

**Gender-Based Violence in Lebanon:
An Arts-Based Approach to Advocacy**

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Abstract

The research paper's aim is to investigate arts-based advocacy as an effective bottom-up approach to dismantle gender-based violence (GBV) in Lebanon. Arts-based advocacy is a tool used to expose human rights violations, spark dialogue, and challenge the stereotypes that continue to oppress women in both public and private spaces. Utilizing a relational approach, arts-based advocacy leverages, and places value in lived experiences to bring forth progress towards gender equality. By sharing messaging in a manner that allows society to challenge their personal ways of knowing, arts-based advocacy is an impactful strategy implemented in Lebanon, considering cultural reform is what is needed for long-term, holistic approaches to gender equality. Gender equality is a human right and the importance of gender as being an integral pillar in sustainable development is well documented and as such is one of the 17 goals as per the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). This paper examines the adoption of arts-based advocacy to achieve SDG five: Gender Equality, and its intersections with the other 16 goals; specifically SDG ten: Reduced Inequalities, SDG three: Good Health and Well-being, and SDG eight: Decent Work and Economic Growth. A qualitative approach is utilized to understand gender equality in Lebanon, multi-sectoral partnerships in addressing GBV, and the effectiveness advocacy campaigns have in reforming culture. Through 14 semi-structured interviews and analysis of scholarly and grey literature, this paper explores gender equality in Lebanon, as it intersects with GBV within governance, culture, society, and work, as factors that influence, guide, and alter gender sensitive programming and projects. The campaigns expose the repercussions and harm of GBV that is upheld through deeply embedded

cultural norms, as well as extremely weak institutional capacity that continue to affect women disproportionately. I argue that achieving the goal of gender equality in Lebanon by 2030 to meet the SDGs, is met with many obstacles and barriers, the main being GBV, yet many successes to date have been achieved through an arts-based approach that is utilized to ignite reflection and dialogue.

Key words: Gender equality, arts-based advocacy, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), governance, cultural reform, non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

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Foreword

This major research paper is an original, unpublished, independent work by Andrea Sayde. Having been born in Canada to Lebanese immigrants, this paper is driven by both academic and personal interests along with my love for Lebanon. From a young age, I was always told what my purpose should be as a woman; etiquette, poise, education, marriage, and family. I understood the importance of maintaining and respecting my heritage but never understood why this meant I had to tip-toe around conversations, people, and spaces. It was because of these experiences as a diasporic Lebanese that I strove for a more in-depth understanding of the role of women in Lebanon- a Middle Eastern State. I wish to acknowledge here the term Middle East as it is a geopolitical and colonial term used historically by power holders who colonized the geographic area of Southwest Asia and North Africa. I do not wish to homogenize the identities of those in the Middle East and further instill oppressive power dynamics. The term was used by some participants during the interview process and continues to be used in academia and grey literature, but for the purpose of this paper, I will refer to the region as Southwest Asia or the Arab region.

Driven by passion and reason, my completion of this research paper is a partial requirement for the MES degree. Prior to the submission of the research paper, I completed coursework over four terms. The coursework contributed to laying the foundation of the theoretical framework for the research. My Area of Concentration is “Women, Citizenship, and Economic Rights in Lebanon”. This Area of Concentration aimed to explore the role of women in Lebanon taking into consideration a diversity of factors that ‘define’ a women’s role in society. This major paper explores GBV as the central barrier to achieving gender equality

through multiple lenses to ensure a holistic and intersectional understanding and framework for achieving gender equality. The paper will also introduce arts-based advocacy as a means for driving dialogue and change. Some of these approaches are videos, theatre, photos/billboards, fashion, music, installations, graffiti, documentaries, etc.

In my Plan of Study, the three components of my Area of Concentration and Learning Objectives include Gender in Political Citizenship, Gender in Education, and Gender in Economic Participation. The objective was to gain a contextual and theoretical understanding of gender dynamics in Lebanon and the barriers that hinder women's ability to achieve gender equality and social cohesion.

This Major Research Paper will showcase the development of my learning through the Master of Environmental Studies program which includes the coursework, discussions with instructors and peers, experiential learning, and field experiences during my collection of qualitative data in Lebanon. This paper has allowed me to fulfill Objective 1.1 (to develop a theoretical and practical understanding of women's citizenship in order to be able to explain how the socially constructed patriarchal society in Lebanon has limited women's political participation, restricted their rights, and hindered their identification as full citizens). The slow progression in tackling gendered barriers and oppressive policies and laws, coupled by deep patriarchal customs and traditions, and religious sectoral divide in governance continue to be the major limiting factors in achieving gender development goals that have been set by the United Nations (UN) and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Additionally, I learned, as per Objective 2.2 (to develop a theoretical and practical understanding of the roles popular education and vocational education play in capacity building in order to use them as a tool for

empowerment) that the main focus in gendered development in Lebanon is to dismantle the 'norm' of GBV that is not only still protected in law, but is embedded in a patriarchal culture. Reform and advocacy towards GBV via various avenues of formal and informal education is the main focus of international NGOs and local NGOs in Lebanon beginning with the use of arts-based advocacy. Finally, Objective 3.1 (to develop a theoretical and practical understanding of women's work in Lebanon in order to identify the political, institutional, cultural and societal barriers they need to overcome when trying to enter the workforce and the barriers they face in career advancement, in order to understand how to advocate against these obstacles) identify the political, institutional, socio-cultural barriers and intersections with GBV, that women need to overcome when trying to enter the workforce and the barriers they face in career advancement, in order to understand how to advocate against these obstacles. This allowed me to have a better understanding of presence, or lack of representation in the public and private sector to further drive gender equality.

Part 1: Introduction

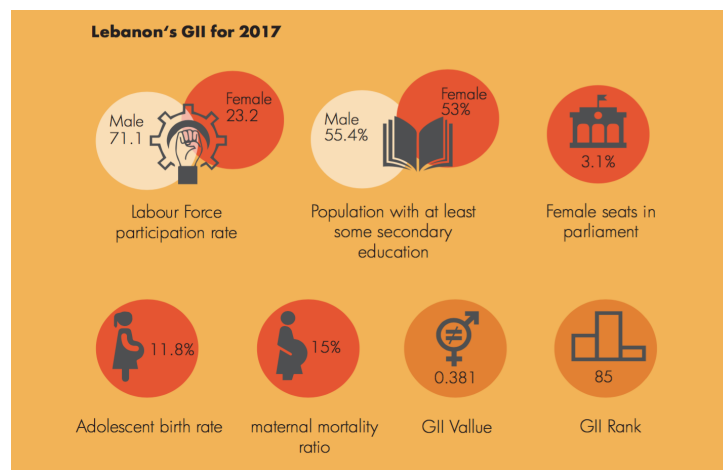
“Until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice, all our goals—peace, security, sustainable development—stand in jeopardy. Empowering women is an economic and social imperative. - Ban-Ki Moon” (UNDP, 2019). Gender equality is a human right and until it is achieved women will continue to be disproportionately affected and limited in public and private spaces. It has been frequently studied, theorized, and argued that there could be no sustainable development without the equal, meaningful, and knowledgeable participation of women (SDGs, U. N., 2015). No matter the region, the country, the level of development, progress will be stalled, exclusionary, and noneffective without taking into consideration and utilizing the full potential and skills of all citizens. Lebanon can be argued as a nation that is in a state of emergency, despite not being declared so by the government. The economic crisis, environmental damage, geopolitical tensions, internal governance corruption, and instability all add to the difficulties of tackling sustainable development- especially goal number 5, gender equality. These factors, as well as a culture that is deeply religious and patriarchal, leave researchers and advocates to call for action and change. Women suffer most in crises relating to economics, environment, politics, and conflicts, therefore the need for gender sensitive and aware development is a human right and becomes critical (SDGs, U. N., 2015).

Considering that Lebanon is an Arab state within Southwest Asia, it is unique in that it is commonly misinterpreted and referred to as the most liberal and progressive in the region; yet data proves otherwise (Avis, 2017). In an interview with a Minister (participant 9) they shared:

“But the fact that we are located in the Middle East and the fact that we are patriarchy, our country, and the fact that men still lead the country affects this process, but not as they don't see it as we see it. They don't see it of course as a human right, they see it as something more political and it's also based on religion because, as you know

Lebanon is divided based on the confessional system, it's divided based on religion” (personal communication, March 12th, 2019).

Lebanon is classified as a democratic state that is ruled and governed through a confessional system whereby multiple religious sects make up the representation, and power is a unique characteristic that acts as a barrier by creating a legislative process that is slow, lacks accountability, and is guided through religious doctrine (Avis, 2017). Having grown up in Canada to Lebanese immigrants sparked my curiosity and led me to investigate the troubling gender statistics, e.g. “Gender Inequality in Lebanon is considered to be particularly stark. According to the Gender Gap index, Lebanon ranks third to last in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (ranked at 135), only Syria and Yemen have a worse gender gap ranking, 142 and 144 respectively (WEF, 2016: 228)” (Avis, 2017). The Gender Index analyses data on education; political empowerment, agency and access to justice; economic participation; and health (including GBV). Lebanon’s most recent GII index score is 38.1%, meaning human development is stalled and met with barriers due to gender inequalities; these inequalities are situated in socially constructed norms that are reflected in GBV in public and private spaces (UNDP, 2019).



(ibid)

Deepening my research on gender in Lebanon allowed me to explore the social and cultural constructs of gender that are scarcely documented and explored in an academic context. This research paper aims to explore theories and concepts that hinder a woman's participation as they link to GBV and Lebanon's potential for gender equality. This research works to garner a better understanding of the diversity of experiences of women in Lebanon through arts-based advocacy with women who face oppression regardless of class, religion, ethnicity, culture, and place, and to show how these diverse experiences call for an intersectional approach to development and gender sensitive programming. I will be focusing on the socio-political, religio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic barriers and the progressive growth of agency of women in Lebanon through arts-based advocacy coupled with development programs to gain traction and progress towards gender equality. As a means for analysis, I will be utilizing information gathered through semi-structured interviews, panel discussions, and lived experiences collected in Lebanon over a period of four months. The diversity of interviewees (Appendix A) along with the data collected at various women-centered events and discussions in Lebanon will support the analysis of gender in Lebanon and how a 2030 goal set out by the UN in achieving gender equality (as well as sixteen others goals that intersect with gender) faces many obstacles and barriers rooted in GBV- along with some successes to date. This paper looks at efforts by international NGOs, local NGOs, governmental ministries, academics, artists, activists, and citizens to better understand how gendered development is being addressed, as well as to explore the different approaches by the stakeholders involved through the arts.

The agency of Lebanese women is a large contributing factor in the advancement of women's rights; it is the barriers of space, culture, and governance that need to be navigated to

ensure success which in turn makes progress slow and oftentimes neglected. In order to explore these factors, theories of Marxist feminism, postcoloniality, and a human rights lens are utilized. These discourses stress the importance of situating human rights analysis through power relations, space, oppression, and self-determination to further strengthen gendered advocacy through artistic communication. The literature reviewed in preparation for collecting qualitative data that is presented in the section 1.1 below exemplifies the importance of situating the research within the theories and concepts of citizenship, intersectionality, place, and power while simultaneously investigating the existing role, structure, and culture of NGOs and the UN in addressing gender equality in Lebanon.

My research was organized around one specific research question: how do women's organizations in Lebanon contribute to the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goal five (UN SDG 5); "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"? Additional questions were necessary in order to understand the strategies, approaches, tools, and partnerships used and how their interpretations of what SDG 5 means differ; the influence, role and effectiveness of the United Nations in the decision-making and implementation of gendered projects and programs in Lebanon through the prism of public, private and personal stakeholders; the recognition/interpretation of SDG goals, targets and indicators, an intersectional approach to gender equality, and the overall effectiveness. A shortlist of the questions asked during qualitative data gathering are as follows: how do you define gender equality?; what do you believe are the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in regards to gender equality (ex. citizenship, GBV, economic participation)?; do you believe attention to gender equality and advancement of women in Lebanon has changed since the establishment of the UN SDGs? e.g.

in Government policies, in public perception, in the media?; and, briefly describe your vision for women's advancement and equality in the future. To prepare for interviews I first investigated these questions, then these questions and more (Appendix B), were discussed and investigated through semi-structured interviews in which the participants not only answered the questions but shared their personal experiences and stories. Furthermore, the questions were investigated through grey literature, academic research and discussed during in-person events and informal interactions with family, friends, and other members of society.

To provide further context it is important that I situate myself in this research so that my research story and my relation is better understood. I am a Canadian-Lebanese, cis-gender female from Toronto, Canada. Arabic was my first spoken language as it is and remains the primary language used at home. Despite the fact that I speak Arabic, I do not read or write, limiting some access to resources provided to me by academics, activists, and grassroots organizations. My parents are both Christian Maronite, and I was raised as such. Christian Maronites fall within the top three religious representations within the country and with religious sects making up governance it remains mandatory that the President is Maronite; based on a census conducted postcolonial France after independence in 1942 (Avis, 2017). As a diasporic Lebanese and first-generation Canadian, I am burdened with the history and trajectory of Lebanon, not only because of my parents' close connection but because of the large portion of my family that still lives in Lebanon today in a small village in the North, Chekka, that is majority Christian Maronite. Having grown up in Canada to parents who immigrated to escape the civil war, I was not completely aware of the gendered complexity if I had been born and raised in Lebanon. In Lebanon, women are faced with challenges, oppression, and violence daily

based on gender alone and regardless of religion, class, ethnicity, or place. Legal, physical, verbal, and mental abuse is the norm and continues to be the driving force for change. In Canada, these aggressions are not as hardly felt as they are in Lebanon; it is not to say they do not exist for some communities or in some capacity, but it is definitely not to the same degree. However, placing myself, my lived experiences, and the experiences of those closest to me into my research can provide progressive insight, ideas, and suggestions that do not necessarily get addressed in the literature. Placing myself in Lebanon for four months during the research phase allowed me to approach this research, interviews, and writing in a way that is relational. I was able to have many conversations and listen to many stories from a diversity of Lebanese in both English and Arabic; this helped me realize that I had brought with me my own assumptions. Using this approach to research allowed for the creation of a safe and trustworthy space between myself- a researcher- and the participant. Furthermore, I am grateful for the relationships I have made back home by conducting my research as it relates to my cultural identity. I was afforded the opportunity to build constructive allyship with women in Lebanon through self-reflection to understand my privilege and active listening; these are concepts that are important to this research (Bishop, 2002). As an environmental student with an interest in gender and development, I have learned that there is no 'one size fits all' model and approach to development, and it is critical that in order for effective progress there must be trust, respect, and empathy. This ensures that not only myself, but future researchers, activists, and organizers are accountable in providing accurate, truthful, and emotionally intelligent work on gendered issues. Nira-Yuval Davis (2006) places emphasis on this, in that the recommendation for the implementation of policy or reform must be respectful of diverse communities, experiences,

learning and respecting these begins with understanding and situating oneself within the research.

