This study aims to provide an overview of the human rights protections in place for Syrian refugee women and girls in urban and rural Jordan, as well as in-camp settings. The paper outlines the gaps in protection available and accessible for this group, as well as specific focus areas in need of attention: sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including early marriage; the changing role of women in the face of displacement, and women’s access to gender-related healthcare. Whilst understanding there are other variables to the full enjoyment of human rights, this paper looks at the international, national and local efforts in place to provide protection for Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan, and concludes with recommendations to better provide basic yet essential human rights protections.
Gender Displaced:
Are the Rights of Female Syrian Refugees Protected in Jordan?
Erlanger Migrations- und Integrationsstudien

Band 5

Herausgeberin der Reihe: Petra Bendel

Zentralinstitut für Regionenforschung
Caitlin Macfarlane

Gender Displaced: Are the Rights of Female Syrian Refugees Protected in Jordan?

Erlangen
FAU University Press
2018
## Contents

Acknowledgements .................................................. 3  
Abstract ....................................................................... 4  
Abbreviations ................................................................. 5  
1. Introduction ............................................................... 9  
1.1 General Introduction .............................................. 9  
1.2 Research Objective .............................................. 10  
2. Literature Review ................................................... 13  
2.1 Who is a 'refugee'? .................................................. 13  
2.2 What is 'protection'? .............................................. 16  
2.3 The Refugee Woman ............................................. 19  
3. Methodology ............................................................. 25  
3.1 Semi-structured Interviews .................................... 25  
3.2 Informal Interviews ............................................... 26  
3.3 The Interview Process .......................................... 28  
3.4 Analysis of Collected Data and Secondary Research .... 28  
3.5 Challenges and Observations .................................. 29  
4. Discussion ............................................................... 31  
4.1 Refugees in Jordan ................................................. 31  
4.2 Women in Jordan .................................................. 38  
4.3 Female Syrian Refugees in Jordan: The Intersectionality 42  
4.3.1 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence ..................... 44  
4.3.2 The Changing Role of Women ............................ 69  
4.3.3 Women’s Health ............................................ 75  
5. Conclusions ............................................................ 83  
6. Recommendations ..................................................... 89  
7. Bibliography .............................................................. 93  
8. Appendix .................................................................. 109
Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my special thanks to Prof. Dr. Petra Bendel, my research supervisor, for helping me realise my passion, and for her guidance and assistance throughout my research project, particularly in preparation for my trip to Jordan. Thank you to Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Heiner Bielefeldt for strengthening my belief that women’s rights can always be realised, regardless of culture or religion.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the women from the Syria Jasmine organisation for opening up their hearts to me. Their stories remind me why this topic is of such importance, and their strength through sisterhood will always astonish and comfort me.

Thank you to my family for their endless support.
Abstract

This study aims to provide an overview of the human rights protections in place for Syrian refugee women and girls in urban and rural Jordan, as well as in-camp settings. The paper outlines the gaps in protection available and accessible for this group, as well as specific focus areas in need of attention: sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including early marriage; the changing role of women in the face of displacement, and women’s access to gender-related healthcare. Whilst understanding there are other variables to the full enjoyment of human rights, this paper looks at the international, national and local efforts in place to provide protection for Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan, and concludes with recommendations to better provide basic yet essential human rights protections.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARDD</td>
<td>Arab Renaissance for Democracy &amp; Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAT</td>
<td>Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERT</td>
<td>Equal Rights Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAWG</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICERD</td>
<td>International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICESCR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JWU</td>
<td>Jordanian Women’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISP</td>
<td>Minimum Initial Services Package</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abbreviations

MOU  Memorandum of Understanding
MPC  Migration Policy Centre
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU  Organisation of African Unity
ODI  Overseas Development Institute
RH   Reproductive Health
UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
UNDP United Nations Development Trust
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNGA United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
USAID United States Agency for International Development
USDoS United States Department of State
WFP World Food Programme
WRC Women's Refugee Commission
Tables

Table 1: UNHCR Funding Requirements, Jordan

Table 2: Syrian refugee women who head their household
1. Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

Since the outbreak of civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic, the influx of Syrian refugees to Jordan has been extraordinary, rapidly increasing particularly since 2013 (UNHCR, 2017). The current figure of registered Syrian refugees accounted for in Jordan rests at 661,114 (ibid.) at the time of writing, yet this number fluctuates, reaching new peaks with increased numbers of new arrivals, and dropping as some make the tough decision to return to their homes in Syria (Knell, Y. 2015). Life as a refugee can be beyond challenging. Aside from fleeing homes turned warzones, the disruption caused by displacement cannot be exaggerated. Limited access to essential food, water, shelter, healthcare, education and employment are just some of the daily hurdles along the way, and yet this dire situation is exacerbated for half of the Syrian refugee population: the women. Refugee women and girls face additional challenges throughout the entire process, from their original location rife with civil and political war and unrest, through transit and even within the safety of the receiving country, both within and outwith refugee camps. These challenges range from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the changing role of women in the household and increased responsibilities in both the public and private sphere, the impact this has on the family, as well as specific health concerns, among others. It is this intersectional discrimination towards refugee women that has driven the direction of this paper.

As this current situation is both recent and ever-unfolding, there is a distinct lack of academic research available. The gaps in research are apparent in three ways: The first is the lack of up-to-date academic discussion regarding Syrian refugees in Jordan in general; the second is the general concentration on
refugee status because the refugee is a woman, i.e. her fear of persecution is directly related to her position as a woman and granted on the grounds of gender to unique cases, as opposed to this scenario of civil war encompassing mass displacement and the implications of widespread gender discrimination in a vulnerable circumstance. The danger with this development is that gender issues tend to be forgotten while the main focus is on the shock of an overwhelming global situation. Thirdly, much of the research and attention on the Syrian refugees in Jordan has been focused on the Za’atari camp, yet with almost eighty per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan living in urban and rural settings, and with ninety-three per cent of those living under the poverty line (UNHCR. 2017), there is a great need to fill the information gap regarding the situation for urban refugees. Therefore, with this in mind, this paper offers a contribution that will address these three gaps in available academic research.

1.2 Research Objective

The aim of this research is to find out how, and to what extent, the human rights of Syrian refugee women and girls are protected in Jordan. The research will predominantly focus on the work of local, national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and agencies, and relevant UN bodies such as UNHCR, as well as the involvement of the Jordanian authorities, although this will be discussed to a lesser extent. Please note that the intention of this paper is not to discuss or review the current situation in Syria, nor is it to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes in place or organisations involved. Rather, this paper aims to illustrate an overview, whilst identifying key problem areas that require further attention, and highlight positive methods that could be reproduced in other areas and countries to ensure the rights of refugee women and girls are protected.
Introduction

To begin, the current academic literature available on this topic will be discussed and reviewed, which will also introduce Kimberle Crenshaw’s notion of intersectionality, a key component and influence of this paper. In this section, the concept of the ‘refugee woman’ will be introduced and discussed through the work of other academic authors. A short methodology will follow, briefly describing my research process in Jordan and the steps taken to find evidence that will be presented in this paper, before opening up to the main discussion and results of my findings, which will focus on key areas, namely sexual and gender-based violence, the changing role of women, and reproductive and maternal health. Finally, the paper will conclude with a summary of my findings, alongside some possible recommendations for future research or implementation.
2. Literature Review

In order to answer the question, *are the rights of female Syrian refugees protected in Jordan?*, it is first necessary to establish what this question means. To better present my understanding, the literature review will dissect this question, discussing what is meant by the terms ‘refugee’, ‘protection’ and, of course, the distinction of the ‘refugee woman’.

2.1 Who is a 'refugee'?  

The word ‘refugee’ has been blasted across our television screens and splashed on the front covers of our newspapers with all sorts of left and right-wing rhetoric surrounding it, ever more so since the recent influx of Syrian refugees across Europe and the Middle East. Sadly, however, the true meaning of the word is often lost or caught up among terms such as “economic migrants”, associations with the very terror they are fleeing, or connotations of smugglers and irregular and often illegal migration routes (Türk, V. and Nicholson, F. 2003: 5). Families running from civil war are often negatively perceived in the media, with misleading accounts creating unjustified fears and causing winds of change across the politics of once more welcoming states, such as Britain and the United States. Xenophobia and intolerance towards refugees is known to have been exploited for political gain (ibid.). Amidst this air of panic, the human element of the term ‘refugee’ has often been gravely overlooked. Instead, the Syrian refugee crisis has generally been treated as a security concern or a threat, certainly across Europe, as opposed to a humanitarian concern. Furthermore, one of the arguments against the movement of Syrian refugees has ironically been in favour of women’s rights, suggesting that one cannot enjoy a society that welcomes both gender equality and a traditionally conservative culture and religion. This attitude is
not only false but largely unhelpful, particularly for Syrian refu-
gee women and girls, and must be tackled. Therefore, while
rarely requested, clear explanation of the term itself is vital to
understanding the true dynamics of the refugee situation. While
it is presumed that those reading this paper will have a back-
ground understanding of the topic, it is nevertheless necessary
to clarify what definition of ‘refugee’ this paper will use.

Originating from the French word réfugier, meaning ‘to take
shelter’ in the 1600s, the meaning today has not strayed far from
its derivation. The definition of ‘refugee’ exists both within and
outwith strict boundaries. From the standpoint of international
law, the definition is clearly stated in the 1951 Convention
relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention) and its 1967
Optional Protocol:

“...owing to wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of
race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social
group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nation-
ality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail
himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a
nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual
residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such
fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

(UN General Assembly. 1951: 153)

Therefore, any person who declares their refugee status
and fits the inclusion criteria pursuant to Article 1(A) cited
above, is legally recognised as a refugee and thereby entitled
to the protective rights enshrined within the 1951 Convention
and 1967 Protocol by Contracting States – those who have signed
and ratified the agreement (ibid). Legal refugee definitions also
exist within regional approaches, for example, in the 1969 OAU
Convention of the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in
Africa, of which includes additional protection from “events
seriously disturbing public order” (1969: 3). Considering the
Latin-American 1984 *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*, the definition is extended even further in Article III(3):

“the definition or concept of a refugee to be recommended for use in the region is one which, in addition to containing the elements of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, includes among refugees persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order”.

(1984: 36)

Interestingly, Latin American countries and African countries that are party to their regional conventions are often poorer countries that are “just as generous as rich countries in assisting the vulnerable, and sometimes even more so” (Maley, W. 2016: 26), a statement which is continuing to grow in truth as Britain and the United States review and retract their refugee policies, while developing countries continue to house the majority of the world’s refugees (ibid.).

Yet Shacknove tells us that outside legal and political circles, the definition of a refugee is much simpler: “a person fleeing life-threatening conditions” (1985: 274). Taking this notion of escape one step further, Goodwin-Gill and McAdam define a refugee as someone in flight from intolerable circumstances, adding that “the destination is not relevant; the flight is to freedom, to safety” (2007:15). By distinguishing the reason behind their movement, Goodwin-Gill and McAdam confront various right-wing arguments. The authors confirm that it is not about the state or what “luxuries” it has to offer, unless the fundamental need for freedom and protection is considered a luxury. William Maley adds a further important dimension to be remembered when discussing and defining refugees: while circumstances may be difficult, refugees are not “tired, poor, huddled masses” (2016: 8). This connotation of refugees can be harmful, altering public perceptions that are both victimising and unhelpful.
Maley explains that actually refugees are often incredibly “resourceful and energetic” (ibid.) and that their willingness to leave everything behind should be enough to portray the extremity of the danger they may be running from (ibid.). Discussing the use of ‘refugee’ as one of the most powerful labels in humanitarian circles, Roger Zetter argues that it both stereotypes a status and creates an “institutionalised dependency”, threatening sovereignty and independence of both the refugee community and their host state (Zetter, R. 1988: 1). In this instance, Zetter argues against the simple definition provided by Shacknove above, instead remarking that “the label now conveys extremely complex meanings” (ibid.).

While refugee definitions may be common knowledge in this field, the importance of defining the term is obvious when dealing with states that are not party to the 1951 Convention, which includes the country of interest in this paper, Jordan, though this will be discussed later. For the purpose of this paper focusing on Syrian refugees, the working definition used by UNHCR today, which includes “people fleeing conflict or persecution” (UNHCR. 2017), will be used as the general definition, as UNHCR has clarified that “in many situations, persons fleeing conflict may have a well-founded fear of persecution for a 1951 Convention ground” (UNHCR. 2012: 12).

2.2 What is 'protection'?  
The word ‘protection’ appears in the 1951 Convention as part of the refugee definition cited previously, as well as various other refugee instruments throughout history, including initial League of Nations documentation and in the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) Constitution (UNHCR. 2012: 9). During this time, the word ‘protection’ was used but a definition was not provided. Moreover, the opening line of Goodwin-Gill and McAdam’s eighth chapter in The Refugee in International
Literature Review

_Law_, states that “the lack or denial of protection is the principal feature of refugee character” (2007: 421). With such weight and importance on refugee ‘protection’, what does it mean?

Antonio Fortin puts forward the theory that, in this field, ‘protection’ is often thought of in regard to who is responsible. He introduces ‘internal protection’, an idea further discussed by Hathaway, which refers to “the protection accorded within the State’s territory to victims or potential victims of persecution” (Fortin, A. 2001: 550-551). Once a person is denied this internal protection, the role of international protection steps in “to make up for the failure of the State to protect the concerned person against the persecution feared” (ibid.). Fortin critiques this argument, however, stating that ‘protection’ actually includes diplomatic protection, in which states are also obliged to protect their nationals abroad. While Fortin disputes whose responsibility it is to protect, finding a clear explanation of the term within his paper proves difficult to decipher. Helton, however, puts forward the argument that when refugee protection is discussed, we refer to _legal_ protection (Helton, A. 1990: 119). He suggests that the concept “must be associated with entitlements under law” (ibid.). While legalities are of course a recognised and vital aspect of refugee protection, such as the legally binding 1951 Convention and the principle of _non-refoulement_ recognised as customary international law, Helton’s argument undermines some of the other key and crucial components of refugee protection that do not fall under a specific legal capacity.

In 2001, after a series of workshops involving over fifty humanitarian organisations sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the following definition of ‘protection’ was formed to better determine basic professional standards and to create a shared understanding amongst humanitarian and human rights actors:

“...all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of
the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law.” (ICRC. 2009: 8)

The inclusion of “all activities” incorporates far more than purely legal-based methods of protection as Helton suggests, though the definition reminds us that protection is first and foremost a legal responsibility of the State (ibid.). When circumstances cause the State to be unable or unwilling to provide protection for its citizens, humanitarian actors, such as UN bodies and human rights NGOs, as well as other states, may assume the responsibility to protect those citizens (ibid.). Furthermore, non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International researching and campaigning for human rights fall under the umbrella of protection, yet would not normally be considered “legal” measures. Goodwin-Gill and McAdam further add that “effective protection demands a purposeful degree of cooperation, by no means limited to states or international organisations” (2007:446) but all relevant actors, including refugees and asylum seekers themselves who are acutely aware of their own protection needs. In this regard, different people will no doubt have different protection needs, often varying with factors such as age and gender, as well as circumstance. Additionally, the Global Protection Cluster Working Group, in collaboration with UNHCR, state that protection extends beyond the immediate physical survival, and encompasses all human rights - civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights (GPC. 2010: 7). Importantly, they take the notion of protection further, claiming protection consists of actions taken to ensure human rights violations are prevented or stopped, remedies through justice and reparations are provided, and rights-friendly environment-building is promoted (ibid.).

