualitative study of young refugees' resilience strategies. *Childhood*, 24(3), 348–365.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568217690031>
- Solis, B. (2008). The Essential Guide to Social Media. *Social Media Today*.  
<https://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/essential-guide-social-media-free-ebook>
- Spencer, M. S., P., K. L., & R, W. J. (2002). Labeling vs. early identification: The dilemma of mental health services under-utilization among low-income African American children. *African American Perspectives*, 8, 1–14.
- Spencer, R. A. (2015). Gender Based Violence Against Women and Girls Displaced by the Syrian Conflict in South Lebanon and North Jordan: Scope of Violence and Health Correlates. *Alianza por la Solidaridad*.  
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/50015>
- Sputnik News. (2018). Nordic 'Hijrah': Iraqis Fleeing Finland for More Favorable Countries - Reports. *Sputnik News*. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201803061062263535-migrants-fleeing-finland/>
- Stevens, J. P. (2012). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences*. Routledge.
- Still, C. (2017). *Dalit women: Honour and patriarchy in South India*. Taylor & Francis.
- Swist, T. e. a. (2015). Social media and the wellbeing of children and young people: A literature review. *Commissioner for Children and Young People*.  
[http://www.uws.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/930502/Social\\_media\\_and\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people.pdf](http://www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/930502/Social_media_and_children_and_young_people.pdf)
- Szreter, S., & Woolcock, M. (2004). Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 33.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyh013>
- Tello, A. (2018). Child brides another casualty of Syrian war. *Arab News*.  
<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1319956/offbeat>
- The Council for Development and Reconstruction. (2016). Habitat III National Report - Final Report. *The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)*, 13.  
[http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Report\\_LEBANON.pdf](http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Report_LEBANON.pdf)
- The Economist. (2018). How heavy use of social media is linked to mental illness. *The Economist*. <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/05/18/how-heavy-use-of-social-media-is-linked-to-mental-illness>

- The New Arab. (2016). Syrian pound hits lowest value since start of war. *alAraby*.  
<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/society/2016/5/9/syrian-pound-hits-lowest-value-since-start-of-war>
- The Telegraph. (2016). Lebanon police break sex trafficking ring who made 1m per month from Syria women. *The Telegraph*. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/13/lebanon-police-break-sex-trafficking-ring-who-made-1m-per-month/>
- Traboulsi, F. (n.d.). Social Classes and Political Power in Lebanon. *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*.  
[https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/fawaz\\_english\\_draft.pdf](https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/fawaz_english_draft.pdf)
- Trickett, P. K., Aber, J. L., Carlson, V., & Cicchetti, D. (1991). Relationship of socioeconomic status to the etiology and developmental sequelae of physical child abuse. *Developmental Psychology*, 27, 148–158. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.27.1.148>
- Tripoli, B., Bcharreh, E. K., & Minieh-Dennieh, E. (2018). North Governorate. *UNHCR-Registration*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66240>
- Tuomas, F. (2016). Thousands of Iraqi refugees leave Finland voluntarily. *Reuters*.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-finland/thousands-of-iraqi-refugees-leave-finland-voluntarily-idUSKCN0VL0UE>
- U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment. (1991). Parents and Families' Influence on Adolescent Health. In *Adolescent Health—Volume II: Background and the Effectiveness of Selected Prevention and Treatment Services*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC. <https://www.princeton.edu/~ota/disk1/1991/9103/910305.PDF>
- UN Women (2019). Addressing Gender Amongst Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *UN Women – Research Brief*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/72394>
- UN News. (2018). Evidence-based approach crucial to migrants and migration. *UN News*.  
<https://news.un.org/en/focus/refugees-and-migrants>
- UNDESA. (2008). Millennium Development Goals Report. *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*.  
[https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/pdf/newsroom/mdg%20reports/MDG\\_Report\\_2008\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/pdf/newsroom/mdg%20reports/MDG_Report_2008_ENGLISH.pdf)
- UNDP. (2013). The 2013 Lebanon Millennium Development Goals. *United Nations Development Program*.  
<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Lebanon/MDG%20English%20Final.pdf>
- UNDP. (2015). The Conflict Context in Beirut: The Social Question, Mobilisations Cycles, and the City's Securitisation. *Lebanon Support in collaboration with UNDP*, Conflict Analysis Report. <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=10150>

- UNESCO. (2017). Country Plan: Lebanon. *The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002614/261406E.pdf>
- UNHCRa (n.d.). Education. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/education>
- UNHCRb (n.d.). Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/3b84c6c67.pdf>
- UNHCRc (n.d.). The Challenge of Education. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/FutureOfSyria/the-challenge-of-education.html>
- UNHCRd (n.d.). Women Alone: The Fight for Survival. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/53bb8d006.pdf>
- VARON-2018 by UN Agencies (2019) Assessment for Refugees of Other Nationalities in Lebanon (VARON-2018), *UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF*. <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2019/10/VARON-2018.pdf>
- UNHCR. (2013). Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees: Solidarity and Burden-Sharing. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <http://www.unhcr.org/525fe3e59.pdf>
- UNHCR. (2014). Woman Alone: The fight for survival by Syria's refugee women. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/53bb8d006.pdf>
- UNHCR. (2015a). Inter-Agency Regional Update, Food Security Sector. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=9237>
- UNHCR. (2015b). Q&A on New entry & renewal procedures for Syrians in Lebanon. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://www.refugees-lebanon.org/en/news/35/qa-on-new-entry-renewal-procedures-for-syrians-in-lebanon>
- UNHCR. (2015c). Refugee Response in Lebanon: Briefing Documents. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/documents/droi/dv/95\\_finalbriefingkit\\_95\\_finalbriefingkit\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/droi/dv/95_finalbriefingkit_95_finalbriefingkit_en.pdf)
- UNHCR. (2016a). UNHCR Daily Statistics. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=10782>
- UNHCR. (2016b). UNHCR-Lebanon- Operational Update January. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/43468>
- UNHCR. (2017a). Syria Regional Refugee Response data portal. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63757>

- UNHCR. (2017b). The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/53061>
- UNHCR. (2018a). Aakar Governorate: Syrian Refugees Registered by Cadastral. *UNHCR-Registration*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66238>
- UNHCR. (2018b). Adolescent Girls and Boys Needs Assessment: Executive Summary. *Plan International*, 4. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64845>
- UNHCR. (2018c). Beirut and Mount Lebanon Governorates: Syrian Refugees Registered by Cadastral. *UNHCR-Registration*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66239>
- UNHCR. (2018d). Bekaa & Baalbek-El Hermel Governorate: Syrian Refugees Registered by Cadastral. *UNHCR-Registration*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66241>
- UNHCR. (2018e). South and El Nabatieh Governorates: Syrian Refugees Registered by Cadastral. *UNHCR-Registration*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66242>
- UNHCR. (2018f). Syria Refugee Response: Lebanon – Syrian Refugees Registered. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Inter-Agency Information Management Unit. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/65859>
- UNHCR. (2018g). Syria Refugee Response: Lebanon – Syrian Refugees Registered. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Inter-Agency Information Management Unit. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66530>
- UNHCR (2018h). Syria regional refugee response data portal. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>
- UNHCR. (2018i). Lebanon Spring 2018: Who We Are and What We Do. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. [https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/Who-we-are-and-what-we-do\\_Apr18\\_EN.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/Who-we-are-and-what-we-do_Apr18_EN.pdf)
- UNHCR. (2020). Lebanon Syrian Refugees Registered. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/74600>
- UNICEF. (2012). The State of the World’s Children 2012: Children in an Urban World. *United Nations Children’s Fund*. [https://www.unicef.org/jp/library/sowc/2012/pdf/sowc\\_2012\\_main\\_report.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/jp/library/sowc/2012/pdf/sowc_2012_main_report.pdf)
- UNICEF. (2014). Multidimensional poverty in Syria. *UNICEF Country Office*. [http://www.cbssyr.sy/Child\\_Poverty\\_Multidimensional/Multidimensional\\_Poverty\\_in\\_Syria\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cbssyr.sy/Child_Poverty_Multidimensional/Multidimensional_Poverty_in_Syria_EN.pdf)

- UNICEF. (2019). Child Labour Survey 2019. *United Nations Children's Fund*.  
[https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/1621/file/ChildLabourSurvey\\_2019.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/1621/file/ChildLabourSurvey_2019.pdf)
- UNOCHA. (2014). Informing Targeted Host Community Programming in Lebanon: Secondary Data Review. *The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*.  
<https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7172>
- UNODC. (2018). Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018. *UNODC*.  
[https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2018/GLOTiP\\_2018\\_BOOK\\_web\\_small.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2018/GLOTiP_2018_BOOK_web_small.pdf)
- Uzelac, A. (2017). The importance of social capital in protracted displacement. *Forced Migration Review*. <https://www.fmreview.org/syria2018/uzelac-meester-goransson-vandenberg>
- Vacca, R., Solano, G., Lubbers, M. J., Molina, J. L., & McCarty, C. (2018). A personal network approach to the study of immigrant structural assimilation and transnationalism. *Social Networks*, 53, 72–89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2016.08.007>
- VASyR-2015, Inter-Agency Coordination (2016). The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2015. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*.  
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2015VASyR.pdf>
- VASyR-2017, Inter-Agency Coordination. (2017). The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2017. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*.  
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/VASyR%202017.compressed.pdf>
- VASyR-2018, Inter-Agency Coordination. (2018). The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2018. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*.  
<https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/12/VASyR-2018.pdf>
- Van Eijk, E. (2013). Family Law in Syria: a plurality of laws, norms, and legal practices. *Leiden University*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis.  
[https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/21765/Binnenwerk%20Proefschrift\\_EvanEijk\\_26July%202013%20corr.pdf?sequence=20](https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/21765/Binnenwerk%20Proefschrift_EvanEijk_26July%202013%20corr.pdf?sequence=20)
- Van Hatch, A. (2014). Mother's experience of social media: Its impact on children and the home. *Edith Cowan University*, Theses. [https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses\\_hons/190](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/190)
- Van Vliet, S., & Hourani, G. (2012). The Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *American University in Cairo (AUC) and the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS)*.  
[http://schools.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/Documents/CairoStudies\\_2\\_2.pdf](http://schools.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/Documents/CairoStudies_2_2.pdf)
- Van Vliet, S. & Hourani, G. (2014). Regional Differences in the Conditions of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*. [http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/regional-differences-conditions-syrian-refugees-lebanon#footnoteref11\\_ojomojm](http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/regional-differences-conditions-syrian-refugees-lebanon#footnoteref11_ojomojm)