I explored what it really means to be a woman in Lebanon the various factors that hinder equality and the avenues of agency that are deployed to advocate for equal rights. Art became a means for me to unlearn my stereotypes and learn by situating myself within the stories and experiences of diverse women across Lebanon; further igniting my curiosity on the impact artistic communication can have when implemented in Lebanese society. It is important to also mention that since departing Lebanon in April of 2019 the country has undergone and continues to be in the midst of a revolution that began in October 2019, detrimental economic collapse with some of the worlds largest inflation rates that began in early 2019, and a deadly and destructive explosion in Beirut that happened on August 4th, 2020, all while still carrying the burden of a refugee crisis and a global pandemic; a lot has changed since the start of the research process in terms of the political economy and impacts on gender.

It must also be said that history and the current situation within Lebanon is not one story that resonates with all citizens, I do not wish to homogenize the context of gender here.

Alternatively, I will showcase the diversity of experiences collected during the research stage.

All of this ties into my deep interest in environmental studies, whereby one cannot disconnect human rights, governance, gender, culture, and economic opportunity from sustainable development. For myself and many academics that came before me and for those who follow, it is important to study the human rights lens and anthropological connections to development, if we, globally are to have an impact in meeting the targets set out by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, U. N., 2015). I wish to acknowledge that although this paper is analysing violence

towards women and activism to combat this, men have also been exposed to violence in Lebanon's history through their role in geopolitical conflicts, the civil war, assassinations of male political leaders, domestic violence, and gendered norms that define their roles in society.

There are three main areas that are analysed in this research paper: politics and gender; societal and cultural awareness and sensitivity towards gender; and the participation of women in economic growth and the use of arts-based advocacy across all three to effectively progress towards equality. Both in public and private life, patriarchy has oppressed and violated women's rights and as a result limited their participation in social, economic and political life. In the case of Lebanon, the binary distinction between public and private is difficult to distinguish, "boundaries have been porous and fluid, in part, because of the centrality of patriarchal kinship structures, modes of operation and idioms in all spheres of social life" (Joseph, 1997, p. 74). Thus, the private is deeply embedded within and moulded by the public. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, the private will be analysed as the patriarchal family home, and the public will encompass all activities outside of the home. All sections will analyse how the power dynamics in the patriarchal private home are found in public spaces, to which bottom-up approaches through the arts are implemented to reform gendered perceptions. Furthermore, all three of these areas will touch on the utilization of an arts-based approach as a method of agency and advocacy of Lebanese women.

1. First, I will explore the topic of political participation in Lebanon. This section will explore concepts of representation and space in politics to support the evidence that showcases the repercussions of a confessional system, weak institutional capacity, geopolitics, and the lack of accountability in governance within this area of gendered

studies. I will explore how these factors not only affect women but deepen the urgency in reforming and amending oppressive personal status laws; here I will be able to explore how the use of art to advocate for representation of women in governance is facilitating dialogue and opening opportunities for more female candidates.

2. Second, I explore the socio-cultural sensitivity and awareness of gender and the main campaigns working to dismantle GBV and VAW in Lebanon. Here I will showcase how various forms of arts-based advocacy in public spaces are used as a tool to raise awareness and spark constructive dialogue. Focusing on the social constructs of gender and cultural norms as a way in navigating the intersectional approach to dismantling gender inequality is also a way of attempting long-lasting change and growing the community of advocates. Focusing on public participation as a method for achieving gender equality provides an opportunity for bottom-up approaches that begin with challenging the gender roles and stereotypes that continue to be oppressive and violent and introduce inclusive and collaborative solutions at the social level.
3. Lastly, I explore the intersections between private hidden labour and gender-based violence and the ability of women to participate in the labour to grow their personal economic independence and further development. Here I discuss the exclusionary social constructs of gender as they relate to work and cultural norms that obstruct opportunity and financial independence. Additionally, analysis on labour laws that are in place that continue to oppress women will be explored and the campaigns launched by NGOs focusing on male allyship to adapt and lead the way in creating opportunity and space for women to grow professionally.

Ultimately, the three sections will showcase the prominence of GBV in various institutions, industries and spaces, and how the use of arts-based advocacy is used to spark dialogue, challenge stereotypes, and reform cultural perceptions on the role of women. This bottom-up approach intends to give a voice and identity to oppressed women, and through visual learning and conversation, build solidarity and accountability for action to be taken. The effectiveness and impact art-based advocacy has in Lebanon will be explored in more detail in section 1.3 of the introduction.

1.1 Review of Literature

The first step in addressing the research question was to contextualize the pertinent issues by conducting a literature review. The literature informs and puts into context the existing theoretical frameworks that can be relied upon to explore the research questions. As stated above the theoretical frameworks explored in the literature reviews were of a Marxist feminist, postcolonial, and human rights lens. Relevant to this report is an exploration and evaluation of the impacts that the geopolitics, socio-political, religio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic underpinnings, as well as governance and the response in aid provided by the public sector have on gendered dynamics in Lebanon. At the very least, the literature review can assist with determining the baseline or potential outcomes that have been studied in relation to the research question(s) at hand (Wright et al., 2013). The pillars of literature reviewed to inform and guide the study include theories and concepts of citizenship, intersectionality, feminist politics, community development, oppression, damage centered research, as well as case studies mapping civil society in Lebanon; these lay the framework for discussions involving gender.

The literature on citizenship in Lebanon is not only limited but dated. Theories of citizenship are fluid and specific to location, history, culture, religion, etc. Additionally, gendered citizenship is a subject matter that dives into notions of citizenship that pertain specifically to women and how their contributions to society have been determined, limited, or silenced. Engin Isin's (2012) article *Citizenship after orientalism: an unfinished project*, highlights the difference between active citizenship, that is a common discourse in development by international and local NGOs, whereby citizenship is determined by status (ie. residence or legal rights) or practice (ie. education, work), and the 'act of citizenship'. Within the context of Arab culture which the article deploys to explore citizenship, women can be argued to be full citizens due to the 'act' of advocacy and organizing for equality as a result of the lack of recognition and resources. This 'act of citizenship' sheds a light on women as strong, persevering and determined bodies who wish to dismantle the system of oppression for a better tomorrow, as opposed to victims of patriarchy and powerless figures. They are acting through participation for the empowerment of self, family, community, and nation. Other literature discussing citizenship in Lebanon, such as work done by the feminist Arab scholar Rania Maktabi (Karlsson, 2009), presents citizenship as the access to resources at the state's disposal, reflected in their development. Her definition of citizenship encompasses the factors (civil, social, political, and economic) that hinder a woman's status and place in Lebanon in both the public and private lens and conceptually frames the repercussions of power wielded by a deeply patriarchal governing system and society. Additionally, in Lina Khatib's article *Gender, Citizenship and Political Agency in Lebanon* (2008), she critically engages and analyses the environment of women as citizens in Lebanon while making connections to legislation, participation, war, and work. Much of her analysis is

derived from classical feminist theories of public versus private and the inherent subordinate nature that women have been subject to for centuries. Lina Khatib (2008) makes connections between education and economic deprivation as factors that hinder citizenship and how they continue to add to women's political and social exclusion. Furthermore, literature exploring 'violence' and oppression towards women serves as a theoretical and conceptual exploration of the diversity of experiences. Moha Ennaji and Fatima Sadiqi's book *Gender and Violence in the Middle East* (2011) uses the feminist anthropology of violence to critically examine and address the politicization of gender and the deeply rooted cultural factors that result in violence against women. The anthropology of violence is a concept used to analyse violence against women through multiple perspectives; it challenges the constructed definition of 'violence' that has been commonly used in Western academia and imposed by international development agencies to combat against it and encourages an analysis on violence that takes into consideration the diversity of experiences within every culture (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 2011). The authors express the need to disconnect from the dangerous hegemonic definition of violence (physical act, commonly inflicted in the private sphere) that invisibilize the diverse experiences and forms of violence, and recognize that violence in the Arab context has been defined through history, war, culture, religion, and law. It not only takes the form of physical actions, but exclusion, "Othering", stereotypes, cultural norms, and restrictions to resources and institutions such as courts of law, healthcare, and work as well (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 2011, p. 22-3).

Literature exploring the development of Lebanon by analysing the effectiveness of existing projects, programs by both international and local NGOs is pertinent in providing baseline knowledge. Lamia El-Moubayed Bissat's (2002) article *The Role of Civil Society in*

Rural Community Development: Two Case Studies from Lebanon, is one of the few that showcases the divide between rural and urban development in Lebanon. It problematizes the centralization of development agencies, governance, and funding allocation in Beirut, and as a result the minimal distribution of organizations and funding in the rural regions. The rural areas of Lebanon have been neglected for far too long in regards to community development. The case study provides a capacity building framework whereby the necessity in the building of local institutional development is presented and defended. In addition, Ozlem Altan-Olcay and Ahmet Icduygu (2012) article *Mapping Civil Society in the Middle East: The Cases of Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey*, maps out the accountability, effectiveness, and international democracy promotion of NGOs in Southeast Asia. Commonalities between the three countries that were studied highlights the gap between the actual needs of a community and the implementation of international development discourse in communities. It showcases the effects donors have in forecasting the programs and projects that will be implemented in the region (top-down approach). The article argues that the division between civil society and states is not exactly known which leaves you to problematize the actual effectiveness in sustainable progress and question who is making the decision on what programs and projects are implemented. The article questions who is assigned the agency in regards to addressing an issue and why. As a way forward the article stresses an alternative method of community organizing and development where the contributions can translate to meaningful political and social transformation. Finally, *Mapping Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon* (2015), a project funded by the European Union, provides information on civil society organizations in Lebanon and the necessary steps forward in enhancing their role. The document highlights the role and influence that state

institutions, political context, international organizations, and civil society have on the development of Lebanon- a vulnerable state. The project showcases how the majority of organizations do not function under their mandated mission, as well they lack the ability to build capacity in the communities they serve, further widening the gap between dependency and empowerment. It is important to note that one of the biggest factors hindering the success of the social sector is an unstable and corrupt political context. This is an important document in that it provides preliminary information on the barriers that many NGOs face in providing meaningful contributions to their communities. Another barrier to the implementation of gender equality projects and programs would be the role that religious institutions and political parties play in funding NGOs. Funding from a specific religious sect or political party plays a role in excluding many disenfranchised people from accessing services. Defining the community you serve is problematic due to the fact that it has left out many people and therefore hinders the possibility for sustainable community development built through capacity building.

It is clear that there is a need for the public sector to aid in the development of Lebanon; their role is undeniably important considering the ongoing political instability in the country and the geopolitics of the region. Although their presence has brought forth some change and development, as well as the advancement of women's roles and rights, their effectiveness and approach can continue to be analysed to ensure adaptability and sustainability. Nira Yuval-Davis (2006) article *Intersectionality and Feminist Politics*, highlights the significance of an intersectional approach to aid and human rights work in the South. The author presents a methodology for community organizers and workers that has four distinct components: data collection, contextual analysis, intersectional review of policy initiatives and systems of

implementation, and implementation of intersectional policy initiatives based on the former. This methodology requires a separate examination of social divisions that operate within communities. In the Lebanese context, the divisions are factored by political affiliation, institutional presence, regional history, cultural traditions, varying religious sects, war, and violence and the presence of refugees. There must be an acknowledgement of diversity and recognition of expertise within the community for capacity building while acknowledging that the experience of one woman does not represent an entire group. In addition, it is well known and documented the importance of adapting programs and projects to specific community needs and desires. Hubert Campfens's (1997) book *Community development around the world: Practice, theory, research, training*, explores asset-based organizing is a method of community organizing. Asset-based organizing is important in that it creates inclusive participation of members of the community- here community is referring to women. Many of the skills necessary to drive change within a community lie within the community itself- capacity building. Members of the community have the most knowledge of the barriers, the needs, and the change that is needed; despite members of the community having diversity in location, religion, class, history, for the purpose of the paper, they share solidarity in their gender. Their skills have been acquired from their day-to-day experience, or education they have received (formal and informal). Although they may not have the academic credentials, they have skills that many academics do not have when it comes to community organizing. Asset-based organizing is an example of the self-management concept, the social learning concept, and the structural-functional concept, whereby it is a bottom-up approach to community organizing and development as well as the participatory approach. This is a critical approach to development in Lebanon and the

discussions that follow will present whether or not this method of development is being implemented, and if not what barriers stand in the way.

1.2 Methodology and Research Design

Researchers must be conscious of the damage in which their research and data collection brings to host communities. Eve Tuck's (2009) article *Suspending damage: A letter to communities*, calls for communities, researchers (including the data collection for this study), and educators to consider the effects of damage-centered research. Damage-centered research, which is common in the Lebanese context, documents women's oppression, pain, brokenness and holds those in power accountable for their oppression. As an alternative, the article introduces a desire-based research framework. Desire-based research takes concern in understanding the complexity, contradiction, and self-determination of lived lives. Desire-based research is a pillar to popular education through artistic communication as it fosters the unlearning of damage-centered research and places value in a deepened learning of gendered norms. Desire-based research is a mode of resistance that can be incorporated in my study whereby the participants (women) can envision a future of empowerment and equality as opposed to revisiting their oppression.

A multi-step process was utilized to address the research questions above. There are two major methods for collecting data related to the topic which are primary data and secondary data. Developing an in-depth understanding of the gendered political economy in Lebanon and the barriers to achieving SDG five various forms of qualitative data were collected. First, foundational knowledge was expanded through coursework, research, and literature reviews; this

will be outlined in the section that follows. The literature review was compiled to highlight various issues of gender equality (ie. citizenship, education, economic participation), international development, intersectionality and community-based participatory research methods. Over the span of three months (mid-January 2019 to early April 2019) observational and empirical evidence was then collected in Lebanon by attending various meetings and events (see table 1) as well as the day-to-day encounters, activities and informal conversations.

Interviews were then coordinated and conducted in Lebanon over the span of three months with interviewees which included advocates, Government officials, academics, UN employees, and local NGOs from various regions of the country. These interviews were subsequently transcribed, coded, and organized into data tables. Finally, the culmination of work resulted in an analysis and conclusion to the research question. The methodology employed in this research was predominantly influenced by the DEPICT model which consists of “dynamic reading, engaged codebook development, participatory coding, inclusive reviewing and summarizing, collaborative analysing, and translating” (Flicker & Nixon, 2015). DEPICT is a democratic, flexible, collaborative, and rigorous method that facilitates ‘knowledge to action’ (Ibid). The following sections will describe in detail each step involved in tackling the research question.

Observational/Empirical Evidence

The first step in addressing the research question is to acknowledge the value and importance of observational and empirical evidence. This was collected from a diversity of avenues (see table 1) as well as experiences of day-to-day encounters.

Table 1
Observational and Empirical Evidence Events.

Event Type	Title	Date	Location	Partner(s)	Speakers
Panel Discussion Q & A	Climate Change in Lebanon: Rallying you to the Heart of the Action	February 7th, 2019	ESA School of Business (Beirut)	UNDP	Ms. Yara Daou Chalfoun & Ms. Lea Kai Aboujaoude
Town Council Meeting	N/A	February 9th, 2019	Chekka, North Lebanon.	UNDP	UNDP & Various community stakeholders
Panel Discussion Q & A	Women in Data Science	March 1st, 2019	American University of Beirut		
Panel Discussion Q & A	Making Gender Work	April 4th, 2019	American University of Beirut	AUB Women & Gender Studies	Ghida Anani, Shaden Fakih, Myriam Sfeir & Jumanah Zabaneh.

Source: Own construction.