Having discussed the works around the concept of protection, a specific vulnerable group within refugees and asylum seekers will be discussed: the women.
2.3 The Refugee Woman

Following the ancient Chinese proverb, “women hold up half the sky”, the same can be said in a refugee context. Approximately fifty per cent of the world’s displaced are women and girls (UNHCR. 2017), yet they endure a discriminative proportion of the risks and vulnerabilities. In this section, an understanding of the key issues predominantly faced by displaced women and girls will be explored.

Referring to the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee provided earlier in this paper, there is no mention of sex, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation whatsoever. While in one regard this could be seen as problematic or negligent, the definition does provide the category “membership of a particular social group”, which is widely recognised as inclusive of gender. Strengthened by the gender-sensitive guidelines provided by UNHCR in 2002 for understanding the Convention, Martin argues that this definition can be far from problematic – rather it can be flexible and inclusive, with space for gender-friendly interpretations (Martin, S. F. 2012: 213). Yet this inclusion focuses on the assumption that female refugees have gained their refugee status through a well-founded fear relating to their gender, i.e. they are refugees because they are women. There is little academic research available on refugee women who have fled for another reason, who own the additional burden of being female in flight. As this paper will focus on Syrian refugee women in Jordan, they fall into the latter category. In this regard, I will introduce the concept of “intersectionality”, a term coined by American civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw, to better explain my understanding of The Refugee Woman.

Intersectionality was used by Crenshaw to describe traits that overlap. In her paper, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, she discusses the moment when race and gender collide, and the inability or rather, lack of awareness, of both race and gender
discourses to incorporate a mutual understanding. Instead, she puts forward the idea that women have to choose between their discriminations. Race or gender – two “mutually exclusive terrains” (Crenshaw, K. 1991: 1243). In this sense, a black woman would be seen to experience either racism or sexism within discourses shaped to deal with one or the other, and yet she is victim to both (ibid. 1244).

She explains in the following section:

“...many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately.”

(Crenshaw, K. 1991: 1244)

Therefore, Crenshaw illustrates that dealing with these issues separately is to deny a living reality for many Black women. The same can be said for refugee women. The experiences of a refugee man differ greatly to those of a refugee woman, and the experiences of a woman fleeing persecution are undoubtedly different to a woman who is not. Therefore, to suggest that they are “women’s issues” or “refugee issues” is neither right nor wrong, they belong to both fields, but as a combined and unique dimension. Furthermore, intersectionality is not limited to two categories. Within The Refugee Woman “criteria”, she may also find herself facing multiple discriminations due to her race, age, culture, and/or religion, among others. This brings in the discussion by Susan Martin regarding cultural relativism when approaching international responses to protecting women’s rights (2012: 208). She argues that problems arise during decisions over the extent to which societal norms and traditional values tied to the role of women should be respected or neglected to provide protection. Furthermore, Martin acknowledges that
while this is a challenging task under “normal” circumstances, solving the problem during times of conflict and displacement only increases the complexity, and urgency, of the issue (2012: 208). This can be particularly problematic as the role of women in the household tends to change during displacement. This can be as a result of increased women’s participation in the host country or refugee camp programmes, including access to education and employment, that may have once been off limits and now offer women their own financial independence (Martin, S.F. 2012: 209). Martin argues, however, that while women’s empowerment is crucial, it can sometimes do more harm than good in the refugee camp context:

“The frustrations experienced by men can result in increased domestic violence, depression, and/or alcoholism. These tensions may also reinforce the need to preserve traditional notions of female subservience, at least among male leaders.”

(Martin, S. 2012: 209)

Therefore, at what stage do universal human rights take a back seat for “female subservience”? Martin makes a very important point in the interests of the safety of women, however, there must be protections in place that allow refugee women to access their basic human rights without fear of domestic violence and further violations. Gender inequality and violence cannot be tackled by simply allowing it to continue. Cultural sensitivity is an essential characteristic in the protection of refugee women’s rights, but must not become an obstacle to such protection. In fact, the notion that women’s rights cannot be enjoyed harmoniously with cultures that are traditionally patriarchal or predominantly Muslim is often used as part of the conservative argument against the inclusion of Syrian refugees across the world, using human rights rhetoric against the very basis of human rights principles. It is therefore critical to demonstrate that both women’s rights and refugee rights can and must be protected simultaneously.
Samira Sami and others make the vital point that women should have their basic needs met as they have “an essential role in post-conflict reconstruction” (Sami, S. et al. 2014: 1179), therefore not only is the treatment of refugee women part of the problem, but it should, if altered, be part of the solution. Considering the culture of Syria and surrounding Middle Eastern countries, the traditional role of women is generally a conservative one – women are not expected to live alone, freedom of movement is commonly decided by the husband, protection is anticipated as a result of early, arranged marriage, and often rape by a spouse is not illegal (UNICEF. 2011: 3). Therefore, if this culture permeates the refugee camps and the homes of urban refugees, then this must be taken into serious consideration when dealing with the human rights of refugee women. Throughout this paper, it becomes apparent that this collective patriarchal attitude is indeed present in refugee settings in Jordan, and, unfortunately, does impact the protection of women at risk.

So what defines a Refugee Woman? The Executive Committee of the High Commission suggests that there can be no such definition, only a concept, one that recognises that the “cultural and socio-economic position and gender roles of all displaced women and girls tend to exacerbate the risks to which they are exposed” (UNHCR. 2007: 132), including facing protection problems at any or all stages of their displacement, and which require tailored responses (ibid.).

As a side note, Crenshaw mentions that white feminists are speaking for black women. With this in mind, I would like to point out that I do not intend to speak for refugee women as I could not begin to comprehend their experiences, nor do I wish to victimise them. In this regard, if and when the word ‘victim’ is used throughout this paper, it refers to individuals who have experienced suffering, whether that be from sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement, “honour crimes”, or other crimes and human rights violations. Use of this term will be limited where possible as it can often be seen
as stigmatising and neglectful of the strength and resilience of the survivors.

Before moving on to the main discussion of my findings, it is first necessary to establish what methods were used to gather information and why.
3. Methodology

Throughout this research project, qualitative methods, namely a combination of semi-structured interviews, informal interviews and secondary research were used to gather relevant information. Qualitative methods have been described as “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 10-11). This method was chosen over the quantitative approach due to the nature of the research question, which deals with human beings’ experiences, where the quantitative approach would provide superficial results. As the research question aims to uncover experiences unique to refugee women and girls in Jordan, qualitative data was used to “obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods” (Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. 1990: 11). Learning the personal experiences proved crucial to finding an honest answer from the concerned sources in question. This section will present further discussion of the research methods used, detailing why and how those methods were chosen, and what approach was used to analyse the collected data.

3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Although semi-structured interviews begin with a list of pre-determined questions, they “unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important” (Longhurst, R. 2016: 143). For this reason, the semi-structured interview was chosen so as to direct the conversation toward the topic in question, whilst it simultaneously allowed the interviewee(s) to present information that was novel, personal, and challenged my own assumptions. Prior to the
commencing of the interview process, the strengths and weaknesses of this method were analysed to ensure it was appropriate for the research question. As with all research methods, there were advantages and disadvantages. The advantages were that the semi-structured interview allowed the interviewees to bring up issues they felt were of importance, and gave me the flexibility to explore further. Moreover, I was able to pick up on social cues such as intonation, word choice and body language, which added a richness to the collected data. This was of additional importance as there was often a slight language barrier between myself and the interviewees, so intonation and body language played a significant role in my interpretation of the data. Finally, even with interviews that came together in short notice and with little structure, content analysis could still be worked to deliver comparable data. Disadvantages existed where interviewees may have answered questions with answers they thought I wanted to hear, rather than what they believed, and having a different response to me as an interviewer. This was the case in one interview, in which the interviewee was taken aback by my age, and this perhaps affected the initial data while they adjusted to their preconceptions of me as a researcher. Finally, collecting and analysing the data can be both time-consuming and difficult to compare, as with less structure comes less word patterns and correlation. Despite the disadvantages, any uneasiness during interviews was short-lived as the semi-structured interviews quickly simulated natural conversation progression, due to the open-ended and inquisitive nature of the method.

3.2 Informal Interviews

Alongside semi-structured interviews, a series of informal and unstructured interviews were used to collect information for this study. This style of interview has been described as one in which neither the question nor the answer are fixed (Minichellio, V. 1990), rather they occur naturally and freely during participant
observation (Patton, M. Q. 2002). In this regard, unstructured and informal interviews can allow the researcher to begin to develop a rapport with the respondents, creating a comfortable and safe environment for the interviewee to speak freely. Gomm suggests that only by building trusting relationships “will respondents feel able to disclose the truth” (2004: 203). In turn, the data collected can be more authentic than that of the structured and semi-structured interview, as the urge to provide the ‘correct’ answer to set questions is removed. One of the drawbacks of this method included difficulties recording and storing the collected data, as there were occasions where relevant information was disclosed without a recording device. Therefore, the majority of information was gathered through semi-structured interviews, with informal interviews supporting and complementing the data. Informal interviews occurred regularly throughout my time in Jordan, as most interactions regarding my research topic resulted in extended conversation. Participant observation may also be considered as a method used, as I immersed myself in as many relevant situations as possible, including spending time in a refugee tented community in Azraq, with refugee women’s groups in Azraq and Amman, in feminism workshops in Amman with both Jordanian and Syrian men and women, and in social outings with Syrian refugee women as friends enjoying coffee and conversation in Jabbal Al-Lweibdeh. Furthermore, a focus group unfolded at local NGO Syria Jasmine almost accidentally while we waited for the main interviewee to arrive. The women at the group gathered in the common area and curiosity from both myself and the women in the group opened up a series of informal questions and back and forth discussion from all members, with each woman discussing her experience in Jordan as a female Syrian refugee, and one woman voluntarily acting as a translator. This led to an invitation from the mother of the interviewee to join their family meal after Friday morning prayers, which
reflected the development of a trusting relationship earlier discussed by Gomm (2004).

3.3 The Interview Process

Fifteen semi-structured interviews were carried out over a four-week period in Amman, Jordan with representatives from international organisations such as UNHCR, USAID and ActionAid, national organisations such as Jordanian Women’s Union (JWU), local grassroots NGOs including Syria Jasmine and Helping Refugees in Jordan (HRJ), and with Syrian refugee women. Two semi-structured interviews were also carried out via Skype™ with medical professionals working in camps in Syria and Turkey to gain an understanding of the similarities, differences and protection needs. Participants were approached based on their expertise and/or experience of the topic. The demographic consisted of twelve women and three men interviewed. The set questions asked followed a similar guideline, but were altered slightly depending on the interviewee. For example, questions to organisations offering protection differed from questions to individuals receiving protection. Each respondent was informed of the interview process and the nature of the research before verbally consenting to involvement, though some wished to remain anonymous if quoted. Moreover, a number of unstructured and informal in-person interviews took place over the course of the four-week period.

3.4 Analysis of Collected Data and Secondary Research

Strauss and Corbin describe qualitative analysis as “a nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data...” (1990: 11). With this in mind, conceptual analysis was used to examine the information gathered and identify concepts that came up
frequently throughout the interviews and to organise them into key categories for further exploration with secondary research. This meant that I could utilise reports available online, as well as books and journals in libraries and online portals to further investigate topics of interest from the gathered primary data. Advantages of this included access to existing data relevant to expanding my knowledge of the topic, as well as filling the gap where primary research had failed. For example, one of the problems I encountered in Jordan was a lack of responses to emails, therefore secondary research enabled me to complete my research.

3.5 Challenges and Observations

While my time in Jordan was fascinating, there were a number of challenges. The first challenge was meeting dead-ends regarding interviews. I quickly learned that the email culture in Jordan was not an effective means of guaranteeing a response, but rather information was more easily obtained through a “who you know” basis. This meant I had to rely on networking opportunities to be introduced to potential interviewees. Fortunately, I was in Amman, Jordan during the UN campaign ‘16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence’ (from the 25\textsuperscript{th} November to the 10\textsuperscript{th} December) which meant there were a number of workshops and activities surrounding women’s rights in the area. As Amman is often referred to as a hub for international NGOs, there were a number of relevant contacts attending such events who were happy to assist me, however this meant securing interviews was far more time-consuming than I had anticipated. Furthermore, as a young, white and fair woman, I stood out, perhaps in a negative way, as I was not perceived as sharing the same cultural or religious values or experiences. For example, during the feminism workshop, I was vocally singled out as coming from a country where women are treated “equally”,
Methodology

a false statement, yet somewhat understandable from a comparative perspective. To certain attendees, I was different and had dissimilar experiences as a woman, and therefore could not adequately contribute to the discussion in their opinion. Fortunately, I was more interested in listening and observing for research purposes than contributing. While problematic, it is necessary to acknowledge that I have had different social and cultural life experiences as a woman, and therefore my interpretations may reflect this, though I try to remain an impartial researcher.

Finally, difficulties arose in informal settings, for example in the tented communities, as there was not an allocated translator. This meant it was sometimes difficult to go beyond pleasantries. When a translator was present, having a “middle man” often negated the efforts at building a trusting rapport. On the other hand, being a woman myself, with both empathy and admiration, helped in breaking boundaries and creating a comfortable environment when speaking with refugee women. Finally, I noted a common reluctance with the refugee women that I interviewed to discuss topics that may be considered taboo, particularly regarding personal experiences of sexual and gender-based violence.
4. Discussion

This section seeks to address the main research question – are the rights of female refugees protected in Jordan? In order to answer this, subsections surrounding the situation in Jordan for refugees in general will be discussed, before moving on to the more specific implications for women and girls. From there, certain areas of refugee protection concern more specific to women and girls will be analysed, including sexual and gender-based violence and physical security, early marriage, the changing role of women, reproductive health, mental health, and access to employment.

4.1 Refugees in Jordan

Before discussing the situation for refugee women in Jordan, it will be helpful to provide some country context and an overview of the situation for all Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Surrounded by neighbouring countries, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and Israel and the West Bank, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been the peaceful haven in the Middle East, continuously hosting refugees, both Iraqis and Palestinians in various waves, and, more recently, welcoming hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing the ongoing violence in their home country (BBC News. 2016). As Jordan has few natural resources, the influx of refugees has been often seen as an “asset” to its economic development through international humanitarian aid helping integration (Chatelard, G. 2010), yet the International Labour Organisation regards their recently open border as a “great expense”, arguing that Jordan is unable to meet its own economic needs, “let alone the needs of 650,000 Syrian refugees” (ILO. 2015: 5). Adding to this, authorities suggest that this figure is actually much higher, with “hundreds of thousands” of Syrian refugees unregistered in Jordan, amounting to an estimated
1.4 million Syrians in Jordan, though this includes those residing in the country prior to the security situation in Syria (Amnesty International. 2016: 5). Regardless, Jordan is generally seen as a welcoming country, and has so far offered its health, education and security services to refugees, as well as providing land for large refugee camps such as Za’atari and Azraq (Saliba, I. 2016). Yet despite this, Jordan has not signed or ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Optional Protocol, nor has Jordan enacted any domestic legislation regarding refugees. Therefore, refugees are legally regarded as foreigners, defined as anyone without Jordanian nationality (ibid.). The ILO acknowledged Jordan’s lack of reference to refugees in 2015, and thereby their lack of adequate legal protection for refugees in Jordan, despite their having the highest citizen to refugee ratio in the world (ibid.). Jordan does, however, prohibit the extradition of political refugees (ILO. 2015: 5), and is broadly obliged through customary international law to follow the principle of non-refoulement, ensuring no person is forcibly returned to their country of origin if they would be at risk of persecution (ibid.). Furthermore, there exists a Memorandum of Understanding between Jordan and the UNHCR, also known as an MoU. This is an agreement signed in 1998 by both parties allowing the UNHCR to act within its mandate, and has become the framework for dealing with refugees in Jordan (ibid.). The MoU ensures Jordan accepts the UNHCR definition of a refugee and also includes the aforementioned principle of non-refoulement, alongside respecting various other rights, such as freedom of religion and belief, free access to courts, and exemption from overstay fines and departure fees (UNHCR. 1998). Article 12 of the Memorandum of Understanding states that both parties will work together to quickly respond to emergencies, including making available “food, water, sanitation, shelter and medical treatment” as well as physical safety and security (ibid.). This was renewed in 2014 and has extended the duration of stay in Jordan from six months to one year, by
which time UNHCR must have found a durable solution. However this time limit is renewable and seldom strictly enforced (USDoS. 2016: 20). Moreover, Jordan has not signed the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, which provide basic protection of fundamental rights (ARD. 2017). However, Jordan is party to the following conventions: ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, CAT, CERD and the Arab Charter on Human Rights (ibid.). Additionally, the UN reported that the Jordanian government generally cooperated with UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations in providing protection and assistance to refugees (USDoS. 2016: 19), yet there remains cause for concern:

Although Jordan has taken on a substantial percentage of refugees following the Syrian crisis, it has slowly been closing off routes into the country, beginning with restricted air travel and limiting entry through only two informal border crossings along the northeast desert border (USDoS. 2016: 20). Sadly, after a suicide attack on June 21st 2016 killed six Jordanian soldiers and wounded thirteen (HRW. 2016), Jordan closed its border entirely and discontinued humanitarian aid to the border area, known as “the berm”, leaving an estimated 70,000 Syrian refugees camping there with minimal access to food, water, shelter and medical care (ibid.).

Despite both customary international law and the Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and Jordan safeguarding the principle of non-refoulement, the US Department of State’s most recent human rights report on Jordan suggests this promise has not been kept. In 2016, the government “forcibly returned Syrian refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria, including women, children, war-injured, and persons with disabilities to Syria”, as well as Syrians found working illegally or living outwith camps (USDoS. 2016: 21). The report elaborates regarding their sent location:
“Authorities most often sent those subjected to refoulement to Dara’a Province, where many had no support network or way to return across battle lines to their homes, which were often within regime- or Da’esh-controlled areas.”  (USDoS. 2016: 21)

This clear violation of international obligations is rarely recounted, yet organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have reported numerous incidents (Achilli, L. 2015: 4). Furthermore, a worrying change of attitude towards Syrian refugees in Jordan has been discovered by scholars and humanitarian workers, of both government and civic members. The Migration Policy Centre describes it as the following:

“The protracted nature of the Syrian crisis and its negative, real or perceived, impact on the living conditions of Jordanians has meant that Jordanians, who, at first, welcomed refugees, have become hostile: those who were originally dyuf (guests) are now laji’in (refugees). The belief that refugees are thriving on scarce local resources is widespread amongst an increasingly resentful host community.”  (Achilli, L. 2015: 2)

While the majority of interactions I encountered with Jordanians regarding Syrian refugees were warm and welcoming, one interviewee did make reference to this “worrying” change of attitude. Ayman Halaseh, Senior Component Leader for USAID-Takamol, a programme in Jordan focused on gender equity and female empowerment, who previously worked with UNHCR, told me about his observations.

“For the first time in Jordan, I hear voices that refugees are not welcome. You have people in the government and in the parliament saying this – this has not happened in Jordan before. This is a major concern for me.”  

(Halaseh, A. Personal Communication: 2016)
Halaseh continued to discuss the reasons behind this, stating that some people believe refugees are damaging the infrastructure and that the foreign aid provided is not sufficient. He made a reference to one government official who expressed on the social media platform Facebook that the Jordanian Prime Minister should endorse Article 33 of the 1951 Convention: *refoulement*. While Halaseh stated there is no legal basis for this, he expressed his concern over the discussion.

Jordanian citizens have also felt the everyday effects of stretched resources, as food, shelter and water become “luxury goods to be fought over” (Mercy Corps. 2014), increasing tension and hostility between host communities and their Syrian neighbours. While the camps’ combined population reaches approximately 141,000, this only accounts for twenty per cent of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan. Eighty per cent reside in urban areas, with the majority in the Amman, Mafraq, Irbid and Zarqa Governorates (UNHCR. 2017), where tensions arise over employment competition, housing, and supplies. Fears are growing over concerns that these tensions may continue to escalate. President of the Kitab al-Sunna Society, a humanitarian organisation aiding Syrians in Jordan, said the following:

“We have reached the point where nearly all of the country’s problems are being blamed on Syrians... There is already talk of violence, and with time, we are afraid this is going to become a reality”.

(cited by Luck, T. 2013)

Concerns and changes in attitude did not happen overnight. Rather, the challenges stem ultimately from a prolonged lack of funding and over-stretched resources, with most urban refugees living below the poverty line, and with extreme funding shortfalls for humanitarian aid providers (Amnesty International. 2016: 5). The data below shows the funding requirements for the Syrian refugee response in Jordan alone, whilst this research was carried out, according to UNHCR, sitting at an alarming deficit of 99%.
Since then, however, the funding coverage has increased to 19%, a positive step, yet still desperately inadequate. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) suggest that the overwhelming numbers of refugees and donor fatigue account for the shortfall in funding (Röth et. al., 2016: 7). It is therefore necessary to appreciate that despite the severe lack of funding, all Syrian refugees living in the camps in Jordan receive shelter, water, food, education, health care and other services, including the Cash for Work scheme (Amnesty International. 2016: 10). For those living in urban settings, however, accessing basic amenities can be a challenge. Once registered with UNHCR, refugees in urban areas are supplied with an Asylum Seekers Certificate, allowing holders to access UNHCR services (ibid.). Additional registration with the Ministry of Interior should allow refugees access to public services, yet bureaucratic hurdles and restrictions make the process and access difficult, often causing families living under the poverty line to resort to pulling their children out of school so that they can work (ibid. 11).

In terms of protection provided for Syrian refugees in Jordan, there is an extensive variety of programmes available, mostly

---

**Table 1: UNHCR Funding Requirements, Jordan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Requirements (2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Appeal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$1,189,871,547</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Received to Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$16,773,541</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gap</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$1,173,098,006</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(UNHCR. 2017)
provided by international organisations. Furthermore, what is available for refugees must also be made available for Jordanians, a requirement put in place by the Jordanian Government to support vulnerable Jordanians (Röth et. al., 2016: 7). These humanitarian programmes come in various forms. One of which is cash assistance or voucher schemes, commonly carried out by UNHCR and UNICEF, providing monthly payments anywhere between $75 and $400 depending on the size of the household (ibid.). Vouchers are often provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and Save the Children and are generally used to purchase food items (ibid.). Furthermore, winters in Jordan can be cruel, so many organisations, including UNHCR, recognise the need for blankets and additional clothing. One of the organisations I volunteered with, Helping Refugees in Jordan, used donations to provide gloves, warm jackets, vests, underwear and small toys for children living in the tented communities in Azraq.

In terms of protection measures, the Danish Refugee Council provides life skills training, psychosocial support, and provides safe areas for children, women and men, both Syrian and Jordanian (ibid. 9). CARE have similar services available through their Emergency Response scheme (ibid.). Other organisations, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, UNHCR, UNICEF and Save the Children are all important actors in coordinating and implementing protection services, which also include information services, help with accommodation for those in urban settings, and creating ‘youth-friendly zones’ within the camps (ibid.). However, many Syrian refugees in Jordan are still opting to return to Syria. Amnesty International suggests increased vulnerabilities are the cause, including cuts to food assistance (e.g. World Food Programme) and personal depletion of savings due to lack of income. The desire to be reunited with friends and family members is also a pull factor (Amnesty International. 2016: 11). Dissatisfaction with camp life has also caused many Syrian refugees in Za’atari and Azraq to relocate to urban areas,
even after the bailout process was suspended in 2015, meaning refugees were restricted from formally leaving the camps. Regardless, UNHCR reports that 160,000 Syrian refugees informally left the camps in 2015 (cited by Amnesty International. 2016: 14). Reasons for this included feeling isolated from the services available in urban settings, struggles to integrate with other refugees from different Syrian governorates, and wishing to live in a more familiar community environment (ibid.).

Having briefly considered the current situation for Syrian refugees in Jordan in general, it is now necessary to approach that of women in Jordan. Once both topics have been covered separately, the intersectionality of Syrian refugee women in Jordan can more effectively be examined. This will be of particular use for providing context for those living outwith the refugee camps.

4.2 Women in Jordan

In Jordan, the experiences of women and girls vary through time and circumstance in terms of legal frameworks, political participation, institutions, education, employment, and cultural and societal barriers and breakthroughs.

Legally, French civil code and Shari’a law make the basis for Jordanian laws. Their courts follow suit, as both civil and religious courts make the judicial system, with religious courts having jurisdiction over family law (UNICEF. 2011: 1). In religious courts, only the testimony of two women is considered equal to that of one man (ibid.). Furthermore, despite ratifying CEDAW, Jordan made several reservations on the grounds that certain articles, such as men and women having the same personal rights, did not comply with Shari’a law (ibid.). Therefore, different rights apply for men and women regarding divorce, as a man can divorce without valid reason whereas a woman cannot (ibid. 2). Furthermore, a marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man would not be recognised (HRW. 2017). Other
Discussion

legal discriminations occurred last year regarding inheritance, child custody, citizenship, pensions and social security benefits (USDoS. 2016: 34). Recently, women’s rights activists have held demonstrations protesting their children be granted their Jordanian citizenship, a right that is currently not enjoyed if the child’s father is non-Jordanian (The Jordan Times. 2017). While some improvements have been made, for instance withdrawing the reservation made on equal freedom of movement in 2009, women are still discriminated against within the legal system today (UNICEF. 2011: 2).

Politically, however, women are making progress and mostly enjoy equal rights. After Jordan increased its quota provision for reserved seats for women in parliament in 2010, women have more political presence and participation (UNICEF. 2011: 2), although human rights activists maintain that cultural bias impedes equal participation for women (USDoS. 2016: 27).

Unfortunately, gender-based violence is still deeply prevalent in Jordanian society. A study by Al-Badayneh found that in a random selection of almost two thousand women across all Governates in Jordan, 98% had been subjected to violence (2012), while 93% believed “a wife is obliged to obey a husband” (ibid.). Al-Badayneh also found that after each incident, women felt “insecure, ashamed, frightened, captive and stigmatized” (ibid.). Despite this, there is ill protection from the law. For instance, if a woman suffers domestic violence, she may be held in administrative detention, known as “protective custody” (ERT. 2016: 3) until a male family member provides assurance she will not be harmed. While ostensibly in place to protect women from honour crimes, Equal Rights Trust argues that this violates Jordan’s commitment to CEDAW by discrimination made on the basis of sex, as well as “deprivation of liberty” as women are detained against their will for an indefinite period of time. Furthermore, Equal Rights Trust state that this prolonged detention may constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (ERT. 2016: 4).
While rape is illegal, the law is not effectively enforced, and pressure is often placed upon families to settle disputes outwith the courts (USDoS. 2016: 31). Alarming-ly, spousal rape is not illegal (Freedom House. 2016). While reporting a rape may lead to an “honour killing” of the victim, many women and girls are forced to marry their rapists in order to prevent shame falling on their families and “preserve the family’s honour” (USDoS. 2016: 33). This leads to offenders avoiding prosecution and an inconceivable reality for the victims, yet the alternative may result in death by a family member. The penal code also encourages this, as a rapist can waive his punishment if he remains married to the victim for a minimum of five years (ibid.). “Honour killings” or “honour crimes” have been increasing in cases, although rarely reported, with an estimated 26 killings of women and girls in 2016 (HRW. 2016). Jordanian law fails to provide protection against these crimes, as penal code articles 98 and 340 allow reduced sentences for the offenders (ibid.). For example, a case in 2016 found a father sentenced to only one year in prison for killing his daughter, a lenient sentence given due to the “honour” nature of the crime (USDoS. 2016: 32). Similarly, laws exist to protect women from sexual harassment and sexual abuse, yet these too are rarely enforced (ibid.). Due to the taboo associated with these crimes, women are unlikely to come forward to report them (ibid.). The Jordanian government do support the Jordanian National Commission for Women, however, an organisation that operates to support women in Jordan. Queen Rania of Jordan has been a powerful role model for women and girls, speaking openly against honour killings, as well as combating views that Islam and progression cannot go hand in hand (James, H. 2016). Furthermore, Halaseh from USAID Takamol argues that the biggest challenge facing women in Jordan is discrimination:

“You find it in both legislation and in practices. Stereotyping also exists. You see it everywhere – on television, in the curriculum at schools. The children, who are the future generation, see
these images of women who can only ever be the schoolteacher or the housewife, whereas the boy can be the hero, an engineer, a doctor…” (Halaseh, A. Personal Communication: 2016)

Halaseh stated that the King and the government are supportive of working on these issues, but the negative feedback from Parliament and the Jordanian public is problematic (ibid.). The Human Rights Committee has recommended that Jordan “adopt and effectively implement comprehensive legislation on gender equality, including a prohibition of discrimination against women” (cited by ERT. 2016: 9), as Jordan currently lacks any anti-discrimination legislation. (ibid.).

It must be noted, however, that since the initial research on this topic earlier this year, the Jordanian Parliament have voted to abolish Article 308 from the country’s penal code, “destroying all legal loopholes which let rapists escape the consequences of their crimes” (McKernan, B. 2017). This decision is yet to be approved and ratified by the upper house and King Abdullah II, though it is expected to go through successfully, which is a monumental breakthrough for women’s rights in Jordan.

Discussions arising from the Feminism workshop held by ActionAid that I attended in Amman involved the challenges for women in Jordan, of which tradition and culture were common themes. Combined with ineffective laws, women living in Amman commented that they felt their opportunities to succeed in employment, and to be treated equally in the public sphere, were hindered because they are women. It was wholly agreed upon that all women attending feared for their personal safety should they be walking alone after dark, including making their way home after this evening event. One woman stated that she will not walk in the dark without her key in her hand for self-defence, which seven other women admitted was common practice for themselves as well. However, it should be noted that while their challenges and dissatisfactions were discussed, both the women and men attending this session were passionate and
driven towards developing social change for gender equality, a crucial factor for its success.

Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme ranked Jordan #102 in their most recent Gender Inequality Index (UNDP: 2015). This index measures gender inequality in three specific areas: reproductive and maternal health, empowerment through political participation and education, and economic status. Most noticeably, the percentage of women with secondary education (69.5%) is remarkably high considering the low percentage of women in employment (15.6%), thereby suggesting most women are empowered by education but lack economic independence despite their willingness and clear capabilities. USAID suggests that women’s underutilisation could be due to traditional and cultural norms and roles of women in Jordan, remaining generally in the private sphere (USAID. 2017).

Having briefly discussed the broad situation for women in Jordan, it can be noted that many of these challenges also apply to Syrian refugee women and girls living in Jordan. In this regard, while certain topics may overlap, it is necessary to change the direction of focus to that of Syrian refugee women, in both camp and urban settings, in order to address the research question.

4.3 Female Syrian Refugees in Jordan: The Intersectionality

In this section, the coming together of two vulnerabilities – gender and forced displacement – aims to discuss a new intersectionality, which is still unfolding and requires serious attention. In order to answer the research question, are the rights of female Syrian refugees protected in Jordan?, this section will split into various subcategories, each discussing the rights at risk and issues that are of particular importance to Syrian refugee women
and girls in Jordan, and how actors are responding to their protection needs. This section aims to be inclusive of both Syrian refugee women residing in refugee camps, as well as those living in urban and rural areas of Jordan. Furthermore, it should be noted that the use of the word “woman” in this paper refers to anyone who identifies as female. This definition also includes girls, as girls in Jordan are often treated as adult women from an early age, with many girls under sixteen married and with children. To limit the definition of “women” to only those over the age of sixteen or eighteen would ignore the very real challenges faced by girls who may not meet the age threshold. For this reason, “women” aims to be inclusive of all Syrian refugee women and girls, including early teens and elderly women. Moreover, the specific address of Syrian refugee women, as opposed to all refugee women in Jordan, was chosen as the situation is still recent and ever-unfolding, and therefore under-researched. By no means is the intention to depreciate the plight faced by refugee women in Jordan who have fled other countries. Furthermore, this paper recognises Article 5 of the 1993 Vienna Declaration of which states that all human rights are “universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated” (UNGA. 1993). In this regard, all of the rights and issues that will be discussed in this section follow suit. They somehow interlink with each other and overlap, occasionally in a manner of cause and effect.

Topics such as non-refoulement and voluntary repatriation are typically thought of as the most important protection concerns, however living conditions and situations refugees are subjected to frequently must also be given attention (Goodwin-Gill, G. and McAdam, J. 2007: 447). Additionally, protection concerns vary surrounding gender and individual needs. Bearing this in mind, this section aims to fill the gap by discussing the following topics, which are more specific, though not limited to, the protection needs of women: sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including physical security and early marriage; the role of women and the effects of displacement; and women’s
Discussion

health, particularly sexual and reproductive health. These were chosen as the topics of importance as they came up most frequently during the semi-structured and informal interviews.

4.3.1 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Defined by CEDAW as “violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex” (UNHCR: 2003: 11), sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refers not only to physical violence. SGBV can also occur in the form of sexual violence, emotional and psychological violence, socio-economic harm such as discrimination in services, and harmful traditional practices (ibid.). In this regard, SGBV acts as the basis for the paper as all of the subtopics covered in this section ultimately fall into this category. Sexual and gender-based violence violates various human rights principles found in international instruments of which Jordan is party to, including the ICCPR, ICESCR, CERD, CEDAW, CAT and CRC. SGBV violates the right to life, liberty and security of the person; the right to the highest standard of physical and mental health; freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, the right to enter into marriage with free and full consent, among many others. Some, particularly those enshrined in CEDAW, more specifically address the issue. Furthermore, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) emphasises the responsibility of states to end crimes against humanity, which includes SGBV (UNHCR. 2003: 8-9). As part of UNHCR’s mandate is to provide international protection to refugees and seek durable solutions, they share responsibility with the State and other humanitarian organisations to protect all refugees against SGBV (ibid.). While these human rights violations can happen to both men and women, studies suggest that gender-based violence towards women “reinforces female subordination and perpetuates male power and control” (ibid. 11). Furthermore, SGBV does not have geographical or temporal boundaries. It can happen at any time, to anyone regardless of their age, race, gender, etc. and it can happen anywhere, in both
Discussion

the public and private arena, including in households, as a weapon of war in conflict, during the flight or in transit, in the refugee camps, and after resettlement (ibid. 20). Considering that social and family structures are prone to collapse during displacement, refugees become particularly vulnerable to SGBV. Combined with various other contributing factors, such as communal shelters of mixed genders, overcrowding, largely male camp leadership and lack of security and services, as well as traditional power relations and the hostility of host communities, women and girl refugees in particular may find themselves in a high risk setting (UNHCR. 2003: 22). Refugees who identify as LGBTI/SOGI face high levels of discrimination and often SGBV, and as do displaced persons with disabilities (UNHCR. 2011: 5). Furthermore, the damage of SGBV can be lasting and detrimental, sometimes leading to death from suicide, homicide or maternal mortality. Disease, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortions and gynaecological problems are common physical outcomes, with depression, fear, social stigma and rejection as psychological consequences (ibid. 24). For obvious reasons, then, the protection for Syrian refugee women against these violations is vital, and must be further explored. As the focus of this study is on Jordan, SGBV in the refugee camps and in urban and rural areas will be reviewed.

Often, dynamics stemming from feelings of frustration in men have a lot to do with cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Syrian refugee women in Jordan reported that their husbands’ loss of self-worth and their new inability to provide for their families weighed pressure and tension on their relationships, and led to an increase in domestic violence in their homes (UN Women. 2014). Additional stresses from overcrowded camps, or social isolation in urban areas, are factors which aggravate an already delicate and uprooted family structure (WRC. 2014: 12).
Kinda Kurdi, filmmaker for UNFPA working in Za’atari, told me the following:

“I saw a lot of women that were being beaten up by their husbands because they don’t have work and they are frustrated. They can’t really survive on the money they are being given so they are taking their frustrations out on the women and children, but mainly the wives, and because of that the wives are taking their aggression out on the children by hitting them. They know it’s wrong, but they are frustrated. It’s a vicious cycle.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)

Kurdi’s observation of this cycle of violence in the family stemming from male frustration of no longer being the breadwinner is not uncommon. Unfortunately, SGBV from male partners in the household is not the only concern. After the home, distribution sites in camps are considered the next highest risk locations for SGBV (WRC. 2014: 9). Single women or female heads of households suffer from a lack of protection in distribution queues, subjected to humiliating comments simply because they are unaccompanied - without men to “take care of their needs” (WRC. 2014: 9). Agencies have also stated that some women are asked for sexual favours in exchange for goods (ibid.). While there are separate distribution lines for men and women, this method of protection is proving inadequate (ibid. 6).

Other areas in the camps that are often deemed unsafe for women and girls are the bathrooms. With a lack of adequate lighting at some of the communal toilets in the Za’atari camp, women and girls are often afraid to go after dark as these are known areas for prostitution (Bindel, J. 2013). Even when lighting has been set up, light bulbs and locks on toilet doors are frequently stolen (WRC. 2014: 10). Improving lighting and reducing dark areas would also reduce opportunities for assault and abuse, and improve protection by creating a safer environment. Since my time in Jordan, the Azraq refugee camp has
improved its in-camp lighting, now running solar-powered electricity to 20,000 residents, and aiming to reach all 36,000 by next year. Not only will this make everyday life easier for all refugees in Azraq, but it will also allow a safer and more dignified environment for the women and girls in particular, aiding protection efforts (Dunmore, C. 2017). Should this prove to be successful in reducing fear of violence and incidents of SGBV, this could act as a model for other camps to follow suit.

Moreover, other in-camp issues include gender segregated toilets, which are marginal (ibid.), fostering more insecurity for women and girls in the camps. IASC notes the importance of planning in these areas, suggesting sanitary facilities should be closer to shelters, and better designed to meet women’s needs (2006: 105). Simple changes here could promote safety and dignity for women.

Mira, a Syrian refugee woman, told me about her concerns over camp safety:

“It is not safe for women. The camp is very big. The section close to the main door is better, but when you go far it is very bad, even though it is still in the camp. But a lot of people like to be further away from the door, the Bedouins. It is difficult in these cases.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)

This suggests that the layout of the camp provides varying degrees of protection for refugee women. For those who prefer to live further afield or for later arrivals who reside on the outskirts, the concentration of well-lit, safe areas and services is reduced. Some women have reduced freedom of movement as a result of camp insecurity, either their husbands will not allow them to leave the house, or they choose not to go outside for fear of sexual and gender-based violence (UNFPA. 2015: 5). Girls have received harassment on their way to school, resulting in their parents confining them to their homes as “their protection mechanism from unwanted sexual advances or other types of physical harassment” (WRC. 2014: 5). This is a detrimental
practiced and should be discouraged, but ultimately will only change if and when parents truly believe their daughters will be safe. Bindel argues that sexual and gender-based violence is so common that it is “too often viewed as part of “culture” rather than crime” (2013). It can be said that this culture of female subservience and male-domination has followed, and in some cases thrived, within the refugee camp environment.

Documenting cases of SGBV is problematic too, due to the sensitive nature of the issue and its traditional allocation in the private sphere. The fears discussed earlier for women in Jordan about coming forward are the same for Syrian refugee women. Women who have survived SGBV do not wish to dishonour their families by making their case known, nor would they want to face the consequences, which could be as drastic as marrying the perpetrator or being victim to an honour crime. A representative from JWU elaborates:

“This is a general issue, not only in Jordan but in most Arab countries. For example, if a woman was subject to rape she would be very hesitant to report this incident. Less than one in ten women subject to assault might report it.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)

Commonly, women and girls are more likely to tell another family member about an SGBV incident (Inter-Agency. 2013: 44). This conservative attitude has been reflected in interview responses, as I noticed that almost all of my respondents brushed over the issue when asked questions directly related to SGBV, indicating a reluctance to discuss it further. Furthermore, women may feel as though coming forward is of little use due to the poor implementation of law and order within the camp environment.

“There is a problem of enforcing the law there. We are talking about a huge area and I don’t think we have enough resources to make sure that law and order are being adequately protected, but when the violation takes place from family members it is
even harder to implement those laws. The other issue is sexual harassment is not clear in our opinion. It does not criminalise all forms of sexual harassment. We don’t have legislation that addresses gender-based violence. We have only one legislation that addresses domestic violence and it has been criticised for so many years because the law focuses on reconciliation and not taking action. This all adds up to the situation for the Syrian refugees” (Halaseh, A. Personal Communication. 2016)

Therefore, with cultural and traditional barriers limiting women’s willingness to report crimes, and with a legal lack of safety guaranteed after, Syrian refugee women may struggle to make use of the offered protection. However, UN Women has found that in Za’atari, women using other services, such as Cash for Work, would also report incidents of SGBV and other protection concerns (2017). As this is the latest information available, it could reflect a positive change in attitude as a result of protection programmes and gender-mainstreaming efforts more recently put in place, which will be discussed shortly.

While humanitarian organisations are working at full force in Za’atari, their resources are spread thinly when it comes to those living outside the camps in rural and urban areas of Jordan. Without the close community of other Syrian refugee women or the presence of aid workers close by, accessing information about what services are available and their whereabouts remains a challenge (Hersh, M. 2012). This is a problem for providing adequate protection as Syrian refugee women living in urban settings also face high risks of SGBV but are too dispersed from sources of help for them to prove effective.

SGBV concerns in urban settings remain similar to those of camp situations regarding domestic violence. A survey carried out by CARE on Syrian refugees living in Jordan’s urban communities indicated that their reasons for leaving Syria stemmed from fears of violence and SGBV, yet some found they experienced even more incidents of SGBV from their partners since arriving in Jordan (Inter-Agency. 2013: 24). Although urban
living refugees do not have to fear the dark corners or distribution lines that come with camp living, they have experienced fears from the insecure hostility in host communities in Jordan. Though these fears are based largely on rumours of violence, parents and husbands are restricting the freedom of movement of their daughters and wives in urban areas too (UN Women. 2014). Furthermore, instances of SGBV toward Syrian refugee women living in the North of Jordan have been relayed to UNHCR staff during a Participatory Assessment, with perpetrators being husbands, staff from community organisations, and Jordanian men (Inter-Agency. 2013: 24). Some women even disclosed that they had to exchange sex for aid (ibid.). Again, like Syrian refugees residing in camps in Jordan, those in the cities also struggle to access funds and means of income. This makes daily living incredibly difficult, and young women and girls may find themselves being forced into early marriage for security or dowry (Hersh, M. 2012: 2).

Sofia, a 22 year-old Syrian refugee woman living in the outskirts of Amman, voiced her experience:

“We came to Jordan to be safe but we do not feel it yet. My father does not approve when I leave the house without him or one of my brothers. He is worried about me, I know this, but it makes it hard for me to feel settled here.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)

Hearing her experience, it is clear that women are not only vulnerable to SGBV directly from potential perpetrators on the street. These fears permeate life inside the home too, impacting their mobility and autonomy to participate in daily life. Integration into the community is severely hindered, worsening tensions that are already brewing. However, it must be noted that not all of the women I interviewed had this outlook. Eshmaal, a brave young Syrian woman who joined her family in Jordan only
after completing medical college and who now works as a volunteer doctor for patients with spinal cord injuries at Souryat Across Borders, had the following to say on the matter:

“For me, Jordan feels safe. The people here are so great and welcoming. I have had a very positive experience. I am grateful to be here with my family.” (Personal Communication. 2016)

In this case, Eshmaal highlights that there is room for strength and resilience in Jordan, and has found positivity in a difficult scenario. Eshmaal joined me one day while we visited a tented community and a UNHCR school in Azraq. The girls in the classroom were so inspired that she was also a female Syrian refugee, and a doctor, and may have easily become a role model. In the image below, she is surrounded by young girls while she plays Doctor.

However, on our car journey back to Amman we were pulled over by the police as part of routine checks. As Eshmaal did not have the correct documentation with her, and being a Syrian refugee, she was taken aside for over an hour. When she returned to the car, she was crying, not because of her experience with the police who let her go freely, but from the fear of having to face her father when she would return home. In this anecdote, it is clear that traditional roles of patriarchy and power exist even over the strongest adult women.

Having established the concerns over sexual and gender-based violence in both refugee camps and urban areas of Jordan, it is necessary to discuss the existing measures of protection in place in order to answer the research question, are the rights of female Syrian refugees protected in Jordan?

Protection measures for survivors of SGBV have increased in both settings, largely due to the creation of women and girls’ safe spaces. In these safe spaces, women and girls can rebuild their social networks with those in similar situations, receive support from other women, and learn new skills. Importantly, these safe
spaces can also provide legal, medical and psychosocial services in response to SGBV, as well as offer advice and information related to women’s rights and health (UNFPA. 2015: 4). In Za’atari camp, there are currently three Women and Girls’ Oasis Centres, run by UN Women and UNFPA. The first one was opened in 2012, but they continue to expand due to high demand, though funding is hindering their growth (UN Women. 2016). The centres have proved highly effective, with ninety-six per cent of participants reporting a positive impact on their well-being, ninety-one per cent having more influence in decision-making both at home and in the community, and twenty per cent noticing a reduction in domestic violence (ibid.), statistics that suggest these centres are providing somewhat effective protection. Furthermore, the safe spaces in Jordan work closely with Sexual and Reproductive Health services. This means they either have these services in the same centre, or they have the same partners, making it easy to facilitate referrals (UNFPA. 2015: 21). This is a crucial aspect of providing effective protection, as women coming forward may have already struggled to bring themselves to the point of uttering their experiences out loud. Providing access to all services at once, or at least information about them, can empower women to take the additional protection – it is offered, she does not have to search anymore. This can change the entire psychosocial experience, from fear and isolation to dignity and relief. In a similar fashion, other organisations can come to the women here. UNHCR, UNICEF, Bright Futures and Save the Children are partners of the project and therefore can use the safe spaces to reach out to women and learn more about their protection needs, and offer additional assistance (UN Women. 2017). What’s more, in Jordan, mothers can attend the centres with their children, as there are toys provided for them to play with while their mothers make use of the services (ibid. 17). This is a small but important measure, as having childcare commitments at home could prevent women from taking these steps toward protection.
These safe spaces and services are not limited to Za’atari camp. UN Women now supports twelve safe spaces, nine of which are in host communities such as Mafraq, Irbid, Zarqa and Amman, and are available for both refugees and Jordanian nationals (UN Women. 2016: 1). Four of these safe spaces are in partnership with non-governmental organisation Jordanian Women’s Union (JWU). The JWU women’s shelters provide protection, counselling and rehabilitation services for female survivors of SGBV. In 2015, they supported almost two thousand women and girls. Of these, 412 survivors of SGBV received legal protection and psychosocial support and almost half of these women and girls received additional training to help them to live independently (UN Women. 2016: 2). Upon arrival at the shelter, JWU supplies a kit containing basic amenities (towel, toothbrush, underwear, pyjamas, bed sheets and feminine hygiene products) (JWU. 2017). Women at the shelter receive three meals a day from their in-house income-generating programme called ‘The Productive Kitchen’. They are protected by security 24 hours a day and receive help from social workers (ibid.). Despite the name, the Jordanian Women’s Union has responded well to the “complex and additional needs of an increasingly non-Jordanian clientele” (ibid.), thereby adjusting their mandate to include protection of Syrian refugee women. They also provide a hotline for women to call with a team of support workers at the other end of the line.

As part of Jordan’s Ministry of Social Development, a women’s shelter called Dar Al-Wefaq was established in 2006 to provide a short-term safe haven for women and children who had suffered SGBV. They work with the Family Protection Department to provide shelter, counselling and forensics, and since 2012 have been working in the Za’atari camp, as well as in and around Amman. While many resources were provided, such as a sewing machine, books and computers, most of them sat unused. From her study, Samhouri suggests that the women’s needs were not sufficiently met as they were not provided with
Discussion

the necessary technical information to use the resources, nor were any classes or workshops organised to encourage participation and involvement (2013). From this, it is clear that while physical protection from violence is provided if sought out, empowerment and participation could be improved by asking and listening to what the women want and need.

During my time at the tented community in Azraq, the UNHCR and HRJ-supported school on the outskirts was also previously a women’s centre. At the time of my visit, they were in the process of relocating and rebuilding the centre so no services were available during the interim period, but promises of improved services in the near future are positive steps towards protection for Syrian refugee women in areas of Jordan, particularly for those outside of camps and the main city, Amman. It should also be noted that there are other women’s centres in Jordan for refugees, for example, the International Rescue Committee supported over 11,000 women and girls from Syria and Jordan in 2013 alone in a similar fashion – by providing a multi-faceted approach at protection, including psychological support and healthcare in a safe and confidential environment (Megevand, M. 2015). Despite this, there remains an unmet demand for more, as the influx of Syrian refugee women to these services have placed a great strain on the current SGBV services available for Iraqi refugee women and Jordanian women though organisations such as UNFPA have been managing this situation (Hersh, M. 2012: 2). In the refugee camps, these safe spaces occur once every twenty thousand refugees (UNFPA. 2015: 11). As almost all Syrian refugee women either experience SGBV or expect to experience it at some point in life by their husbands (UN Women. 2014), there is a dire need to ensure protection services to survivors are more readily available.

Furthermore, attention to planning and location is also of importance in terms of safe spaces for women and girls. For example, before the Azraq camp opened, a safety audit carried out by the Gender-Based Violence Working Group noticed that
a basketball court was to be built beside the women’s safe space. As basketball courts are likely to be used mostly by men and boys, they were able to change the location (UNFPA. 2015: 12). In doing so, preventative action was taken and thereby increased protection for refugee women. Recipients of the help available at the shelters are therefore more likely to feel safer, and in return will be more inclined to make use of the services available.

Moreover, safe spaces for women are not the only means of providing protection. In fact, it can be argued that these safe spaces could be considered more as rehabilitative measures, as opposed to protective and preventative measures. Women are unlikely to seek out this help until such times as they have already been victim to an incident. Many of the women’s shelters have, however, marketed themselves in a way that promotes socialising with other women and encouraging other methods of empowerment or work, without SGBV as a prerequisite. In this regard, they act as a preventative measure, as women are already there and in control of their new surroundings, a strength they can take home with them. Unfortunately, due to restrictions on the movement of women for cultural and safety reasons described earlier, as well as widespread unawareness of the services available, these effective protection measures are under-utilised (Inter-Agency. 2013: 44).

Another vital element towards real protection for refugee women against SGBV is changing the attitudes and mindsets of potential perpetrators before they commit sexual and gender-based violence. In this case, SGBV programmes not only address the women and girls at risk, but the men and boys too. In doing so, traditional and cultural ties to the status of women can be tackled, promoting the long-term goal of gender equality. UNHCR implements these engagements with men and boys in their SGBV protection programmes, so that “individual attitudinal change in the short term result in incremental societal change in the longer term” (2011: 17). In terms of protection for Syrian refugee women, long-term societal change reducing or
even eliminating sexual and gender-based violence would be the ultimate form of protection. Furthermore, through inclusion of men and boys, the programmes can “highlight the positive social roles” that they play in the lives of women and girls, as supportive partners, providers, and protectors themselves (ibid.). This culturally appropriate positive reinforcement may also reduce stress and tensions that the male refugee population are facing related to the crisis as a whole, and aid a more peaceful environment in the household. Once again, there are various partner organisations working on this inclusion method, not only UNHCR. UN Women and Jordan’s ARDD-Legal Aid are also looking at how men can manage the stress of the camp through a series of sessions, which also address SGBV and the treatment of wives and daughters (UN Women. 2017).

Other methods of protection can be through organisations helping to provide legal support for separation and divorce with violent partners. The UNFPA are currently offering this service. Filmmaker Kinda Kurdi explains:

“Some of the footage I recorded was on how a lot of the women were being subjected to beatings by their husbands, so they would go to UNFPA centres and get lawyers put on the case and help them to get divorced. There was one woman I met who managed to get a divorce and she feels alleviated, relieved. It’s tougher now, but she’s free. There are a lot of women in this case who have been displaced and cannot live a normal life. Even if there was violence before, it is worse now with the displacement.” (Personal Communication. 2016)

These services are crucial for refugee women to know they have their rights regarding marriage, family life and freedom protected. As their lives as they know them have been entirely uprooted, having these support systems in place are vital.

Additional means of protection for Syrian refugee women’s rights come in the form of organisational coordination. As there are many organisations working in the same field, care should
be taken to ensure their efforts work in harmony with each other to provide the most effective protection. This can be achieved through communication and information sharing where necessary. For example, vulnerability criteria has been produced by UNHCR for use by a variety of other organisations to ensure the most effective distribution of resources and services from a needs-based perspective. The criteria prioritises refugees at a higher risk of vulnerability, including female-headed households and women and girls at risk of SBGV. This multi-sectorial approach involved the cooperation and coordination of CARE, the Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam, and many others. Another example of coordinated efforts in practice was the creation of Standard Operating Procedures, produced with the input of Jordanian governmental agencies, UN bodies, and international organisations (WRC. 2014: 13). These provide referral mechanisms for numerous services, including those tackling SGBV, so that incidents can be reported and women and girls can be directed to the appropriate protection service. Unfortunately, difficulties regarding accountability have been encountered, as well as incidents that have not been followed up. This can be hugely problematic as women reaching out to seek help regarding sexual and gender-based violence could be in a dangerous situation that urgently demands attention. To have her call go unanswered, or to wait for help that is not coming, could be “the difference between life and death” (ibid.).

Having discussed some of the sexual and gender-based violence issues affecting Syrian refugee women and girls in the camps and urban and rural areas of Jordan, including risks and measures in place, it can be argued that protection is available. However, “available” is not a guarantee that protection is being accessed. As discussed, it is apparent that many women are unaware of the services available to them, suggesting an increase in awareness-raising and promotion of projects, programmes, safe spaces and services for women, girls, men and boys is absolutely necessary. This should be carried out for in-camp
Specific attention should be paid to the difficulty in accessing information and services for women living in rural and urban parts of Jordan, or who may have trouble paying for transport to safe spaces. Efforts should therefore be increased to reach out to women who may not know how to come forward. Asking women themselves how to improve these services, and what methods would make it easier for them to reach out, is an important step to ensuring protection needs are met. Additionally, during my research, I noticed a distinct lack of attention paid toward sexual orientation and gender identity regarding people of concern (SOGI/LGBTI) and their experiences with SGBV as a refugee. This is an area that requires immediate attention.

Furthermore, basic adjustments to camp security can increase protection for Syrian refugee women and girls, such as implementing better lighting systems, ensuring there are locks on toilet doors and creating more gendered toilets so women and girls feel safe using them. Additional security should be provided at distribution lines to discourage and prevent sexual harassment, again improving protection for women and girls in the camps.

However, it is positive to see that changes are being made, and despite the severe lack of funding, women and girls protection from SGBV is high up on the agenda. While there is little scholarly material on this topic, there are a number of reports and guidelines created by international organisations that are specific to the issue of SGBV against refugees, with data collected, and monitoring and evaluation in place for the programmes that are running. Furthermore, there are inter-sectorial groups specifically looking at gender equality as part of the Syria response in Jordan by UNHCR and partners. Considering SGBV was hardly recognised as a humanitarian concern in the international community until the 1990s, most international NGOs now have SGBV as an established part of their operations
Discussion

(Buscher, D. 2010. 7). Moreover, significant progress is continuously being made and recommendations are acted upon. For example, criticism from Jeanne Ward in 2002 argued that “coordinated activities between the constituent community, health and social services, and the legal and security sectors, remain just that: ideals” (ibid. 10), yet evidence presented in this paper shows that today, these ideals are becoming realities. Albeit there remain challenges with cluster programmes, communication and coordination efforts, but nonetheless they exist now with their mandate inclusive of protecting Syrian refugee women and girls from SGBV. In this regard, and bearing in mind the severe funding limitations, the international community, local and national NGOs and government bodies are working together to increase protection through a wide range of preventative measures, and reconciliation efforts crossing social, legal, and health arenas. Thus, it can be argued that in terms of SGBV, Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan are somewhat protected, with effective measures in place, though unfortunately many women and girls are unable to access such protection, with various societal and mobility factors acting as barriers. While the efforts in place by international and national actors must be commended, the fact of the matter is that SGBV is still a prominent feature in the lives of most Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan, suggesting that the protection in place is not sufficient for the entire vulnerable group.

4.3.1.1 Early Marriage

Early marriage, or “child marriage” is defined as a marriage between two people, where one or both are under eighteen years of age (UNICEF. 2016). Despite being illegal under international law and Jordanian national law, evidence of Syrian refugee girls marrying before the legal age is rife. Early marriage is a human rights violation, and is protected under Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stating individuals must enter marriage freely with full consent and must be at full age
Discussion

(UN. 1948). This is reinforced by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), both of which Jordan is party to. In addition, early marriage impacts the individual’s access to other human rights, such as health, education, non-discrimination and equality, and freedom from violence and exploitation (Girls Not Brides. 2016). It falls under the category of sexual and gender-based violence, as girls are refused their right to make their own decisions about marriage and sexual health. It is also very closely tied to early motherhood, which can have dangerous consequences for both mother and baby (Inter-Agency. 2013: 29). Early marriage has further societal implications on the position of women and girls, generally positioned under the control of her husband. As early marriage takes place while the bride is often too young to understand the consequences it may have on her future and her health, and because of tradition and cultural norms where it normally takes place, resistance is rarely successful (UNICEF. 2006). Naur suggests that there are three main driving forces behind early marriage: poverty, reinforcing social ties, and the belief that it provides protection (Naur, N. 2009: 53), all of which have been cited as reasons for Syrian refugee girls to be forced into early marriage. Due to a lack of income and financial difficulties, many women and girls find that early marriage or prostitution is the only way to provide for themselves and their families (UNHCR. 2008: 10). In the majority of cases, it is the parents of the girl that arrange an early marriage. Not only does this mean they have one less mouth to feed, but they will likely receive a financial sum in the form of a dowry. It must be noted, however, that rarely will the parents do this out of ill intention. Rather, the fear of sexual violence in the camps and urban areas of Jordan drive them into the “safe” hands of a selected husband (Freedom House. 2016). A father, whose daughter Hanadi was married and pregnant at age 14 in Jordan, relays the following:
“They rape girls who are as young as her in Syria now. If they raped a nine-year-old girl, they can do anything. I will not feel okay if I do not see her married to a decent man who can protect her”. (cited by IRIN. 2012)

In instances like these, a “decent” man often refers to a man far older than the girl. Alongside financial struggle and want of protection, the breakdown in social structures following displacement also exacerbate the situation (WRC. 2014: 11). Sadly, early marriage as a form of protection is ironic and self-contradictory, yet there is little awareness of the physical and psychosocial implications it may have, and the additional vulnerability it places on the girls involved (Inter-Agency. 2013: 44). Moreover, with the increased sense of urgency due to conflict, displacement, and insecurity over safety and finances, parents are neglecting the thorough investigations and background checks of the potential husbands that would normally be undertaken to ensure he had a good character. Instead, so long as he can provide physical and financial security immediately, he gains the approval of the young girls parents and a wedding can be hastily arranged (UNICEF. 2014: 10). As discussed earlier, girls who have been subject to SGBV are also married off to their perpetrators in order not to bring dishonour to the family. This is just as true for Syrian refugee women and girls as it is for Jordanians (Dean, L. 2016). In these circumstances, not only are Syrian refugee women and girls’ rights violated by the harmful traditional practice in itself, but are at greater risk as husbands are not “vetted”.

In Jordan, the legal age of marriage is eighteen, yet despite this law, girls can be married as young as fifteen if a judge in the Shari’a court allows it, in favour of the girls “best interest” (Freedom House. 2016). However, it is argued that the law is unhelpful anyway, as many of the marriages are informal, temporary and unregistered, making it easy to bypass the law. These temporary marriages, often known as ‘urfi’ or ‘misyar’ are legally
permissible in Shi’a and Sunni Islam, and usually performed by religious leaders (Inter-Agency. 2013: 33). They are common in Jordan as foreign nationals wishing to get married officially would have to provide a letter from their embassy declaring their current single status (IRIN. 2012). As the Syrian conflict makes obtaining further documentation impossible, informal marriages become the “solution” to bypassing the bureaucracy. Unfortunately, these temporary marriages are detrimental to the rights of the women and girls subjected to them. Not only do these marriages act as a form of prostitution, as they are often combined with a payment (dowry) to the girl’s father and can last anywhere between a few hours and several years, but the set-up deliberately revokes the rights a wife would typically be entitled to in a registered Islamic marriage, including financial and material support (Inter-Agency. 2013: 33). Furthermore, should the girl become pregnant from a temporary marriage, which is highly likely, she is not entitled to any legal rights or support if her husband leaves her or dies (ibid.). The implications are passed down to the children of the ‘urfi’ who will lack access to their legal rights if their birth went unregistered, or if the mother tries to register the child without her husband due to the ill protection provided by Jordanian law (WRC. 2014: 11-12). It should also be noted that statistics from Shari’a courts on the number of underage marriages only represent those which have been registered. Therefore, the number of early marriages is actually much higher than reported (UNICEF. 2014: 10). USAID suggests that it is likely that one third of the Syrian refugee population in Jordan are subject to early marriage (2017), but organisation Girls Not Brides thinks the figures may be much higher (2016). What’s more, the girls are generally marrying far older men. Research by UNICEF shows that 85% of married Syrian girls’ husbands were between five and fifteen years older than them (cited by Girls Not Brides. 2016), while the age of girls forced into marriage dropped even lower upon arrival in the refugee camps in Jordan (Inter-Agency. 2013).
Aside from temporary marriages to bypass the law, other methods include rich men, commonly from Gulf countries, taking girls from the camps and across the border back to Syria to marry, then return her to the camp in Jordan later. In this case, although underage marriage in Jordan is illegal, Jordan has to recognise this certificate as it is from the Shari’a court in Syria (Halaseh, A. Personal Communication. 2016). Through bypassing the law, any legal protection in place becomes hopeless. However, this could be regarded as human trafficking, as it certainly falls under the following definition:

“Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation”.

(cited by UNHCR. 2003: 9)

Not only is Jordan party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (UNHRC. 2016: 8), but the country also has its own Anti-Trafficking Law of 2009 that follows a similar definition. Punishments for the crime of trafficking under this law can be ten years imprisonment and a fine, should the victims be women and/or children, among other groups (ibid. 9). Although these laws remain in place, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, expressed that Syrian refugees and asylum seekers are especially vulnerable to trafficking in Jordan (2016: 12). She was informed of the following case:

“...a 17-year-old Syrian girl forcibly married to 13 different men from Jordan and Gulf countries over two years. For each “marriage”, which lasted from one day to one month, the victim was forced to undergo hymen reconstruction surgery at a private clinic in Amman by her traffickers – her single mother, a family friend and a doctor.”

(ibid. 7)
This shows the scale of the situation that cannot be ignored, yet she noticed that there was limited information on sexual exploitation of Syrian refugee women and girls available. The Special Rapporteur suggests this indicates that Jordan does not view it as a problem of its own, and must actively seek out victims to provide protection (ibid. 12).

In other cases, early marriage is used as a tactic by Syrian men to gain entry into Jordan, as the entry process is more easily awarded to men with marital status and families (Girls Not Brides. 2016). Marrying a Jordanian man is also seen as a way out of the cycle of displacement, as girls can relocate out of the camps and bring their families with them. This can also open doors for legal employment (ibid.). However, this adds to more tension within the host community, as Jordanian women notice the tendency for Jordanian men to marry Syrian women and girls. In a survey carried out by UN Women, Jordanian women felt that not only were Syrian refugee women their competition for work, but for husbands, too, while Syrian women responded that they were ashamed to be portrayed as easy prey in the eyes of Jordanian men (2014).

However, it is well known that early marriage in Syria is a traditional and culturally accepted practice that predates the conflict, and is often not recognised as a negative issue by Syrian refugees residing in Jordan (Inter-Agency. 2013: 29). Others argue that it is barely a phenomenon at all, rather an exaggeration by international media (Inter-Agency. 2013:33). This was the attitude of one Syrian refugee woman I interviewed, Nabila:

“It is not like what you see on television. It is not a big number, maybe about fifteen cases of early marriage in the camps, but it is done now. I must tell all the people – it is not like that here [Amman], just in the camps. After three years in Za’atari it was a problem, but now it is better. We are settling.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)
However, these accounts are unfortunately in contrast to evidence suggesting incidents are growing increasingly common inside Jordan among the Syrian refugee community, both in camps and in urban areas (UNFPA. 2016). Kinda Kurdi with UNFPA told me the following:

“One of the main things I noticed whilst filming in Za’atari was that there has been a rampant increase in the marriage of children under eighteen. A lot of the women thought it was okay to marry off their daughters for security, but in fact what happens is they get pregnant, drop out of school, and keep having more children. This is very bad because they are not educated enough to know they are harming themselves, their kids, their future and their health. A lot of them are not even at child-bearing age. I saw a case with a mother and her daughter both pregnant at the same time – and this was not uncommon.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)

Here, Kinda refers to the increase of early marriages and early pregnancies she witnessed, neither of which seem to be slowing down. Just last year, bridal gown shop owners in Za’atari said that the average age of brides in their gowns was fifteen (Dean, L. 2016). In urban areas, early marriage proposals for girls as young as twelve have been reported. Another case includes a Syrian refugee mother residing in Amman who told UNICEF that five men had asked to marry her fourteen-year-old daughter (UNICEF. 2014).

Although it is common practice in Syria, women and girls rarely want this for themselves or their daughters. Mothers and daughters who had both married early said they would not want the same for their own daughters, and that despite any involvement they may have had in the marriage arrangements, it was ultimately up to the male in the household (UNICEF. 2014: 9). This in itself highlights the power relations involved in early marriage that ultimately render the girl helpless toward the decision, and therefore denied her right to enter into a marriage freely, with full consent and of full age. Sometimes the young
age is chosen so as to stunt any insubordinate attempts to change their path (UNICEF. 2016), yet it was too late for one of the young girls Kinda interviewed in Za’atari:

“She was very outspoken, very pro-human rights and equality and education for women. She had the strongest spirit. After we finished the interview, the social worker told me she is actually being forced into an arranged marriage the following week and she is in complete denial. Her parents would marry her off a few days later. She will be married now.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)

Sadly, this shows that psychosocial empowerment and being informed can do little in terms of protection in these scenarios. Therefore, what protection measures are in place for early marriage in Jordan, and are they working?

As there are loopholes in the law forbidding early marriage, this is clearly not effective as an adequate protection measure. As has been explored throughout this section, it is evident that these loopholes are well-known and heavily exploited. In this case, these loopholes and discretionary permissions in Shari’a courts must be re-evaluated. Culturally appropriate solutions within the courts must be reviewed, and the minimum age for these permissions should be raised. Furthermore, attempts to decrease temporary or unofficial marriages have been made by waiving the fine for not registering a marriage in Jordan, encouraging refugees to come forward and make them legal, thereby ensuring the women and girls can enjoy their rights within marriage and the minimum age requirement will be met (Hanmer, L. and Elefante, M. 2016: 11), however there is a distinct lack of awareness of this among the refugee community (ibid.).

Lack of documentation also hinders the protection process in terms of legal efforts. Many Syrian refugees fled in a hurry, leaving everything behind, including birth certificates and marriage certificates (ibid.). Without birth certificates, it is difficult to determine a girl’s age and therefore near impossible to prove
she is below the minimum age for marriage. However, the Jordanian Civil Registry is now issuing birth certificates regularly to children of Syrian refugees (ibid.). While this is of little help to girls facing early marriage today, it is recognised as a long-term effort to prevent and protect the next generation from early marriage. Where possible, proof of age should be mandatory, alongside the registration of all marriages. With this regard, extra care should be taken to ensure marriages do not go underground, and cultural sensitivity should be taken into account so as to ensure no harm is incurred in the name of “honour” should a marriage application be rejected. This could be done by introducing a panel to assess applications for marriage on an individual basis. Significant attention should be paid to the imams and religious authorities within the camps, who are officiating at many of the underage weddings in the Za’atari camps.

Eradicating early marriage in the Syrian refugee population in Jordan is no easy task, and one that requires coordinated responses to address the underlying root causes and understand the traditions behind this practice. UNHCR is working with the Jordanian government and Syrian refugee communities in Jordan to provide advice and assistance on matters regarding early marriage, and are involved in advocacy and response services (ibid.). Furthermore, UNHCR staff and other organisations have issued Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, which offer assistance in risk-assessment for early marriage (Inter-Agency. 2015). Jordanian NGO ARDD-Legal Aid also address the issue in their sessions with men and boys regarding SGBV, encouraging men to discuss their thoughts behind putting their daughters through early marriage. In one session last year, a father admitted that he regrets marrying off his thirteen-year-old daughter (2017). These programmes therefore have the potential to help highlight and promote a change in societal attitudes and behaviours. As it is most commonly the fathers that have the power to decide their daughters’ fate, changing their mindsets
could have a significant impact on the protection of Syrian refugee girls.

One Syrian refugee girl, Omaima, who was fifteen at the time, started her own campaign against early marriage in the camps after her best friend was married off despite her resistance. Now she holds awareness-raising workshops through acting and drawing, and invites both parents and girls to attend and share their knowledge (Atkin, C. 2016). Solutions coming from Syrian refugee girls themselves are pivotal to creating change. Another example of this is the coordination efforts between mother and daughter in Za’atari working with UNFPA and the Institute of Family Health of Jordan to help tackle the problem (UNFPA. 2016). It should also be noted that the women’s centres and safe spaces, among other efforts that were discussed in the SGBV section, also incorporate early marriage into their curriculum for awareness-raising and providing legal, psychosocial and physical support and protection. In this sense there is little data for programmes running with a specific focus on early marriage, rather it is assumed under sexual and gender-based violence mandates. However, with instances on the increase, effective protection for all is not accessed.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the power balance in early marriages, and the lack of legal standing, it can be argued that Syrian refugee girls are not adequately protected in this area. Any services that are available may also find that those in need are restricted in their freedom of movement by a male family member, or are forbidden to attend due to the ‘haram’ nature of the content. Even when girls can and do attend, they have little weight in the decision-making process. Therefore, prevention measures need to involve all actors, including teachers and neighbours to report incidents, as well as relieving the financial burdens on families that may lead them to choose early marriage. These may be in the form of cash for work programmes or through training, which will be further discussed
later. Additionally, education is known to be a key empowerment tool for young girls, as skills and knowledge can prevent or delay the onset of early marriage (Girls Not Brides 2016). As many young girls abandon education after early marriage (UNICEF. 2016), enhanced efforts encouraging girls to remain in school are essential. These efforts should also be aimed at parents to allow their daughters to remain in school.

4.3.2 The Changing Role of Women

“She is man, she is woman... she is everything.”
- Um Hadi describing her friend, colleague and mother of five who lost her husband to the Syrian conflict.

(Personal Communication. 2016)

Another prominent issue regarding Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan is their role in the household. Many women living in the camps and urban and rural areas of Jordan may have made the move without their husbands. It is not uncommon to find that the men have been killed in conflict, separated from their families in transport, detained, or have gone elsewhere to find work (Jabbar, S. A. and Zaza, H. I. 2015: 305). Others may have joined armed groups in Syria, or have stayed behind to look after other family members (CARE. 2016: 16). In their absence, many women have become the head of the family, with one in three becoming the sole providers (ibid.).

The map below gives an idea of the numbers, with female-headed households in the tens of thousands in Jordan, a figure which is continuing to rise (CARE. 2016: 5). In the northern governorates of Jordan, the female-headed household population is particularly concentrated. This could be due to the proximity to the Syrian border, and therefore closer to support networks and family members, including males, aiding a sense of security (UNHCR. 2015: 21).
Table 2: Syrian refugee women who head their household

As the head of the household and living without a male, Syrian refugee women may find they have added responsibilities. Traditionally, Syrian women’s responsibilities have remained very much in the private sphere, where daily tasks include childcare, cooking, and housework (UNFPA. 2015: 5). However, since taking on the role of both man and woman, ninety-four per cent of women felt their responsibilities had changed, with the majority reporting the shift had a negative impact on their lives (*based on a survey by UNHCR in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon) (UNHCR. 2014: 45). One reason for this could be the forced nature of the shift in gender roles. International Rescue Committee’s women’s protection coordinator, Daniela Greco, argues that the change of gender roles is “not natural social change” but comes as a result of displacement and violence (cited by Su, A. 2015). As this shift in gender roles takes place as a consequence of unforeseen circumstances rather than through natural or learned cultural progression, it has yet to adjust and integrate with the traditionalist, patriarchal culture
that is present in both Syria and Jordan. Therefore, a small increase in women’s empowerment or position in this society can thus cause tensions and frustrations from males traditionally holding power. Rachel Dore-Weeks from UN Women explains it in relation to the Za’atari camp:

“It’s a shock to those Syrians that are coming from very patriarchal, conservative communities to see any kind of situation in which women are treated preferentially outside of their traditional roles”.

This can affect the protection of Syrian refugee women from a variety of angles. In the community, women without a male in their household have reported feeling unprotected and at risk of SGBV, often exacerbated by poor lighting and home security such as locks on doors and windows. To this extent, it is not uncommon for Syrian refugee women in Jordan to try and hide the fact they are living without a man (UNHCR. 2014: 21). In situations where hiding this fact is impossible, for instance with landlords, Syrian refugee women in Jordan have reported sexual and gender-based violence, with offers of “free” shelter and accommodation in return for sexual favours (ibid.). Here, women feel unprotected at the lack of having a man in the house. However, evidence shows that gender roles still shift in situations of displacement even when husbands, fathers, brothers and sons are in the home. Often, the roles reverse: women are pushed out of the traditional private sphere and into the public sphere, participating in different activities such as skill-training and cash-for-work programmes to relieve their financial burdens. Meanwhile, the men may have lost their status as the ‘breadwinner’ and provider, and now have to adjust to a shift in power dynamics as women have more control over their own actions. Due to the deeply entrenched patriarchal culture, this is often difficult for men to accept, and can increase tensions and domestic violence (CARE. 2016: 15). Feeling emas-
Discussion

culated, men tend to reject this swap of power and responsibility, and refuse to do the ‘women’s work’, arguing that it is a woman’s responsibility to carry out household tasks and childcare, and that it is the man’s choice if he wants to help her or not (ibid. 18). This results in an unequal distribution of duties, and can turn what should be an empowering experience for women into an exertion overload and a tense household. Former UNHCR employee Halaseh describes it from his perspective:

“This is one of the main causes for an increase in sexual and gender-based violence. The whole concept has changed because the man thinks he should be the breadwinner but now he’s staying at home and depressed, while she is taking courses, getting jobs, and spending her money on him. It causes frustration which comes out in the form of violence against the wife. There are studies, but I have also seen it myself.”

(Halaseh, A. Personal Communication. 2016)

Moreover, men have noted a sense of favouritism towards women’s employment over their own (although this is a common misconception as men take up 76% of employment positions within Za’atari) (Staton, B. 2016). However, men often do not have the legal permits allowing them to work, as well as residency permits, and are generally asked to present their paperwork more often than women. This can limit their mobility and freedom of movement, afraid to leave the house, another characteristic that has generally been associated with victimised women (CARE. 2016: 6). Men adjusting to the gender role reversal are often struggling to adapt to the feeling of powerlessness that can breed in the camp setting after fleeing conflict (Staton, B. 2016). Gerecke argues that during conflict and social breakdown, men have increased “access to women... and impunity” (Gerecke, M. 2010: 138). With this argument, it could be suggested while women have a reduced sense of security and increased vulnerability, men have reduced sense of responsibility, which can dangerously lead to sexual and gender-based
violence. Olivius argues that in fact it is not the gender roles that change, only the division of labour, while the framework of gender and power relations remain untouched (2014: 95). This is supported by a study carried out by CARE, during which men stated that women should seek their permission before working in public, allowing them to retain power over a woman’s decisions (2016: 19). However, Dore-Weeks adds that while it may be frustrating for the men, women’s work has actually reduced domestic violence within Za’atari. It reduces the stress as income is coming in, and allows women to get out of the house (Staton, B. 2016). Male refugee, Ahmed, who arrived in the Azraq camp in Jordan and now works in the women’s centre there notices the difference:

“Women, especially in Syria, used to spend a lot of time at home, cooking and looking after the home... Now that's changed. They bring the gas, they go to the mall... It's new for them. They feel now that they can do something, be more active, take the lead in different ways.” (cited by Staton, B. 2016)

Ahmed shows here that not every Jordanian or Syrian man shares the traditional conservative opinion surrounding gender roles, later stating that working in the women’s centre has helped him too. This is a positive outcome, proving that gender roles are learned, and can therefore be ‘unlearned’ and adapted to suit changing times and situations (UNHCR. 2003: 12).

When speaking with Lara Shaheen from Amman-based women’s for-profit initiative, Syria Jasmine, I asked if any of the women had difficulties with men due to their involvement in the work there. She shared this:

“Before, if they were in Syria, yes they would have a problem. But here, her husband or brother – it is okay for women to work because we don't have any other choice. The whole family must work for a chance to live. It is a chance for women to contribute. And some of our women work from home.” (Personal Communication. 2016)
As a Syrian refugee woman in Jordan, Lara understands the need to be flexible. Providing an opportunity for women to work from home (making crafts, candles, soaps and jewellery) allows women to make some money whilst seeing to their other responsibilities, and reduces tensions at home. The initiative is far more than just for profit, as Lara explains its full value:

“Most of the women here don’t have husbands – some of them are dead, some missing in Syria, so they have to support themselves and try to learn everything to start work. They feel good when they come here and see the other ladies and we meet outside of work too. It’s like family and it’s very beautiful. It is so much more than coming to work. They call this a little Syria in Jordan.”

(Personal Communication. 2016)

Programmes and initiatives like Lara’s are crucial to supporting and empowering Syrian refugee women to embrace their new positions and to build a positive atmosphere. This not only helps women learn new skills, but they can be financially independent, bring their children along, and receive psychosocial support and relief from other women in the same situation. During my time with the women at Syria Jasmine, their warmth and appreciation for each other, and their strength to be optimistic, was remarkable. Women who have lost almost everything were sharing their stories openly and making light of a dark situation. What was also interesting was the age range of women and girls, with one teenage girl joining after her school day was over. Having recently discussed early marriage and SGBV, the involvement of younger girls into programmes that encourage empowerment, as well as helping their family’s income in a positive way without dropping out of school, is an essential component to the long-term protection of refugee women and girls. It was also positive to see older women there, who are often forgotten both in practice and discussion in refugee settings.

In this section, the focus was not on specific human rights violations per se, rather on an important observation of the
effects displacement has on the traditional role of refugee women in and from traditionally conservative countries. This draws on the aspects of other discussed areas in this paper, including SGBV, early marriage, and work, reminding us of the complexity and interconnected nature of the issues and solutions for Syrian refugee women in Jordan. Therefore, protection measures in place are not so much necessary for the changing role of women in itself, which could and often does have positive consequences, but rather for the negative effects this culturally premature or inorganic shift has on women’s access to rights, including protection from SGBV and discrimination. Efforts in place that deal with the role of women are mostly centred around women’s empowerment workshops, which are provided in women and girls’ safe spaces discussed earlier, and grassroots initiatives like Lara’s, as well as in efforts to involve men and boys in their adjustment to these changes, reducing tensions and frustrations related to women’s empowerment that may lead to SGBV. Women’s Refugee Commission notes that services to deal with the changing role of men and their failure to protect are scarce and insufficient (2014: 1). If the role of women is changing, greater efforts must be in place to ensure this is a progressive step towards empowerment and not additional labour and a further threat to their physical security.

4.3.3 Women’s Health

In this section, Syrian refugee women and girls’ access to healthcare in Jordan will be discussed. Article 12 of the ICESCR, which Jordan is party to, protects the right to the highest attainable standard of health under international law, and is inclusive of timely and appropriate healthcare, as well as sexual and reproductive health (UNGA. 1966). This is closely reiterated in Article 12 of CEDAW, and Article 24 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, outlining equality in healthcare for men and women, including sexual and reproductive health. These are extended to non-nationals, thereby inclusive of Syrian refugee
women and girls among others, regardless of their status (Amnesty International. 2016: 20). Free healthcare was provided for Syrian refugees by the Jordanian government until 2014, with a policy change imposing user fees on Syrian refugees registered with Ministry of Interior (MoI) service cards. While the fee may appear reasonable, limited income and transport fees incurred to reach medical facilities can often deem healthcare an unaffordable luxury (Amnesty International. 2016: 18). For unregistered Syrians without MoI service cards, they can expect to pay the same rate as foreigners. This can amount to up to 60% more than the rate for uninsured Jordanians (ibid.). Therefore, since the change in policy, Syrian refugees have struggled to enjoy their right to healthcare (ibid. 6). In response, various NGOs and humanitarian groups have attempted to compensate with their own services, but with no prior warning from the Jordanian government about the imposition of the user fees, many reported having “very little time to scale up their response”, and leaving some unable to treat the majority of those in need (ibid. 19). As the topic of health in this area is so vast, specific health concerns for women and girls will be discussed, with a focus on sexual and reproductive healthcare.

4.3.3.1 Sexual and Reproductive Health

In conflict zones, in flight, and in the refugee camps themselves, women and girls are often in desperate need of medical attention. This is commonly due to the drastic conditions they have endured as a result of SGBV on their journey, a lack of access to clean drinking water for pregnant women, and a lack of access to hygiene, sanitary products and general access to women’s healthcare en route (Clayton, J. 2016). Without access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, women and girls are vulnerable to “death, disease and disability” (Women’s Refugee Commission. 2016). Notably, the previous two issues discussed - SGBV and the role of women in the household – also increase refugee women’s vulnerability to sexual health complications, including maternal
complications and emergency obstetric care. Alongside regular reproductive and maternal health requirements, the proliferation of early marriages of Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan often results in early age pregnancies, which is a health implication in itself (Amnesty International. 2016: 8). Early age pregnancies are far more likely to cause complications during birth, and may deem future childbirth impossible (IRIN. 2012). According to the World Health Organisation, pregnancy in girls under twenty-years-old is the second highest cause of death for this age group globally, with poor humanitarian settings worsening the chances (UNFPA. 2016). Furthermore, while the problems are predominantly physical, they also have long-term mental health effects associated with anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (Sami, S. et al. 2014: 1179). Therefore, women’s sexual and reproductive health unequally impacts the lives of refugee women.

One of the main factors reported for Syrian refugee women and girls unable to enjoy their right to healthcare was a lack of awareness of the services available. This was an obvious observation during my research, as the majority of Syrian refugee women that I interviewed in Amman seemed uninformed in this regard. Three respondents stated that services do exist, but they did not know what, where, or how to find out more. It should also be noted that these women did not have smartphones, with one claiming she sometimes uses her husband’s to access the internet, therefore searching the internet for more information is not an easy option, particularly in rural areas where internet cafés are sparse or non-existent. This suggests that even where services do exist, they are not being fully utilised as they are not effectively reaching their target group. This is problematic as not only are women unable to access necessary reproductive health check-ups and physical appointments, but they also lack essential information and knowledge regarding family planning and sexual health. Being ill-informed about family planning exacerbates the number of young girls becoming pregnant
immediately after an early marriage (IRIN. 2012). Enshrined in Article 16 (e) of CEDAW, it is clear that this constitutes a violation or ill-protection of Syrian refugee women’s rights:

“... to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;”

(UNGA. 1979)

Another barrier to accessing healthcare is the need for appropriate documentation. According to a health needs assessment carried out in the Zarqa governorate in Jordan, Syrian refugees must provide “at least 4 copies of the UNHCR registration document for every consultation” (cited by Amnesty International. 2016: 15-16). As women in this situation have recently come from a crisis situation resulting in displacement, they have often been exposed to trauma, sexual and gender-based violence, or may have been unable to access medical attention which is long overdue. Therefore, bureaucratic stalling can be life-threatening to both mother and baby. As mentioned earlier, registration itself can be a difficult and time-consuming task having fled Syria without necessary documentation.

Furthermore, Syrian refugee women reported that one of the biggest challenges to accessing healthcare was the cost of transport to the facility. While this is less of an issue for those living in camps and urban areas, women residing in the rural areas of Jordan may find the nearest hospital is hours away via public transport (UNHCR. 2014: 26). The cost of treatment itself has also deterred women from seeking vital medical attention such as antenatal care, which detects any complications during pregnancy. Amnesty International reported three cases of women who delayed going to a public hospital for antenatal check-ups as it was too expensive, yet women are recommended to have a minimum of four antenatal appointments before giving birth (2016: 19). This can have serious implications on the health of Syrian refugee women and girls and their babies.
According to recent statistics from UNFPA, there are approximately 158,000 Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan of reproductive age. On average, ten per cent are pregnant at any given time (2016). With women unaware of services, and unable to afford or access sexual and reproductive healthcare, the risks and implications can be critical. Therefore, not only is the right to healthcare ill-protected, but so too is the right to life.

However, in terms of protection, there are efforts in place to address these needs. Over the years, sexual and reproductive healthcare in a refugee setting has moved beyond only catering to delivering babies, and is now a generally well-established part of humanitarian aid, with the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) for women’s reproductive healthcare now a minimum standard (Buscher, D. 2010: 7). This resource is used by humanitarian workers working in refugee situations, and is designed to “prevent and manage the consequences of sexual violence; reduce HIV transmission; prevent excess maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality; and plan for comprehensive RH [reproductive health] services” (IAWG. 2017). It also includes the availability of contraception and treatment for infections. Importantly, it ensures all health organisations in a crisis address reproductive health (ibid.). While MISP has been successfully implemented in Jordan for the most part, it has been reported that reproductive health coordination has been lacking in urban areas, and that the reproductive health working group, composed of various UN staff and NGO staff, have had a stronger focus on the camps in comparison (IAWG. 2013: 2). This leads to inequalities across the Syrian refugee population within Jordan in itself, based on their location. However, the Ministry of Health has health facilities in all governorates that provide reproductive healthcare, and it works in coordination with the Reproductive Health Sub-Working Group, composed of representatives from a variety of humanitarian organisations (UNHCR. 2017). Furthermore, the Reproductive Health Sub-Working Group has been addressing the lack of awareness issue
by providing awareness-raising sessions in both Azraq and Za’atari camps, specifically focused on the involvement of men and boys (ibid.).

In Za’atari, there is a 24-hour clinic run by UNFPA and Jordan Health Aid Society with 39 members of staff, including midwives and nurses, gynaecologists and paediatricians. On average, they will deliver around ten babies a day, referring a few complicated cases to the Moroccan hospital close by. They recently celebrated the 5000th baby born in the camp, and despite the increased risks in maternal mortality in a hostile environment, there have been no cases (UNFPA. 2016). In addition to childbirth, they also provide other forms of sexual and reproductive health, SGBV care, counselling, sex education and even a response programme to reduce early marriage (ibid.). These services are available and provided to an estimated 20,000 Syrian refugee women and girls in the Za’atari camp. As Kinda Kurdi filmed the work in the reproductive health clinics for UNFPA, she elaborated on the quality of healthcare provided:

“In my opinion, the reproductive healthcare was comprehensive. Even though they were operating out of caravans, it is running really well. The staff were phenomenal. They are very professional – you have the nurses who provide post-natal care and inoculations, and they will visit mother and baby in their homes afterwards to see how they’re doing. The Moroccan hospital is outstanding too.” (Personal Communication. 2016)

While there is little data available for efforts in place for Syrian refugee women in urban and rural parts of Jordan, Kinda told me about a Jordanian centre in Sweileh that she maintains provide excellent reproductive healthcare for everyone, including refugees. She told me they have psychologists on hand that give sessions on combatting SGBV, with many women telling her they felt empowered after.

However, despite protection efforts in place for Syrian refugee women’s access to sexual and reproductive healthcare,
culture and tradition still stand between women and coming forward for help. In relation to sexual health for survivors of SGBV, women are often “unlikely to weigh the benefits of seeking services against their fears of retribution” (Krause, S. et al. 2015). Sexual violence and sexual health is still largely a taboo topic within the communities, hindering women’s freedom to speak openly and seek medical attention (ibid.). In fact, some women in Za’atari worryingly mentioned that “they would try to self-abort through lifting heavy objects if they had an unwanted pregnancy” (ibid.), though sessions encouraging all genders to participate seek to change these mindsets. Moreover, women are even less likely to seek medical attention if the staff are male, and Za’atari has been noted as having a lack of female staff (ibid.).