- Veronis, L., Tabler, Z., & Ahmed, R. (2018). Syrian refugee youth use social media: Building transcultural spaces and connections for resettlement in Ottawa, Canada. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 50(2), 79–99. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/700981>
- Wall, M., Otis Campbell, M., & Janbek, D. (2017). Syrian refugees and information precarity. *New Media & Society*, 19(2), Article 2.
- Weber, M. (2013). *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. Routledge.
- Weesjes, E. (2016). Timeline Refugee Crisis. *Natural Hazards Center*, 15. <https://hazards.colorado.edu/article/timeline-refugee-crisis-from-may-2011-february-2016>
- Weine, S. (2008). Family Roles in Refugee Youth Resettlement from a Prevention Perspective. *Child Adolescent Psychiatric Clinic in America*, 17(3), 515–viii. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3414421/>
- Woolcock, M. (2001). Microenterprise and social capital: A framework for theory, research, and policy. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 30(2).
- Women’s Refugee Commission (2016). A Girl No More: The Changing Norms of Child Marriage in Conflict. *Relief Web*. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Changing-Norms-of-Child-Marriage-in-Conflict.pdf>
- World Bank. (2013). Lebanon: Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict. *World Bank Report, 81098-Lebanon*, 46. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/925271468089385165/pdf/810980LB0box379831B00P14754500PUBLIC0.pdf>
- Yahya, M., Kassir, J., & El-Hariri, K. (2018). Unheard Voices: What Syrian Refugees Need to Return Home. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Yahya\\_UnheardVoices\\_INT\\_final.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Yahya_UnheardVoices_INT_final.pdf)
- Yasmine, R. M., & C. (2016). Systemic violence against Syrian refugee women and the myth of effective intrapersonal interventions. *Reprod Health Matters*, 24(47), 27–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rhm.2016.04.008>
- Yassin, N. (2018). 101 facts and figures on the Syrian refugee crisis. *American University of Beirut*. [https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/publications/books/2017-2018/20180601\\_101\\_facts\\_and\\_figures\\_on\\_syrian\\_refugee\\_crisis.pdf](https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/publications/books/2017-2018/20180601_101_facts_and_figures_on_syrian_refugee_crisis.pdf)
- Yoshikawa, H., Aber, J. L., & Beardslee, W. R. (2012). The effects of poverty on the mental, emotional, and behavioral health of children and youth. *Am Psychol*, 67(4), 272–84.

Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17(3), 319–336. <https://academic.oup.com/jcmc/article/17/3/319/4067682>

# Appendices – Table of Contents

Appendix A: Instrument of Research .....1  
Questionnaire.....4  
Appendix B: Tables.....9  
Appendix C: Figures .....26

# Appendix A: Instrument of Research

The annexed questionnaire was administered to a convenience and snowball sample of 91 Syrian refugee subjects living in 4 different geographic areas in Lebanon as was detailed in the methodology section of the present research. Responses were gathered between April and September 2018.

- This questionnaire resorted to nominal scale measurement when answering general questions by respondents pertaining to their socioeconomic background. Those include questions related to their age, education, family ranking, number of male figures in the household, marital status and occupation, among others.
- Other questions were dichotomic in nature (i.e., binary Yes/No questions). Such as does your “mobile provides a space for me [you] to express” yourself? Does it make you “more informed?” Does it save you “money,” “time,”? and so on.
- Some were of ordinal scale measurement to stress respondents’ extent of usage of some of their mobile applications, for instance. Such also contributed to the qualitative analysis needed to better understand subjects’ choices.
- Others were open-ended, to allow respondents to speak freely of their particular viewpoints of a certain topic addressed, which also invited sub-questions to be asked.

The questionnaire is divided into the following sections:

**Questions covering respondents’ mobile usage and their applications preferences [Q.1 to Q.8]**

This section allows to answer some essential questions on the “Who,” “When,” “How” and “Why” pertaining to refugee mobile ownership. It covers the functional applications of a mobile by refugees as regular users (using it as a calculator, flashlight, calendar, GPS, alarm, camera, search engine, gaming tool and entertaining device), but also as a space for expressing their thoughts (via WhatsApp or Facebook use), communicating when it’s ‘necessary’ for them or for ‘support,’ ‘coping,’ to ‘pass the time,’ among other such questions gathered in this section of the questionnaire

**Questions addressing the behavioral change witnessed among YSR respondents after reaching Lebanon [Q.9 to Q.19]**

This section explores information about respondents’ perceived change of their lives and the new resulting responsibilities they adopted. Such was sought through a detection of both their expressed and subliminal thoughts on the passage of time, their fears and their description of their age and witnessed experiences. Moreover, the concept of “change” (in the new scenario) was recurrently sought, along with attempts to fathom what a YSR thinks has changed in his day-to-day routine and daily life since his arrival.

Questions encompass an enumeration of their current and previous responsibilities; the role they played within the family (pre-war roleplay) and the one they now took or incorporated into their lives—including coping mechanisms and behavioral changes. This is, in addition to their perception of their Parents’ expectations in the new reality, including character and behavioral changes noted. Perceptions of their refugeehood is also explored, along with how they this has affected their living standards.

**Questions on YSRs’ family relations [Q.20 to Q.29]**

This section examines respondents' awareness about their relationship to their parents. Starting from whether or not they thought their parents listened to their advice, to what they wish they had 'more say' in, at home. Along these lines, questions here detected YSRs' negotiation technics and collected data on their social networks; Posing questions on the people they felt most empowered with as opposed to those they felt most at ease with. In this context concepts of power and powerlessness were investigated, along with the biggest fears that hunts a young refugee living in Lebanon and his/her biggest hope. Which also led to their perception of who could help them in Lebanon when they or their family members are in trouble and what they thought of their future after war.

# Questionnaire

## Direct questions related to mobiles and app usage from a young Syrian refugees' perspective

- 1) Who bought your mobile phone?
  - When & Why did you buy it?      OR      When & Why did they buy it for you?
  - Was the purchase made: In cash or by installments?
- 2) How important is your mobile in your life?
- 3) How often do you use your mobile phone in the following functions? Kindly use:  
0=No/Never, 1=Yes; 2=Sometimes; 3=Rarely
  - To communicate on social media
  - For its calculator
  - For its flash feature upon electricity cuts
  - For its calendar
  - For its GPS
  - For its alarm
  - For gaming [follow up: Which game do you play on it? Do you go to a gaming store?]
  - Others?
  - To make/receive phone calls
  - To take pictures and videos
  - To listen to music
  - To watch YouTube [follow up: What exactly do you watch?]
  - To meet new people on FB
  - To search for friends on FB
  - For entertainment on Instagram
  - Internet search for information and others
  - As a space for expression on WhatsApp or FB.
- 4) Do you agree or disagree to the following statements?
  - “A mobile may...”
    - Connect me with my friends and family
    - Help me pass the time while waiting [Sub-Quest.: Waiting for what?]
    - Help me cope with harsh realities
    - Help me get support from others
    - Make it easier for me to find news/information
    - Make it possible to meet others with same interests
    - Help me learn new things
    - Keep me entertained
    - Serve as a space for self-expression
    - Others?
  - “A mobile may ...”
    - Harm relationships and create quarrels
    - Give unrealistic views of others' lives
    - Lead to a lack of in-person contact
    - Cause distractions/ addictions/ obsession

- Be used in bullying<sup>260</sup> and rumor spreading [ex. news spread of the one who died while I was there]
- Be used for peer pressure on local topics of dispute and sensitivity
- Cause mental health issues
- Others?

- Follow-up Question: Based on your answers above, how do you consider that your mobile affects you: Mostly positively, mostly negatively or neither?

5) Do you agree or disagree to the following statements?

- “My mobile makes me ...”  
smarter; more informed; free-er
- “My mobile saves me ...”  
time; money; energy;
- “My mobile provides a space for me to express myself”

6) What applications do you use among these?

Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, Viber, Tango, Imo, Snapchat, LinkedIn, None of the above.

- Kindly specify that which you use “most often” among them?<sup>261</sup>
    - How do you use social media platforms like FB & WhatsApp – Kindly be specific?
  - Why don’t you use this or that apps.?
  - Does it matter if you owned a standard mobile phone and not a smartphone? Why?
    - Based on your answer, how do you recall living before owning a mobile?
- 7) How often do you use Google? Kindly answer using: 1=Almost constantly; 2=Never; 3=Rarely; 4=Sometimes; 5=Often; 6=I don’t but my kids do
- How often do you use FB? 1=Almost constantly; 2=Inactive/Never; 3=Rarely; 4=Sometimes; 5=Several times a day; 6=Several times a week.
  - How often do you use WhatsApp? 1=Almost constantly; 2=Inactive/Never; 3=Rarely; 4=Sometimes; 5=Several times a day; 6=Several times a week; 7=Once my husband is back home, I speak to my family; 8=Inapplicable
- Parents complain about their children’s excessive use of their smartphone, especially at night. How is the night usage of a mobile different from its morning use?
- 8) Do you think that your use of social media *may* somehow influence your decision to go back to Syria, stay in Lebanon, or seek asylum abroad? (Why yes & why not?)

### **Direct questions related to behavioral change of YSR after reaching Lebanon**

<sup>260</sup> For more on this see: “Cyberbullying a desecration of information ethics: perceptions of post high school youth in a rural community” by Lancelord Siphamandla Ncube and Luyanda Dube.