The events and encounters allowed the use of the case study method which, according to John Creswell (2013), in his book *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*, is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (community organizing and development in this case) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. The achievement of an in-depth understanding of the gendered political economy includes observation and empirical evidence for this study. The observational data will explore ways in which the public is familiar with the UN SDGs, their interpretation of UN SDG five, whether or not they feel included, the

barriers that stand in the way of sustainable development, and overall problems/concerns and successes. This was collected by simply asking about their familiarity with UN SDG five or gender equality, and if they have an understanding or are familiar with projects and programs. In addition to the events, informal conversations with women and men around the country, and the day-to-day experiences as a female researcher in Lebanon add value to the research paper by providing unbiased, emotional, and unfiltered stories. This will all be incorporated into the discussion that follows as well as inform the research on the various layers and dynamics of gendered politics in the country. Observational and empirical evidence was hand-written and collected in a notebook on almost a daily basis. The notes were taken within a Marxist feminist, postcolonial, and human rights lens by acknowledging themes of power, space, oppression, and self-determination. No names were used in the collection of this data, only gender, location, and event type (if applicable). The notebook was stored securely daily where no one would have access but the researcher. The collection and use of informal qualitative data for the research paper aids in providing a complete discussion on gendered dynamics in Lebanon.

Interviews

The second step in the process of answering the research question consists of conducting interviews with human participants. In addition to the foundational theoretical and conceptual understandings of development in the region and the case study research whereby the researcher gathered and interpreted observational data needed to address my research question, the researcher incorporated community-based participatory research. John Gaventa and Andrea Cornwall's (2008) chapter Power and Knowledge in the Handbook of Social Research highlights the importance of participatory research for feminist theory and development. In order to explore

the conceptions of knowledge that women and men in Lebanese communities have and how this can yield power in the decision-making on programs and projects necessary for gender equality (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008). This form of qualitative research was important to capture lived gendered experiences and the role that public, private and civil stakeholders have in sustainable gendered development. As noted by O'Brien et al. (2013, p.1245), qualitative research assists in “describing, interpreting, and generating theories about social interactions and individual experiences as they occur in natural, rather than experimental, situations”. In preparation for the interviews, the interviewer completed and obtained ethics certification (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans) from the Government of Canada’s Panel on Research Ethics. The certification process, which on average takes 3 hours to complete, assists in educating, preparing, and testing interviewers on how to conduct ethical research involving human participants. Further interview preparation was provided via academic literature on best practices. The extensive interview preparation was necessary due to the vulnerability of some of the interviewees, especially those who wish to remain anonymous to protect their careers. Once the preparation was completed, the interviewer reached out to the interviewees to arrange an interview at a time and place that was convenient for the interviewee. Interviews were semi-structured and ranged in time between 27 minutes to 118 minutes and took the form of individual interviews. The interviews were conducted with advocates, Government employees, employees from various UN agencies, academics, and local NGO employees (a total of 14 interviews; see Appendix A). My proficiency in Arabic allowed for the interviews to be conducted in either language. Throughout the interview the interviewer not only probed for further information, but took notes to capture inaudible responses such as body language, long

pauses and hand gestures. Despite the considerable preparation that went into the interview process, the researchers had to accommodate for one interview to be conducted over the phone due to conflicting schedules. The accommodation of this interviewee and the overall approach to the research required the researcher and the participants to work equitably throughout the process; working equitably also means allowing access to review the transcripts post interview and sharing the research upon completion (Tuck, 2009). The diversity of interviews is pivotal in gaining an understanding of the contribution of women's organizations and Government to the achievement of UN SDG five, their indicators, and their interpretation of what gender equality means. The questions asked will be desire-based rather than damage-based (inform the interviewees of the long-term goals of the project), by taking into consideration the article by Stacy Jacob and Paige Furgerson (2012), *Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research*. The article outlines ten steps for conducting a successful interview for researchers who are new to the field. All data collection and interviews were conducted in compliance with all YorkU Human Participants Research requirements and the collection of informed consent forms were collected by every participant (see Appendix D). All audio recordings were saved in a password protected google drive file and will be deleted upon submission of the final research paper.

To reinforce the importance and recognition of the contribution participants are making to the research, they will be provided with a final copy of the final research paper. Incorporating reciprocity and accountability into the fabric of the research will be helpful in learning to unlearn inherent biases, as attached to the privilege of the researcher being a Canadian-Lebanese woman,

that may be implicit in my dialogue, while further working to understand complex issues in a thoughtful manner.

Transcription

After the interviews were completed, the project proceeded to the transcription phase. The transcription process was informed by academic literature and lecture which highlighted best practices for transcribing interviews into text. Of particular importance and emphasis was on capturing inaudible or tonal/emotional responses that are typically absent in verbatim transcription. Stylistic options that were incorporated into the transcribing process was to capture translated text, body language, hand gestures, and various emotional responses. To ensure the verbatim transcription of audio to text the online transcribing service called ‘Transcribe Wreally’ was used. This allowed for the audio recordings to be slowed down, sped up, rewind, forwarded, and paused. Once the transcriptions were completed the participants were allowed to engage in a consultation session, which is a participatory process that seeks to give power to the participant over the research results and receive more inclusive feedback with what has been transcribed. Upon completion of the transcription, the audio recordings remained in the password-protected google drive file and will be destroyed upon completion of the paper as per the terms in the consent form between the interviewer and interviewee.

Coding

After the anonymized interview transcripts were uploaded to a password protected google drive file, coding could begin. Again, this exercise was informed by academic literature. The purpose of the coding framework for the data was to make sense, compare and contrast, and analyse data contained in 14 different interviews. Once the coding framework was finalized, the

researcher went through all transcripts and began to code. This step included a thorough review, marking, and cutting of the transcript into statements corresponding to the established coding framework. Any statement that didn't fit within any of the coding frameworks was shredded by the researcher. Upon completion, the data collected by community-based research becomes more impactful and resourceful.

Analysis- Data Tables

In order to sufficiently analyse a code, the creation of sub-codes was important to distinguish between the multiplicity of issues within one topic. For instance, the Governance code alone does not capture the various dimensions of experiences and responses of participants. Since an appropriate one size fits all code does not exist, a rigorous analysis requires sub-codes. As a result, the extracts from the coding exercise were organized into sub-codes and then transposed into data tables accordingly. The process resulted in five codes and further divided into 15 sub-codes. A list of these sub-codes along with its corresponding extracts can be found in a data table attached to this report and marked as Appendix C. The utilization of sub-coding and data tables was informed by academic literature and lecture.

1.3 Gender Equality: An Arts-based Approach

Throughout the duration of the research collection process and my time in Lebanon, it was never my intention to analyse the linkages between arts-based advocacy and gendered development. Nonetheless, after many of the discussions I had, events I attended, and encounters with various stakeholders passionate and driven for gender equality, it became evident that the arts have played and continue to play a large role in driving effective long-lasting change. As

such, an arts-based approach cannot be ignored as the main thread through my research. Grey literature on gender equality in Lebanon historically and presently continues to show the need for deep-rooted change. The literature recognizes governance and culture as major barriers to advancement towards equality. Increasing support from the public to ignite and strengthen the call-to-action to bring forth reform is the main focus of gender transformative programming. Art is a form of praxis (where praxis represents both reflection and action) and can be used to resist unjust uses of power. Through true reflection, effective and inclusive action can be taken to address human rights violations and GBV in Lebanon (Freire, 2010). This sort of interaction allows for changes in the way that people engage in interactive spaces. The artistic process adopted by local NGOs and in partnership with the UN starts with a conversation with the public which then leads to a vision for communicating experiences and ways forward; this creates a sense of solidarity, support, and trust in the transformative journey. Utilizing arts-based approaches in a society with different political affiliations, weak institutional presence, violent regional history, oppressive cultural traditions, and diverse religious beliefs will foster deepened understanding and creatively communicate knowledge that will alter the ways in which citizens interact in public and private spaces (Freire, 2010). Artistic communication fosters asset-based organizing whereby citizen participation is encouraged in order to share and add value to the development process by presenting lived experience as an educational tool (Capmfens, 1997). The social learning or educational concept of community development which aims at bringing together professional experts (NGOs), with their universal knowledge and local residents (artists) with their popular knowledge and lived experiences is an effective tool in bottom-up advocacy to reform culture (ibid). An arts-based approach allows for an intersectional, inclusive and

accessible method to voicing the demand for change, whereby the information and message being shared can be educational and awakening for many who may be unaware of the political, systemic, and cultural oppressions women are faced with daily.

“Additionally, the past few years have seen a rich production of feminist content and knowledge online and offline, in the form of academic publications, journalistic writing, artistic products, and documentation of oral histories. Activists from older generations of organizing have referred to the fearlessness and bravery of younger activists in making issues visible where they could not, and in mainstreaming feminist content into Lebanese popular culture. In fact, people who are just starting to identify as feminists have increased access to feminist discourse, through comedy shows, storytelling events, art performances, comics, and more. Finally, the existence of several spaces available for feminist discussions and events reinforces a sense of belonging to a wider movement” (Moughalian & Ammar, 2019).

Film, television, radio, social media, photos, drama, theatre, music are only some of the forms of art that have been used to make visible the experiences of women across Lebanon, acting as a fuel igniting and driving the feminist movement towards political and cultural reform. The diversity of artistic approaches are reflective of the uncertainty of how society obtains their information. Within a nation diversified by religion, class, culture, education, income, it is important to share messaging through various mediums to ensure non-exclusionary engagement.

During the American University of Beirut (AUB) panel discussion held April 4th, 2019 on ‘Making Gender Work’ Myriam Sfeir, the Director of Arab Institute of Women stated “art speaks all languages and speaks to people in different ways” (April 4th, 2019). Having been a decision-maker in the institute for many years, Myriam has seen first hand the change that has come from using the arts as a vessel to speak on gender issues in Lebanon and across the region. She shared passionately about the impact that one song released in Lebanon called “In my Hand” has had on spreading the message on women’s rights in Lebanon; this was an example of how music has invited gendered discussions to the table (LAU & AiW, 2016). The song addresses a

variety of oppressive norms that women in Lebanon deal with daily, beginning with laws, political corruption, unrecognized and unappreciated domestic work, and domestic violence. The main messaging is a call-to-action for women and male allies to rise up and demand change towards the existing criminal laws, personal status laws, and cultural norms that are inherently oppressive and violent. Here we must be reflective as well and understand that there is not one story or one experience shared by all the women in Lebanon; the laws and norms affect women in different capacities (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 2011, p. 22-3).



Figure 1. *In my Hand*, 2016.
By LAU & AiW. Photo retrieved from youtube.

The diversity of experiences must be made visible, as some women in communities may be freer to travel within the country or less restricted in their attire; there are nuances to differentiating experiences. Therefore, we must refrain from homogenizing the lives of women in a patriarchal and socially constructed violent state, which is why an arts-based approach is vital to change in that it explores a wide variety of experiences through multiple avenues. An arts-based approach

to advocacy allows the opportunity for an individual to receive the message, place themselves within, and relate on a personal level. It allows for the opportunity to introspect and question “where do I fit into this?” or “I have had a similar experience, and this is my story”. Gendered advocacy through the arts is diverse, intersectional, and accessible, it does not exclude, oppress, or discriminate. Rather it serves as an uncensored opportunity for reflection, dialogue, and change. The artist is sharing their story in hopes that it is relational; it is their attempt in bonding through solidarity and becoming an ally in the fight for equality. Anne Bishop (2002) article *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people and beyond token change: Breaking the cycle of oppression in institutions* presents 18 guidelines to breaking the cycle of oppression that can be further translated into the working of artists sharing the experiences of women in Lebanon. “It is important to be a worker in your own liberation struggle, whatever it is. Learn, reflect on, and understand the patterns and effects of oppression, take action with others, take risks, walk towards your fear to find your power” (Bishop, 2002, p.1). Presented as the 1st point in becoming an ally, artists have the ability and hold the power in participating in the advancement of gender equality by making their experiences visible and posing as educators for the community. The process of unlearning and understanding that not all experiences are the same within a group is part of the journey in teaching, growing, situating oneself in the discussion, and safely standing in solidarity (ibid). This is valuable for artists to consider when advocating for gender rights. Becoming an ally is a crucial step in the right direction to create and engage in inclusive, safe, and supportive environments for women and men.

In Lebanon an arts-based approach to advocacy is critical. It allows for messaging and demands for reform to be shared in an uncensored and unbiased manner. The freedom to share

and the spaces created to safely do so are essential in the inherently violent and exclusionary state. Communicating through the arts allows society to safely question if their beliefs are outdated, or am I being told to believe something that is harmful to others? Furthermore, it allows for an opportunity for all to participate in gendered advocacy, not only those educated in a traditional environment. “Institutional change is not a linear or necessarily a cumulative process; often the most powerful influences for change are not even intellectual, but emotional—for example, brought about through artistic or creative expression—by poetry or music” (Taylor, 2008, p. 361). Creative expression has played and continues to play a critical role in Lebanon for allowing the opportunity for society to unlearn the oppressive actions that have become the cultural norm and learn how change can be achieved, what role they have in advocating for change, how to participate in an impactful and meaningful manner and support the overall inclusive development of Lebanon. Focusing on bottom-up approaches that utilize art as a tool to educate, empower, and activate alliances will shift the ways in which society interacts within public and private spaces. The sections that follow will present the barriers to achieving gender equality in Lebanon and the arts-based initiatives that have ignited conversations, political and policy reform as well as a cultural shift in the perspectives of what it means to be a woman in Lebanon.

Part 2: Governance & Space: The Call for Meaningful Representation (SDG 5 & 10)

Achieving targets and making progress toward gender equality cannot be done so without the participation of the government. Governance systems, ministers, local leaders must all be part of the process to ensure that there are amendments and reform to oppressive and exclusionary

laws and policies as well as to make room for the participation of women in politics. Lebanon faces multifaceted obstacles to gender equality and a major pillar of this stems from governance, weak institutional capacity, and lack of representation (Avis, 2017). The participation of women in politics and the nurturing of an inclusive space for constructive change is pivotal in making a lasting impact. The 2004 Arab Regional Conference – which marked the ten-year anniversary of the Beijing World Conference on Women – reiterated in its Beirut Declaration “the importance of the empowerment of women, which...has become a fundamental element in the Arab vision of reform,” calling for legislative changes to “guarantee an increase in their participation in political activity,” including political gender quotas (UN, 2004). Yet unfortunately, “since 2010, Lebanon has seen a consistent decline in its global index rank and relative gender gap score primarily as a result of scores consistently close to zero in political empowerment (WEF, 2016)” (Avis, 2017, p.2). There must be urgency and accountability placed on the ministries and decision-makers to amend, change and implement policies, such as those affecting citizenship and GBV in Lebanon; this is critical at this stage of development (UNDP, 2019). Within this section, there will be a socio-political exploration of the representation and participation of women in governance and the significance this holds in making a sustainable impact towards progressive development.