In terms of whether the reproductive health rights of Syrian refugee women are protected, it can be argued that different women have different levels of access to protection. Therefore, women with funds or close proximity to clinics are more likely to know about the services available, and be able to reach and access them easily. Unfortunately, women residing in rural areas still face hurdles due to a lack of mobility, money, awareness and available resources. It is therefore essential that efforts are made to improve this situation, which must involve the input of Syrian refugee women abiding in rural Jordan, in order to establish an effective solution.
5. Conclusions

Noting the gap in research surrounding the intersectionality of female refugees, particularly in the event of the conflict in Syria and the protection mechanisms in place in neighbouring Jordan, as well as the tendency for earlier research papers to focus predominantly on the in-camp conditions and neglect those of urban and rural female refugees, this study proved a necessary addition to the available literature. Concentrating on the efforts in place by international, national and local/grass-roots bodies, the aim was to find out if the human rights of Syrian refugee women and girls are adequately protected in Jordan. Having established what was meant by the key terms, ‘refugee’, ‘protection’, and ‘The Refugee Woman’ as a merging of two exclusive concepts into one, and having conveyed how the field and desk-based research was conducted, collected and collated, a discussion into the findings was presented.

The discussion opened with a brief introduction into the current situation for Syrian refugees in Jordan in general, appreciating Jordan’s MoU with UNHCR and their outstanding commitment to providing food, water, shelter and medical treatment, and to the principle of non-refoulement. However, it became apparent that this principle was not always honoured, and Jordan gradually began to close its borders. Furthermore, tensions have been growing amongst Jordanians, primarily due to their dissatisfaction with overstretched resources. Difficulties with funding deficits for UNHCR and other organisations were acknowledged, yet cluster organisational efforts have continued to provide extensive services where possible, providing a wide range of protection mechanisms for Syrian refugees in Jordan, particularly in comparison to the majority of actors in the international community.
Following this element of the debate, the broad situation for women in Jordan was deliberated, realising that while Jordan has ratified various international conventions, such as CEDAW, the jurisdiction of Shari’a law and religious courts aided gender inequality, with testimonies of two women equalling that of one man. Furthermore, a lack of legal protection, the regular threat of honour crimes and societal standing for women suggest the commitment to said international conventions prove to be little more than lip service.

After discussing the two separate elements, it was necessary to combine them using Kimberlé Crenshaw’s concept of intersectionality to fully realise the condition for female Syrian refugees in Jordan. Refining the topic to three areas of particular relevance to this vulnerable group, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with a focus on early marriage, the changing role of women, and women’s health, particularly sexual and reproductive health, were examined.

Beginning with SGBV, it became apparent that this is a powerful presence in the home, both rural and urban, and in the refugee camps. A cultural reluctance to come forward, a lack of confidence in legal protections, and a widespread lack of awareness in available services proved to be impeding factors to protection efforts. However, international efforts (UNHCR, UN Women, UNFPA, etc.), national efforts (such as Jordan ARDD-Legal Aid) and local efforts (run by women and men in camps and grassroots programmes around Jordan) exist to reduce this problem, including safe spaces and shelters in camps and in urban and rural areas. Moreover, programmes inclusive of men and boys are being utilised, promoting gender equality and tackling deep-rooted discrimination. These efforts are directly addressing long-term change, reducing tensions, and highlighting positive ways men and boys can support women and girls, instead of turning to violence. While these protection efforts are effective and available, they are not necessarily accessible, as many women and girls are unaware of the services, unable to
Conclusions

leave the private sphere to attend, or cannot afford the transportation. Therefore, it can be argued that Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan are partially protected from sexual and gender-based violence, with a substantial proportion unable to make use of the available services.

The topic of the early marriage of female Syrian refugees in Jordan under the legal age of eighteen was then approached. Again, acknowledging and appreciating that Jordan is party to international conventions such as CRC and CEDAW, as well as having their own national legal minimum age for marriage, loopholes are being exploited by both parents and potential husbands. With the belief that underage marriage can provide financial stability for the family, and physical security for a beloved daughter, temporary unregistered marriages are frequent, leaving the young bride exempt from marital rights. Furthermore, the speedy process often means girls are married off to far older men without parental vetting, and against their will. While various organisations are working to address the root causes, with services talking to men and boys (fathers and husbands) to encourage alternative paths to safety and respect for women and girls, as well as organisations created by Syrian refugee women and girls themselves to raise awareness of the realities of early marriage, the situation is still rife. Ultimately, women and girls have little to no say in the matter, as the male in the household will traditionally make the decision. Moreover, upon entering early marriage, a girl’s education is usually brought to an end – which would have been a key tool for empowerment. UNHCR guidelines are ensuring all organisations are working with an awareness of handling such issues, yet, unfortunately, the protection available is inadequate.

Moving on to the changing role of women, a common feature during displacement due to men involved in conflict or staying in Syria with family, a third of Syrian refugee households in Jordan are headed by women. Thrown immediately from the private sphere into the public sphere, this social change did not
Conclusions

occur through positive natural progression, meaning the traditional patriarchal ethos still remains, creating a cultural clash on top of an already unsteady environment. In turn, this exacerbates the risk of SGBV, with unaccompanied females viewed as “vulnerable” without male protection. In households where males are present, the financial need for women to leave both the house and their traditional “female” duties for paid work also causes tensions in the home, as she may take over the traditionally male-associated role of the breadwinner. However, protection mechanisms in place, such as grassroots social enterprise Syria Jasmine, encourage a safe and positive transition into the new role. Run by women for women, safety, friendship and income come together. Women can also choose to work from home, an option that can reduce tensions while families adapt to their new surroundings. However, as employment rights for refugees are difficult to obtain, involving loopholes and “blind eyes” turned by authorities, protection efforts like Syria Jasmine appear to be few and far between. Furthermore, there has been little attention to the changing role of men, though services discussed earlier with workshops for males do approach these issues. As mentioned earlier, this particular subtopic is not so much one that requires protection – women need not be protected from becoming more empowered and independent, however under the circumstances they may be at higher risk of sexual and gender-based violence, for which they are provided limited access to protection.

Finally, the issue of protection in terms of the right to health, specifically sexual and reproductive health, was discussed. Considering the interlinking of SGBV and early marriage directly impacting the need for sexual and reproductive healthcare, a lack of awareness of available services was noted. Furthermore, the topic was generally considered taboo, with few respondents comfortable to discuss it. A lack of female staff working in healthcare facilities also proved to be a deterrent for women seeking medical attention, combined with an absence of suitable
transportation methods, particularly concerning women living in rural Jordan. However, Syrian refugee women and girls residing in camps such as Za’atari have a substantially high standard of healthcare available, provided by UNFPA, Jordan Health Aid Society and the Moroccan Hospital, which have been strongly commended. Furthermore, the healthcare also addresses SGBV-related cases, provides counselling, sex education, as well as response programmes to early marriage. Additionally, the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) ensures that women’s reproductive healthcare is provided, which has been successfully implemented in Jordan. Therefore, it can be argued that Syrian refugee women and girls are, again, somewhat protected in this realm, though factors including mobility, costs, culture and awareness of services decrease the accessibility of provided services.

Furthermore, it should be noted that due to the space and time limitations of this research paper, certain areas of strong influence regarding the protection of female Syrian refugees in Jordan, including education, employment and mental health, could not be explored. These should be priority areas of focus for future research.

It can therefore be concluded that while protection efforts exist, the human rights of Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan are only partially protected. In this regard, the protections in place are not all-inclusive, and fail to reach the most vulnerable in urban, rural and in-camp settings. However, the reasons for these downfalls are largely attributed to the societal “placement” of women and cultural taboos surrounding survivors of violations, impeding their ability to access available protection mechanisms. Furthermore, poorly implemented national laws, sharing and competing for jurisprudence with religious Shari’a law, further hinder the ability for female Syrian refugees in Jordan to fully enjoy such protection. While Buscher argues that refugee women languish in these situations, and their participation in programme design is far from a reality
Conclusions

(2010:4), I have witnessed women and girls striving for a better future and making sure they participate in programme design – even by means of creating their own organisations. I do agree that this should be encouraged, as while efforts in place should be praised, gender equality is sadly still a distant dream for Syrian refugee women and girls in the camps, rural and urban areas of Jordan.
6. Recommendations

In this section, recommendations for future efforts to increase protection for Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan will be put forward.

As with most humanitarian efforts, money plays a huge role towards the overall protection plan. Without adequate funding, projects cannot go forward, resources are thinly spread, and the quality of protection given and the quantity of those receiving it are reduced. Having realised the current funding shortfalls for UNHCR dealing with the Syria crisis in Jordan alone, serious action must be taken as soon as possible to acquire more funds for these crucial projects, and for other organisations and the government. UN Secretary General António Guterres strengthens this recommendation, urging increased support for countries hosting Syrian refugees, stating not enough help has been offered to Jordan by the international community. He maintains that it is in the interest of the wider international community to provide stronger backing, as prolonged poverty can lead to an increase in global insecurity (Dunmore, C. 2017). While the threat of global security is indeed a strong point, emphasis should also be placed on the need for a humanitarian attitude and solidarity, as opposed to one of fear. Similarly, the manipulation of human rights rhetoric in the international community to suggest hosting or supporting Syrian refugees would harm women’s rights should be challenged, and efforts should be made to show that the two concepts can and must be realised harmoniously, in the very interest of women’s rights. Jordan has proved through the Jordan Response Plan (2016-2019), and included project proposals for the future, that it is committed to the protection of Syrian refugees, though it cannot continue to carry this weight alone, nor should it be the sole responsibility of countries closest to the conflict to bear the burden. Considering the climate of conflict in the Middle East, the world cannot
afford to lose Jordan as a host, nor as a peaceful zone amidst such insecurity. Therefore, this recommendation is less directed at Jordan, but rather at the international community as a whole to realise its self-interest in supporting Jordan’s relief efforts. Furthermore, there must be stronger emphasis on the principle of non-refoulement to fully ensure, despite closed borders, that no one is forcibly returned to Syria, which could be more closely enforced through recommended ratification of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

In addition, recommendations to reduce tensions brewing between Jordanians and Syrian refugees have been suggested by UN Women, encouraging joint projects that address livelihood concerns within communities (2014). An effort should be made to encourage Syrian refugee women and girls to be more involved in these dialogues, with an emphasis on finding solutions to the problem of accessibility. This would encourage solidarity, a necessary ingredient for successful integration and resettlement, particularly as returning to Syria will not be a viable option for the foreseeable future. With this in mind, all proposed solutions must be durable and sustainable in the long term, whilst simultaneously sought urgently. It should also be noted that while culturally appropriate measures must remain, particularly for the safety of women and girls involved, the role of women is undoubtedly changing and this does provide a window of opportunity for the implementation of measures that are far more inclusive and attentive to gender equality and sensitivity (UN Women. 2014). In doing so, this can encourage the traditionally patriarchal society to embrace this change in a positive and progressive manner, aiding long-term gender equality. Moreover, women and girls should be included not least in community dialogues, but have meaningful involvement in all aspects of protection plans and services, therefore in international, national and local measures, to fully address the root causes of inaccessibility, and implement ideas and solutions
from Syrian refugee women themselves, who ultimately understand their own protection needs more fully than even the most well-intended humanitarian workers and policymakers. Moreover, gender-sensitivity should be applied to all protection plans as a minimum requirement to ensure that Syrian refugee women and girls rights are addressed through every measure. Particular emphasis must be placed on efforts to address gender violence in the private sphere, and at reducing taboos to encourage women and girls to come forward with issues relating to SGBV, early marriages and sexual health. This comes with confidence in security, therefore women must be aware of solid protection mechanisms available. This could be further realised should Jordan take on the recommendation put forward by the Human Rights Committee to adopt and implement legislation prohibiting discrimination against women (cited by ERT. 2016: 9). As well as national legal protection, collaboration between international and local actors with the Jordanian Government should be encouraged to ensure smooth and effective cohesion of humanitarian efforts addressing protection needs.

In regards to Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan enjoying the right to health, Jordan should prioritise the removal of user fees for health services, and increase affordable transportation options for those residing in rural areas to access essential healthcare services. In the meantime, Syrian refugees that do not have the MoI card or required paperwork on hand must not be denied access to these services. Again, this should be managed with cooperation from the international community, in order to reduce the financial strain on Jordan and curb the hostilities between dissatisfied Jordanians and Syrian refugees.

Bearing in mind that protection is not only physical, efforts to support the mental and psychosocial health of Syrian refugee women must be encouraged and supported. However, physical safety must remain a priority, by ensuring additional measures reach every dark corner of the camps, and behind every closed door in urban and rural Jordan. No woman should feel like she
is running from danger into the arms of more. Therefore, to allow the conditions and circumstances many female Syrian refugees are subjected to in Jordan is unacceptable, and every effort should be made to ensure no woman or girl cannot access the protection she needs, and is entitled to. This means protracted efforts are an urgent priority, in order to reach women and girls who have limited freedom of movement, due to male authority forbidding it, lack of financial means or transportation. Only once these recommendations, among others, are fully implemented can Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan be on the path to full enjoyment of their basic human rights.
7. Bibliography


ARDD-Legal Aid. 2017. ‘Combating SGBV through Storytelling in Za’atari’. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILol7owoJesU&feature=youtu.be&a


Bindel, J. 2013. ‘Women Come Last in Syrian Refugee Camps’, Dispatches. Available at: http://standpointmag.co.uk/node/4917/full
CARE. 2016. ‘ON HER OWN: How women forced to flee from Syria are shouldering increased responsibility as they struggle to survive’. Available at: http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/care_on-her-own_refugee-media-report_sept-2016.pdf


Bibliography


Mercy Corps. 2014. ‘Helping Meet the Needs of Syrian Refugees in Jordan’. Available at: https://www.mercycorps.org/helping-meet-needs-syrian-refugees-jordan


Bibliography


Plan International. 2017. ‘Child Marriage’. Available at: https://plan-international.org/because-i-am-a-girl/child-marriage?gclid=CICXq96Q8dICFYGbvAodKdUCDA#

Regional Refugee Instruments & Related. 1984. Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama. Available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36ec.html


UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2012. The 1951 Refugee Convention and the Protection of People Fleeing Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence, PPLA/2012/05. Available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/50474f062.html

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2014. Syrian refugee women who head their households. Available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/53bfb5264.html


United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). 2016. UN Women’s Programming: Syria Crisis Response in Jordan (Brief). Available at:


8. Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview – Sample Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consent to your information being used and printed in an academic paper?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to use a different name?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are you from?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How and why did you come to Jordan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has your overall experience been in Jordan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do you live in Jordan? (camp, rural, urban)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel safe here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can you tell about sexual and gender-based violence?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can you tell me about early marriage here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you noticed that your role as a woman has changed? If so, how?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your access to sexual and reproductive healthcare?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything you would like to change about your experience in Jordan?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study aims to provide an overview of the human rights protections in place for Syrian refugee women and girls in urban and rural Jordan, as well as in-camp settings. The paper outlines the gaps in protection available and accessible for this group, as well as specific focus areas in need of attention: sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including early marriage; the changing role of women in the face of displacement, and women’s access to gender-related healthcare. Whilst understanding there are other variables to the full enjoyment of human rights, this paper looks at the international, national and local efforts in place to provide protection for Syrian refugee women and girls in Jordan, and concludes with recommendations to better provide basic yet essential human rights protections.