<sup>261</sup> I created here a three-fold preferential usage of mobile application and a two-fold, more specific usage of social media platforms. All processed via SPSS.

- 9) Do you feel your responsibilities in Lebanon are the same to those you had back in Syria?  
Enumerate them for me please. Ex: Used to take care of grocery shopping; used to take care of house shores; used to study only ...
- Are you playing the same role in your family as before or do you feel it changed too?
  - Do you think that your parents' *expectations* of you have changed?
- 10) Between new responsibilities, a new role, and different expectations, how do you feel about these changes that occurred in your life?
- o How do you see the situation you're in?  
 Objectively: is it a barrier to living a normal life as it's hard  
 OR  
 Subjectively: is it a chance that could be used to emancipate, to advance and progress personally or in education...?
  - o What does it mean for you to be a refugee?
- 11) If you can change anything in the situation you are in right now, what would you change?
- o What is the barrier in face of this Change you want?
- 12) For Change to occur, what does one need?
- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| o Energy            | o Peace of mind            |
| o Patience          | o Planning                 |
| o Money             | o Luck                     |
| o Parents' consent  | o a Network/ family abroad |
| o Local connections | o Others?                  |
- 13) How do you feel about the concept of 'waiting' until things change?  
 Such as: "waiting for..."
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| o The war to end in Syria  | o Your family situation to improve   |
| o Your kids to get accepted in a closer school or one that is acknowledged by the Ministry of Education for the sake of their future | o Your asylum documents to be processed and you receive acceptance on them |
| o Others?  | o You, your husband or kids to find a job                                  |
- Does it bother you at all or does it not matter to you because you just can't escape it?
- 14) Do you believe your smartphone *may* play a role in all of the above? i.e., getting you through the waiting game, helping you overcome those obstacles we discussed.
- Due to the access to information and network that it could provide you with?
  - Do you think the use of a smartphone would strengthen your motivation to seek change or facilitate it per se?
    - Such when your cousin sends you pictures of how happy s/he is in Europe per se, don't you feel encouraged to follow suit?
- 15) What are your biggest fears or major concerns in your life now?  
 NOTE: If they didn't give their own answers, I asked them to answer by Yes or No to the following: "I'm afraid that I, or one of my family members, would ..."
- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| o Go hungry    | o Have to relocate, yet again (for some) |
| o Get deported |  |
| o Go to jail   |  |

- Others?
- Get sick, when I can't afford the healthcare system in Lebanon
- Follow up question: What would be the best thing that could happen to you?
  - Staying in Leb.
  - Migrating/ Being repatriated to Europe, the States or Canada
  - Going back to Syria;
  - Others?
- 16) Who do you consider to be 'young' still?
 

In retrospect, in your opinion how old would you consider a person to be 'old'?

  - Where do you place yourself in those two categories?
  - How old do you give yourself after having been through all your experiences? And why is that?
- 17) On behavioral, emotional, and psychological change adopted in Lebanon, answer by yes or no to the following.
 

"Since I came to Lebanon I started..."

  - Drinking more coffee
  - Smoking **or** smoking more cigarettes a day
  - Smoking shisha
  - Sleeping late **or** staying up at night
  - Seeing nightmares
  - Daydreaming **or** mind-drifting
  - Introverting/ extroverting
  - Working
  - Speaking less **or** more
  - Feeling like you want to help more, however way you can
  - Feeling desperate
  - Feeling depressed
  - Feeling scared
  - Feeling anxious and stressed
  - Feeling less patient to almost anything you tolerated before
  - Gaining weight **or** losing some
  - Dancing, singing or drawing more **or** less
  - Going out more often **or** preferring to stay home
  - Asking many questions to gather information **or** trying to understand things around you
  - Feeling more confident **or** less
  - Feeling like you can face whoever threatens you or your family, like you have an internal power that you have never felt before **or** feeling weak
  - Feeling out of energy, apathetic, lethargic, and listless
  - Feeling more religious **or** less
  - Getting angry, **or** perhaps faster
  - Resorting to physical violence **or** at least verbal abuse
  - Reacting in a way that is disproportionate to a situation, such as overreacting or overexaggerating.
  - Others?

### **Semi-structured questions/ guided interviews**

18) Do your parents listen to your opinion and advices at home? Kindly answer by Yes/No

19) What would you like/wish to have more say in at home?

Follow-up: If they didn't give their own answers, I asked them to answer by Yes or No to the following: "I'd like to have more say in..."

- What we're eating everyday
  - Where we should be living
  - How we should deal with the situation we're in
  - How should we protect each other
  - What I can wear
  - Which school we should be attending
  - Whether or not we should migrate
  - Where we should be migrating to
  - Others?
- 20) How do you negotiate with your parents for something you want to have or happen but that they are not convinced about?  
 Follow-up: If they didn't give their own answers, I asked them to answer by Yes or No to the following: "If I wanted something my parents are not convince about, I would..."
- Talk loudly
  - Act confidently
  - Misbehave – Stand up in their face
  - Show that I can work & depend on myself
  - Cry and plead till they accept
  - Obey them on a series of occasions before opening the subject
  - Convince my mother first
  - Ask someone of influence (ex. uncle) to speak to them
  - Others?
- 21) What would be your biggest fear when/after stating your opinion about a domestic matter that you know does not conform to your parents' opinion or point of view?  
 Follow-up: If they didn't give their own answers, I asked them to answer by Yes or No to the following: "If I state an opinion that is radically different from that of my parents, I'm afraid they would..."
- Mock me
  - Ignore me
  - Punish me
  - Judge me [as being a bad daughter/ son]
  - Others?
- 22) With who's company do you feel most yourself/ most comfortable/ most understood?  
 NOTE: If they didn't give their own answers, I asked them to answer by Yes or No to the following: "I feel most at ease, most comfortable and most understood..."
- With my dad alone
  - Among friends (vs. only female friends when talking to a girl)
  - Behind my mobile
  - With my mom alone
  - With my entire nuclear family
  - Among brothers and sisters
  - Others?
- 23) How do you understand these two notions: power/ powerlessness?  
 ○ What makes a person powerful? What make him/her weak?  
 ○ When is it that you feel most powerful? Most weak?
- 24) With whose company do you feel most capable/ most 'empowered' to make a decision?  
 "I feel most capable/ most 'empowered'..."
- In my family
  - With my dad
  - Among friends (vs. only female friends when talking to a girl)
  - With my mom
  - Among brothers and sisters
  - When I'm alone
  - Others?
- Follow up: Do you have a friend or a number of friends whom you call for support? What issues would they help you with for instance?

- 25) Would you ask for help from stranger people on the internet through FB blogs and forums?  
[Yes or No, & Why?] VS. Would you ask such people for information?
- 26) When/If you, your parents, or siblings were in trouble, who would you turn to for help? A Lebanese or a Syrian? Why?
- 27) Finally, when you sit alone and dream of a future life, what do you dream about?

### **Questions posed to parents (especially mothers)**

- Did you notice any change in your children's behavior since their arrival to Leb.? (even the slightest change noted: ex., they eat less than before, they sleep more, they are louder, they shout more often, lethargic, listless....)
- Do you still see your children as kids? Do you realize this experience has made them mature faster?
- What were your children' responsibilities before coming to Lebanon?
- How do you see your children's future?

## Appendix B: TABLES

**Table 1:** The percentage of increase in the price of rice, sugar, beans, and milk since 2010

Commodities	Percentage increase (approx.)
Rice	25–40%
Sugar	30–40%
Beans	40–50%
Milk	33%

Source: (IMF, 2014, p. 12).

**Table 2:** Types of ties and their strength

	Strong Ties	Weak Ties
<b>Bonding (horizontal) ties</b>	Close friends or immediate family with similar social characteristics, e.g. social class or religion	Members with similar interests or social characteristics within voluntary associations
<b>Bridging (horizontal) ties</b>	Close friends or immediate family with different social characteristics, e.g. age, gender or ethnicity	Acquaintances and members with different social characteristics within voluntary associations
<b>Linking (Vertical) ties</b>	Close work colleagues with different hierarchical positions	Distant colleagues with different hierarchical positions and ties between citizens and civil servants

Source: (Claridge, 2017).

**Table 3:** Tracking UNHCR Registered Syrian Refugees by District in Lebanon for the year 2018

Month	Registered number of Syrian refugees	Reduction from previous registered period	Percentage of the difference	Links to Map
January 31 <sup>st</sup>	995,512	2,393 (from December 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2017)	0.24%	<a href="https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62222">https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62222</a>
February 28 <sup>th</sup>	991,917	3,595	0.36%	<a href="https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/">https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/</a>

				04/Who-we-are-and-what-we-do_Apr18_EN.pdf (UNHCR, 2018i)
March 31 <sup>st</sup>	991,165	752	0.075%	<a href="https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63808">https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63808</a>
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	986,942	4,223	0.42%	<a href="https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63757">https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63757</a> (UNHCR, 2017a)
June 30 <sup>th</sup>	976,065	10,877	0.55% on average between May & June	<a href="https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64925">https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/64925</a>
July 31 <sup>st</sup>	976,002	63	0.0064%	<a href="https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/65859">https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/65859</a> (UNHCR, 2018f)
September 30 <sup>th</sup>	952,562	23,440	1.23% on average between August & September	<a href="https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66530">https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/66530</a>
November 30 <sup>th</sup>	950,334	2,228	0.11% on average between October & November	<a href="https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71">https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71</a>

Source: Table compiled by the author from a combination of UNHCR maps. (Op. Cit., UNHCR, 2018g)

**Table 4:** Marital Status, Target Sample, Region and Gender

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single Males	32	37.2
Married Males with kids	2	2.3
Newly married males	4	4.7
Single Females	14	16.3
Married Females with kids	13	15.1
Newly married females	8	9.3
Parents	13	15.1
Total	86	

Missing	5	
<b>Within the Target Sample</b>		
Yes	64	70.3
No	27	29.7
<b>Region</b>		
Beirut	36	39.6
Bekaa	19	20.9
Tripoli	16	17.6
South	20	22.0
Total	91	100.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	51.6
Female	44	48.4

Source: Created by the author of the total number of respondents, using SPSS.