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, women’s rights, including female political participation, and the struggle to achieve these rights have become legitimized on a global scale. CEDAW states that discrimination against women not only “violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity,” but is also “an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hamper[ing] the

growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity” (Avis, 2017, p.5). Effective development requires the participation of women, but throughout history, and in Lebanon’s present-day there remains a lack of women in politics, therefore their role in communities in positions of authority tends to be undermined (Leavitt, 2003). Jacqueline Leavitt (2003) addresses this issue critically in her article, *Where’s the gender in community development?*, whereby gender silence is the dominant norm, women in community development holding power roles are weak because they do not address gender issues, and they are a female playing in a man’s world (playing it safe). The patriarchal society has played a role in shaping the community and national development, whereby privilege is given to the male decision-makers and in-turn the prioritization and implementation of gender sensitive programming continues to be stalled (Pearse & Connell, 2015). Elsa Maarawi, a UN gender specialist, expressed that, “so basically Lebanon and gender are new to each other” (personal communication, February 28th, 2019). When asked to discuss what investments and partnerships are required to strengthen the national gender equality initiatives and to increase their effectiveness, her raw and honest response exposed the harsh reality that gender work still has a long way to go: “for women’s representation in political, political institutions and political parties I know there is a lot of work” (ibid). To address issues of representation, debates on a gender quota have been a topic of discussion since 2005, notably through the Boutros Commission proposal. Drude Dahlerup (2005), in their article *Increasing Women’s Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas*, claims that gender quotas have played a role in bringing about this transformation as they have proven effective in many countries; “as a

consequence of gender quotas, a dramatic change has taken place recently in the global ranking order of countries based on their level of female political representation” (p. 141). Lebanon has yet to pass legislation implementing a gender quota in the governance system, despite the staggering evidence globally of the impact this has on a nation’s sustainable development and advancements towards gender equality, especially in countries where representation is met with many barriers.

“I think specific laws as well, in Lebanon in the political sphere it’s time for a gender quota in parliament, I don't know if you've come across this conversation here before. It should be merit-based, I'm not saying just get anybody who's a woman to fill a seat in parliament, but leave a quota for the most competent, because it's already so hard for women to compete against men. But obviously she should be qualified. So I think that should definitely be passed...and this way if that's rolled out more women will probably be encouraged to run, because they know that, it's not so stacked up against them and they actually have a chance to make it” (Zeina Saab, personal communication, March 15, 2019).

From the discussions throughout the semi-structured interviews and informally in conversation, meaningful participation was an important message that was shared. This is because factors such as kin-based solidarity, a religious sectarian government, and cultural norms have shaped the representation in present-day Lebanon and remain as barriers in creating space for women to participate. “The number of women increased in the parliament, but this is not enough. Not only but, with numbers, this is not enough because we need meaningful participation not only the participation of women...we should not just mainstream gender and just like put it there because it should be there, we need meaningful participation” (Mohammad Mansour, personal communication, February 21st, 2019). Like many of their male counterparts, most of the women who have made it into high-level government positions have entered politics as a result of family connections and cronyism; MPs Bahia Hariri, Sethrida Geagea, and Nayla Tueni being current

examples of women coming from prominent political families. These are the same families that have been in politics in Lebanon since their independence from colonial France, and the same families that opposed a ten percent gender quota in Lebanon (Benoist, 2014). Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2003) explore the role that factors such as patriarchy, religion, kin-based solidarities, and culture have played on limiting space, access to resources, and ultimately underrepresentation of women in politics; these factors are translated into modern-day Lebanon in shaping governance. In Lebanon, there is limited space for participation and those women who are participating are perceived as gender tokens by society. Mohammad Mansour, the Senior Director of Programs at ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality touched on the importance of women in politics multiple times throughout our discussion and presented on some progress:

“We look up to having a non-genderized system in Lebanon. A good step, first time in Lebanon we have four ministers in our cabinet for women. First time, previously we had one, last government. First time in the Arab world, the Minister of Interior Affairs a woman... which is really good. The number of women increased in the parliament, but this is not enough. Not only but, with numbers, this is not enough because we need meaningful participation not only the participation of women.” (personal communication, February 21st, 2019).

Yet, despite the limitations, gendered working groups such as The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and female political representatives have made progress over the past few years in reforming laws such as women and girls are protected by the Law on Protection of Women and other Family Members from Domestic Violence, Law No. 293 of 2014; and Article 562 of the Penal Code, which allowed reduction of sentences for ‘honour’ crimes, was repealed in 2011 (UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women & ESCWA, 2019). These reforms do not mean that the

law is perfect or that gender justice has been achieved, alternatively, they highlight the prioritization of reform and revisions that were met with minimal religio-political barriers (ibid).

Even with the slight increase in women in politics in Lebanon, the Arab region still has the lowest level of women's representation globally. "It is worth noting that it was not until the onset of the uprisings that women's political participation in national legislatures exceeded the 10 percent mark. Currently, women constitute, on average, 17 percent of the membership in the parliaments in the region, compared to 40 percent in Nordic countries and 27 percent in both Europe and the Americas (Shalaby, M., 2018, p. 1). The opportunities for political participation are inherently oppressive and exclusionary; Ruth Lister (2000) explores this topic in their paper *Dilemmas in Engendering Citizenship* through discussions on active citizenship and how a woman's capacity to participate is hindered by opportunities of space: "no matter how successful women were at organizing at a grass-roots level, their power was limited while they remained outside the circles where key policy decisions were made and implemented" (p.41). For women in Lebanon who are living in poverty, do not have control over their finances, or are culturally segregated from opportunities to politics, there is an increase in challenges faced, and in turn less opportunity to enter the political field. Their experience and expertise of first-hand experiences of what is needed at the community and national level are muted and stalled by the lack of advancement of female politicians.

"Although the powerful expert, often an 'outsider', is seen as a key player in change processes of many kinds, the recognition is growing that such change agents are most effective when they engage deeply with those most knowledgeable about a particular context, supporting their critical reflection on the issues that affect them, and helping them to identify approaches and resources needed to bring about a particular change" (Taylor, 2008, p. 359).

Recognizing and leveraging the perspectives women bring when addressing feminist issues reflected in criminal, personal status, and labour laws and policies that remain oppressive to women across the country can be argued to be the most strategic method to achieve gender equality (Chappell, 2002). “There's a lot of work, we don't think this is enough, there is a huge work to cover to establish gender equality in Lebanon. There's a lot of laws that need to be reformed, abolished, changed to, so we can reach gender equality” (Mohammad Mansour, personal communication, February 21st, 2019). Who better to advocate and work towards oppressive laws than the women who have been affected by them first hand.

“Political activities carried out by women around the body, the environment, the community and the public arena are redefining political action. They are redefining the political to take into account their own gender concerns based on their encounter with various processes of globalization, and are challenging the dominance of political-economic logics by basing a politics in their own needs and their daily, lived experiences” (Harcourt & Escobar, 2002, p. 14).

The passion and expertise that women offer in advocating and supporting their communities have proven to be an obstacle as they have been deemed as inexperienced or not qualified; this is translated into the number of women in politics today. Addressing human rights violations and effective development requires the participation of women in governance to set agendas and prioritize reform (Leavitt, 2003). Experience and qualifications must be measured outside traditional formal education and institutional exposure whereby historical exclusion is acknowledged and dismantled.

Advocating for change and expressing the need for more female representation in politics has taken many forms in Lebanon. Cultural norms and society's interpretations of what the role of a woman is in Lebanon is one of the most impactful barriers and forms of oppression. In 2018 UN Women reported that 78.6% of female candidates had been subject to political violence in

Lebanon. So aside from the institutional reform needed to make space for women in politics, there is an even greater need for Lebanese society to allow an increase of women's access and inclusion in politics by eliminating oppressive gender taboos and roles. The constant suppression of a woman's ambitions not only has an impact on the individual but their community and country as well. "It's so difficult, so why not make it a little easier and get the culture and society used to having more women leaders in political spaces" (Zeina Saab, personal communication, March 15, 2019). Prior to the 2018 parliamentary elections, the UNDP in partnership with the former Lebanese Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, the EU, and UN Women launched a gender roadmap for women's political participation and representation (UN LVNR, 2018).

"Aiming to enhance the meaningful participation of women in the upcoming elections, the gender roadmap presents alternatives, other than quotas, to increase women's participation in politics and help in advocating and influencing public behaviour to support the inclusion of women in public life. The gender roadmap includes the development and production of a public media awareness campaign that targets Lebanese women as candidates and voters following the electoral calendar timeline" (UN LVNR, 2018, p. 29).

The roadmap not only served as a tool to support female candidates but a tool as well to spread awareness and communication on the need and importance of female representation in politics by meeting with and discussing the role media outlets serve in promoting women candidates throughout their electoral journey (ibid). "Women's public political work, then, has much to do with shifting cultural codes and creating a critical language or vantage point that can open up the public domain to more participants in the decision-making process as well as point to the ubiquity of those public sites within accepted cultural practices" (Harcourt & Escobar, 2002, p.11). Cross-sectoral collaboration with various stakeholders to share the experiences of female

politicians can be seen as a powerful tool in sharing transparently the reality of their experiences to contribute to the transformation of society. Another pillar to the campaign was named ‘Half the Society, Half the Parliament’ (UNDP, 2018). A portion of this campaign used an arts-based approach through billboards, TV commercials, radio broadcasting, and social media to share the platforms of women candidates who’s message would most often not be highlighted and veiled by the popularity of the male-dominated candidates.



Figure 2. *Half the Society, Half the Parliament Project, 2018.*
By EU and UNDP. Photo by Bilal Hussein in Downtown Beirut, Lebanon.

The campaign discussed the importance of media exposure and also presented this as a barrier to increasing public support in that female candidates do not get as much airtime as the male candidates (ibid). Additionally, the campaign sought out to encourage more women to run for office stating, “for your voice to make a change, you should be in parliament”, while simultaneously showing photos of feminist protests that have been happening across Lebanon demanding: equal citizenship rights, basic human rights, reforming laws to end child marriage and punish rapists, and ultimately protecting women from GBV (UNDP Lebanon, 2018).



Figure 3. *Half the Society, Half the Parliament Project*, 2018.
By UNDP Lebanon. Photo retrieved from youtube.

This opens up opportunities for solidarity, activism, self-reflection, and unlearning of harmful stereotypes regarding the positionality of women in both the private and public sphere. The ultimate goal of the gender roadmap was to reform gendered norms on a women’s role in politics and highlight actions as oppressive when they would usually be deemed as the usual rhetoric.

Jumanah Zabaneh the program manager with UN Women spoke about the campaign deployed by the UN to spread awareness on women’s political participation:

“There was also a video, like a documentary, whatever you call it. After the Lebanese elections of what kind of questions the media ask women, that are running. It was all about, so what does your husband think? So can a MP be pretty and elegant? And, MP what will be the dress code? Will it be a problem if you wear formal suits or not? How do you manage to see your kids and stuff? You know, and then this documentary was actually saying that compared to what questions, I mean, not the single man was asked does your wife approve? Or how are you going to get dressed when you reach parliament? Or whether you can still be a good father? So it's, it, there are changes happening but we still have the residues of the traditional roles or for women” (personal communication, March 19th, 2019).

This arts-based approach to advocating for an increase in female representation in politics exposed the cultural oppression women are faced with. The video documentary spread

messaging on how the questions asked are inherently sexist and undermine the expertise, professionalism, and value of a women's role in politics.



Figure 4. *Half the Society, Half the Parliament Project*, 2018.
By UNDP Lebanon. Photo retrieved from youtube.

It was filmed and shared with the public before the upcoming 2018 (later to be postponed to early 2019) elections and those elections resulted in an increase of female representation in parliament from three to four and an increase of female candidates running for public office from 12 to 86 in 2018 (UNDP LEAP 2018, p. 40). When asked if this arts-based project had an effect on the elections Elsa Maarawi stated:

“But there was an increase, since yeah from the few years from the previous election to the election...if you compare to the municipality elections and parliament election, between the previous one, this one and the one before, yes there was definitely a big increase. I am not sure if it's about SDG number five honestly” (personal communication, February 28st, 2019).

The uncertainty of the impact such a campaign has on challenging the norm is something to consider, but what the art informed campaign did was present the topic of representation in a manner that was accessible and digestible for the population.

“But it's all about raising the kids to think a certain way, then these people are future voters, these are future leaders and that's how change is made, it's not always the revolution, violent revolution, it's by a silent revolution...but why not change mindset, why not change the voters, the future voters. Um, so that leaders can actually be

convinced that this is how something needs to be done” (Zeina Saab, personal communication, March 15th, 2019).

Changing mindsets and altering perceptions is a difficult task for only one tactic to be used, especially when attempting to educate the next generation and ensuring that gender discrimination is a thing of the past. You can build the capacity of women with the necessary skills and tools to run for office, but if this is met with cultural resistance there will be no progressive change in the participation of women in politics. Arts-based advocacy directed at messaging for female representation in politics played an important role in igniting lasting change both in cultural and societal perceptions of inclusivity and a woman's ability to be in positions of power; further dismantling patriarchal culture and institutions. This will ensure that there is action and accountability on future agendas relating to gender equality and that they are prioritized and seen through; ultimately, resulting in the amendment and reforming of criminal laws, personal status laws, labour laws, and policies that continue to oppress women.

Part 3: Power, Oppression & Violence: Gender Sensitivity & Awareness (SDG 5 & 3)

“The personal is political” (Hanisch, 1969). One can argue that the most difficult feats to achieving the UN SDGs, specifically SDG number five, gender equality are embedded in the societal and cultural perceptions of gender that for many years have left women behind along the road to development. Lebanon is a nation that is deeply patriarchal which is reflected in its laws and cultural and social norms that exclude and oppress women (Salameh, 2014). Therefore, a deepened understanding of what socio-cultural norms exist and how they function as inhibitors of gender equality initiatives is a crucial step in modifying and adapting gendered programming

to be more effective in contributing to the achievement of SGD five. Within this section, there will be an exploration of cultural and societal awareness and sensitivity towards gender and how a lack thereof has resulted in commonly accepted violence towards women and slow progress towards change.

Lebanese society is organized with a distinct gender divide whereby men hold the power and women are left to be powerless and oppressed in many situations; this leaves women in a precarious disadvantage whereby power imbalances have perpetuated violence and as a result, women are considered partial citizens (Salameh, 2014).

“The function of violence is bound to have practical and symbolic meanings. Not surprisingly, violence turns out to be a socio-cultural phenomenon, a changing form of interaction and communication at many different levels. With violent action, one may express constructive as well as destructive aspects of gender, subjectivity, community, etc. Violence is both an aspect of community and society (symbolic-cultural approach) and an aspect of disharmony and destruction—as expressed in theories that speak of an increase in interpersonal violence among marginalized and impoverished groups (demonstrated in socialization theories and functional approaches)” (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 2011, p.22).

The cultural and social constructs of what it means to be a woman (loyal and honourable to both man and nation) and these same beliefs that legitimized a gendered division to citizenship have been instigators to violence against women (VAW) in both the public and private domains (Jad, 2010). “A number of scholars single out socialisation and culture as the most important factors explaining men’s VAW” (Hamieh & Usta, 2011, p. 6). Despite the strength and perseverance embodied by women, VAW is still inflicted through multiple avenues, both visible and invisible and in all spaces. Ultimately, barriers to gender equality are embedded in the oppressive and violent gender divide that is continuously reinforced through government and political discourse, institutional systems, national and regional history, cultural traditions, social norms, religion,

war, and violence. Reflections of culturally inflicted and generally accepted violence towards girls and women in Lebanon can be seen in both private and public spaces.

“This school of thought maintains that violence is a result of the socialisation process whereby cultural and societal expectations of men influence how boys are brought up to think and act in relation to women. The environment in which men are socialised is significant. The ideas, images, and norms of behaviour to which men are exposed play an important role in shaping their behaviour” (Hamieh & Usta, 2011, p. 6).

Conscious (deliberate verbal, physical abuse) and unconscious (subordination) violence brought on by cultural norms is one of the most apparent and talked about gendered issues (gender-based violence- GBV) (ibid). Lack of comprehensive and progressive criminal and personal status laws that hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, lack of trust in the judicial system to penalise acts of violence, lack of awareness of the repercussions of daily verbal abuse, and cultural norms that continue to restrict women’s access to resources, conversations and spaces are topics of discussion that continuously appeared during the research process.

“If you are aiming to achieve gender equality in Lebanon, you really need to tackle the laws that are not really gender sensitive...We have our challenges, though we are going there, we are on the path, we are trying to have law reforms, we are working with like ministries on mainstreaming gender, pulling regulations between brackets "of the SGBV sector in Lebanon to be more systematic, organized". So we are trying to do those, we still have a lot of work to do, we still have our flaws that we need to change tackling chapter seven of the Lebanese law especially from 503 to 522. 522 is abolished, so 503 to 521” (Mohammad Mansour, personal communication, February 21st, 2019).

These laws in Lebanon that Mohammad Mansour mentions (as well as many other participants) are the laws and Penal Codes that penalise perpetrators that inflict violence (physical and nonphysical) in the form of: sexual harassment, marital rape, abortion for rape survivors, adultery, exoneration by marriage, child marriage, male guardianship over children and women, custody rights, marriage and divorce, inheritance, etc (UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women & ESCWA, 2019, p. 9). The fact that these laws continue to exist in Lebanon is reflected in the acceptance

and volume of cases of violence reported (mostly unreported) and social acceptance of their occurrence; on average, each person knows 1.7 victims of GBV (KAFA & UNDP, 2016). The laws (public), coupled with socio-cultural norms in the household (private), hinder the ability to adopt change, despite the appearance of gendered programming advocating for advancements in women's social, economic, and political status. When Elsa Maarawi was asked what the most pressing issue in relation to gender was in Lebanon, she responded:

“Gender-based violence I think is the most pressing issue because this is the, I mean you are talking about death so it's immediate it's something that we need to deal with. This is related to rights and law, because, there is discrimination that are related to social control background and stuff. But if I am violated, what are my options? Um, because it is linked to economic empowerment because if I have money, the financial means I can leave, I can build my life and say no to violence. But if I don't have this, like many women here, then will the laws here protect me and the enforcement of the law? Okay, so the laws say you cannot beat your wife, your wife, your children, your husband. It's in the law, but if I am beaten so what, what are my possibilities?” (personal communication, February 28st, 2019)

With the fear of bringing shame to the family or being subject to more violent actions, most women who are faced with GBV in public and private spaces refrain from reporting or seeking help; their sense of agency has been silenced (KAFA & UNDP, 2016). The UN has documented examples of the multiple reasons that this occurs such as: lack of trust in the judicial system that tends to favour men, fear of more violence and oppression brought on by the family in response to speaking up, lack of access to resources to help a woman attempting to leave a violent space, fear of the loss of child custody (UNDP, 2019, p. 11-12). With both the public and private spheres limiting the access to safe spaces for women to seek refuge from violence, their voices will continue to be silenced and the norms will continue to be acceptable for the current citizens and generations to come.

The urgency in addressing and dismantling GBV norms is evident in Lebanon through the emergence and increase in the diversity of organizations, programs, projects, and campaigns working towards change such as ‘Kafa (enough) Violence & Exploitation’ that was founded in 2005, ABAAD which stands for Zero tolerance to Sexual Exploitation & Abuse in 2011, Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya meaning development champions in 2011, and Nawaya (intentions) Network in 2016 to list a few. There are multiple strategies for overall effectiveness in achieving SDG five such as political advocacy, lobbying, and protests to reform and amend laws and the educational workshops that teach women about their rights and programs and projects working to explore pedagogies of violence and propose relevant and intersectional approaches to empower and support women in their fight against violence. Kafa is one of these organizations, which I did not have an opportunity to interview, but was commonly referenced and recognized for the transformative gendered work being done in and around Beirut. At the American University of Beirut (AUB) panel discussion ‘Making Gender Work’ hosted by AUB Women & Gender Studies Department, Ghida Anani, the Director and Founder of ABAAD– Resource Center for Gender Equality, spoke of the mission and values that NGOs and grassroots organizations in Lebanon need to focus on to have success (April 4th, 2019). These include, “confronting the system”, which represents the work being done to challenge the political system that continues to uphold and turn a blind eye to GBV (ibid); second, the social and cultural exploration of not only the implications of violence but the urgency of both qualitative and quantitative research, data, and discussions on the root causes of GBV (ibid); and what Ghida referred to as Kafa’s work on “breaking the cycle” by not only providing awareness to women but the need for programming to focus on men and their historical and present-day role in violence and

oppressive power over women (ibid). These three pillars on which the organization focuses their work can be observed as initiatives targeting the public sphere, yet additionally, KAFA and similar organizations work to address private sphere violence and support women by providing legal, social, and psychological support for victims of violence (UNDP, 2019). This is both preventative and responsive advocacy and reflective of the four components Yuval-Davis (2006) recommends as the methodological approach to intersectional policy and gendered development (p. 204-205). “The point is to analyse the differential ways in which different social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities” (ibid). Ultimately, acts of GBV in Lebanon hinders the participation of women in many spaces outside of their socially constructed gender role and endangers their agency, yet to challenge this, local NGOs such as KAFA and ABAAD are prioritizing intersectional approaches to development that understands and values the involvement of all members of society equally and prioritizes the involvement of marginalized people to act (Boudet, A. et al, 2013). They are inclusive and acknowledge the diverse experiences, for some women are more mobile than others, less restricted in their attire- even those who wear a hijab, have access to resources and tools for development etc. Development here has been using an arts-based approach to ensure the content is accessible, thought-provoking, and intersectional; representation is important and critical here as Lebanon is socially segregated by religion, region, history, class etc. Facilitating inclusive and intersectional education (popular and vocational) that targets the three pillars set out by KAFA is a powerful and impactful method to provide women with the agency, resources, and space to decrease cases of GBV and ultimately put an end to oppressive violent social norms.

I will explore how informal education- for the purpose of this paper, education outside of the traditional schooling system- and the use of arts-based advocacy plays an important role in dismantling violent, oppressive, and exclusionary gendered cultural and societal norms in Lebanon. Educating through the arts is a method in which gendered unlearning and learning has the ability to challenge and dismantle taboo beliefs, stereotypes, and roles. Freirian context of problem-posing education, the images produced, and the issues discussed and framed by citizens may stimulate collective problem solving, organizing, and social action (Freire, 2010). Through numerous and diverse methods used by the social sector and private sector including popular and vocational education, the data collected through the semi-structured interviews conducted showcase how the arts have the potential to educate and gradually make room for gender equality through the generation of dialogue and facilitating space for questions to be posed. Freire noted that one means of enabling people to think critically about their community and to begin discussing the everyday social and political forces that influence their lives was the visual image (Freire, 2010). “In many instances, gender-based violence is sustained as a result of a culture of silence” (Hamieh & Usta, 2011, p.7). The visual image or other forms of arts such as videos, songs, posters, installations, and/or poetry allow the oppressed (ie. women in Lebanon) to control the narrative and resist the culture of silence; holding the power here, this approach welcomes a better understanding and communication of new knowledge that will, in turn, alter socially constructed spaces to fully and justly include women. In 2016 ABAAD, in partnership and through multi-sectoral collaboration with activists, lawyers, consultants, social workers, and researchers, curated and launched a nationwide arts-based educational campaign to address GBV, by shaming its general acceptance, exposing oppressive laws, and challenging the notion of

victim-blaming- the campaign was named “A White Dress Doesn’t Cover Up Rape – #Abolish_522” and later in 2018 a sister campaign called “Shame on Who?” (Haroutunian, n.d.).



Figure 5. *A White Dress Doesn’t Cover Up Rape – #Abolish_522*, 2016.
By ABAAD. Photo was taken in Downtown Beirut, Lebanon.

Visual art in a highly trafficked public space in downtown Beirut was implemented as a method of advocacy and a tool to generate broader conversation. “The visual aspects of the campaign played a crucial role in addressing the problem, as a series of “shock” actions were organized to convey, in creative ways” (Anani, n.d., p. 9). Arts-based advocacy in a public space for this campaign sparked conversation and placed pressure on parliament to repeal Article 522 of the Penal Code. With only 1% of the population having knowledge of article 522 and only 60% in favour of repealing it, the campaign had multiple stages to spread awareness (ABAAD, 2016). Given the centrality of the campaign being situated in Beirut, a city with a population of over two million, the goal was to use the power of art to generate dialogue and invite self-reflection on topics of gender, power, place, laws (Freire, 2010).



Figure 6. *A White Dress Doesn't Cover Up Rape – #Abolish_522*, 2016.
By ABAAD. Photo was taken in Downtown Beirut, Lebanon.

Art, coupled with petitions, lobbying of government, and international attention resulted in a huge win for ABAAD and their partners, and in 2017 Article 522 was abolished (ABAAD, 2016). Snowballing off the success of the ‘White Dress’ campaign and the effective use of arts-based advocacy and activism successfully used by ABAAD, the campaign was then revised and implemented in 2018 to targeted rape, once again, “Shame on Who? ‘Prosecute the Rapist. Do Not Blame the Victim’” (ABAAD, 2018). The need and urgency for a second campaign advocating for tougher sanctions, acceleration of trials against rapists in cases of sexual violence, and more pressure to change cultural and social perceptions that stigmatize and shame female victims, remained necessary as change is gradual and slow in a patriarchal society. Jumanah Zabaneh explains further: “The starting point of it is realizing how harmful the current system is and that's why we need change. The reason why the change is not moving forward is because there is not enough public support and demand for this to change” (personal communication, March 19th, 2019) (ABAAD, 2018). Utilizing methods of popular education for social change

and acknowledging and implementing intersectional approaches were key tools for the 2018 campaign in order to have an impact in dismantling destructive gendered perceptions towards rape. This allowed for the oppressed (women) to control the narrative once again, and make their experiences visible; something that is commonly not theirs to express freely. Within the region such as in countries like Iran, Jordan or Saudi Arabia women do not have access to these spaces to freely and safely share their story in hopes of bringing forth change and have been wrongfully incarcerated; so although the space used in Lebanon may not be enough, it is a progressive step for Arab feminists.

“We have a lot of people who were against the whole campaign and the subject and the approach. So this sparked a huge debate which, because of the advocacy is to shed light on, we have those things going on, we still have rape cases and we still blame the victim and not the perpetrator” (Mohammad Mansour, personal communication, February 21st, 2019).

Popular education used by the campaign leaves room for stories and lived experiences to be shared in a language that shifts the narrative and removes blame on the victim by promoting open discussion on gender through art. Yet for many, this remains a difficult topic to discuss at the national level because sex remains a taboo topic (whether consensual or not) in a nation divided by religious sects. The “Shame on Who?” campaign used similar modes of storytelling and advocacy as the campaign prior to address spousal rape (private), but the approach here had to have multiple layers added to combat perceptions of rape outside of the union of marriage (public). This campaign was pointing fingers and calling out men across the country on the violent repercussions of their power over a woman's body, honour, and gender. The first arts-based pillar to the campaign was a video that Mohammad Mansour explains in his interview:

“We had a social experiment, a video. We had a young lady walk the street crying and she was screaming that someone raped her. And just recorded reactions around her, and it was shocking because everyone blamed the girl and not the rapist. So, it was really huge and

we hoped that this would impact the other reforms. For the past year, we had a problem, we had problems, there was no government and the political problems in the country and this could affect reforms in general. But, we did not stop our advocacy campaigns because like as well we need the attention of the mass with us, and we should not stop because if we stop then we'll fail and we don't want that. We still like, in the video, we have the girl approaching the victim and telling her like do not tell anyone because this is shameful. So those were real reactions. We encourage real reactions. So it was huge” (personal communication, February 21st, 2019).



Figure 7-10. *Shame on Who?*, 2018
By ABAAD. Photos retrieved from youtube.

The use of the video as a social experiment to document and expose real reactions to violence against a woman in Beirut only reconfirmed cultural norms of oppression towards women and an inherently violent patriarchal society. The methodological approach of launching the campaign with a video was pivotal in allowing women to control the narrative and in doing so highlighted the lack of empathy, lack of support, victim-blaming, and lack of safe space, further reinforcing the existence of power structures in society and a man's superiority over women. Mohammad mentioned how the campaign received a lot of push back and negative response. This in itself can

be perceived as a success in that it sparked dialogue and debate in the household amongst family, in schools, within groups of friends, and/or with colleagues at the workplace. It invited thought-provoking questions, norms to be challenged, and the unlearning of harmful power structures that have allowed for VAW to occur.

The second arts-based pillar to the campaign was an immersive play by ABAAD. The ‘Shame on Who?’ play allowed attendees to walk through Zico House in Beirut where they experienced an interactive retelling by actors of the stories of victims of sexual violence (ABAAD, 2018). In Ann Elizabeth Armstrong and Kathleen Juhl’s book, *Radical Acts: Theatre and Feminist Pedagogies of Change* (2007) they state, “Both feminism and theatre offer methods for speaking through and across differences, and as an artistic medium, theatre requires that we enter into an honest and authentic representation of conflict” (p. 8). Through participatory learning methods, the interactive theatre experience shared several stories that were collected by ABAAD through interviews with the survivors of sexual assault and rape; the participants were given the choice to have their identity shared, but an overwhelming majority chose to remain anonymous (Freire, 2010 & ABAAD, 2018). The immersive play experience allowed for victims to ‘speak out’ and have their stories and experiences be performed to the public through artists and activists. “People teach each other, mediated by the world” (Freire, 2010, p. 80). Utilizing methods of popular education through theatre, ABAAD has facilitated a platform for the lived experiences of victims to be heard, valued and used as a vessel to ignite the urgency for citizens to advocate for reform. For campaigns to be effective participant seven explains in their interview: “In Lebanon, now we start with the public, and then the public will take it further. So

if we start with the public then I think we've done a good job to change a few opinions maybe. You know it takes time in Lebanon” (personal communication, March 8th, 2019).



Figure 11. *Shame on Who?*, 2018
By ABAAD. Photos taken in Zico House, Downtown Beirut, Lebanon.

ABAAD’s arts-based advocacy by means of a theatrical dramatic performance allowed for the audience, public, and community to identify the issue of VAW that may have not surfaced through dialogue alone given the context of the performance was based on the personal lived experience of women across Lebanon. These women were of diverse religion, region, history, class, further leveraging the importance of intersectional representation (Boal, 2000). Controlling the narrative, women here have recaptured their power by inviting the audience to reflect and analyse more thoroughly by presenting the multifaceted issue of GBV that is grounded in law, space, culture, and history dramatically.