**Table 5:** Percentage of the Syrian refugee population by governorate in Lebanon, 2018

<b>Governorate</b>	<b>Districts include</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	[organized according to the number of Syrian refugees they host, compared to others at the local governorate level in Lebanon]	
Beirut & Mount Lebanon	Baabda, Aley, Chouf, El Meten, Kesrwane, Jbeil	26.5%
Bekaa (Central-east)	Zahle, West Bekaa, Rachaya	23%
The North	El Minieh-Dennie, Tripoli, El Koura, Zgharta, El Batroun, Bcharre	15%
Baalbek-El Hermel (Northeast)	Baalbek, El Hermel	12.5%
Akkar (North)	Akkar	11%
The South	Saida, Sour, Jezzine	7.5%
Nabatieh (Southeast)	El Nabatieh, Marjaayoun, Bent Jbeil, Hasbaya	4.5%

Source: Calculated and prepared by the author.<sup>262</sup>

<sup>262</sup> Calculations are based on data, maps, and material provided to UNHCR by the Government of Lebanon for operational purposes, on a total population of 952,562 Syrian refugees registered at UNHCR by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. (UNHCR, 2018g).

**Table 6:** YSRs' stated conditions and reasons for respondents' flight to Lebanon

<b>Conditions of the flight to Lebanon and its reasons</b>	<b>Total</b>
Prior connection to a relative(s) in Lebanon	25
Compromised security, direct physical threat, unsafe neighborhood, or a general feeling of danger	19
Afraid of compulsory army incarceration	6
Prior connection + Afraid of incarceration	4
Prior connection + compromised security	2
Prior connection + in search of a better source of income	1
Compromised security + Afraid of incarceration	1
Geographic proximity	1
No answer & other reasons?	63

Source: Compiled by the author of the present dissertation, processed via Excel.

**Table 7:** Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR in Lebanon end-2012 to mid-2014

<b>Period</b>	<b>Cumulative registrations of Syrian refugees</b>
End-2012	129 106
End-2013	805 835
Mid-2014	1 068 859

**Table 8:** Parental Education Levels

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Parents' Education</b>		
Both	40	48.8
Neither	34	41.5
One of the Two	8	9.8
<b>Father's Education</b>		
Yes	45	54.9
No	37	45.1
<b>Mother's Education</b>		
Yes	43	52.4
No	39	47.6

Source: Compiled by the author of the present dissertation, processed via Excel.

**Table 9:** Indicators influencing YSRs' reproduction and vulnerability, as informed by their families' SES

Indicators influencing YSRs	<b>Reproduction</b> = economic power, wealthy family	<b>Vulnerability</b> = economic hardship
<b>Responsibilities, relational &amp; roles change</b>	Lower	Higher
<b>Educational attainment</b>	Higher	Lower
<b>Stress &amp; Trauma levels</b>	Lower	Higher
<b>Future prospects</b>	potential	unstable and unprepared
<b>Family structure, family dynamics &amp; family ties</b>	Continuity	Change
<b>Social capital level analysis</b>	Reproduced & maintained	- Weakened among the Lebanese community due to the protracted nature of displacement'; but,  - Maintained among the Syrian community because of the collective experiences and struggles.

Source: Table created by the author based on research findings.

**Table 10:** Most mentioned countries where respondents' social networks exist.

<b>International Social Network</b>	<b>Total</b>
Germany	43
Turkey	32
Canada	24
Holland / Jordan	17
Sweden/ Saudi Arabia	15
Switzerland/ Poland	9

Source: Data compiled by the author based on undertaken interviews.

**Table 11:** Report of the most important usage of a mobile phone by age-range.

<b>Age Range</b>		<b>&lt;14-17&lt;</b>	<b>&lt;18-21&lt;</b>	<b>&lt;22-25&lt;</b>	<b>Over 25</b>
<b>Describe the most important usage of your mobile</b>	Communication only	6	9	9	12
	Entertainment only	10	1	1	1
	Total dependence	2	2	2	1
	Trending device & Peer pressure	0	2	1	0
	Both Education and Entertainment	0	1	1	0
	Work only	0	0	0	3

Means nothing to me	1	0	2	5
Both Communication & Work	1	1	3	0
Both Communication & Entertainment	2	2	3	0
Not applicable	1	0	0	0

Source: Data gathered by the author for the respondents older than 14, processed via SPSS.

**Table 12:** Reasons for buying a mobile

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Communication	36	39.6	39.6	39.6
Entertainment	15	16.5	16.5	56.0
Necessity/ My everything/ I depend on it	7	7.7	7.7	63.7
Trending device & Peer pressure	3	3.3	3.3	67.0
Learning skills, Self-improvement, & Entertainment	3	3.3	3.3	70.3
Educational activities & Entertainment	1	1.1	1.1	71.4
Work	8	8.8	8.8	80.2
Means nothing to me	5	5.5	5.5	85.7

Communication & work	4	4.4	4.4	90.1
Communication & Entertainment	6	6.6	6.6	96.7
Not applicable	3	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 13:** Participants' mobile usage as a Camera by age range

	No/Never	Yes	Sometimes	Inapplicable/No [mostly due to not owning a mobile]	Answer Total
Under 14	0	4	0	2	6
<14-17<	1	22	0	0	23
<18-21<	1	16	1	0	18
<22-25<	1	19	2	0	22
Over 25	9	11	2	0	22
Total	12	72	5	2	91

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 14:** Participants' mobile usage as a Music device by age range

	No/Never	Yes	Sometimes	Inapplicable/No [mostly due to not owning a mobile]	Answer Total
Under 14	0	4	0	2	6
<14-17<	1	22	0	0	23
<18-21<	0	17	1	0	18
<22-25<	4	12	5	0	21
Over 25	16	4	3	0	23
Total	21	59	9	2	91

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 15:** Participants' mobile usage as a Camera by gender

	No/Never	Yes	Sometimes	Inapplicable/No [mostly due to not owning a mobile]	Answer
Male	8	37	3	0	
Female	4	35	2	2	

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 16:** Participants’ mobile usage as a Music device by gender

	No/Never	Yes	Sometimes	Inapplicable/No Answer [mostly due to not owning a mobile]
Male	8	38	2	0
Female	13	21	7	2

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 17:** Participants’ mobile usage as a Gaming device by age range

	No/Never (incl. “I used to, but not anymore.” Making reference to substitution)	Yes	Sometimes	Inapplicable/No Answer [mostly due to not owning a mobile]	Total
<14-17< 9		13	1	0	23
<18-21< 13		5	0	0	18
<22-25< 14		8	0	0	22
Over 25 21		1	0	0	22
Total	57	27	1	0	91

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 18:** Respondents’ general use of SNS and social media platforms

	FB	WhatsApp	YT	Instagram	Snapchat	Twitter	Viber	Tango	Skype	Imo	Others*
Yes	56	83	62	29	20	2	15	5	1	2	9

No	22	2	22	60	69	86	68	79	86	74	77
Inactive/Long ago	11	1	5	0	0	1	6	5	2	13	1
Inapplicable	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91	91

\* Others include: Telegram and Line.

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 19:** Respondents' usage frequency of the one or two-most used SNS platform on their mobile phones, by age-range.

Age Range		Under 14	<14-17<	<18-21<	<22-25<	Over 25	Total
<b>What application do you use most often?</b>	Facebook (FB) mostly	0	0	0	0	0	0
	WhatsApp mostly	0	0	4	11	16	31
	YouTube mostly	0	1	0	0	0	1
	WhatsApp then FB	0	3	6	2	3	14
	WhatsApp then YouTube	0	5	3	6	3	17
	FB then YouTube	1	1	0	2	0	4
	FB then WhatsApp	0	2	1	0	0	3
	YouTube then FB	2	7	4	0	0	13
	YouTube then Gaming	1	2	0	0	0	3

Inapplicable	2	2	0	1	0	5
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	---

Source: Data3 gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 20:** Respondents' usage frequency of the three-most used SNS platform on their mobile phones, by age-range.

Age Range		Under 14	<14-17<	<18-21<	<22-25<	Over 25	Total
<b>Enumerate the apps you use by order</b>	FB, WhatsApp Instagram	0	2	0	0	0	2
	FB, YT & Insta.	1	1	2	1	1	6
	FB, Insta., & WhatsApp	0	3	0	1	0	4
	WhatsApp, Then YT & Instagram	0	4	3	0	1	8
	YT, Insta., & FB	0	2	1	0	0	3
	FB & WhatsApp	0	2	1	0	0	3
	FB, YT & WhatsApp	0	2	0	2	0	4
	WhatsApp & FB	0	2	4	2	2	10
	WhatsApp mostly	0	0	4	12	14	30
	YT & FB	2	1	0	0	0	3
	YT & Gaming	1	0	0	0	0	1

WhatsApp & YT	0	3	3	4	4	14
FB & YT	0	1	0	0	0	1
Inapplicable	2	0	0	0	0	2

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 21:** Respondents' usage frequency of WhatsApp, by age range

Age Range		Under 14	<14-17<	<18-21<	<22-25<	Over 25	Total
<b>How often do you use WhatsApp?</b>	Almost constantly	2	15	10	17	13	57
	Inactive/Never	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Several times a day	0	6	6	4	7	23
	Sometimes/ Several times a week*	0	0	1	0	2	3
	Once my husband is back home	0	1	1	1	0	3
	Inapplicable	4	1	0	0	0	5

\* “Sometimes” (2 respondents) and “Several times a week” (1 respondents) were combined in this table. And “Rarely” registered zero responses in this question.

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 22:** Respondents’ usage frequency of FB, by age range

Age Range		Under 14	<14-17<	<18-21<	<22-25<	Over 25	Total
<b>How often do you use FB?</b>	Almost constantly	1	5	3	1	0	10
	Inactive/Never	1	1	5	7	16	30
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Several times a day	2	15	6	11	3	37
	Sometimes*	0	2	4	3	2	11
	Inapplicable	2	0	0	0	0	2

\* “Several times a week” registered zero responses in this question.