The third arts-based pillar to the 2018 campaign was used to ensure the messaging would reach a larger audience, graffitied buildings and bridges across Beirut. “ABAAD also took #ShameOnWho to the streets in a new form: murals on the walls of Beirut, depicting the faces of rapists as described by their victims. Some were even accompanied by voice boxes featuring the

oral testimonies of the survivors” (ABAAD Annual Report, 2018, p. 27). Creating a wider education component through the installation of publicly graffitied walls (visual art) was yet another impactful tool in addressing VAW.



Figure 12. *Shame on Who?*, 2018
By ABAAD. Photo taken in Downtown Beirut, Lebanon.

Public perception and awareness remain one of the main obstacles in grassroots advocacy to advance the urgency in tackling GBV in private spaces and placing pressure on the government to take action in reforming laws. Participant 8a explained further in their interview when asked about the slow progression in issues related to GBV that ultimately continue to hinder the full participation of women in sustainably developing Lebanon:

“Public perception I have to say, it's not the way we want it to be of course, *but* there are changes. Not many, not major, but there are changes. *I mean* ten years ago you wouldn't hear any person saying in a community, “Oh I think I have been subjected to violence” or “because of my gender”, or “I have been harassed”. Now you can hear these things and I have to say yes, there is a higher level of awareness.” (personal communication, March 8th, 2019).

To increase awareness ABAAD sourced and leveraged the artistic talent of diverse women and deployed methods of community organizing through graffiti art to engage a wider audience. By challenging notions of power and culture through exposing men in public spaces, the graffiti was another empowering method of arts-based advocacy that brought a relational experience to gendered rights and recognition to the artistic talent of women (Harcourt & Escobar, 2002).

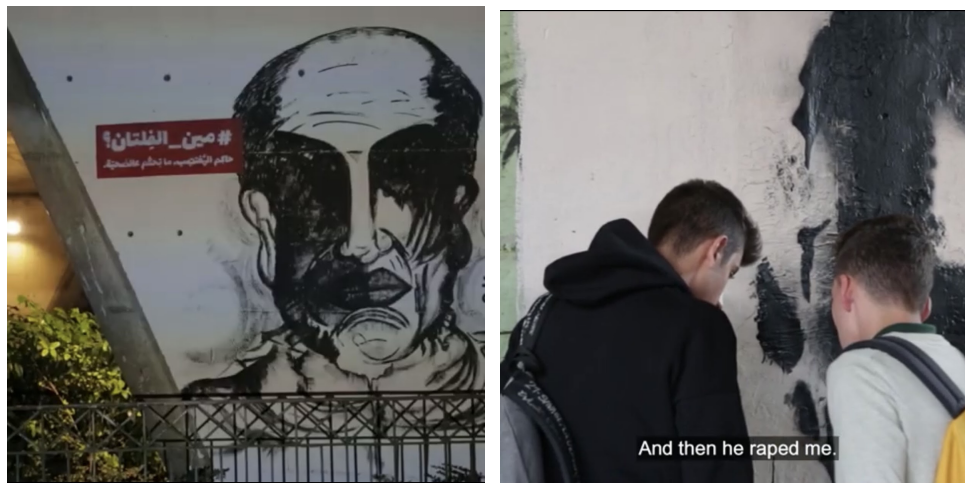


Figure 13 & 14. *Shame on Who?*, 2018
By ABAAD. Photos retrieved from youtube.

The graffiti art was advertised as a live event where volunteers also distributed educational resources, engaged in dialogue with bystanders as they stood to watch, and asked for further support by providing a petition to further place pressure to influence legal reform (ABAAD, 2018). This segment of the campaign allowed for women to reoccupy and regain power over the spaces that have for many years oppressed and violated them. Additionally, it allowed for inclusive and diverse engagement and outreach by making experiences visible. “Just as women have redefined the political by illuminating the political nature of their bodies, place-based politics suggests that we need to take into account many more aspects of our social and cultural

locations when constructing a movement in pursuit of social change” (Harcourt & Escobar, 2002, p.11).



Figure 15 & 16. *Shame on Who?*, 2018
By ABAAD. Photos retrieved from youtube.

ABAAD facilitated the interactive community graffiti art to strengthen the campaign even further by occupying public space, continuing to share the stories of women, challenging the norm of victim-blaming, inspiring more stories to be shared, and recruiting citizens in their journey towards equality. Ultimately, local NGOs like ABAAD and KAFA strive for the legal reform and amendments to laws and policies that have oppressed women and violated their rights for decades, but equally important, if not more is the urgency in addressing cultural inheritance that condones patriarchy, power structures and a society that turns a blind eye to VAW. Yes, a law can be passed that penalises a rapist, but the rape will continue to occur if there is no ‘shaming’ of the violence in both private and public space, as well if a woman does not feel safe or supported with the necessary services to hold perpetrators accountable.

The 2018 campaign was celebrated as a success, not by driving changes to legislation as of yet, but by the volume of impressions, level of exposure, and capacity building that followed.

In ABAAD's 2018 Annual Review they reported that the national campaign had a reach of 72 million people, nationally and globally. "Through vast mainstream and social media coverage, #ShameOnWho was able to accomplish one of its main objectives of encouraging women and girl survivors of rape and sexual assault to come forward, disclose their cases, and seek support" (ABAAD Annual Review, 2018). The campaign obtained media coverage and reporting on outlets including CNN who interviewed the Founder of ABAAD Ghida Anani (ibid).

Additionally, there were 12 million impressions through website banner ads, 17.1 million reached through Twitter, 25 million on Facebook, 7.8 million on Instagram and, 53,000 on YouTube (ibid). Accessibility and inclusion remained a top priority as many may not be active on social media, may not have access to television, and do not live in the main urban hub of Beirut where the multiple pillars of arts-based activism were launched. So to address this ABAAD partnered with mobile phone network providers in Lebanon and at random, 2 million phone numbers regardless of region, religion, class, income, etc. received a text message; Mohammad Mansour explained further, "It was two million random numbers. We gave it to the phone company and we don't know the numbers but it was two million random phone numbers, they received a text message 'Shame on You' with a link to the video" (personal communication, February 21st, 2019). The campaign invited and encouraged the learning and unlearning of inherently violent gendered norms and the ability to spark conversations in both public and private spaces. The magnitude of impressions and reach pushed for the implementation of new and effective programming. Aimed to create safe public spaces and to minimize the occurrence of victims covering up crimes of GBV, what became apparent was a gap in resources and training because in Lebanon, it was difficult to identify women who have experienced violence or to

determine the full extent of violence committed against women (Hamieh & Usta, 2011).

Vocational education and training programs rely on the interest, capacity, and urgency of places of employment to critically engage in their current practice, reflect on how they may be violent towards women, and how changes can be made to ensure trust is established and safe spaces created. Cross-sectoral engagement and collaboration, and maintaining an educational component were imperative to the success of the campaign and as such the UNDP, ABAAD, and Ministry of Interior Affairs partnered with Internal Security Forces (ISF)-police- to provide training and build the capacity of first responders and police in Lebanon who are responding to cases of VAW; a progressive outcome of the campaign.

“From the start of the campaign up till now we are noticing a trend of increased reported cases, people approaching and we even had the ISF, the police having a hotline for domestic violence now. It was not the case before. Um, we have a dedicated hotline for domestic violence with trained people to deal with domestic violence and they respond. And we saw a trend like an increase of um, compelling domestic violence stopping the husbands” (Mohammad Mansour, personal communication, February 21st, 2019).

The transition here of arts-based advocacy campaigns and the use of social media to spread awareness on GBV in Lebanon, to in turn, the implementation of vocational training programming involving a male-dominated sector was a progressive advancement towards achieving gender equality initiatives. “Through joint efforts, the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) and ABAAD have been raising awareness about crimes of sexual violence in Lebanon. Throughout 2018, weekly training sessions were provided to more than 1,200 officers from the Internal Security Forces (ISF)” (ABAAD Annual Report, 2018).

“Whenever there is a SGBV related call, how they should respond, how they should receive the women. And police stations, how to refer to the case, the confidentiality, the mental health, the health part. And especially we train on clinical management of rape, how to manage the rape cases because this is really critical. It's not only related to the woman itself, but mainly it's the encouragement of the mother or the woman, the mental health status of the woman, how to deal with her especially. We have seen an increase in

report cases. This does that mean that there's more rape, but I think this is a result of building capacity of relevant people on how to deal with rape case and increase in the trust in reporting” (Narod Haroutunian, personal communication, February 21st, 2019).

Arts-based activism highlighted a personal, political, and gendered issue to then inform action, agency and capacity building (Cohen-Cruz, 2002). Narod Haroutunian proudly reflected,

“After our 'Shame on Who' campaign, we noticed that since the beginning of the campaign till the end of December that more than 200 women and girls called our hotline because we also have helplines for emergency cases. So a lot of the women and girls called the helpline to report their cases. Whether new incidents but mostly things that happened before that maybe they didn't have the courage to report it. So they came with new stories, they came forward” (personal communication, February 21st, 2019).

The campaign’s use of an intersectional approach to avoid homogenizing lived experiences and various arts-based methods to ensure accessibility resulted in the ignition of the agency of women demanding justice and the creation of public and private safe spaces (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The partnerships, involvement and multi-sectoral collaboration with activists, lawyers, consultants, social workers, researchers, artists, actors, and local NGOs to curate, launch, perform, and facilitate gender sensitive arts-based practices to spread awareness on GBV and VAW have advanced efforts on achieving SDG five in Lebanon.

Part 4: Participation in Public Labour: Impactful Allyship (SDG 5 & 8)

Empowering women economically cannot be separated from advocating for women’s rights as it is a gateway for women to obtain independence, redefine space and have the ability to be decision-makers in their own lives (UNDP, 2017). The challenges faced are the cultural inheritance that reinforces gender stereotypes, working roles, and the social image which has placed a veil over the reality of experiences, tensions, and struggles in the private and public

sphere that hinder a woman's participation in the job market. I wish to bring a relational example here as I have seen this first hand with my family back home, of my five aunts, none participate in the formal labour force, they strongly believe that their role is to be at home performing informal labour and care for the family making my uncles the sole monetary supporters of the family and controllers of finances; this, of course, is not a representation of all Lebanese women. Formal labour in this study encompasses work performed outside of the household and labour that has monetary compensation, whereas informal labour is the unrecognized domestic labour that has no monetary compensation gained for it; most women in Lebanon are coerced through cultural norms to take up informal labour, further hindering their ability to make an impact in the formal economy. It is important to note that the experiences of women in rural and urban settings differ as well; there is access to more opportunity for work in urban settings than in rural therefore more opportunity for women to participate (Avis, 2017, p. 15). Within this section there will be a socio-economic exploration of the participation (or lack thereof) of women in the labour market, the oppressive and gendered barriers faced and the impact this has towards making a sustainable impact towards progressive development. Arts-based advocacy here will again explore the importance of bottom-up campaigning that addresses GBV, the creation of space for dialogue to change mindsets and reform cultural attitudes on the role of working women, the significance financial independence holds in protecting women from violence, and the impact of male allyship through arts-based advocacy.

A 2019 report by the UNDP revealed that the labour participation rate is extremely disproportionate with 71.1% being male and only 23.2% female; "UN Women had estimated in June that women's employment in Lebanon was set to fall by 14-19% as a result of current

economic contraction rates” (UN Women, 2020). Gendered expectations of ‘hidden’ work for social reproduction has, and continues to disproportionately affect women in the Southwest Asian region, including Lebanon (Joseph, 1997, p. 37). Having to choose between family and self, the oppressive obligation through the manifestation of the capitalistic patriarchal household is only intensified for a Lebanese woman, who now has to navigate the maintenance of the private labour and attempt to participate in public labour. The experiences of women that do choose to work differ in that they are faced with barriers to insert themselves into the economy despite, “the Law of May 26, 2000, amending the Labour Code of 1946, provides, in Article 1, the prohibition of all discrimination between men and women in the workplace with regard to access to employment, advancement, promotion and affirms the principle of equal pay for equal work” (Talifer, 2012, pg. 59). Despite the amendment, women continue to be paid less and face discriminatory gendered barriers in inserting themselves into many male-dominated fields. Jumanah Zabaneh provides an example in her interview of how violence and power dynamics present in the private household is found in public spaces for women who want to enter the labour force:

“Work on a support system for women to be able to fulfill herself. To have services, to have policies and legislation that can allow her to be whatever she would like. She might decide to be a, like how to say, a mother at home, and stay home, but then she should have the opportunity to do whatever she wants. Equal pay, day care, whatever, maternity leave, flexi-time for work, lots of things that could make the environment more enabling, with for example we forgot to speak about sexual harassment at work. That's also a major barrier, specifically for conservative families. In one of our community based programs we did in Saida, old Saida, we were talking to parents and we did a whole capacity building program for parents, then at the end we asked the women, would you send your daughter to work? She says no, so we were shocked, so after all this capacity building work you still say no. And then she said, it's not safe in our community, there is a lot of harassment, there was a case of rape, of a shop keeper there was this. We need to guarantee that she will be protected if she goes to work. So that is a barrier, that we don't have a sexual harassment policy or a legislation in place so that we should also work on the legal and policy framework” (personal communication, March 19th, 2019).

In a society where women are often shamed for choosing career development and financial independence over family, it becomes difficult for a woman to report unequal treatment and harassment (UNDP, 2019). The low percentage of women in the labour force is a result of both no legislative protection for women in the workplace, and socio-economic norms that serve as barriers in the private sector. Violence against women in terms of their right to economic participation are: gendered hiring biases, harassment in the workplace, lack of resources for development, and a lack of funding for entrepreneurial projects (Talifer, 2012). Additionally, lack of equal rights to economic participation is found in outdated laws such as, “The Labour Code prohibits women from working in certain occupations considered arduous or hazardous, e.g., in the mining industry, welding and metalwork, glass work, production of alcohol, tannery work, and abattoir work. Provisions relating to women are included in Chapter 2 of the Labour Code” (UNDP, 2018, p. 22). These barriers enforced by law are only further intensified through cultural norms that affect a woman's ability and at times take away her agency and decision-making power to enter the labour force. These legislative barriers continue to inform and support decisions made in the patriarchal household that there is no place for women in public labour (Pyle & Ward, 2003). Therefore, the strategy of grassroots organizations, local NGOs, and international NGOs continues to work on cultural reform that will, later on, increase the support of the public in advocating legal reform. One of the first questions asked to participants in the interview process was “In your own words, what is your interpretation of what UN SDG five means?; Hoda Al Rifai founding member and Youth Program Officer of Ruwaad Lebanon responded:

“For me it is to believe that women and men are capable of doing the same work. It’s very related to the labour law. In the labour law women are very discriminated against

because, the working hours, first they cannot work all the jobs and all the jobs like men, so some of the jobs are prohibited in the Lebanese labour law” (personal communication, January 25th, 2019).

The importance and value of advocating towards gender equality, the right to decent work and economic growth, and their intersections, have been proven to substantially aid in achieving the UN SDGs by 2030.

Advocating for women’s working rights and economic empowerment is nothing new to the feminist movement, yet, what is critical is that organizing in Lebanon does not follow a global platform or an agenda as this will place a veil over the complexity and heterogeneous feminist challenges that occur at the local level (Kabeer, Milward & Sudarshan, 2013). Using global tactics to solve the issue is a mechanism of depoliticizing and ignores the cultural reform that will need to take place to achieve self-recognition and social recognition (ibid, p. 260).

Therefore, by utilizing a similar approach to advocacy in addressing GBV and VAW, local NGOs in Lebanon are deploying bottom-up approaches that target changing cultural norms around working women as it has been exhausting and time-consuming to focus efforts on advocating for legal reform to labour laws. In a 2011 study involving 273 male participants from a diverse sample set of, location (rural and urban), religion, incomes, marital status, education level, and type of work, were asked in focus groups about their thoughts on working women (Hamieh & Usta, 2011). The study reported on results that showed:

“With respect to their attitudes toward women’s work, almost half of the men interviewed in the survey believed that women should not work if there is no financial reason to do so, while more than half agreed with the statement that the financial support of the family is the man’s responsibility. Men in general, and in particular married men, agreed that women should take care of children and refrain from working, because they perceive work to affect motherhood negatively” (p.14).

These beliefs and reinforced exclusionary norms strip women from their financial independence and confine them to unpaid and unrecognized domestic labour. A woman loses her agency and decision-making power when there is no access to finances. Therefore, if she is subject to GBV in the privacy of the household, she is stripped of her ability and power to choose to leave and escape violence. I do not wish to homogenize the experiences of women here as this does not apply to all equally, although it is apparent in society it may not be the case for all. The intersections of achieving gender equality and the link to advancing education, political participation, and decent work become more apparent and Elsa Maarawi explains further:

“But then I think, so violence, then laws, then economic empowerment because they will need to be independent and to be able to refuse violence. Because what if the husband doesn't want to stop the violence, with a job and income she can leave, now most women are trapped” (personal communication, February 28st, 2019).

Organizing for decent work and equal opportunities in the labour market has become an additional tool in making progress towards cultural reform and the abolishment of GBV and providing women the agency to refuse violence at home. To address VAW in the private sphere power and agency can be regained through organizing in public spaces and advocating for the opportunity for work (Joseph, 1997). This work and income can result in a shift in power relations in the home by removing a woman's dependency on a man's income giving her partial autonomy (ibid). Although most women are not affected in the same capacity by patriarchy and cultural norms in the public and private, solidarity in organizing is encouraged and the intersectional approach remains critical to inclusive development. The use of intersectionality as a methodology in relation to work and employment is to ensure that organizers and advocates do not erase or conflate experiences (McBride, Hebson, & Holgate, 2015). Intersectional approaches must be constantly revisited while considering the specific factors of religion,

culture, history, industry, etc; there must be a recognition of missing voices and experiences to understand the entirety of women's work and employment (ibid). To dismantle the oppressive nature patriarchy holds on women there must be opportunities to participate in the economy whereby their contribution is made visible and valued.

“Plus even with the salaries, there is discrimination with the salaries between men and women having the same position, having the same degrees. I have one example, if you [woman] hold a Ph.D. degree and you have ten years of experience and you have a very good network and communication skills, so you are perfect for this job. And another man comes with a master degree, having five years of experience, he gets hired and you don't; this happens a lot. Because they say that maybe you will get married and if you get married you will leave the job or you will become pregnant and you will have more days off and they will pay you in a different way, the maternity leave. So in the labour law women are very discriminated against. To be fair and not saying only women are discriminated against, I guess men are discriminated against in one area, it's paternity leave. Because they don't have the right to paternity leave, just to be fair enough for him” (Hoda Al Rifai, personal communication, January 25th, 2019).

Gender equality and justice must be addressed through avenues in which economic participation is not a system of favouritism based on gender, but whereby a women's decision to work and opportunity is weighed equally to men's (Sen, 2001). Development that considers equality, human and community well-being in Lebanon allows women the ability to choose and be heard, the ability to refuse violence, and lead communities out of poverty (ibid). There is more to capital other than financial needed to develop a community and ultimately a nation- there is social capital, cultural capital, and intellectual capital- because sustainable development does not necessarily mean economic growth as this may not be inclusive at all, it is more about access to opportunities, resources, and skills building to foster a diverse and inclusive economy (ibid). The well-being and sustainable development of the communities across Lebanon, both rural and urban, are being supported by involving women and men in discussions after it was deemed necessary by international NGOs; a form of community democracy through dialogue (SDGs, U.

N., 2015 & Kerans & Kearney, 2006). By establishing an understanding of cultural norms and gender working roles and how these further deepen oppression towards women allows for a critical look at gendered power relations where acknowledging agency becomes a way to create dialogue and the opportunity to challenge and open up opportunities for women to participate (Boudet, A. et al, 2013). Grassroots organizations, local NGOs, international NGOs, and the private sector are collaborating to ensure that women are able to access employment equitably with men. They are implementing strategies that result in not just better economic outcomes but also lead to advancements in women's political and social status within and outside the household.

Intergenerational partnership to teach and communicate change in the household acts as the main tactic and entry point to advance female participation in the labour force as women still carry the duties of unpaid domestic labour. Throughout the interview process, participants shared that cultural reform must begin in the household, as it is the entry point to dialogue, and wherein the privacy of the household learning and unlearning can occur.

“The family is the primary source of socialization; the family's conduct and values greatly influence the socialization of their children. These children grow up to act as similar parental figures to their parents. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness among families about the importance of raising children in a healthy, non-discriminatory, and violence-free environment” (Hamieh & Usta, 2011, p. 17).

Initiating and facilitating the unlearning of oppressive and exclusionary cultural norms towards women will require challenging conversations to be had, similar to those addressing GBV; conversations that will start in the privacy of the household and have the potential to have rippling reach into communities. An intrinsic analysis of the rhetoric that has been passed on for

generations and uplifted by law has the ability to reform mindsets for the next generation of leaders.

“I think there needs to be cultural change from a young age at the household, at the family level where it's kids are raised to understand that a woman's role is much more than just being a mother or a wife or a homemaker and where husbands and fathers and brothers encourage their female relatives to go beyond the norm. Where access to higher education is made more, more accessible to more marginalized groups particularly women in this case. And, maybe more scholarships available, maybe more women, women focused initiatives that inspire women to start their own small businesses, to go beyond maybe even Lebanon, go to universities abroad. Change the way that people are conditioned to think about what a woman can achieve and what she can't. Think about all about culture, it's all about family life. And then I think, then it will be passed on to their own kids and generations in that sense. And, when we raise, when these women learn to raise, or are made aware of how to raise their kids they will grow up to demand laws that change, that make gender equity more possible” (Zeina Saab, personal communication, March 15th, 2019).

The arts-based approach of campaigns to showcase private household dynamics as the main factor of oppressing women and shaming them from working outside the culturally accepted domestic labour role was an impactful tactic implemented. The approach used here differed from those of supporting political agency and the dismantling of GBV in that it involved the stories and experiences of men, the oppressors. “This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves” (Freire, 2010, p. 44). UN Women, local gendered NGOs, and cross-sectoral partners noticed the gap in advocacy and adopted campaigns that involve men in achieving gender equality, thus including the oppressor in the journey to empower the oppressed.

“Support the process of unlearning oppression with other members of your own group. Do not usurp the role of communicating the experience of the oppression; that one belongs only to members of the oppressed group. You can, however, share with other members of the oppressor group the journey of becoming an ally; you can help break through other's ignorance of the oppression. Members of your own group might hear you when they cannot hear a member of the oppressed group” (Bishop, 2002, p.4).

There cannot be development without the equal participation of men and women, this also includes men participating in unlearning, advocacy, organizing, and becoming allies in the journey towards achieving SGD five, gender equality. Mohammad Mansour explained further by acknowledging the problem and then sharing how programming and campaigns involving men have fostered progress in supporting the Lebanese feminist movement:

“This is problematic and this is one of the major problems because we don't believe men have roles in ending violence against women. Let's say its a gender issue and we need to end violence against women from gender perspective so the man, men are the cause and if men are the cause we need to work on this...The masculinity program is directed mainly towards men in general and it has a lot of subsections, but the main goal is engaging men in ending violence against women and that we believe as a gender equality organization to accept that our services should be directed towards both genders” (personal communication, February 21st, 2019).

Acknowledging the gap in advocacy and diversifying messaging in campaigns led to the launch of arts-based approaches that involved men in the conversation about gendered working roles and ending GBV. These campaigns explore topics of power, caregiving and gender equality; adding a relational approach by including a male perspective which further communicates that gender equality is a journey that both genders must participate in. The first campaign ‘Because I am a Man’ was facilitated by UN Women in partnership with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) launched in 2017 across the MENA region and is still active today. It included the experiences and stories of men in Lebanon. Jumanah Zabaneh explains the campaign further in her interview:

“But what we also discovered is that for social norms you need to normalize certain concepts. For example, showing that a man doing house chores is normal, we recruited in Egypt [inaudible name] as a public figure for the campaign. His video I think was seen by more than, I don't know two three million people. So we discovered that we need to create an enabling environment for those who would like to change the way they treat women and they live their everyday life by normalizing the idea that it's normal. So we've done that, we've also done a media campaign called 'Because I am a Man' and it was open

to the public so people started posting. We posted some positive messaging and we did billboards and everything that ‘Because I am a Man’ I do housework, ‘Because I am a Man’ I change a diaper, ‘Because I am a Man’ I love my family and I spend time with them, and I cook and I shop and I clean the toilets and all of that” (personal communication, March 19th, 2019).

This campaign aims to reform cultural norms by attempting to teach men that their perceived gender roles are placing them outside of the norm, this way there is an opportunity for unlearning and adjustments to their beliefs and actions to fit the ‘new’ norm (Schultz et al. 2007). This norm is for shared domestic labour that will give space and autonomy for women to choose to enter the labour market and advance in their careers, while not feeling as though they are bringing shame to the family by sharing domestic labour.



Figure 17. *Because I am a Man*, 2017.
By UN Women and SIDA-Billboard.

Working with new and traditional media and arts allowed for the expansion of the campaign in order to increase the reach and visibility of gender sensitive work; this allowed citizens especially men to question their beliefs on stereotypes and gender roles (UN Women & Promundo, 2018, p. 14). The campaign facilitated open forum discussions on social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) using the hashtag #Because_I_am_a_man and #WorkingTogether, whereby men and women can share their stories and experiences. It nurtured

an opportunity for the male ally to be themselves, be honest, and express their emotions, all of which is part of the process of unlearning; becoming an ally is a crucial step in the right direction to create and engage in inclusive, safe, and supportive environments (Bishop, 2002).



Figure 18. *Because I am a Man*, 2018.

By UN Women and SIDA. Photo retrieved from UN Women Arabia Twitter.

This method of communicating with the public has the ability to be more accepted and influential considering the dialogue is being shared by a member of the same group (ie. male). It opens acceptance of shared domestic labour as the norm and the possibility of a more powerful and happy family when all members are treated and valued equally. The second pillar to the campaign was facilitated by UN Women in partnership with Promundo- an international NGO focused on engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality and preventing violence- 2018 released a video series named 'Understanding care in Lebanon: A Drama' (UNDP, 2019). The video placed a spotlight on challenging conversations that would occur in the household regarding gendered working roles and the shame and verbal abuse a woman would be subject to if she would share domestic labour with her partner in order to keep her job and advance her career.



Figure 19. *Understanding care in Lebanon: A Drama, 2018*
By. UN Women & Promundo. Photos retrieved from youtube.

The family is engaged in discussion around the dinner table and the son shares with his parents that his wife will get a promotion at work and will be traveling for two weeks. What was thought of as great news to share with the family was interpreted as shameful and frowned upon as it is not the mother's role to leave the husband with the children; an unfortunate norm in Lebanese culture that further links a woman's honour solely to the family (UNDP, 2019, p. 9 & Hamieh & Usta, 2011). Impactful tools of allyship presented through an artistic video drama explore what Anne Bishop (2002) presents as guidelines to breaking the cycle of oppression: active listening, understanding oppression, realizing everyone is the oppressor, counting your privileges, acting on oppressive action, the process of unlearning, being yourself, being honest, and expressing your feelings. Additionally, the campaign presented ideologies, new to many in Lebanon, of men participating in domestic labour and the sharing of caregiving roles and how this is a powerful tool in gender sensitive education for the next generation. The drama video opens up engagement and opportunity for men to become activists for cultural reform that not only supports a women's economic participation but for men to be supported in their transition to take up more responsibility at home.



Figure 20. *Understanding care in Lebanon: A Drama*, 2018
By. UN Women & Promundo. Photos retrieved from youtube.

“I think more maternity leave, benefits, paternity leave as well, it's, it's a new concept here I know. They would laugh at us for talking about it...this mentality of the man being more active in the household, helping the women doing the dishes, doing the laundry, changing the diapers. And so, if there is a paternity leave clause here then maybe it will be more of a thing that men are also expected to contribute to the household as well and to raise the kids” (Zeina Saab, personal communication, March 15th, 2019).

Advocating for paternity leave places value and visibility on women’s work outside of the home.

A tactic of organizing that is most successful is to place emphasis on the significance of cultural reform beginning in private spaces to further reach communities for long-term progressive change (Kabeer, Milward & Sudarshan, 2013, p. 251).

A powerful “weapon of the organized” (p. 251) is to use art (video drama) as a means of shifting the paradigm of working women in the informal economy. The video acts as a representation of the culture and a powerful mobilizing tool to bring forth critical reflection, dialogue, and change (ibid). The communicative device of arts-based advocacy and organizing presenting allyship as a tool to confront power relations and gendered roles. It empowers the individual and community to participate by tying in everyday life, building shared identities, creating solidarity between groups who may not be aware of the struggles of women, and educates the public through a language (art) that is understood by all (ibid). The video was a tool

in growing the allyship of men by reframing the conversation and engaging in challenging conversations with families and communities to dismantle the cultural norm and make room for women to excel in the labour force. This will ultimately act as a tool to shift the narrative on gender roles for the current and next-generation, furthering the sustainable development of Lebanon.

Promoting men's role in domestic labour is a step to achieving targets of gender equality by 2030. The arts-based campaigns were later followed with gender sensitive programming that encouraged and targeted the participation of men in understanding masculinities and their role as allies. By working to eliminate VAW in the private home which excludes women from equal access to employment, there will be more opportunities for their personal and professional growth and equal participation. The Because I Am A Man campaign messages received over 7 million views online; which can be considered a huge success and a step in the right direction by facilitating dialogue and challenging Lebanese culture (UNDP, 2019). Despite there not being a follow-up qualitative study analysing the success of the arts-based campaigns- Because I Am A Man & Understanding Care in Lebanon- in specifically garnering male allyship, the appearance of male programming can be viewed as a progressive step in the right direction. ABAAD with the support, capacity building training, and funding of UN agencies launched a program for engaging men. By raising awareness of male allyship came the acknowledgment of a need and therefore, the appearance of services for men including Program P which was launched in 2018, a year after the arts-based campaign was launched.

“Program P-ECD is a gender-transformative curriculum that engages men and their partners in nonviolent, equitable parenting for early childhood development (ECD)...The pilot implemented with 316 participants in 2018 shows promising results in decreasing intimate partner violence and violence against children and in increasing equitable

household decision-making, shared caregiving, and changed attitudes around gender norms and roles” (ABAAD & Promundo, 2019).