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 23:** Respondents’ usage frequency of the Internet/ Google, by age range

Age Range		Under 14	<14-17<	<18-21<	<22-25<	Over 25	Total
<b>How often do you use the Internet/ Google?</b>	Almost constantly	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Never	1	9	9	6	16	41
	Rarely	0	5	3	7	1	16
	Sometimes	1	4	3	2	1	11
	Often	2	5	3	7	1	18
	I don’t but my kids do	0	0	0	0	3	3

Inapplicable	2	0	0	0	0	2
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	---

Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Table 24:** Report of respondents' reported area of origin and period of arrival to Lebanon

Area of origin	Period of arrival
Homs (including Qusair)	2011, 2013, 2014
Alepo suburbs	2011, 2014, 2015, 2017
Deir Ezzor	2011, 2013, 2014, 2015
Idleb	2007, 2011, 2016, 2017, 2018
Dar'aa	2011, 2014
Damascus	2011, 2012
Ghuta (including Eastern Ghuta)	2011, 2012
Tedmor	2012

Source: Compiled by the author of the present dissertation, processed via Excel.

**Table 25:** Social capital indices among respondents

Indicator	Economic-Wellbeing	Domestic Stress	Gender Equity	Education	Outcome
High	Low	Low	High	Low	Stronger Family Ties/Strong Bonding Social Capital
Low	High	High	Low	High	Weak Family Ties/Weak Bonding Social Capital

Source: Compiled by the author based on data analysis.

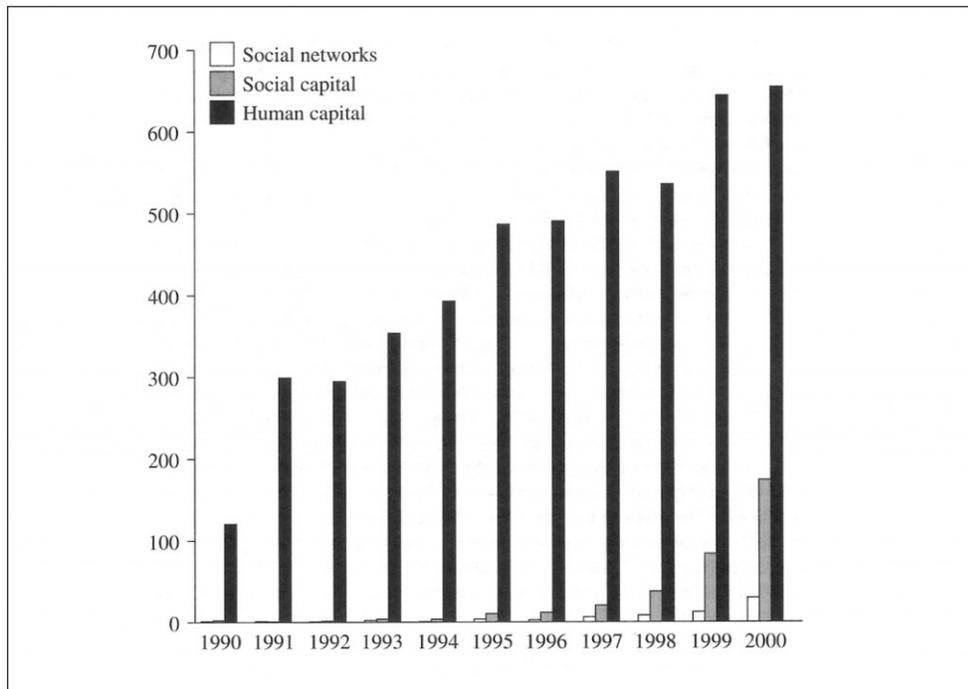
**Table 26:** Respondents' perceptions about the level of happiness of their social networks

<b>Perceptions about social networks' level of Happiness</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Yes, I think they are happy	76
No, I don't think they are happy	11
Perhaps they are happy	8
Not everyone is happy or sad there OR There are pros and cons to their life abroad	5

Source: Data compiled by the author based on undertaken interviews.

## Appendix C: FIGURES<sup>263</sup>

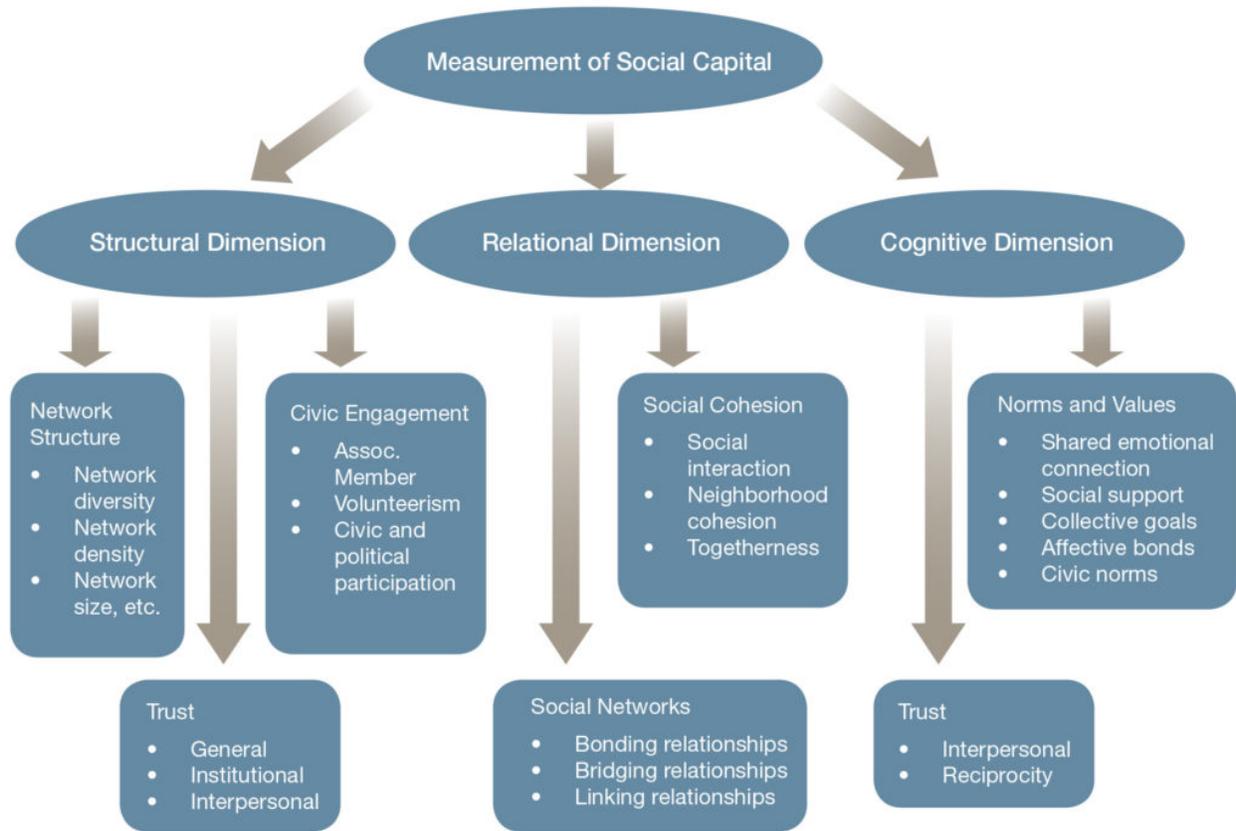
**Figure 1:** The Evolution of Social capital in Literature



Source: (Op. Cit., Claridge, 2004)

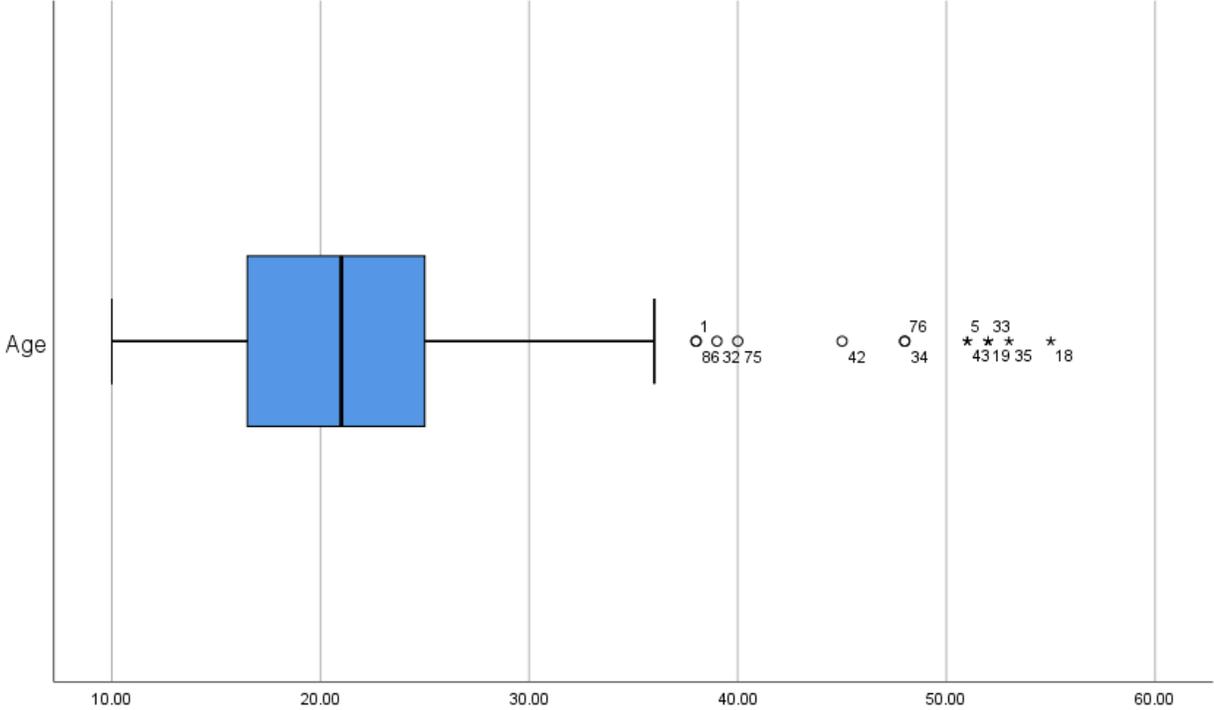
<sup>263</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all Figures are created by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Figure 2:** Elements measuring social capital



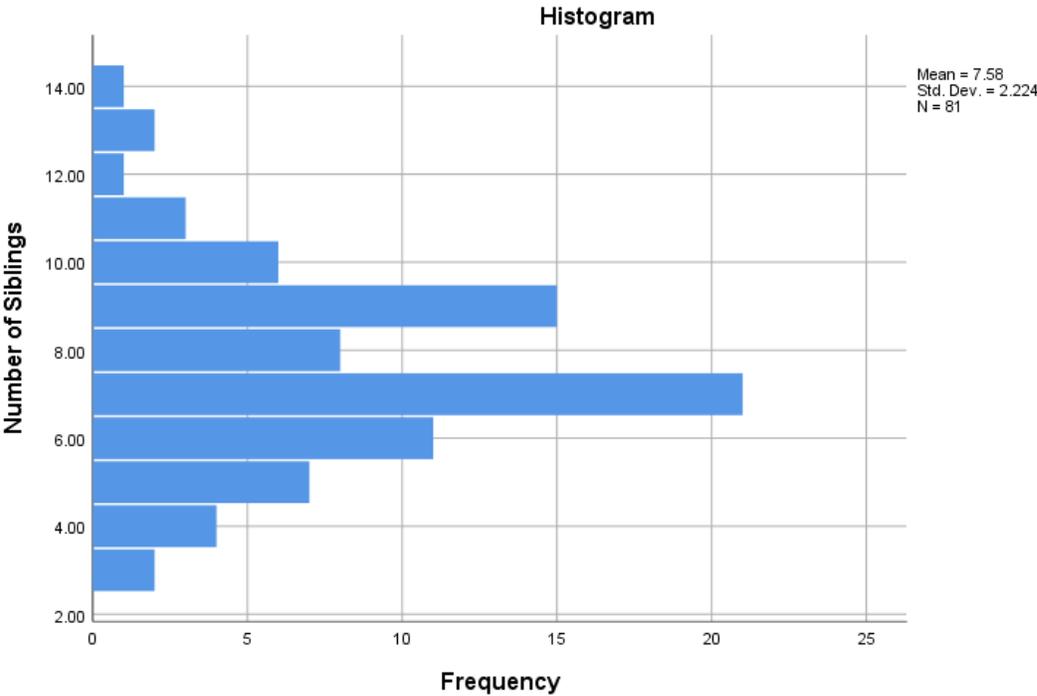
Source: (Op. Cit., Claridge 2017).

**Figure 3: Distribution of Age**



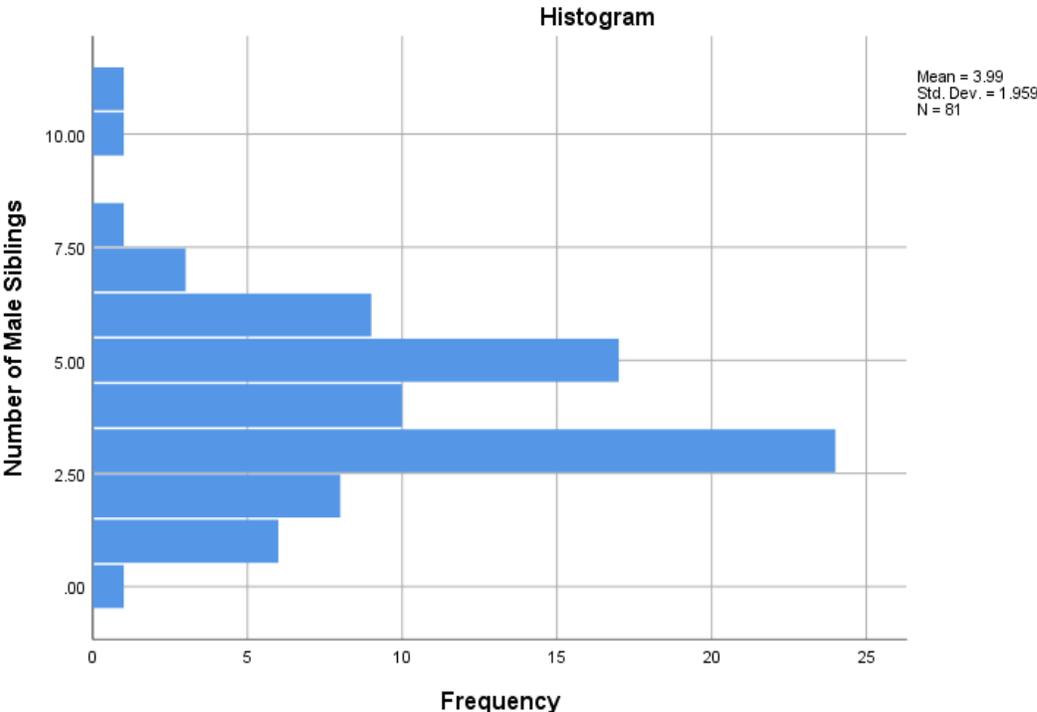
Source: Created by the author for the total number of respondents, via SPSS.

**Figure 4: Number of Siblings**



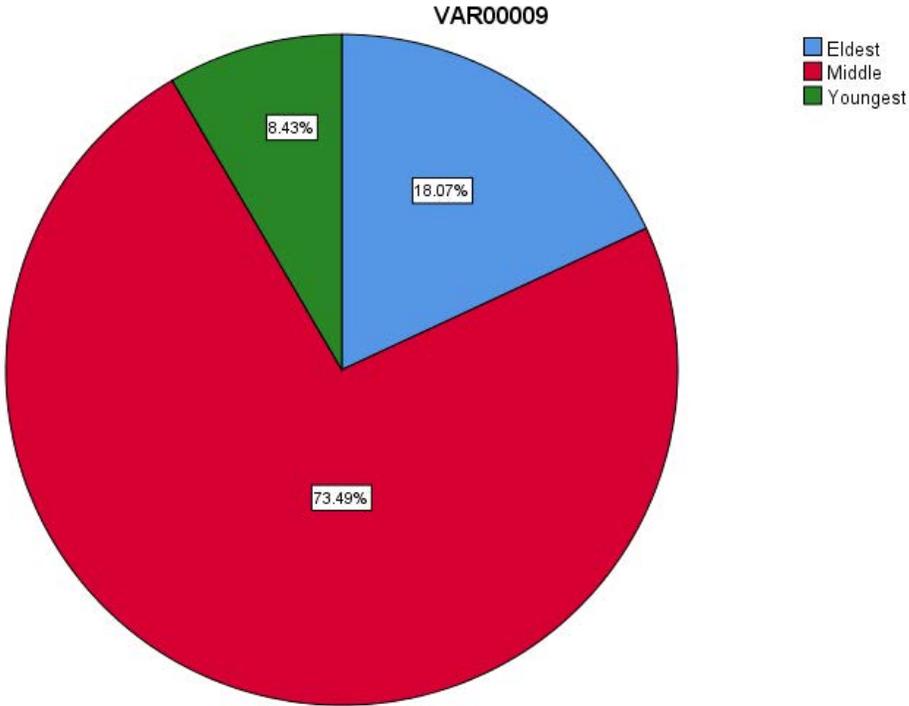
Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Figure 5: Number of Male Siblings**



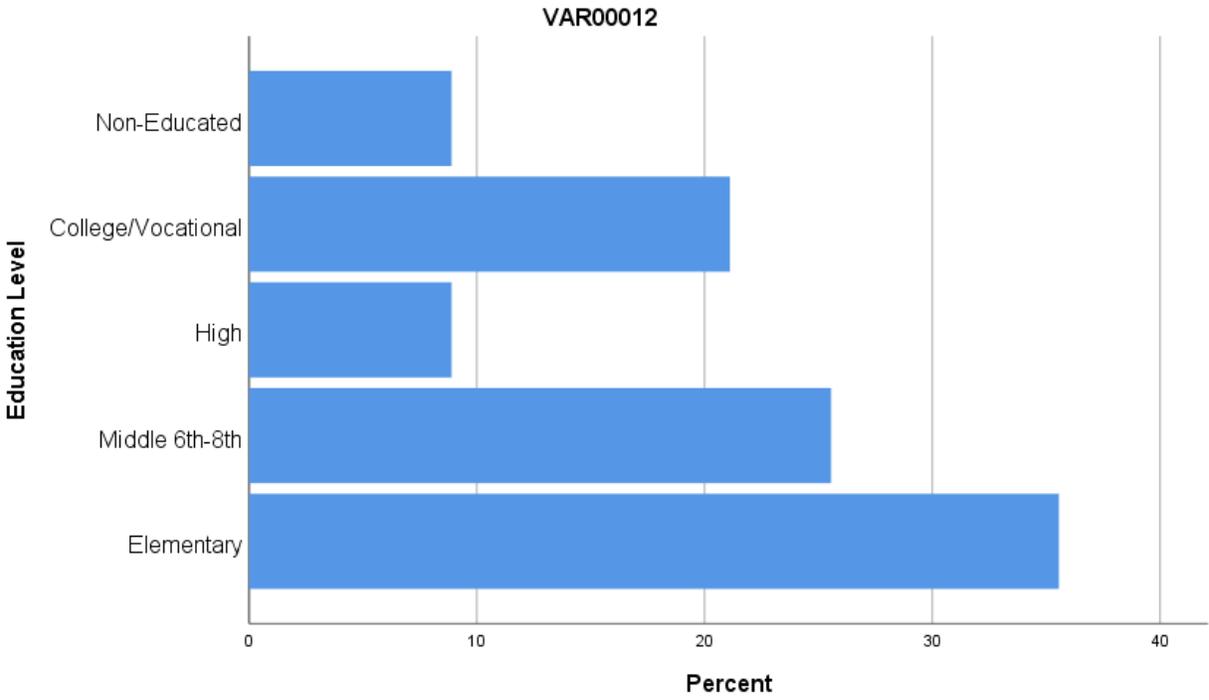
Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Figure 6:** Birth order in the Family



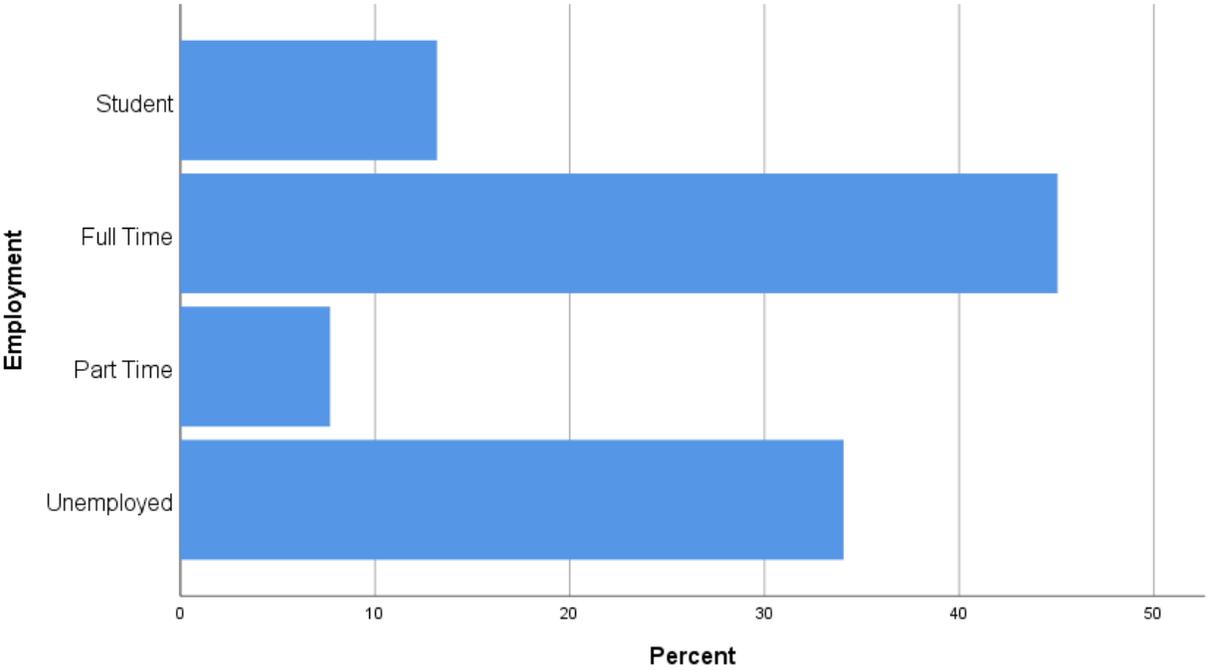
Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Figure 7: Educational Level**



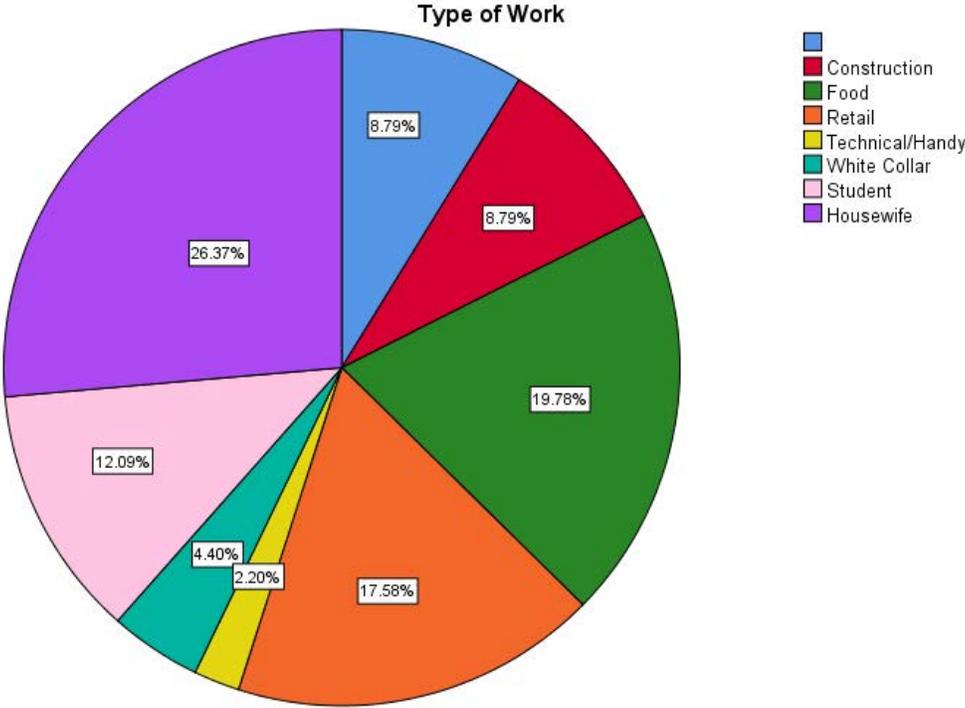
Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Figure 8: Employment**



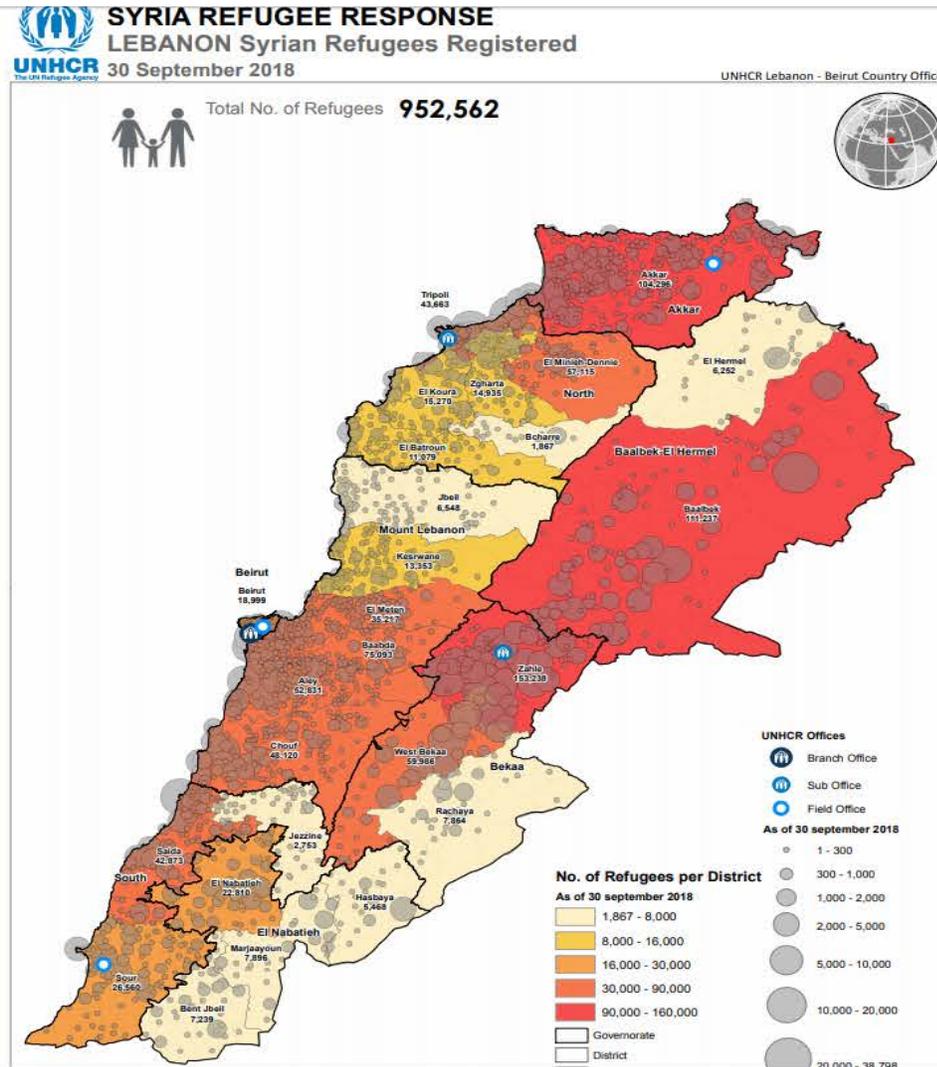
Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

**Figure 9: Types of Work**



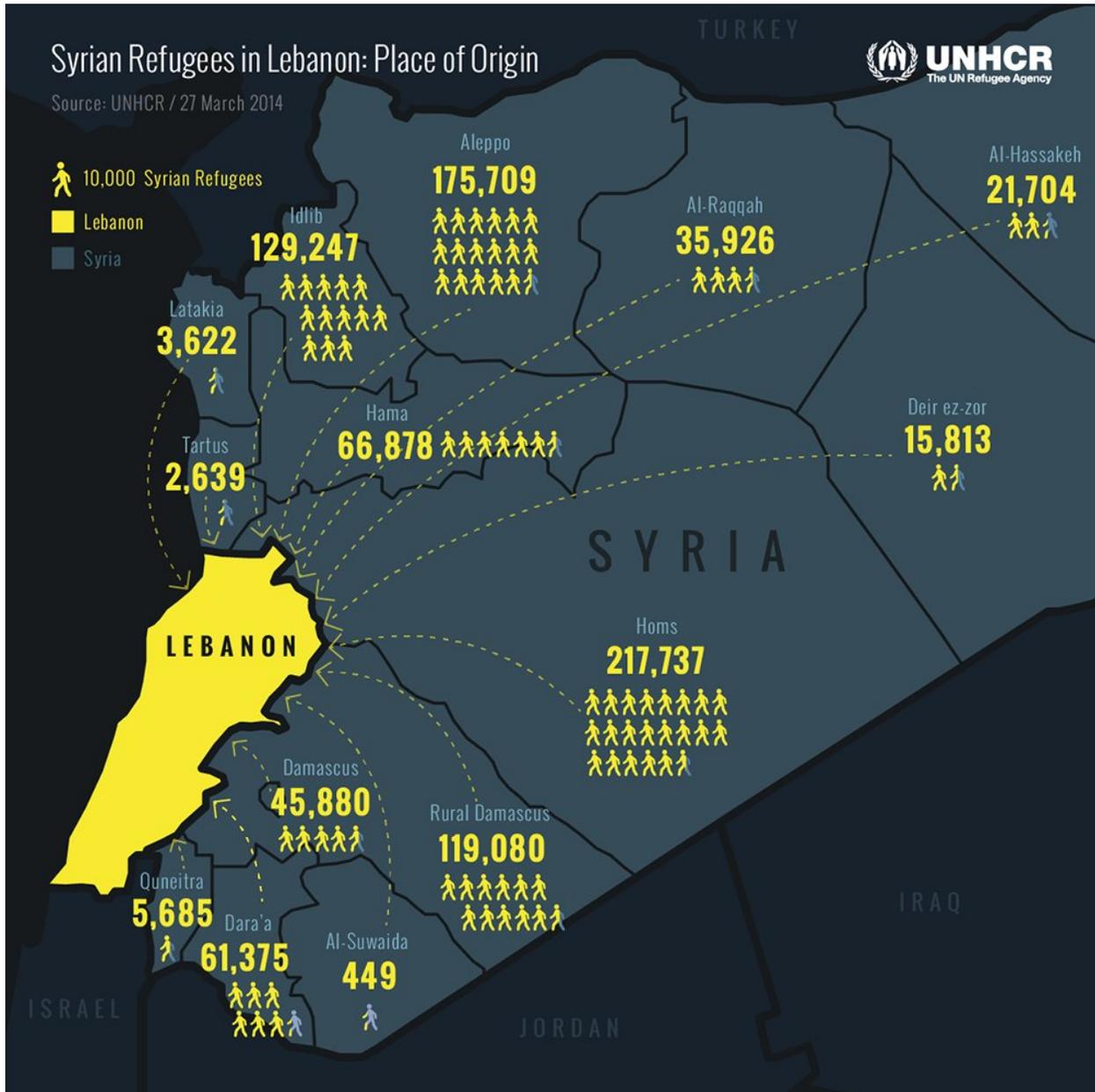
Source: Data gathered by the author for the total number of respondents, processed via SPSS.

Figure 10: UNHCR Mapping of the Refugee Population in Lebanon



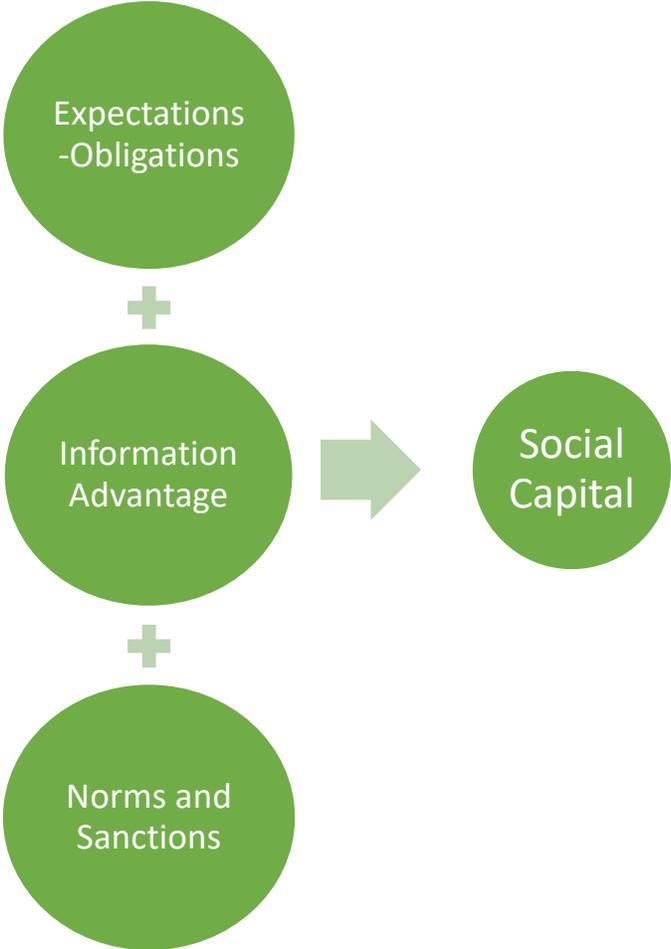
Source: (UNHCR, 2018h)

**Figure 11: Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Place of Origin**



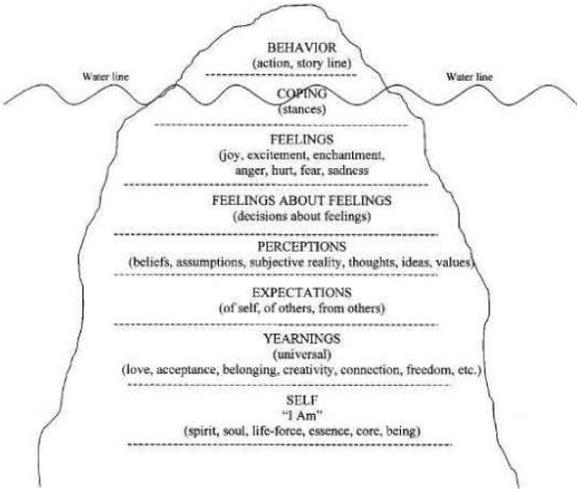
Source: (Bender, 2014).

**Figure 12:** Catalysis of social capital in a refugee context



Source: Compiled by the author based on data analysis

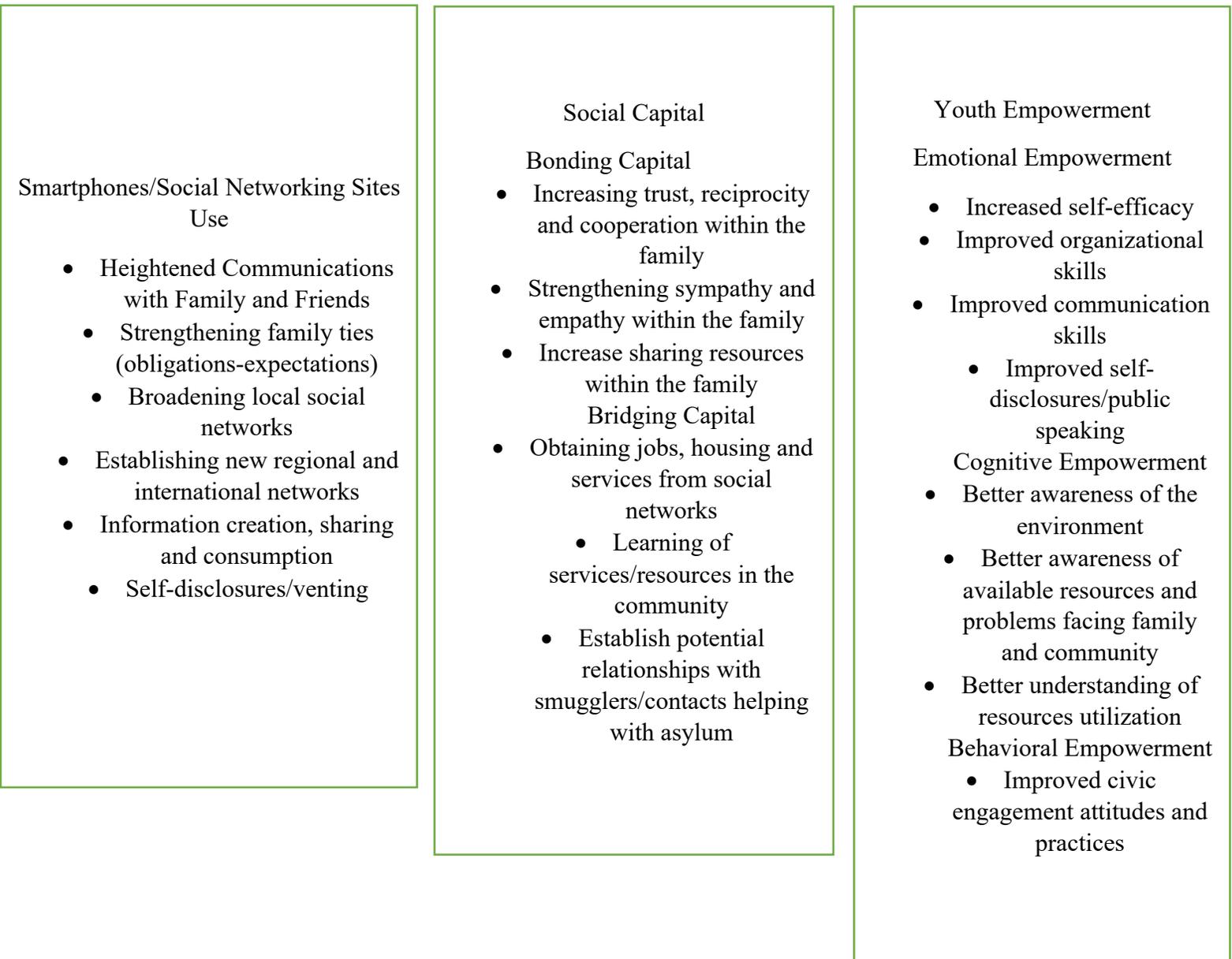
**Figure 13:** The personal iceberg metaphor



**FIGURE 1**  
The Personal Iceberg Metaphor

Source: (Op. Cit., Gomori, 2017, p. 5)

**Figure 14:** Smartphone use, Social capital building and youth empowerment



Source: Compiled by the author based on data analysis