One example of the results of the pilot program is as follows; the baseline results presented that 83% of men and 86% of women believed that a woman’s most important job was to take care of the home and cook for the family, by the end of the study the endline results presented that now 54% of men and 47% of women still felt this way after the program. The arts-based advocacy campaign and Program P worked to tap into Lebanese culture in a holistic manner by including men in the discussion and solution (ABBAD, 2018). Gender sensitive programs targeting the multiple pillars to ensure equal access to participate in public labour will benefit individuals, families, communities, organizations, and Lebanon. Ultimately, bottom-up approaches to reforming gender roles is an effective initial step in successfully organizing for amendments to labour laws and an additional next step to achieving SDG five.

Part 5: Conclusion

When women are able to build on their agency to advocate for their human right to be treated equally, the satisfaction of livelihood has the potential to bring forth sustainable change and effective policies. Bottom-up approaches allow women the creative and relational opportunity to build on their agency and place value on lived experience to be used as a tool in the unlearning of GBV. Achieving SDG five by 2030 requires effective and impactful campaigns, programming, and projects to tackle the intersecting barriers to development that are specific to a nation; mainly those deep-rooted in the patriarchal society and cultural norms. Campaigns that utilize art-based advocacy, have the potential to foster dialogue, challenge

norms, increase solidarity, build allyship, and communicate with larger audiences using a creative language that can be understood by all.

In the Lebanese context, art is deployed as a visual language and communicative device through the collaboration of local NGOs and international NGOs to display the complexities that politics, history, culture, and religion have in sustaining gendered oppression and violence.

“Norms do not float free: they are materialized in specific domains of social life and are often embedded in institutions” (Pearse & Connell, 2015, p. 30). In Lebanon socio-political, socio-cultural, and socio-economic norms affect women in private and public spaces, furthermore, they have weakened the institutional capacity necessary to bring forth sustainable development. Art is the entry point to foster the unlearning of violent gendered norms and educate on methods that can build more inclusive and supportive environments for all genders and identities. Popular education methods for social change through arts-based advocacy gave way for bottom-up projects that provided a relational approach to the diverse experiences of women in Lebanon. The campaigns targeted private and public sphere perceptions on gender by showcasing social gender issues in order to create awareness, understanding, and an increased level of support for change. The gender road map and ‘Half the Society, Half the Parliament’ campaigns used arts-based advocacy through visual methods of billboards, videos, and social media to bring attention to the lack of meaningful representation of women in governance. The campaigns exposed the violent rhetoric and lack of space women are met with when attempting to enter politics. The “White Dress Doesn’t Cover Up Rape – #Abolish_522” and “Shame on Who?” campaigns used arts-based advocacy through art installations, theatre, billboards, graffiti, and social media to address GBV and VAW. The campaigns shed light on the violence women

are subject to in both private and public spaces and how the actions are rooted in deeply rooted patriarchal norms of gender and power. Lastly, the “Because I am a Man” campaign used arts-based advocacy through billboards, video drama, and social media forums engagement to address gendered working roles. The campaigns presented allyship as an impactful strategy in challenging notions of shame for both genders as it relates to domestic labour; there is no shame in a man sharing responsibilities in the home as this will create more agency for women to choose to excel in their careers and gain financial independence. The main thread through all the campaigns was the use of bottom-up approaches to reform cultural norms that continue to oppress women. The public has benefitted from this approach as it allows people to engage more deeply through gender sensitive messaging.

The overall effectiveness and impact these campaigns had in achieving SDG five cannot be solely measured by the implementation of amendments to laws and policies, alternatively, the effectiveness of the campaigns can be determined by levels of engagement, reach, potential to spark dialogue on difficult taboo topics of gender and cross-sectoral collaboration. Ultimately, the campaigns were a tool to ignite curiosity and facilitate challenging conversations in public and private spaces to gradually reform culture. Achieving gender equality in Lebanon by 2030 is a difficult feat, yet beginning with reforming culture will build solidarity, allyship, and recruit activists to join the movement. Art has the ability to act as an inclusive and holistic tool in its ability to provide power to the powerless through sharing their shared experiences. Yet, to achieve gender equality in Lebanon art cannot be the only tool used, although effective initially as a bottom-up approach to educate society there must also be multi-sectoral and long-term approaches to gender equality. It is the unlearning of gendered stereotypes that will launch the

‘second stage’ to activism which is the amendments and abolishment of outdated, exclusionary, and oppressive laws that exclude and violate women’s rights, making Lebanon, its institutions, communities, and citizens more gender sensitive.

5.1 Limitations and Future Research

While the results of the research have showcased a few avenues of advocacy to aid in the advancement towards gender equality through the arts, it also raised issues that could pave the way for further research and policies. The first limitation of my research is the lack of qualitative and quantitative studies on cultural and social views and perceptions of gender. Most of the research found is outdated, analyses a small sample size, or is damage-centered. There is value in analysing the lived experiences and stories of citizens in a society that is deeply patriarchal and navigating diverse challenges to sustainable development. Qualitative research will pose to be beneficial in placing value on desire-based research that is concerned with the “complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives” (Tuck, 2009). Additionally, more thorough research of the effectiveness arts-based advocacy campaigns have on making progress towards gender equality and the impact they have on the implementation of gendered legal reform. The monitoring and evaluation for the arts-based campaigns measures impressions and views; adding a qualitative study where prior to engaging participants are asked questions regarding GBV and the same questions are asked after watching or attending the artistic displays. This will inform future arts-based advocacy campaigns. Therefore, future research is needed to better understand the gendered political economy in Lebanon, its deep roots in a patriarchal culture and the impact creative solutions have in spreading awareness.

Second, there is a need for more decentralized campaigning as the majority of the arts-based advocacy was held in the central urban hub of Beirut. Aside from social media outreach and the videos created, the remainder of the arts-based approaches were held in Beirut ie. art installation, theater, and billboards. A more decentralized approach can be implemented by inviting communities outside Beirut to create their own artistic creations or host pop-up installations to further spark dialogue in more rural areas. When I had asked my family- who live in Northern rural Lebanon- of their familiarity with any of the arts-based campaigns showcased in this research paper, they were unfamiliar with all, with the exception of the *Half the Society, Half the Parliament Project*, to which they had seen some media coverage prior to the elections. This approach has the potential to foster a wider reach that might increase engagement to further the unlearning of oppressive and violent gendered norms.

Third, as the research period was implemented I did not have the opportunity to engage with or attend any of the arts-based advocacy campaigns. If I had been there a few months earlier prior to the elections, I would have been able to obtain more diverse perspectives from the community and provide a more relational approach to the research. This would allow the opportunity to widen my reach with more grassroots organizations, local NGOs, activists, and citizens who are directly or indirectly engaging with feminist activism.

Finally, Lebanon is host to over two million Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Throughout the interview process, all participants made mention of the impacts the refugees have had on the prioritization of programming, resources, and funding. It was my intention to provide a gendered analysis on the role Syrian refugees have on the host community and how they are changing gender roles; barriers to this is the gap in intersectional research analysing the complexities and

impacts it has on sustainable development initiatives in Lebanon. The lack of gendered qualitative and quantitative data made this difficult as the information remains segregated by ‘othering’ the experiences of Syrian refugees; this ultimately required me to reassess the focus of my research paper. Yet, there is no denying that the refugee Syrian refugee crisis has played a role in shifting Lebanese politics, labour, and gendered relations in both private and public spaces. Future research on Syrian gendered dynamics and the impact this has on UN projects and programs implemented for the host community has the potential to shift campaigns that call for solidarity through a more informed cultural approach.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Demographic Information of Interviewees

*The following questions are to get some background information, to describe the people that participated in this study. Those who do not consent to being identified by name will remain anonymous.

Participant Code	Quoted by Name (Y/N; if yes name indicated below)	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Role/Occupation	Length of Interview
P1	Y Jessica Najem	Female	25-30	Lebanese	Environmentalism, Advocate, Ministry of Public Health, WHO.	27:24 min
P2	Y Hoda Al Rifai	Female	30-45	Lebanese	Ruwwad: Youth Program Officer, Founding Member of Lebanon Chapter.	1:18:30 min
P3	Y Fadi Karam	Male	60+	Lebanese	Secretary General Koura Region: Ouwet Political Party; former Minister of Koura.	40:18 min
P4	N	Male	60+	Lebanese	University of Balamand	34:26 min
P5	Y Mohammad Mansour	Male	30-45	Lebanese	ABAAD: Senior Director of Programs	1:15:11 min
P6	Y Narod Haroutunian	Female	25-30	Lebanese	ABAAD: Public Affairs Coordinator.	56:21 min

P7	Y Elsa Maarawi	Female	30-45	French	UNDP Gender Specialist; coordination with the Ministry of the Environment.	27:24 min
P8	N	Male	30-45	Lebanese	Ministry of Social Affairs	28:53 min
P9	N	Female	25-30	Swedish with Lebanese Heritage	UNFPA Program Assistant	33:52 min
P10	N	Female	30-45	Lebanese	UNFPA Gender Based Violence Specialist	47:23 min
P11	N	Female	30-45	Lebanese	UNFPA population and development coordinator, SDG focal point, UNSF focal point.	16:21 min
P12	N	Female	45-60	Lebanese	Ministry of Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth	33:18 min
P13	Y Zeina Saab	Female	45-60	Lebanese	Founder of The Nawayya Network	49:15 min
P14	Y Jumanah Zabaneh	Female	30-45	Lebanese Canadian	UN Women Project Manager	45:14 min

Source: Own construction.

Appendix B: Interview Guides

B1: Interview Guide for Ministers and NGOs

*Note: Interviews will be semi-structured and will be further adapted by the student and their supervisor. It may also need to be adjusted to meet the settings in which they are conducted.

Key Question	Probe
How did you first get involved with the department/organization and specifically with the gender program?	Why and how did you decide to get involved? Why this particular organization/department?
What social issues in Lebanon are you most interested in?	
Can you tell me about your involvement within the Government/organization?	What have been your role(s)? How long?
Are you familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals? Specifically #5 gender equity.	If yes, can you speak to the implementation of programmes to achieve this goal in Lebanon? What are the indicators/goals for effective development and change in Lebanon? Who determined the indicators (Global Trends, National needs)? What is the national mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs? Have there been any major achievements and/or successes from the implementation of the UNSDG's; ex. Policies, decrease in gender gap indexes? What are your short-term/long-term goals, be specific?
In your own words, what is your interpretation of what UN SDG 5 means?	In general, and in the Lebanese context.
What do you believe are the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in regards to gender equality (ex. citizenship, education, economic participation)?	Is this based on sub-national and national indicators/trends? How do these fit within the regional and international status vis a vis that particular aspect of the SDGs. What facts or figures support the need?

	<p>Did you come across this need through personal experience, lobbying, community organizing and activism? Are these based on class, location, religion etc? Do these issues have existing sub-national/national programs/projects to address the need? If so, how effective have they been? How sustainable are the achievements? What needs to change? Be augmented? Re-thought? What are the challenges associated with program implementation? What are the possibilities/considerations for sustainability and scale-up of this project (to other regions)? What further supports are needed to ensure program success?</p>
<p>How do you cooperate with the UN and also with Lebanese CSOs/NGOs working on gender parity? Or any other organizations – including religious ones, academia etc.</p>	<p>Can you provide examples?</p>
<p>Briefly describe your vision for women's advancement and equality in the future.</p>	
<p>Is there anything else you would like to share with me?</p>	

Source: Own construction.

B2: Interview Guide for United Nations Staff

*Note: Interviews will be semi-structured and will be further adapted by the student and their supervisor. It may also need to be adjusted to meet the settings in which they are conducted.

Key Question	Probe
How did you first get involved with the department/organization and specifically with the gender program?	Why and how did you decide to get involved? Why this particular organization/department? What social issues in Lebanon are you most interested in?
Can you tell me about your involvement within the UN?	What have been your role(s)? How long?
What do you believe are the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in regards to gender equality (ex. citizenship, education, economic participation)?	Is this based on sub-national and national indicators/trends? How do these fit within the regional and international status vis a vis that particular aspect of the SDGs. What facts or figures support the need? Did you come across this need through personal experience, lobbying, community organizing and activism? Are these based on class, location, religion etc? Do these issues have existing sub-national/national programs/projects to address the need? If so, how effective have they been? How sustainable are the achievements? What needs to change? Be augmented? Re-thought? What are the challenges associated with program implementation? What are the possibilities/considerations for sustainability and scale-up of this project (to other regions)? What further supports are needed to ensure program success?
What investments and partnerships are needed at the sub-national and national, as well as regional and international levels to strengthen national gender equity initiatives in order to increase the effectiveness?	Are there enough existing? What is missing? Recommendations?

<p>Do you believe attention to gender equality and advancement of women in Lebanon has changed since the establishment of the UN SDGs?</p>	<p>In Government policies, in public perception, in the media? Please provide examples of this change.</p>
<p>What is the national mechanism for leading/monitoring the implementation of the SDGs?</p>	<p>Is there a UN Working Group on Gender Parity? How does the UN work with the Government, CSO/NGOs, academia, religious organizations etc. on gender parity?</p>
<p>Briefly describe your vision for women's advancement and equality in the future.</p>	
<p>Is there anything else you would like to share with me?</p>	

Source: Own construction.

Appendix D: HPR Informed Consent Form

Date:

Name of Participant:

Research Name: Sustainable Gendered Development in Lebanon

Researcher: Andrea Sayde, Faculty of Environmental Studies Graduate Student- York University.

8 Normandy Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Email: asayde@my.yorku.ca Telephone: 647-866-7686.

Purpose of the Research: Our goal is to explore the projects and programs addressing gender equity in Lebanon. We want to learn more about successes and challenges you experienced with curation, implementation and sustainability of the programs. This research like all MES Major Research will be published in YorkSpace and may be published on the FES website if nominated for the Outstanding Paper Series. We intend to share our findings with you and hope that these can be of interest/benefit to your organization.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: You will be invited to volunteer for an interview that should last approximately one hour. During the interview, we will talk about your experiences and any suggestions you might have for improving the programs to better address gender equity in Lebanon. The interview will be audio-recorded.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of any relationship you may have with the researcher(s), study staff, or York University, either now or in the future.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, _____, consent to participate in Sustainable Gendered Development in Lebanon conducted by Andrea Sayde. I understand the nature of this study and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

- I agree that my participation may be audio-recorded: Yes _____ No _____
- I agree to be identified by name: Yes _____ No _____
- I agree to be quoted by name: Yes _____ No _____
- I would like to receive a copy of the final research paper, at the following email address:

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort resulting from your participation in the research. We do acknowledge that sometimes it can be hard to talk about negative experiences. We will take the time to make sure that you are OK as we go along. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer and still participate in the study; or you may end your participation in the study at any time without any adverse consequences. You have the right to not answer any particular questions.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: The findings from this research may help the organization, researchers, and policy makers develop more effective programs for women in Lebanon.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. If you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality: Unless you specifically give your permission by checking the boxes below, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. We will audio record your interview. Any notes taken will be safely stored in my apartment in Chekka, North Lebanon where no one will have access but me. Once it is transcribed, the audio will be deleted immediately, and the notes will be shredded and discarded. Transcripts will be kept in a password protected folder on google drive. Only the researchers will have access to this information. They will be deleted on April 1st, 2021. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr. Niloufar Pourzand, either by telephone at (416) 878-7759, or by email at nilypourzand@gmail.com. This research has been reviewed and approved by the FES Research Committee, on behalf of York University, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca.