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# Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanese Secondary Schooling: A Vertical Case Study

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Education

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**Abstract**

Syrian refugee education in Lebanon faces several challenges from limited school access, language barriers, and undefined policies, to uncertain future citizenship status of refugee students under the larger conditions of state ‘fragility.’ This study examines how Syrian refugee education is enacted in two Lebanese public secondary schools operating in relation to national and transnational policies and norms. The theoretical frame used has three inter-related components. The first addresses (post) development education and fragility. The second addresses globalization and the evolving role of the state dealing with Syrian refugee education. The third considers citizenship education and its relation to refugees as noncitizens. The methodology used is a single vertical case study informed by the analysis of literature and policy, and an inductive analysis of school participant interviews. The vertical case study allows for a more fulsome understanding of how Syrian refugee education is enacted by including a cross-level, multi-stakeholder analysis. The key findings show that state fragility was an overarching condition and concern in the challenge to school Syrian refugee students. Different positioned actors all emphasized Syrian refugees’ ‘right to education’, and improving upon their access to quality schooling; however, these actors’ priorities and concerns were different. The ministry official focused on contextualizing refugee education processes and challenges within intersections of transnational and state policies, while teachers and administrators’ were more focused on daily concerns of students’ participation and the curriculum. Finally, the students were more focused on how their current schooling might lead them to a better future.

**Keywords:** refugee education, secondary education, fragile state, globalization, development education, citizenship education, vertical case study, policy, Lebanon

### **Summary for Lay Audience**

After the start of the Syrian war, Lebanon hosted a large number of Syrian refugees. With around 500,000 school-aged Syrian refugees estimated for the school year 2016-2017, only 27% were enrolled in the formal schools out of which only 2% registered in the formal secondary school (UNICEF, 2017, as cited in Chopra & Adelman, 2017). This study focused on how Syrian refugee education was enacted in two state secondary schools for this small portion of refugee students who attended. Special attention was given to different educational actors at different levels and to the transnational, regional, and local policy interactions.

A single vertical case study (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006) design was used to attend to the educational experiences of actors within a multi-level terrain. Within the vertical case study, three axes were used: horizontal (comparing the same phenomena in different locations), vertical (tracing how global, regional, and national policies inform school practices and each other), and transversal (integrating historical influence within the analysis). A thematic inductive approach was used to build up themes from semi-structured and open-ended participant interviews. The participants included a ministry official, administrators and teachers providing Syrian refugee education, and secondary Syrian refugee students.

A theoretical frame composed of three interrelated parts was utilized. The first addressed development education and fragility. The second addressed globalization and the changing role of the state dealing with refugee education. The third considered citizenship education and its relation to refugee education.

The findings reveal that state fragility influenced how each stakeholder prioritized many aspects of the enactment of Syrian refugee education. The ministry official's main concern focused on contextualizing Syrian refugee education to the

## SYRIAN REFUGEE EDUCATION IN LEBANON

Lebanese local and conditions while attending to the international demands. The administrators and teachers were more focused on their day-to-day operations and curriculum. Finally, the students were trying to make the best use of their education to attain better future. While all stakeholders emphasize the human right aspect, there is still a need to attend to the funding gap, funding type, and policy-practice gap. However, hope for a better future remains a major element in Syrian refugee education.

### **Dedication**

To my child, Aleka, your presence has provided me with a new purpose in life. I hope you grow to become a happy, productive, and helpful individual in your community. May God light your way.

To my wife, Maral Varbetian, my soulmate, my partner, and my friend, you have been there in the toughest of times. I can never do enough in this lifetime to show my appreciation and love to you.

To my father, Hassan Wakim, and mother, Salwa Wakim, you have supported me throughout my life. You have survived through the toughest of times, in worst war times and in the worst economic condition, but you have never held back any of your love from us. I love you both.

To my brother, Tony Wakim, and my sister, Marie Maamari, you are real-life friends who supported me in the good and bad times. With every day, I grow in admiration of you. You are a true role model. I am proud to be your brother.

To my uncle, Gen. Kalim Wakim, the guiding and protecting angel in my life that has and still is lighting the way for many. You are an icon in the public service, in the community, and in helping others. Thank you for helping me along the way.

To Dr. Walid Busaba, your support in the last five years has been invaluable. I will always be grateful to you and your family for all your support and help you have given me.

To the memory of my Grandmother, Marie Semaan, your prayers will always be with me, and to my late uncle, Youssef Wakim, your caring and loving heart have touched us all. I am privileged and proud to have had you in my life.

### **Acknowledgement**

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I am also grateful to the students, teachers, administrators, and ministry officials in Lebanon for their participation in this study. I hope this research can enrich refugee education in the country. I am obliged to the full support and assistance given by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon. Finally, I express my appreciation to my extended family for their help along the way. Genuinely thank you all.

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Appendix A: Key Policies

Appendix B: Ethics Approval

**List of Abbreviations**

Abbreviation	Definition
CCS	Comparative Case Study
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA	Education for All
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
GES	Global Education Strategy
GoL	Government of Lebanon
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEE	Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLG	No Lost Generation
PMU	Program Management Unit
RACE	Reaching All Children with Education
3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
SRRP	Syria Regional Response Plans
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All

## **Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanese Secondary Schooling: A Vertical Case Study**

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

#### **1.1 Overview**

Since the beginning of the Syrian war in March 2011, the Syrian crisis alone recorded the largest number of displaced citizens since World War II (Visconti & Gal, 2018). In the year 2017, *neighboring* countries such as, Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, hosted the largest number of Syrian Refugees with more than 5.4 million registered Syrian refugees, of whom 1.94 million were school-aged refugee children (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017). In 2018, inside Syria alone, an estimated number of around 13.1 million Syrians 5.6 million of which were children, were in need of help. Out of the 13.1 million, 6.1 million Syrian were displaced as estimated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in its 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview, and 5.6 million, including 2.6 million children, took refuge in different hosting countries as reported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data portal (UNICEF, 2018). The remaining 1.4 million were expected to have remained at home. My research study seeks to illuminate how secondary schooling is provided to, and experienced by, Syrian refugee students in Lebanese schooling.

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines refugees as individuals who have crossed international borders and are unable or unwilling to go back to their country of origin due to fears for their lives or fears of oppression (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010). Lebanon has witnessed numerous episodes of violence, wars, internal and external clashes resulting in

massive displacement of people from within and outside of the Lebanese borders.

Across the past century, Lebanon has been a refuge for displaced peoples such as Armenians after 1915, Kurds after 1940, Palestinians after 1948, Iraqis after 2003, and Syrian refugees after 2011 (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2014). By the end of 2017, it was estimated that around 992,100 Syrian refugees reside in Lebanon. With those numbers, Lebanon occupies the top of the refugee per capita chart with around 1/6 of the people refugees under the UNHCR responsibility. If the Palestinian refugees are included under the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) mandate, this ratio rises to 1/4 of the population (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018).

The increasing numbers of refugee students created a massive strain on an already fragile educational system. It was estimated that, in 2014, the public sector served only 30% of total students, national and refugees (Shuayb, Makkouk & Tuttunji, 2014). To support the Syrian refugee students enrolled in its formal schools, and unlike those enrolled in the private schools, the Lebanese government provides Syrian refugee students with their tuition (UNHCR, 2015, as cited in Arcos González et al., 2016). For the school year 2016-17, while the estimated number of school-aged Syrian refugees was 500,000, only 135,400 were enrolled in formal schools, and out of this group only 2% registered as secondary school students (UNICEF, 2017, as cited in Chopra & Adelman, 2017). The Lebanese schooling system has suffered from violence, uncertainties, interruptions, closures, and destruction in Lebanese war-time. It is also diverse across jurisdictions with different curricula provided alongside the official national curriculum (Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2014).

Refugee education is complex as it is situated between nation-stated education systems and *global* institutions and actors through the influence of UNHCR and global funding mechanisms (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b). The relevant policies here include the following: Universal Declaration on Human rights, Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), and Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) I and II. Within this complex policy and funding terrain, Dryden-Peterson presents the significant aims of refugee education that vary from impacting the individual refugee's life prospects to being vital for world security in general (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b). Defining how and what is being taught becomes an integral part of understanding refugee education (T. Waters & LeBlanc, 2005). Also refugee education can impact the hosting nation's stability (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b) since education in fragile contexts can act as a stabilizing or destabilizing factor (Mosselson et al., 2009). In addition, refugee education can affect the reconstruction of the refugees' home country (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b).

Syrian refugee students in Lebanon, as in other countries, have faced several challenges, with numerous factors hindering refugee children's access to education, among which is the lack of adequate capacity and learning spaces, appropriate policies, qualified teachers, overburdened institutions, integration problems, language barriers, and weak financial capacities. Furthermore, the individual costs associated with this education exceeds the Syrian refugee families' financial ability (Visconti & Gal, 2018).

My study aims to illuminate how refugee education is being enacted in Lebanon under these difficult conditions. As a 'vertical' case study, it seeks to bridge the different levels of policies influencing Syrian refugee schooling with the

perspectives and practices of on-the-ground actors implementing or experiencing this refugee schooling.

## **1.2 Coming to the Study: Introducing the Researcher**

This study is motivated by my own personal experience of war, displacement, and (interrupted) education in Lebanon. I have witnessed the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, the departure of the Syrian army from Lebanon, and the heightened political tensions with Syria. At the age of seven, my whole family was displaced from our village and left with whatever we could carry in one car. On several occasions, we were facing life-threatening situations that included shooting in the area we were living in, random kidnapping, and lack of water, food, and means of communication.

My education was interrupted on several occasions. The longest of which included an interruption that lasted for around six months. Following the interruption, we students had to attend an accelerated school program to continue normal schooling schedules. During my last year of schooling, I joined an Armenian school. I was among a few children who did not have an Armenian background. At the university level, my education coincided with huge political tensions that affected educational processes. At the master's level, I had the chance of engaging in a new field that focused on finance, different from the hospitality services domain I had learned at the bachelor level. Initially, I had proposed a more narrow examination of the financial/resource dimension of Syrian education for my PhD studies. However, given the lack of research I expanded my inquiry to be the more holistic and exploratory study represented in this dissertation. However, in the Lebanese complex political setting, I have decided to focus the political analysis on what could explain and guide current policy and future policy on refugee education. This traversing across areas of



education was challenging, but at the same time it was an opportunity to learn and see how students and teachers in different fields think and operate.

My experiences of war, interrupted schooling and learning in different kinds of schools and programs have motivated me to explore the conditions and experiences of refugee children in Lebanon schooling. Furthermore, the lack of existing research on Syrian refugee education in Lebanon also motivated me to initiate this study. I hope that this research can be useful in highlighting the various dimensions, qualities and complexities of refugee education in Lebanon, which in turn can inform stakeholders committed to enhancing educational and life opportunities for refugee children residing in Lebanon.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In this section, I present the overarching research question and the sub-questions of the study.

#### **1.3.1 Core Question**

- How is refugee education for Syrian students enacted in two Lebanese state secondary schools?

#### **1.3.2 Sub-questions**

1. What is the refugee education policy context across the global, national, and institutional levels?
2. In relation to this policy context, how do school administrators and teachers understand and operationalize refugee education for Syrian students?
3. How do Syrian refugee students understand and experience their refugee education?
4. How do such on-the-ground understandings and experiences reflect and potentially inform the broader policy context of refugee education?

#### **1.4 The Methodology and Method Used**

The methodology and the methods used to guide the data collection and analysis are based on the qualitative interpretivist paradigm. Specifically, I build my research approach on my understanding of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, as explained by Palmer (1972), to assist in comprehending and interpreting the participants' interviews. My research follows Vavrus and Bartlett's (2006) vertical case study that allows for a multi-level analysis of the problem. This vertical case study considers three axes - the horizontal, the vertical, and the transversal - to examine the educational enactment of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis are the main methods used. The data analysis abides by the inductive thematic approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### **1.5 The Schools and Participants**

This study is conducted in two Lebanese formal schools with a total of twenty-three participants, including one ministry official from the Ministry of Education and Higher education (MEHE) in charge of refugee education in Lebanon. Aside from the ministry official, the remaining twenty-two participants, located in the schools, include thirteen students, seven teachers, and two administrators from the schools.

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Refugee education exists in a world witnessing global mass migrations and national and local tensions in reaction to these movements. The large number of Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon constitutes a setting rich in political, social, and economic complexity. Refugee education in Lebanon and its policy context have developed under state fragility and diversity. They also operate under the influence of heightened globalization processes, including human rights discourse circulating

across levels. This complex setting is vital for understanding possibilities and limits for Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. Due to the lack of research in this area, understanding how the Syrian refugee education in Lebanon is conceived and experienced by secondary Syrian refugee students and other key educational actors represents an important contribution.

## **1.7 Dissertation Organization**

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Chapter two, which follows this introductory chapter, presents the theoretical framework. This chapter is followed by the literature review in chapter three. In chapter four, I discuss the methodology and the methods used to guide data collection and analysis. In chapter five, I present the policy context surrounding Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. Chapter six presents the study's findings extracted from the participants' views and experiences related to Syrian refugee education. In chapter seven, I discuss of the findings. This discussion is informed by the theoretical framework, literature, policies and non-participant observations. Chapter eight is the concluding chapter of this dissertation. It presents the recommendations and limitations of this study, as well as possible future research suggestions.

## **Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Syrian refugee education is highly influenced by the Lebanese fragile and complex social, political, and economic context. For this reason I use three related components to guide my understanding of current Syrian refugee education in Lebanon: development education, globalization and education, and citizenship education. The first component is development education. It provides a space for the improvement of life via education in the developing nations (Kendall, 2009). The second component, globalization explains how integrating and disintegrating global forces influence national schooling and education. Through the changing role of education under heightened globalization, I find that despite the global constructs that influence secondary Syrian refugee education, this education is locally and culturally enacted. The final component, citizenship education, orients to the challenge of how the stateless Syrian refugees, who are attending national schools and have access to the same classes as the Lebanese students, are being educated and might benefit from this education. All these discursive frames help to situate my case study on Syrian refugee education in Lebanon.

### **2.2 (Post) Development Education and Fragility**

#### ***2.2.1 Development Education***

After World War II, development is perceived as the “activities designed to learn about, support, and improve life, including through education, in so-called developing states” (Kendall, 2009, p. 418). According to Kendall, this development is carried out through institutions and organizations mainly created by modern, powerful, capable states to assist poorer and weaker countries. The parameters of such

a definition, according to the author, are problematic, beginning with who defines the state to be poor or rich, weak or strong.

Within the domains of education, development education, through state schooling, focuses on the uplifting and modernizing of the so-called developing countries, on creating adequate and needed workforce for the modernization of the state, and on the needed economic growth (Kendall, 2009). Kendall adds that defining development education in a globalized terrain is a very challenging endeavor.

Development education can support educational practices that extend to the diverse and changing lives and dreams of people and institutions aiming to reinvent relations at the global level. “As a discourse, development education needs to be aware of, and have the tools to respond to, the debates in development, globalisation, theories of knowledge and social change” (Bourn, 2015, p. 75). According to Bourn, it is vital to understand and address the theories and impact of development and globalization on education as they show how citizens engage with the rest of the world. As important, the author explains, is to understand theories and debates related to global citizenship and cosmopolitanism, among others. Globalization has set the grounds for the evolution of development education (Crossley, 2000), while at the same time has destabilized the nation-state-centered elements upon which development education is based, the economic element, and the human rights element. The points of focus on the national citizen and the sovereign state, are challenged by global actors and effects that transcend national borders (Kendall, 2009).

Within the country context, and even with the increase in resource allocations for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), most of the resources aimed for development are still channeled towards national governments (Kendall, 2009). The distribution of development assistance can be redirected by international agencies and

reprioritized towards more fragile contexts (Buchert, 2013). To take the appropriate effect, this development assistance needs to be provided over a considerable period since fragility can influence long-term development (Mosselson et al., 2009). Since Lebanon is characterized by being fragile, heavily burdened before and during the hosting of Syrian refugee students, and in dire need of foreign aid assistance to support its new economic plan, engaging with development and its impact through education is taken for granted.

This relation between development and education has evolved over the years. This relation goes back to the 1950s and 1960s and after the end of the World War II (Kendall, 2009). During that period, the need for education to have an international dimension grew in the individualized nations (Bourn, 2015). Development education was guided by the idea that development, social, political, and mainly economic, needs to start at the individual level (intelligent and self-disciplined) that adds up to develop and change the shape of the nation's state into a modern one. As countries moved to strengthen their economic and political structures after World War II, modernization dominated the social and economic approach. This conceptualization was mainly fueled by the economic development and the modeling of Western industrialized modern states (Kendall, 2009). Previous colonizing countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and Belgium re-established their relationships with their previous colonies by assisting them through development aids and their economies. It was late in the 60s that some countries adopted educational and development education programs, to gain the support of their citizens and get approval for spending local resources and money in foreign countries. After that period, development education evolved. However, this evolvement remained without clear evidence of its value and influence on the aims and goals of education, rendering it vulnerable to

different forces in society. For example, where the emergence of development education was initially gained by public support, governments with a conservative approach or with a restricted budget did not support development education at all (Bourn, 2015). Since education plays an important role in the development of the individual (Brown, 2011; Mosselson et al., 2009), and since education forms the driving force behind such a model that aims at increasing productivity at the individual level to elevate the whole community or state, development education took the role of constituting the human capital to modernize the state (Kendall, 2009).

The human capital theory proposes that the knowledge and the learned skills form a kind of capital (Little, 2000). Education, in this model, according to Kendall (2009), is tuned to a functionalist player where the sole purpose of investment and financing is to increase productivity, lifestyle, health, and social participation. Thus, in this formation, “growth of the education sector only remained productive as long as the labor market could absorb graduates” (p. 424). Organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) guided the needed training to provide staffing. However, critics of such models aim at the appropriateness of the economic measures that are used to guide educational goals of the linear model of growth, at the appropriateness of the model to address actual educational practices and experiences, and at the suitability of this model to address re-emerging colonial risks.

The failure to bridge the inequality gap has led to a countermovement to these models in the 1970s (Kendall, 2009). However, this logic of developed countries assisting developing states raised critique on the exact meaning of development and the kind of supports and political agendas in play, which possibly have regenerated colonial relations and arrested development (Tilak, 1988). Development discourse is

also heavily reliant on the economic perspective explaining the aims behind development and power structures (Kendall, 2009). Dependency theory provided a new approach that redefined the relationship between the developed and poorer states. This perspective encourages the move away from a state-centered standpoint on the national economy and society towards a relation between the state and other states (Little, 2000). During this period, education aims at bridging the gap between formal education and the lives of the economically disadvantaged through expanded education for all (Kendall, 2009).

In the following decade, i.e., the 80s, reforms were enacted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and the funding for education, such as health services, was considered to be unproductive. However, such moves did not pass uncontested (Kendall, 2009). The critique on development is highly noted through post development theory. For McGregor (2009), post development calls for fundamental changes or even the abandonment of development theories. It destabilizes the fundamentals upon which development theories are based. Allegedly, development becomes inclined towards perpetuating poverty, inequality, and the superiority of developed nations through accessing and using the resources of the developing nations. Development is “repositioned as a homogenising process, rather than a liberating one, which stunts diversity and fails to entertain or fully appreciate other ways of being” (p. 1691). Post development moves even further than just critiquing development debates into one that provides new possibilities for change (McGregor, 2009). Such a possibility is built on the cultural traits and values of the country explored through the literature and ideas of its people. Then, idea patterns and survival mechanisms unique to those people are explored. Thus, post development education provides an alternative that responds to the cultural



characteristics for every country (Berg, 2007), as well as challenges Western and economic measures of development (McGregor, 2009).

Furthermore, the structural reforms that were initiated in this period were reformulated in the 90s (Kendall, 2009). In the 1990s, new desires that would allow states to manage their development and to try to reduce inequalities were addressed in the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA). This conference was directed more towards education as a human right with the state as the primary sponsor of education provision. The new structural policy reforms became more humane in an attempt to improve the economic condition of the poor, and primary education was increasingly perceived to be essential (Kendall, 2009).

By the year 2000, the state was asked to increase its investment in social services and education. Spending patterns were similar to those in the 1950s–60s. Even with an increase in social, educational funding, the state remains the primary provider of education, along with NGOs' operating in various sectors. Development education is now more involved in global plans, such as the Millennium Development Goals, and in the reduction of poverty. Most importantly, there have been changes in the educational practices that targeted teacher training and more standardized materials and testing for students (Kendall, 2009).

The context through which development, interpretations of development, and its relation to education exist, differ from nation to nation (Little, 2000). Thus, through development education, we are better able to respond to changes and relationships arising from diverse perspectives on development, globalization, ways of learning, and other perspectives (Bourn, 2015). This changes the approach from the more inclined interpretation of development and development education as a functionalist one, where generally agreed upon beliefs and values integrate economic,

social, and political aspects. The possible new inclination may reflect what conflict theorists engage with, power reproduction and struggle, or may reflect the interpretivist approach that is more flexible in adapting the interpretations of rules and policies (Feinberg and Soltis, 2009, as cited in Weidman, 2016). In this aspect, Weidman (2016), with other authors, moves against favoring one approach over others and aims to adopt multiple perspectives and interpretations. Even with weighty multinational organizations and NGOs, as Weidman continues, nations are expected to prioritize goals according to their context and benefit. Thus, development education can provide educational actors and nations the capacity or ability to understand problems from different angles. Consequently, development education (theoretically) enables the building of an educational system that is useful for the individual, the nation, and the international body.

### ***2.2.2 Fragility and its Relation to Education***

In this section, I start by providing a brief interpretation of the concept of fragility and discuss its complex dual relationship with education. Lebanon has been known to be a fragile and weak state (Arcos González et al., 2016; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs et al., 2015a), that has been affected by the poor economic, social, and political conditions (Messner & Haken, 2017). The existence of vast numbers of Syrian refugees only added to the gravity of this fragility (Arcos González et al., 2016). Fragility affects several sectors, including education. Thus, it is essential to consider the effects of fragility on Syrian refugee education in Lebanon.

There is not one uniform definition of fragility, but the concept of a fragile state elaborates on the weak provision of services such as education (Mosselson et al., 2009). It can also mean the lack of capacity and willingness by the state to provide its

citizens certain services, as stated by Miller-Grandvaux (2009), adopting the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Development Assistance Committee's 2004 perspective. Messner and Haken (2017) established an index (State Fragility Index) that identifies several elements of fragility based on indicators and sub-indicators covering economic, political, and social aspects. Buchert (2013) uses the term fragility to distinguish situations that have the potential to turn into a conflict from one that is already in a state of conflict.

Fragility has a dynamic nature and should be assessed from a holistic perspective and thus analyzed from a multi-level approach (Mosselson et al., 2009). Such an approach could inform the improvement of educational policies and programs (Buchert, 2013). At the macro-level fragility can be indicated in cases such as weak government, lack of border and territorial control, corruption, horizontal inequity facing members of the same society, and political uncertainty (Colenso, 2005, as cited in Mosselson et al., 2009; Tebbe, 2008, as cited in Mosselson et al., 2009). At the micro-level, fragility deals with the delivery and effectiveness of the service provided (Mosselson et al., 2009). In the same manner, Buchert (2013) emphasizes that when addressing education in a fragile or conflict area, three dimensions should be taken into account, sociocultural, political, and economical. These are, in turn, situated on three different levels, the macro, at the level of society, meso, at the school or institutional level, and the micro, at the individual level. However, Buchert continues to say that international and governmental agencies often use an economic perspective that concentrate more on the medium term solutions but miss on the long-term aspect. Fragility can also integrate aspects of time and space, as countries or areas are not always fragile nor immune to fragility (Miller-Grandvaux, 2009). This is important in the case of Lebanon where local political tensions escalate

and de-escalate in different regions, at different times, depending on many local and global factors. Because of fragility's dynamic nature and since education is affected by the state conditions surrounding it, and since there is no exact mapping of the relationship between fragility and education, there is a need to understand education from a holistic perspective that can add to the state-centered macro understanding of fragility, and the micro level factors. This holistic approach can provide the appropriate framework to assist more vulnerable individuals (Mosselson et al., 2009).

The relationship between fragility and education is complicated. Education remains closely affected by the socio-economic and political conditions of the country, especially in a fragile context (Mosselson et al., 2009), such as that found in Lebanon (Messner & Haken, 2017). Fragility can lead to the disruption of education, such as in the areas with civil unrest (Mosselson et al., 2009). Comparisons made at the transnational level indicates that "fragility may be a stronger overall predictor of educational decline in a country as a whole than conflict" (Burde et al., 2017, p. 629). Educational enrolment rates are highly affected by fragility; these rates seem less in fragile states if and when compared to conflict-ridden states (Shields & Paulson, 2015). Furthermore, education can entice fragility. Mosselson et al. (2009) stress that education can contribute to the increase of state fragility, such as in the case of teaching curricula that promotes division. On the other hand, education can reduce the effects of fragility, especially when education "position[s] itself at the center of four general domains of fragility: economic, governance, security, and social domains" (p. 10). Thus education can play a dual role on the countries' development and stability, one that supports social cohesion and one that does not (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Furthering understanding of the relationship between fragility and education can have

a major impact on educational policies and educational practice (Shields & Paulson, 2015).

In a fragile context, education is considered a significant sector in discussions between the state and development agencies. In their discussions, both the state and the agencies aim towards improving quality, access, teacher support, governance, and overall legitimacy (Kirk, 2007). There is a need for governmental and non-governmental agencies to work together in a comprehensive approach that brings together humanitarian and developmental perspectives where educational policy and practice constitute an essential part (Barakat et al., 2013).

### **2.3 Globalization and its Impact on Schooling**

In this section, I elaborate on perspectives and definitions of globalization, as well as its different schools or standpoints. I also elaborate on the perceived relation and influence of globalization on the state. Finally, I discuss the changing role of education under increasing and heightened globalization and possible mechanisms through which globalization affects local educational settings. Refugee education is, in essence, an issue that transcends national borders, and that involves international organizations like UNHCR. Understanding how transnational educational policies transcend local settings and understanding how national and local settings evolve and react to those policies becomes an essential matter.

Globalization is a complex and multi-faceted term (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014). M. Waters (1995) characterizes globalization as the economic, cultural, and political rearrangement, through specific location and time, surpassing national borders. According to him, this allows for conceptual integration while maintaining a level of diversity. Similarly, Jones (1998) defines globalization in his work as the economic integration that moves beyond national boundaries to influence the states'

ways of involvement. He believes that globalization redefines the role of the state to become that of a regulator or a facilitator of global influence on its own territories. It sets the state's involvement in new mechanisms that reshapes statehood and cultures, and how identities are perceived. This happens without the collapse or erosion of the state. According to Green (2003), globalization reflects an uneven development and change over time and spaces that extend beyond the economic perspective to influence the political and cultural areas. As with Jones, Green believes that this happens while the state has not been completely eroded.

Held et al. (2002) define globalization as the heightened “worldwide interconnectedness” (P. 2) of different facets of social life. The authors understand globalization as being a process that “reflects the emergence of interregional networks and systems of interaction and exchange. In this respect, the enmeshment of national and societal systems in wider global processes has to be distinguished from any notion of global integration” (p. 27).

Shahjahan (2016) explains the effects of globalization and the impact of international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Bank, among others, through their epistemic activities that perpetuate colonial influence on education, specifically, higher education. This influence is built up through creating dependencies and limiting decision-making and policy creation at the local level. The authors stress the fact that modernity, with its links to capitalism, hides its historical colonial roots and aims at removing all non-European political, economic and social modes of living. Also modernity classifies people as inferior or backward and out of time. According to Mignolo (2011) as cited in Shahjahan (2016), modernity dis-attaches knowledge production from contextual settings to make it seem fit for all contexts. However, to move from this colonial

perspective, Shahjahan promotes the need to reimagine a perspective that can support different possibilities born from and addressing the local thinking.

Robertson and Dale (2008) identify globalization as an ongoing process of uneven and sometimes incomplete change in the political, cultural, and economic dimensions that affect everyday lives. These changes according to Sassen (2003) as cited in Robertson and Dale, (2008), have forced a reconsideration of our understanding of citizenship, politics, and the state. The changes that globalization brings about demand a rethinking of the primary basis of analysis upon which education and other sectors are understood (Robertson & Dale, 2008). The authors elaborate that while the state maintains significant capabilities, a focus on the state should not be independent of political forces that defined the state at a certain point in time, as well as defined its components' relationships to the globalized world. Furthermore, our analysis should not independent of its complex relations that tie and affect this space to the outside.

In their work that aims to explore the teachers' role and their work under globalization, Paine et al. (2016) provide a conceptual understanding of globalization and how the understanding of education extends and can no longer be contained within a mere national frame or interpretation. The authors believe that globalization brings together what is global to the local context that holds its unique values, identity, and characteristics. They use conceptual lenses of "global flows, spaces and networks, and friction" (p. 719) that emphasizes what Stromquist and Monkman (2014) mention of the globalization's multi-dimensional aspect. They also recognize the diversity that can emerge as a consequence of such globalization. However, they do not classify globalization as an independent factor that moves and affects societies on its own. They believe that globalization runs through actors who affect others and,

in turn, are affected themselves by the economic, cultural, social, and technological aspects. These actors can work across the international, regional, national, and local levels.

Stromquist and Monkman (2014) also define globalization as the “phenomenon that comprises multiple and drastic changes in all areas of social life, particularly economics, technology, and culture” (p. 1). According to them, globalization alone lags in the interpretation of the major changes that it brings to the different contexts and countries. Globalization does not influence local contexts and nations in the same degree or even manner (Held et al., 2002). Still, Stromquist and Monkman (2014) believe that although globalization has not yet infiltrated every individual’s life in the world, its influence is spreading over time.

According to Stromquist and Monkman (2014), two major actors who can influence the decision process under globalization are the market and the transnational corporations. The market is expected to increase efficiencies and creative powers. It holds competitiveness as the main principle that is to ensure high output and ‘best quality’ while the transnational corporations engage in capital investment, trade, financial exchange, and matters related to technology. With this extreme neoliberal and globalized perspectives, there is a risk of missing out on how the local interacts with the global changes. The local redefines itself to become a “modified form” (p. 16) of itself, a form, according to the authors, more adaptive to the global changes.

Globalization is not uncontested, as Stromquist and Monkman (2014) explain. They state that there remains a need to find an alternative solution, possibly in more influential states. Solutions that could aim for a better inclusive and expanded citizenship, which gives access and allows for better participation in the society as stated in a UN Development Program Independent commission.



In an attempt to assess the effects of globalization and the change in the state's role in education, Welch (2001) addresses the need to reconsider and move away from the pure economic thinking and individualism that reflects neoliberal thinking. While the author noted that even under increased globalization, the role and influence of the state remain present and active. It is found that due to the effects of globalization, there has been a negative influence on the democratic approach, as well as a reduction and erosion in social and national engagement.

Sklair (1999), as cited in Welch (2001) identified four different models approaching globalization from different perspectives. The first is the "world systems approach" (p. 476). This approach argues for a different classification of states based on the importance of their role in the capitalist system. The second is the "global culture" (pp. 476–477). This model stresses the importance of cultural perspective over the economic one. Identity in this approach is highly influenced by local and global relationships and by the global culture. The third model is identified as the "global society" (p. 477). This situates globalization as an essential factor influencing the development of the world by influencing researchers' understanding of time, space, and awareness, as well as their relation to each other. Finally, "global capitalism" (p. 477) is the final model reflecting the increasingly capitalist world that extends beyond or even supersedes national influence and power, and that gives an increasingly important role to education. Bourn (2015) summarizes by saying that a common theme emerges from different literatures and identifies globalization through its impact on the lives of people who are more interdependent on each other.

Throughout history, Lebanon has been at the center of economic and cultural trade. Its location on the east coast of the Mediterranean made it an integral part of this flow of goods and cultures. It is also at the center of political tensions between the

Western and the Eastern states. While there are a lot of traces left from those global factors, it becomes essential to situate the country in this global network.

With the absence of weak execution of national policies, education in Lebanon constitutes a complex example of diverse influence and links of globalization. Several examples that reflect the effect of globalization on the Lebanese local through education can be seen. For example, for a long period of time, Lebanon hosted numerous educational institutions that are directly linked to foreign countries and that can graduate many students who are ready for higher education and for work in different countries. Furthermore, Lebanon's educational system is characterized by its diversity and its ability to meet different market needs (Bahous et al., 2013).

Further evidence of global influence can be seen in the cultural, political, and daily events such as that seen in the use of different languages. Dagher (2002) elaborates that historically, Christians were more inclined to speak the French language as a means for maintaining a Western link and prevent "any imposed Arabo-Islamic concept of cultural assimilation and, accordingly, of any political unity that would be justified by it" (p. 21). For that, at a certain time in history, through their schooling, Christians used the French language and the Muslims adopted the English language reflecting the historical tensions and powers of different countries (Akl, 2007).

Education, like many other sectors, has been influenced by globalization. For example, Spring (2009), believes that globalization of education refers to the "worldwide" (p. 1) global influence on the local policies and practices in education, in addition to the influence of the local policies and practices on the superstructures. Spring identifies several elements that relate to the effects of globalization on education. One of these elements, in education, reflects the adoption of similar

practices, including pedagogies and curriculum, showing the influence of global discourses on educational actors. To better compete with other economies, incentivize economic growth, and develop human capital, many nations decide to adapt global educational policies into their educational agendas. Thus, education is considered as an investment in human capital to improve job skills and allow for economic development. Another element that traces globalization to education is seen in the impact of various non-state organizations on the nation and its educational system, the impact of the power of global networks, and that of the influence of multinational corporations on the dissemination of educational products. It is also seen in the effect of English as a global language on local schools' cultures and curricula, and the effect of mass migration on the nation's schools with some of their practices.

Spring (2009) identifies distinct interpretations of global education. "World culture theorists" (p. 8) interpret global education as one developing more similar and uniform educational systems that adopt the western mode for education. The second is the "world system theorists" (p. 13) that interpret global education as an informing tool used by richer nations imposing policies on less favorable ones to stimulate economic development. The last is the "culturalists" (p. 14) who reject uniformity in global education and consider how local ideas change global policies and practices, producing heterogeneity in local manifestations.

In parallel, Spring (2009) argues that educational institutions, schools, and educational actors, do not passively take the full effect of globalization on education or take global policies and influences directly for application. These institutions and global actors interpret from their cultural perspectives. They may also *adapt* the global practices to their local settings, or completely reject them. Ozga and Jones (2006) also find that the local retains some influence and ability to mediate global

policies. When reaching the local settings, these policies are reshaped according to local, cultural, social, and historical characteristics. This reshaping comes as an effect of globalization encouraging the reconstruction and the recreation of the local values and cultures.

Similarly, this complex relation between globalization and education is discussed by Green (2003). The author believes that while globalization pressures can change educational systems in many countries through foreign investments and influence on different key areas, there is a limit to such influence. Even with heightened globalization, education still remains a national matter and priority. To those governments, education is a point through which they try to exercise some control over their systems and citizens. Thus, when considering education, the state continues to wield significant influence.

Stromquist and Monkman (2014) also reflect the tension seen in the relation between education and globalization. They believe that globalization sets forth the reconfiguration of the political, social, and economic spaces that directly influence education and its role in reshaping societies. This influence can be seen through new trends of transnational education, identities, character-shaping, as well as through the development of global citizenship. However, while most nations' formal schools "have a primarily national orientation and so, continue to produce citizens who reflect national identities" (p. 6), clear tensions develop between this notion of national solidity and the effects generated from the globalization that drives educational aims towards provision of a global labor force. But even with this tension, education still benefits from the increased competitiveness that links it to technology and development, making it an essential factor in social mobility and economic growth.

Furthermore, Carnoy (2014) believes that globalization has a significant effect on education. Though unseen, these effects express themselves at the different educational levels, perceived education values, and the different types of knowledge. Since globalization effects have to pass through educational policies of the country, the state still holds an influential power, through political and financial areas that can affect how globalization changes education. In an attempt to understand the changes in the global educational field, Mundy (2007) states that there is a need to develop a wider and more comprehensive approach to understand the depth of educational dimensions under globalization. Mundy provides global governance as a way that permits for “new ways at how forms of international authority are socially constructed and historically contingent” (p. 351), and that attend to the various ideas and the role played by transnational actors.

Within the “global capitalism” (p. 477) model identified by Sklair (1999), as cited in Welch (2001), globalization, still challenges our understanding and practice of the role given to education. This challenge, according to Welch must address, face, resist, then go beyond the pure economic aims and the individualistic approach that is fueled by neoliberal globalization, to engage a cultural diversity and promote tolerance. This tolerance in turn can affect minority and disadvantaged groups in weaker countries, enhance democratic societies, and increase civil society engagement. And as Bourn (2015) states from his reading of globalization theorists, globalization drives states and their education towards an outward perspective to understand and learn about other cultures and viewpoints.

Robertson and Dale (2008) focus on the fundamental changes and effects of globalization on our understanding of the state, nation, and the education systems. Under globalization, education demands the involvement of more players, new ways

of distribution and norms of thinking (Dale and Robertson, 2007, as cited in Robertson and Dale, 2008). As such, the nation state is not the only actor. What is also important is that Robertson and Dale (2008) saw that education governance plays out at different scales with the coordination and amalgam of different actors and activities. Activities for example, involve coordinating activities on issues related to regulation, funding, delivery, and ownership that can be implemented with or without the state's involvement with other actors. Globalization has forced a rethinking about the aims of education, involved actors, and the context under which it operates (Robertson & Dale, 2008).

Carney (2012) takes a nuanced way to understand the effects of globalization on education. This understanding reconsiders how policy formulation and its practice differ as they are dependent on the unique and diverse economic, cultural, and political experiences of the involved actors. Furthermore, the state, in this understanding does not lean back to the global forces that are thought to destabilize its sovereignty or weaken it. When dealing with global forces, the state is assisted by the global forces and is reconfigured and reshaped into a new form. This is a "helpful way to retain the state as an important object for analysis without being beholden to it" (p. 342). Carney also reflects on James Ferguson's understanding of the transnational nature that aims to re-identify how the government and grassroots organizations are highly connected to global factors, while these governments still hold the ability to drive change.

The unpredictable results of globalization can also be seen in Dale and Robertson (2002) where complex and sometimes contradictory forces move into play at different levels resulting in an unpredictable outcome. The authors also note that globalization does not have a homogenizing effect since it exists alongside and at the

same time needs national and local structures to develop and expand. For that matter, national regulations and protective measures could benefit the spread of globalization and the local settings, a reason why these measures are attacked by neo-liberal movements. Regional organizations take the role of both protecting and evolving the capital system. For education, the involvement of regional bodies can be assessed by their purpose, degree, the effect, the way and the extent of their influence.

#### **2.4 Citizenship Education: Schooling Refugees with Uncertain Futures**

Understanding education, specifically refugee education in Lebanon, requires study of the social context in relation to wider geopolitics. Refugee education has long existed in Lebanon, but with the country's complicated social, political, and cultural situation, Syrian refugee education has been affected, because "education is neither neutral nor immune to the forces around it" (Mosselson et al., 2009, pp. 1–2).

Education that has the ability to reproduce certain norms needs to be approached in a holistic manner. In other words, various perspectives from different groups or individuals are essential to create a more fulsome understanding of the education in a fragile setting. The relation between fragility and education can stretch and relate to the individual, school, community, area within the state, and from the state, to the region, and to the international community. It could also extend from the micro to the macro level, within different sectors, and different times (short or long term) (Mosselson et al., 2009).

Education and schools can have a leading role in influencing lives through social justice, economic, and developmental aspects (Brown, 2011; Mosselson et al., 2009) as well as in cultural and political ways (Brown, 2011; Sobe, 2007). The complex long-term multi-faceted role of education in developing the society, aims towards improving individual lives (Acedo, 2013) and strives towards changing and

transforming an individual's living conditions through the various policies and programs (Buchert, 2013). A twenty-first-century understanding of education leans towards the state-provided mass schooling with a western hegemonic style that targets the same developmental goals.

Education for secondary Syrian Refugee students in Lebanon constitutes a challenge. On one side, they are receiving their education inside the Lebanese formal national system. On the other hand, the Government of Lebanon (GoL) is in a constant quest to have the Syrian refugees in the country return to Syria. These students are considered as temporarily displaced in Lebanon, where the government retains the ability to decide on their status according to the Lebanese regulations (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019), even when the average duration of exile stretch between ten to twenty years in the neighboring countries like Lebanon (Culbertson & Constant, 2015). Since schooling aims for the development of loyal national citizens, then understanding the Syrian refugee education in the Lebanese formal schools presents a challenge. Furthermore, the fragile Lebanese socio-political, cultural, and economic complex setting shapes how the state is responding to the transnational and local pressures when dealing with refugees and their families.

Lebanon, a country that hosts eighteen different religious sects and a wide array of political parties, is exposed to heightened challenges, tensions, and conflicts. As a result, Lebanon turns to citizenship and citizenship education as a means of bridging differences (Akar, 2017). Since education and "schools aim to create a common understanding of identity in terms of what is imagined as legitimate expressions of nationalism" (T. Waters & LeBlanc, 2005, p. 129), and since its



eventual aim is political, education has always reflected tensions addressing issues of value, access, equity and quality, among others (Buchert, 2013).

Citizenship defines the relationship between the individuals and the community to which individuals relate (Akar, 2017). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identify three versions of citizenship in the context of education, the responsible citizen who is a hard worker, decent, responsible person, the participatory citizen who engages with social institutions, and the social justice-oriented who engages with social issues such as inequality and its causes. Individuals can understand their citizenship through their political associations or their level of good social participation (Pluim, 2017). It is through social, political, and civil rights, constituting elements of citizenship, that individual's participation and access to services are defined (Marchall, 1950, as cited in Akar, 2017). For example, in Lebanon, the legal status gives more citizenship rights to nationals than refugees and the non-Lebanese. Furthermore, citizenship can reflect the dynamics that shape the relationship between the individual and the community (Akar, 2017). A traditional form of citizenship defines the community as the state; however, this does not eliminate the conception of citizenship as a global or cosmopolitan one where rights and duties may extend beyond national borders. International agreements extend beyond the state borders and render national isolation obsolete. For that matter, issues that can relate to refugees, among others, pave the way for the formation of new forms of citizenship, a global one, that redefines the rights and duties without eliminating the state role in that manner (Isin & Turner, 2007). Citizenship, also, can be expressed from a minimal view that gives certain rights to the citizen and a specified form of political and social participation, or from a more engaging dynamic approach of a maximal perspective with a more extensive political and social engagement and belonging. However, a

clear cut line that differentiates the two approaches can be difficult to draw (McLaughlin, 1992).

Citizenship education could reflect learning about political and civic knowledge as well as learning about the equality, inequality, discrimination, and rights of the individual (Pluim, 2017). Citizenship education helps individuals in a diversified context to find ways to enrich their community. Defining the relationship with their community gets complicated in a diversified setting (Akar, 2017). Citizenship education plays an important role in committing students to a unified understanding of different public values, loyalties, and principles while at the same time allowing for the diversity in understanding and thinking at individual and private levels. Furthermore, citizenship education remains directly linked to a specific society. It becomes even more challenging in a complex political, social real context that needs inclusive discussion at the national level to resolve its complexity (McLaughlin, 1992).

School, for that matter, plays an important role in the formation of a shared understanding of identity, nationalism, and national productivity. Thus, at the social level, schools aim to create politically and economically active community members or citizens who share the same understanding of identity and participation. What information is being taught and how it is being taught can shape how citizens are formulated and their ability to participate in their communities (T. Waters & LeBlanc, 2005).

The type of educational practice determines the kind of citizenship that develops among the students (Akar, 2017). This has echoes in refugee education since refugees, who can be considered stateless, and arrive from a conflict-affected nation to the hosting nation providing them with education, are still affected by the education

received in their home country. Thus refugees who are being educated under a hosting country's national system, are not in alignment with that host country's understanding of nationalism and citizenship (T. Waters & LeBlanc, 2005).

According to T. Waters and LeBlanc (2005), three challenges face the development of refugee education within refugee camps. The first challenge addresses how international organizations handle issues of curriculum and teaching. The root of this challenge lies in the unclear perception of refugee children's presence. Since refugees left their country due to a forceful situation, their final destination remains an uncertainty. Thus, the full engagement with current hosting country's curriculum language, history, art, religion and other basic civic, numeracy and literacy education that formulate the national identity, remain unfulfilled. Education for voluntary repatriation adds to this uncertainty. Furthermore, education planning for the refugees, considered as part of a longer term relief system, is mainly set by hosting nations, and other international organizations such as the UNHCR.

The second challenge deals with the value system that is not clear in terms of how it drives refugee education. The diversity of the actors involved in setting refugee education, the hosting nation, the international bodies and the refugees themselves, reflects their diverse agendas that at many times, conflict. The final challenge that addresses refugee education is in the way it engages individual development and economic progress that remains unclear how it would benefit refugees. Since schooling and education is highly related to national economy and individual development and since refugees are considered stateless, refugees find themselves disengaged from the main pillar of their education. The success of their future relies on decisions about education such as language of instruction among many other short and longer-term choices. In other words, if the aim of national education is to create a

common sense of value, then excluding refugees who are learning within the national schools from social, political, or economic participation remains problematic.

Citizenship education constitutes a unique angle to this study. It provides an understanding of the potential value and uses of Syrian refugee education (in a more global context) and highlights what is being provided to Syrian students who have departed from war-torn Syria and entered Lebanon. Syrian refugee students are being provided their education in Lebanese public schools, learning the Lebanese curriculum, while their future is still unclear. This condition is exacerbated by using an old curriculum that was last updated in the year 1997. Furthermore, while the traditional sense in the education policy encourages equality, the challenges in practice derived from the diversity of religious sects, identities, cultural heritages, and political parties producing resentments and conflicts that undermine this understanding in Lebanon. This gap between policy and practice, when it comes to diversity and identity, is considered a threat. This gap restricts the development of individuals beyond their smaller community and challenges their expansion towards global and cosmopolitan citizenship (Akar, 2017). Dryden-Peterson (2016b) reveals that refugees integrated in national systems often face a conflict between what was experienced and aspirational policy rhetoric, due to the socio-political tensions seen between the local students and the refugee students. Citizenship education has a long-term effect, is influenced by, and cannot exist independently from the environmental, sociocultural, political, and historical norms of the context it is being provided in. Thus, it is essential to also understand whether or not the context represents a fragile setting (Pluim, 2017). The condition of the state necessitates a different approach toward citizenship education (Maitles, 2014). In a fragile state, citizenship education, in particular, should take a different approach from the traditional Western setting

where social and political structural backgrounds are more stable and where citizenship education takes for granted Western participatory norms in engaging different learners in different countries. In a fragile context, citizens might not have sufficient resources or ease of access, or they might not have the security to easily participate in social activities or politics (Pluim, 2017).

Citizenship is identified differently in various contexts. For that reason, any peaceful citizenship should be based on a non-hegemonic views that would allow for the cultural characteristics and values of various settings, however diverse and different that may be, to be expressed in an exercise of peace and democracy (Albala-Bertrand, 1995). This might create tensions between what is perceived as local culture or identity with a contingent new element, such as the case of the Syrian refugees in a society that has a different identity, and where they request the same rights as the citizens. Albala-Bertrand (1995) identifies two different citizenship approaches. The first emphasizes and prioritizes social belonging and obligations through the role of the individuals and their loyalty to certain political society or country. The second emphasizes the individual right to socio-economic, civil, and political rights that are not to be revoked by the state. These rights are based on political equality as well as on the recognition of differences among certain groups or contexts. In different contexts, citizenship develops out of the different tensions resulting from the two approaches mentioned above. The author also states that the choice of citizenship that each society is inclined to, should define this society's education. In this study, identifying the choice of citizenship that Syrian refugees in Lebanon follow is unclear. Thus choosing the type of education that best benefits those refugees also constitutes a challenge.

In conclusion, as a way of framing the conceptual terrain that prefigures and configures refugee education in Lebanon, I have brought together a set of three relevant fields. (Post) development education, globalization and education, and citizenship education (under transnationalism) are of course interrelated. First ‘refugee education’ is *global* in its genesis, from the policy level down to the routes refugee students take to find a school in Lebanon. Syrian refugee education is driven by multiple forces. Second, development education engages the historical context of educational reform in modernizing (and fragile) nation-state. Third, citizenship education is shaped by heightened transnationalism (as a feature and precipitator of globalization), where refugee students represent a limit case. This inter-related discourses act as a frame for my vertical case study.

### **Chapter Three: Literature Review—The Context of Refugee Schooling in Lebanon**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter set forth a holistic review of the most recent and relevant literature related to Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. After presenting a review of the relevant articles, I constructed a synthesis that surfaced the main registers of my literature review. This task has been challenging due to the thin literature specifically addressing the Syrian refugee (educational) challenges in Lebanon (Charles & Denman, 2013). These registers included the fragile Lebanese political, social, and economic situation and their effect on the Syrian refugee education. These registers also addressed possible resentments towards Syrian refugee students, their uncertain futures, and education value.

#### **3.2 Addressing the Syrian Refugee Educational Challenge in Lebanon**

The Syrian refugee crisis constituted a considerable part of the global refugee crises. It is estimated that by early 2017, the Syrian war has created the highest number of displaced people since World War II with no end to this displacement in sight (Visconti & Gal, 2018). By the end of the year 2019, 26 million were reported as refugees from all over the world. The majority of these refugees, 73%, lived in countries *neighboring* conflict-ridden states. Overall, 20.4 million were under the UNHCR's mandate (UNHCR, 2020), which meant that UNHCR was responsible for the refugees' protection and education (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019), while 5.6 million remained under the UNRWA's mandate. Out of those total refugees, 6.6 million, or around 25.4% of all refugees in 2019, were Syrians (UNHCR, 2020).

Lebanon hosted an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees in 2019, out of which, 914,600 were registered with UNHCR (UNHCR, 2019).

Before the Syrian war, Syria provided primary education for all 6 to 11-year school-aged children, and maintained above 90% literacy rate (Visconti & Gal, 2018). Due to the Syrian war, many students arriving in Lebanon have missed at least one to two academic years, while others never even had the chance to enroll. These academic conditions have led Syrian students to face social and educational difficulties, as noted by many of their teachers (Crul et al., 2019). Furthermore, the Syrian educational system used one language, Arabic, as the language of instruction, leading to additional difficulties given that Lebanese schools used French or English in subjects like mathematics and science (Shuayb et al., 2016).

Refugee schooling in Lebanon represented one response to an ever-increasing demand for the education of refugees worldwide. Lebanon was a country that has only recently exited from a fifteen-year civil war between 1975 and 1990, significantly disrupting and affecting the public school system. Sectarian tensions remained high between the Christian, Shia, and Sunni residents (Baytiyeh, 2017; Frayha, 2003). In addition to the sectarian divisions the country struggled from political tensions. With the presence of eighteen denominations Christian, Muslims and Jewish, the religious and sectarian diversity in the fragile Lebanon has made it susceptible to external influences and internal conflicts (Akar, 2017). From the Ottoman Empire presence in the year 1516 to the French mandate that started in the year 1918, the country has suffered from division at the political and social levels. It wasn't until the independence in 1943 till 1958 that the country has witnessed a relatively stable period in its history. From the year 1958 and on, the country experienced very unstable conditions till the eruption of the civil war in 1975 that ended with the Taef



agreement in 1989 (Frayha, 2003). By the year 2004, Lebanon witnessed a huge political division seen in the form of two politically opposing blocks, pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian, known as March 8 and March 14 movements, respectively. With the Syrian troops' withdrawal in 2005 and the re-initiating of diplomatic relations in 2009, the Lebanese-Syrian relationship remained under tension (Fakhoury, 2017).

The Syrian refugee crisis has further exacerbated the fragile economic condition of Lebanon. It was estimated that in 2016, US \$13.1 billion was the burden and lost revenues of Lebanon due to the Syrian war (Government of Lebanon, 2016, as cited in Human Rights Watch, 2016). All infrastructure and services, including the already fragile educational system, were strained due to the vast number of the Syrian refugee influx. At the time, the Lebanese public schools suffered from weak infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, and high numbers of repeats and dropouts. Only 30% of the Lebanese students were served by the public sector in Lebanon before the conflict in Syria. Due to that conflict, the Lebanese educational system had to deal with a number of school aged Syrian refugees exceeding those enrolled in the public schools. Very few Syrian refugee students were able to access the private schools (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

### **3.3 MEHE's Engagement with Syrian Refugee Access**

MEHE's engagement with the Syrian refugees was reflected in three aspects. The first addressed the double shift system. The second explained Lebanon's international commitments in relation to the Syrian crises and their education. Finally, the third showed the local response to the crises.

#### **3.3.1 *The Double Shift System***

At the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the Lebanese MEHE was reluctant to the idea of integrating refugees into the public system. This hesitancy was rationalized

as avoiding the damage of an already vulnerable national education system (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Visconti & Gal, 2018). However, the Lebanese government at a later stage actually encouraged the integration of Syrian refugee students in the formal Lebanese schools and was able to set policies that avoided creating a parallel educational system for the Syrian refugee students (Buckner et al., 2018). This approach was seen to be guided by pressures from international organizations (Mendenhall et al., 2017). To find a solution and provide Syrian refugees access to education, MEHE decided to create a two split shift system (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Visconti & Gal, 2018).

The double-shift system did not completely solve the capacity problem of the formal schools and entailed several challenges that led to provision problems. Some of the challenges to accommodate this double shift system included issues such as shortening teaching time for both shifts, difficulties in getting sufficient qualified administrators and teachers, and limiting non-core subjects. Further challenges included increased resentment from local students against Syrian refugees due to the use and distribution of limited resources; these resentments have led to bullying in some instances and increased school absenteeism in others (Visconti & Gal, 2018). Furthermore, with the creation of a second shift one year after allowing Syrian refugee student integration in the formal schools in 2012–2013, most Syrian refugee parents decided *not* to register their children in the second shift due to their perception of its low quality (Shuayb et al., 2016). For the school year 2016–2017, out of the 500,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children residing in the country, only 135,400 or 27% were enrolled in the formal schools, and only 2% or around 10,000 Syrian refugee students were enrolled in the formal secondary school (UNICEF, 2017, as cited in Chopra & Adelman, 2017). To address such challenges and to improve the

quality and the perception of quality in the public sector, Lebanon's RACE II Strategy (2017–2021) and its predecessor RACE I were followed (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). RACE I aimed at providing equitable access, improving learning and teaching quality, and supporting the national systems (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014) while RACE II built on RACE I and worked on stabilizing and developmental projects (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016). Further details pertaining to RACE I and RACE II were detailed in chapter five.

### ***3.3.2 Lebanon's International Commitments and Syrian Refugee Education***

Lebanon had signed several of the international agreements that respect the right and access to education such as The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Buckner et al., 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2016; Rubin, 2017; Shuayb et al., 2016), the Dakar Education for All (EFA) (Shuayb et al., 2016), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (Buckner et al., 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2016), The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Human Rights Watch, 2016). However, Lebanon was not a signatory state of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol (Arcos González et al., 2016; Buckner et al., 2018; Chopra & Adelman, 2017; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2016) and thus refugees did not have the refugee status as they would have under the international law. Furthermore, Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR are forbidden to work in Lebanon (Buckner et al., 2018).

The Lebanese government did not consider Lebanon as a final refugee destination (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs et al., 2015a). It

was through the General Security Office that the Syrian refugees' entry into Lebanon, as well as the refugee-related policy, were regulated (Nassar & Stel, 2019). The government considers Syrians who have entered Lebanon after March 2011 as temporarily displaced in Lebanon (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019). However, since the average duration of exile was around 20 years and could extend to the mid or full stretch of those years in the neighboring countries, educational policies needed to address these long exile durations (Culbertson & Constant, 2015).

Syrian refugee education in Lebanon aimed to integrate the rights of the child (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016). This education was considered as a fundamental human right (United Nations, 1948). It was also considered a strategy to deal with the effects of the Syrian war on refugee students (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016). As a complement to this fact and with the support of the Lebanese government, the UNHCR granted refugee students the right to access formal schools, rehabilitation schools, and community-based education. It also provides students with the tuition fees (Arcos González et al., 2016).

### ***3.3.3 Lebanon's Local Response***

In Lebanon, the control over the public school with its delivery of refugee education was retained by MEHE. The private schools coordinate with the ministry only when official exams and general curriculum guidelines were considered; these schools retained certain autonomy for other issues (Shuayb et al., 2016). However, in a memorandum issued in 2012, MEHE requested all schools enroll Syrian students irrespective of their legal status. It was estimated that around 15,000 Syrian refugee students during 2012–2013 school year were enrolled in the private schools according to Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) reports, a group led by MEHE and

chaired and co-chaired by UNHCR and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) respectively (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

The Lebanese formal educational system consisted of four levels. The first three levels, pre-school or Kindergarten, elementary, and intermediate, were dedicated to basic education. The last level was secondary. The Kindergarten levels were two years long in the public sector or three years long in the private sector. After that, the students remained for six years in the elementary and three in the intermediate level. Then, the students passed through one or two vocational trainings or three years at the secondary level, typically terminating at the age of 17 years old. Schooling was compulsory for students up to 15 years of age (Shuayb et al., 2016).

During 2014, the Ministries' cabinet created the Inter-Ministerial Crisis Cell to work with the UN agencies (Bidinger et al., 2014, as cited in Nassar & Stel, 2019). During this year and due to the fragile conditions in the country, the Lebanese government decided to adopt a stricter policy on displacement and refugee influx. However, exceptions were kept in case of humanitarian crises (Fakhoury, 2017).

The school year 2015–2016 reported 588,385 eligible school-aged Syrian refugee students, around twice the 249,494 Lebanese students enrolled in the Lebanese public schools. However, only 158,321 Syrian refugee students were enrolled by the end of 2015–2016 school year (Visconti & Gal, 2018). During the same school year, Lebanon and the international community had responded to the Syrian influx through the 3RP. This plan included LCRP and was managed by UNHCR and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). With the joined efforts of the GoL and the international community, the LCRP attempted to respond to humanitarian needs and become integrated while assisting the government in

development projects (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs et al., 2015b; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017). The LCRP response to the Syrian crisis also focused on three strategic areas: the humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees and economically disadvantaged residents, improving the national delivery system capacity, and assisting the national economy which covered several sectors including education (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs et al., 2015b; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017). Thus, this combination of the humanitarian response with the long term development planning aimed to build and support the resilience of refugees and the capacity of the national hosting systems (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

In June 2016, it was estimated that around 36,665 Syrian children along with many non-Lebanese students were enrolled in the private schools (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016). For the academic year 2018–2019, the public sector hosted 30.9% of the total 1,073,141 enrolled students nationwide, 36,212 of whom were under the UNRWA mandate. Furthermore, out of the total number of students enrolled nationwide, 15.1 % were non-Lebanese, including 9.1% with Syrian nationality. The total number of teachers was 102,494 enrolled in 2,903 schools. Of the total number of teachers, 41,792 teachers were enrolled in the public sector in around 1,272 public schools (Centre for Educational Research and Development, 2019).

### **3.4 Review of Research Literature**

According to Kelley (2017), the unprecedented large refugee influx represented “an existential threat” (p. 82). Kelley examined how the Lebanese

community was able to sustain its existence and show resilience to provide basic services such as education, education that could improve future refugee students' prospects. Her research covered a four-year period that extends from spring 2011 until early 2015. According to her study, the Lebanese response to the Syrian refugee crisis had its success and downfalls at times. Her findings pointed towards several issues. To start, the author found that agencies were given a new enhanced role in an attempt to cope with the gravity of the situation. This new role also allowed them to better prepare and plan for staffing and different management requirements to assist Syrian refugees. Furthermore, Kelley noted that the development and humanitarian actions were getting closer and closer to service-unified visions of the Syrian refugees' needs in the country. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework developed from the New York Declaration of 2016 could constitute its advanced starting point as she explained. However, emergency responses and innovative technologies were still needed and should be coordinated to better assist donors and the United Nations in their work. These were needed to improve outcomes of development and humanitarian activities as well as the United Nations' work. At the local level, the author found that humanitarian agencies still need to find the appropriate level of engagement with the national and local authorities. At the national and regional levels, the author found that more needs to be done with respect to conflict prevention; however, such a dilemma will have to be addressed in further studies.

Arcos González et al. (2016) presented the effect and relationship between the fragile social, economic, and political conditions of the state and the increased challenges Syrian refugees and local residents face in Lebanon. To face such adversities, two recommendations from the authors were highlighted here. The first was the need to have a stronger follow up on the development and economic projects

that exist at all levels, including projects related to the education sector. These projects tended to be neglected and end up incomplete. The second recommendation was that existing funding should be administered in a better and more fruitful way so as to not to create dependency on this funding.

In addition, since these refugees lived in urban and rural areas scattered over six districts in over 1700 localities (UNHCR, 2015, as cited in Arcos González et al., 2016) and were not allowed to reside within camp settings, the challenge was even greater for the fragile country (Dahi, 2014). Thus, in order for the Lebanese government to be able to face these constraints and challenges, Dahi (2014) advised on creating clear political goals that accompany the expansion in development spending targeting sectors such as that of education. These political goals should also facilitate investment in infrastructure and focus on job creation. Furthermore, increased coordination between the international organizations and the state was also needed in order to enhance any plans set for assisting the refugees' and residents' living conditions in Lebanon.

The strategies, policies, and approaches adopted by the hosting countries such as Lebanon, had severe implications on refugee students' education. In a study done by Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019), the authors aimed to understand the educational priorities and educational experiences that defined refugee students' futures as well as how international refugee education policies and their implementation mechanisms were created at both national and school levels.

Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) examined refugee education in fourteen different national contexts hosting refugees, including Lebanon. They analyzed policy documents such as educational profiles and plans, in addition to semi-structured interviews and participant observation. This study was completed using the frame of



‘vernacularization’ for analysis in diverse contexts to examine how ideas unfold themselves, interact, and adapt differently in different settings (Levitt and Marry, 2009, as cited in Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). The authors also used Bartlett and Vavrus's (2017) three axes of a vertical case study, horizontal, vertical, and transversal for the years 2012–2014. Data from the UNHCR and the World Bank Data Bank among others was used in the selection process. The selected countries had the opportunity to have a Global Education Strategy (GES) implemented in them since 2012, in addition to other different country characteristics. For example, Lebanon was chosen for a set of reasons: it adopted the GES, it hosted a very large number of Syrian refugees, and it had a previous conflict with the Syrian refugees’ country of origin, Syria. It was also chosen because it was not a signatory state of 1951 Convention (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019).

Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) showed that refugee education needed a national engagement that allowed refugee children to “have opportunities to access quality education, develop social belonging, and partake of economic prospects” (P. 347). While social belonging and inclusion were highly promoted at the global level, the national systems presented varied models of inclusion. These models showed that in some nations, refugees were denied access, had separate access from national students (such as the case in Lebanon where refugee students had access to the formal schools but in different time schedules with the split shift system), or shared their education with national students. These different models are then either further restricted or enabled at the school level. Furthermore, access to quality education and weak future work prospects were affected by the initial absence of this quality education in most national systems and the strained relationship between refugees and nationals. Finally, the authors also found that there was a need to consider how refugee education could

be affected by possible exclusion and discrimination that could, by itself, affect refugees' futures. The authors recommended that further longitudinal research was needed to focus on secondary and higher educational trajectories of the students, their experiences, quality of education, their ability to belong, and uses of their knowledge in all possible futures. Furthermore, additional focus was needed to understand how access and inclusion could reshape the society that refugees lived in, as the authors explained.

In a study that sought proven practices to increase access, retention, and educational experiences for Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Germany, and that examined the potential prospects of those who drop out from the Lebanese education system, Shuayb et al. (2016) identified several good practices as well as bottlenecks. Those good practices and bottlenecks existed at different levels. First, they existed at the level of educational policies that included access and enrollment requirements as well as placement level requirements. Second, they were at the levels of educational practices related to curriculum, language, and student supports. Finally, they occurred at the level of society and issues related to the school environment and the integration of students and parents.

This study was built on a comparative case study (CCS) of three elementary schools in Lebanon, specifically in grades 6 and 9, and of different schools in Germany. Shuayb et al. (2016) found that in Lebanon, the extent to which policies were set to assist Syrian refugee students for sustainable and long-term solutions could redefine the future prospects for those students. The exclusion and marginalization of the refugees from work at the regional level could affect the students' perceptions of their prospects. This exclusion could push them to pursue work sometimes at the expense of their education in other countries such as the

European countries. Furthermore, the authors found that additional support was needed to address language challenges Syrian refugees face in Lebanon. Social challenges also needed to be addressed where additional teachers' training could better assist refugee students in integrating with other students. Moreover, the authors revealed that students who were successfully integrated had a better chance to benefit from their education. Thus, where some parents fail, teachers had a huge responsibility to motivate students to remain in schools. Finally, where students had missed two or more schooling years, accelerated programs, proper grade placement, chances for vocational training, and additional resources were much needed (Shuayb et al., 2016).

Shuayb et al. (2016) concluded that in order to have had meaningful refugee education that could be used to help refugee students to attain a better future, this education needed to be inclusive and respectful. However, in a hostile environment and the absence of integration, access, or respect, education became aimless. Refugee parents needed to feel socially accepted by the school, teachers, and the hosting community, and refugee students needed to have a curriculum and educational policy that helped them achieve their goals and address their individual educational needs instead of hindering them. The authors found that the refugee education paradigm was still that of 'emergency education,' and a shift was needed to address quality education that assists students in finding a better quality of life and not just out of harm's way. The authors believed that by maintaining the 'emergency education' paradigm, the Lebanese government was sidetracking the educational skills and support that refugee students needed to improve upon their lives on the long run. Thus, there was an urgent need according to them to move away from this emergency paradigm in the Lebanese context.

Crul et al. (2019) went further by stating that what was considered to be a refugee problem in some countries was nothing but an institutional inability to adhere to migrant flow. Many countries, according to the authors, still dealt with this issue on a short term basis and with short-term measures. They proceeded to say that migration, voluntary or forced, constituted a structural issue for the hosting state. These migration issues needed only to be addressed by creating proper policies with institutions that deal with refugee education in the long term. The authors also found that the faster the inclusion of Syrian refugees into the regular school system, the better the chances were for educational success. On the other hand, segregated schooling systems where refugees were placed in classes separated from the rest of the students for long durations could lead to interrupted schooling.

Crul et al. (2019) study aimed to move away from personal background information or experiences and focus on institutional factors that influence opportunities for refugee education at the different levels. This study compared how Syrian refugees were included in the educational systems of five countries, three of which were in Europe: Sweden, Germany, and Greece, and two outside Europe: Turkey and Lebanon. They compared school access for compulsory and after-compulsory aged students, tracking mechanisms, welcome classes, and education for a second language.

In Lebanon's case, Crul et al. (2019) showed that actual access to compulsory education fell far short from their stated right to compulsory education. According to MEHE's report in 2016, only 42 % of the school aged children at the compulsory level were enrolled (LCRP, 2018, as cited in Crul et al., 2019). According to Lebanon's Compulsory Education Act (Law 686/98), compulsory education required that students from age 6 to 11 receive education, while Law 150 extended this

requirement to age 15 (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016).

Furthermore, when it came to ‘welcome classes,’ Syrian students attend segregated classes with often lower quality. Losing several school years due to the Syrian war and using Arabic only as the language of instruction in Syria created a language challenge for them with the Lebanese curriculum. Due to these challenges Syrian refugee students dropped out of schools and Lebanon recorded the lowest enrolment rates for the secondary level, motivating government action. Thus, in 2016, the government allowed for refugee students to sit for official examinations without presenting prior schooling records (Crul et al., 2019).

Refugee access to education in Lebanon has been discussed by Charles and Denman (2013) in their work on Palestinian refugees, who were taking refuge in Syria before arriving to Lebanon, and on Syrian refugees in the country. The authors discussed the children’s ability to access education and the short and long term effects of extended lack of access to education on the refugees’ economic situation, on the future of rebuilding Syria, and on the refugees’ personal safety. The authors found that the lack of access or the reduced or limited ability to access education in Lebanon by the Syrian refugee students had a devastating effect on their ability to maintain an acceptable economic living standard. This lack or reduced access led to the loss of human capital, social benefits, and political participation. It also led to the loss of maintaining Syrian refugees’ ability to rebuild the Syrian community as active citizens once the war was over.

A similar finding was elaborated in Dryden-Peterson's (2016b) work. The main challenge, according to the author, was how to empower the right to education for the refugees and clear the way for their ability to use this education within their hosting countries. She focused on how to provide refugees with their right to

education and enable them to use that education to improve their participation in their societies. She also illustrated how “refugee children are caught between the global promise of universal human rights, the definition of citizenship rights within nation-states, and the realization of these sets of rights in everyday practices” (p. 473).

According to her, refugee education remained on an unequal pedestal when compared to that of the hosting country students’ education. This was due to the way hosting country explained citizenship, rights, and citizenship education and to the extent global factors could really change or influence this understanding to integrate universal rights to education.

Dryden-Peterson examined refugee education in the period extending from World War II to 2016. She based her work on an analysis of original, historical data and documents from 1951 until 2016, in addition to an analysis of 214 policy documents and 208 semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, she worked on detecting changes in the related theories and the changing relationship between the UNHCR and the hosting states when dealing with refugee education (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b).

In her findings section on refugee education, Dryden-Peterson (2016b) situated the purpose and provision within three phases from 1945 to 2016. In the first phase from 1945-1985, refugee education moved from the UNESCO to UNHCR (Ruggie, 2003). During this period, the global institutions’ role was limited and focused on providing scholarships to few at the post primary level (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b). The author explained that, during this stage, the purpose of refugee education was aimed at preparing refugees for the future of rebuilding their countries of origin. With the second phase that extended from 1985–2011, the increasing role of global institutions such as the UNHCR, emphasized access to education for all and reflected national and global trends to provide education for wider range of population. During

this time, economic globalization, conventions and declarations set the floor for new global authority guiding education. Refugee education at the time was still under the UN influence that was exerted on the nation state from the international community.

Kagan (2011) elaborated further on this co-cooperation between the international bodies such as the UNHCR and the national governments on issues related to refugees. The author highlighted the bilateral agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UNHCR and some national governments, including the Lebanese government. Kagan explained the shift in responsibilities towards the UNHCR. He stated that this shift in responsibility targets national political interest benefits. Kagan continued that the first benefit was that states hosting Syrian refugees such as Lebanon could shift financial burdens onto northern countries that funded the needs of refugees, without having a framework of responsibility-sharing between the parties (Cuellar, 2006). A second benefit was that this shift could provide governments, who would otherwise reject their integration into the local communities, a reason for accepting the existence of refugees in the country for a longer time. These agreements would also ease the political tensions between the hosting governments and the neighboring countries, tension that could be related to refugee population movements (Husseini, 2007, as cited in Kagan, 2011). The author suggested that due to the difficulty of having the state take on the complete responsibility for the refugees, it might be better to create a different effective strategy through legitimizing a clear and limited role of the UNHCR as a surrogate state. This would better define the UNHCR and the state's roles in improving the rights and protection of refugees in the country. The Lebanese MOU was signed in 2003 between the country and the UNHCR. Parts of this agreement state that Lebanon was defined to be a transit country giving 12 months for refugees to remain inside

Lebanon before leaving elsewhere. After this period, protection gaps could exist, and no guarantees for reallocation were given by Lebanon. Furthermore, the majority of economic concerns and social support for those holding the necessary permits would be assigned to UNHCR. Kagan (2011) paralleled Dryden-Peterson (2016b) in showing the distinctive role of the nation state when it came to dealing with refugee education in their countries. Refugee education was kept under the political and economic influence of the state but at the same time outside and not benefiting from the national services benefits (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b).

The issue of coordination or the lack of between UNHCR and GoL was discussed in Mitri's (2015) work about aid provision to the Syrian refugee. Such coordination, according to Mitri, was highly influenced by the Lebanese context, politicization of aids, and the level of coordination and planning. The fragility of the state, the high pressure on the infrastructure, the impact on social cohesion, the no camp policy, and the unclear policy regarding Syrian refugee status increased the complexity of coordination. Furthermore, due to the politicization of the assistance provided by a variety of donors, coming from the western countries and from the Gulf region among others, each donor set their different approach towards humanitarian assistance and different values to the humanitarian aid. Thus, humanitarian assistance fell in between the political agendas of the donor states and the true needs of Syrian refugees in the country. This increased number of actors providing assistance and the unknown duration of exile added to the coordination challenge. Finally, the UNHCR was given the leading role in coordinating the work of multiple partners and implementing humanitarian aid through several Syria Regional Response Plans (SRRP). These plans aimed to align national goals with that of the region, introduce programs, improve capacity, and focus on areas most in need of assistance, such as



those considered as poor areas or hosting a large number of refugees. However, the UNHCR also faced challenges in coordinating these aids. As a result, one of the pitfalls that needed to be addressed by the UNHCR, according to the author, was the delay in shifting the response from refugee crisis emergency response to a more coherent humanitarian one and one that supported developmental projects. Such a shift would assist hosting countries' infrastructure and admit to the spillover effect onto the Lebanese economy and society. This shift would also require a greater role to be assigned to the GoL to deal with the crisis.

The third stage in Dryden-Peterson's (2016b) work covered the point from 2011–present. This period was defined by greater integration of refugee students within national systems (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012). This shift came as a response to the increasing urban presence of refugees versus camp settings (UNHCR, 2009, as cited in Dryden-Peterson, 2016b), the prolonged exile duration, and the inability of donors to meet extended funding requirements of the refugees. This phase was also characterized by the release and development of GES. This development had two aims, setting education as a human right and creating value by providing quality education. Such a strategy “provides a global framework for the development of more specific country-level education strategies and programmes in camp and urban settings” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012, p. 8). This strategy witnessed a varied application within different nations at their national levels. For example, in Lebanon, Syrian refugees and local residents attended the same national schools, shared the same language and the same curriculum but were separated into different time shifts. In spite of this attempt to integrate Syrian refugees into national education systems to attain access and quality that the GES aimed for, countries in general and their national education systems, in

specific, failed in providing refugees the needed status. Such a status would enable refugee students to participate in the social, economic, and political life. Even with the different time shifts in Lebanon, political tension between residents and refugees persisted and refugees did not have the chance to work, participate socially, economically, and politically. Thus the global promise to give access and quality education remained unfulfilled at the national level (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b).

Refugee education had the potential to improve the individual refugee's life, their country of origin and their hosting nation. For this potential to come to existence, refugees needed to participate at different levels, social, political, and economic. Global institutions aimed to integrate human rights imperatives and create a space for the use of this education within hosting nations; however, most hosting countries' policies focused mostly on the human rights imperative and much less on refugee participation. Unclear systems of implementation remained problematic (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b).

A study by Visconti and Gal (2018) analyzed the effects of the No Lost Generation (NLG) initiative on the educational system in Lebanon and other countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. Part of the 3RP responded to the educational sector needs through its initiative, NLG. The aim of NLG was to assist host countries in supporting and strengthening national and local educational systems, increasing access, and providing quality and relevant education (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017). The authors found that the social, economic, and political instability of the region, the unknown future residence of the Syrian refugees, as well as the comparable and similar weaknesses of the educational systems of those countries, demanded collaboration at the regional level. Such collaboration aimed to strengthen national

and local educational systems. However, such collaboration remained connected to the centers of decision making at the national and local level (3RP report, 2016, as cited in Visconti & Gal, 2018) Nonetheless, Visconti and Gal elaborated that certain reforms should be regionally coordinated. Three recommendations were offered by the authors: the first was to standardize K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) as well as formal and non-formal accreditation, the second was to develop teaching practices regional databases, and the third was to increase the link between the universities and industry on one side, and secondary schools on the other to ensure that the developed skills were ones needed in the current economy. These recommendations, according to the authors, aimed to create equal educational opportunities with a transferable education that was more relevant in addressing the current economic needs of all refugees, nationals and the market.

These recommendations also addressed challenges that Secondary Syrian refugee students faced in Lebanon. Among these challenges was facing language difficulty in the core subjects. In Lebanon, Science and Math were given in French or English but not in Arabic, the language of instruction in Syria. As a result, it was rare to find secondary Syrian refugee students who passed the final examination and attended university to acquire a university degree (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Culbertson and Constant (2015), provided an overview of policy and other considerations that surround refugee education in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan. Their study was based on refugee education literature review from around the world, documents related to refugee education from the specified countries, and interviews with thirty-five government agencies, think tanks, UN agencies, donors, and NGOs as well as school principals. The authors approached refugee education from four axes: Access, Management, Society, and Quality. They stated that the Syrian refugee crisis

presented a significant challenge to the countries' budgets, infrastructure, and educational systems. To address this situation, the authors found a need to create new strategies, demand more resources, share knowledge, increase efficiency, and to base more decisions on evidence.

Culbertson and Constant (2015) found that when it came to access, in addition to opening schools to second shifts, changes on policies needed to address the case of out-of-school children and to use available school capacity. These policies also needed to develop formal education choices, to increase the number of days of schooling, and to address other access barriers, such as financing needs. For the management consideration, new policies needed to address long term development as well as humanitarian short-term response and planning. Furthermore, additional funding had to be channeled, and investments in building capacity made. Finally, the effective use of technology with expanded data information could hugely influence refugee education. Social policies needed to address the challenges host communities and refugees face together. These policies, according to the authors, must address the positives and negatives of integrating refugee students within the same shift as locals or within a separate shift in schools, their integration within the society, and their effects on long term integration on the society. Thus, there was an additional need for policies to address the effects of labor markets. Finally, curriculum standards needed to prepare Syrians for repatriation or for integration in local societies; schools and teachers needed to address this requirement and to respond to the psychological needs of the refugees. Policies needed to address quality considerations by ensuring appropriate instructional time for all shifts, to support teachers with their refugee students, and to create a monitoring system that involves a larger number of schools.

In further assessing refugee education, Chopra and Adelman (2017) conducted a study in Lebanon between 2015–2016. Their study aimed at understanding the barriers of Syrian refugee education, including political, economic, and social factors. They worked with data from 107 interviews with Syrian learners, with Lebanese and Syrian teachers, and with administrators working with refugee children. The study explored the students' educational challenges, aims, and aspirations, as well as their teachers' experiences in the field, all within a setting of conflict and displacement. The results of this study showed that there was little attention to the previous educational experiences of the Syrian refugee students before their exile. Furthermore, their findings showed that within these tough conditions of conflict, Syrian refugee students maintained a strong motive towards their education despite of being unsure of how successful they were in attaining their future aspirations. These findings, according to the authors, "call into question the promises of refugee education" (p. 4). Chopra and Adelman (2017) state:

In designing refugee education programs, we must articulate and pay attention to the longterm purposes of refugee education and the promises refugee education implicitly makes to refugee children and youth, especially as we persuade them to continue their education trajectories. (p. 9)

Education, according to these authors, must acknowledge the strong aspects of students' previous experiences, and at the same time, assist these students in building their future. The authors proceeded to state that the complexity of Syrian refugee education in Lebanon entails the need for a deeper understanding as well as an integration of the global dimension with the local context and its political, social, and economic challenges. At the global level, education was considered as a human right (United Nations, 1948). However, the application of such a right remained directly

influenced by the policies, politics, and capabilities of the local settings. At the local level, Lebanon has allowed Syrian refugees to be registered at formal schools or non-formal schools (Shuayb et al., 2014). The official policy towards Syrian refugee education in Lebanon was outlined throughout RACE I and II (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014, 2016). However, such policies did not focus on higher education and showed less emphasis on the lifelong learning needs of Syrian refugee students in Lebanon (Chopra & Adelman, 2017).

Furthermore, Chopra and Adelman (2017) found that different level actors had to deal with different challenges. At the national level, the Lebanese MEHE had to find a way not to dilute the national educational system while at the same time responding to the increased demand by Syrian refugee students to access the schools. At the administrative and teacher levels, challenges of a second language barrier and psychological needs had to be managed while attempting to integrate Syrian refugee students within the schools and their societies and while using the Lebanese curriculum. Finally, at the student level, challenges of violence, bullying, poor economic conditions, and discrimination against Syrian refugee students had to be faced.

Despite the challenges found at the administrative, teacher, and student levels, Lebanon continued to provide an opportunity for the Syrian refugee students to carry on their education while acknowledging the variation in the local accessibility and capability of the Lebanese educational system. This variation could be enhanced through further transparency, guidance, and clearer communications at the local level. These enhancements enabled the educational system to better address the realities of the challenges of Syrian refugee education in the country (Chopra & Adelman, 2017).

In a study carried out by Dryden-Peterson (2016a), the author argued that, globally, understanding of refugee education was informed by conflict conditions. These understandings usually included the quality and the rate of access to education in first asylum countries where language barriers, discrimination, and teacher-centered pedagogy were found to be recurring themes. With teacher centered pedagogies, teachers relied heavily on the prepared lectures to build up the students' knowledge. Thus the students' level of engagement in asking questions, group work, or exploration of knowledge was very low. This type of pedagogy, according to the author, influenced how students behave in resettlement countries. The author thus, in their study, examined the pre-resettlement educational experiences that affected and informed their post-resettlement education using data from UNHCR, participant interviews from fourteen countries, including Lebanon, as well as ethnographic fieldwork and interviews in four countries.

Dryden-Peterson (2016a) explained the current conflict conditions in the refugees' home and first exile country through three moments. The first moment elaborated on the severity of the conflict that caused children, being at higher risk in conflict areas, to become refugees. Second, children in conflict areas experienced prolonged disruptions in their education in their home country, influencing their educational experience in the countries where they took refuge. Finally, the initial exile duration for refugees often took a very long period to do so and reach the final re-settlement country. In this work, Syrian refugees in Lebanon are expected to remain for a short period of time (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019), however, this duration extended to range between ten to twenty years (Culbertson & Constant, 2015)

Dryden-Peterson (2016a) elaborated that the 1951 Convention and its related protocol acts as a reference point that defines refugee rights and the state's obligations towards them. These rights and obligations were carried out by the UNHCR being the organization responsible for seeing the social, physical and political refugee protection, for the delivery of different sorts of humanitarian assistance, and for the delivery of educational services (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012).. Thus, refugee education depended on the level of coordination with the state hosting country and on the hosting state's policies and practices and their ability to cope with the refugee numbers, such as the case in Lebanon (Dryden-Peterson, 2016a).

Dryden-Peterson (2016a) found that first of all, there has been an increasing trend towards integrating refugees into national educational systems formalized in 2012 by the UNHCR. This integration trend was due to the refugees' unstable living conditions, the prolonged duration of the conflict, and the belief that the national education system with its own teachers' training and certifications could improve its educational quality. Second, there was an uneven rate of access across and within nations of the first asylum, and refugee access to education at the primary level was low and usually lower than that of the national students, while secondary rates were even lower. Finally, the analysis of data gathered showed that recurring issues related to language barriers, discrimination, and teacher-centered pedagogy usually affected the educational experiences of the Syrian refugees in first asylum countries negatively.

In another study done by Buckner et al. (2018), the authors examined Syrian refugee educational policy in Lebanon based on forty-four participant interviews completed in three different areas Beirut, Bekaa Valley, and Tripoli in March 2016.



Their analysis focused on three areas: first, the policy landscape, second, knowledge and views of the participants engaged with refugee education, third, the discrepancies between educational policies and educational practices where refugees exist.

The aim of Buckner et al.'s (2018) study was to examine how a national educational system in Lebanon that was primarily not set for outsiders, as refugees were often considered (Mendenhall et al., 2017), was enacted at the local level where refugees were involved. Buckner et al. (2018) argued that since educational policies fall in the domain of the national government authority, the gap between policy and practice was natural when such policies found their way to local level or when enacted by non-state actors. However, they stated that such a gap was worsened in refugee related contexts where refugees were considered as outsiders, where the state authority was weakened by local non-state actors and international organizations, and where the state was considered to be fragile. Thus, for a better understanding of refugee educational policies, it was essential to understand the competing forces, that of the state and non-state actors, at the local level.

The authors conceptualized policy formation and its influence on implementation at the local level through two forms of relations. The first was between government and state actors at different levels, supranational, national, and local, and the second, through a relationship between the government and non-state actors. Through the first, the authors set the work of the GoL, MEHE, the office of refugee education, and the Program Management Unit (PMU) as the most reliable source of policy formation. However, this work, according to them, was still influenced by supranational actors such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and foreign donors such as USAID and the World Bank through financial, technical, and other forms of pressure. The resulting policies would have to find their way for implementation at

the local levels, sometimes facing communication and oversight challenges. The second relation drew on the link between the Lebanese government and the non-state actors such as international and national NGOs. Such non-state actors provided informal education not run by the government. In this relation, the government had weak influence on the non-state actors maintained through the regulatory aspect (Buckner et al., 2018).

Their findings showed that, in addition to the launching of RACE in 2014 that focused on fortifying the educational system and improving access and quality (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014), normative pressures as well as external aid assisted in improving Syrian refugee access to education. It also helped GoL to create refugee educational policy. However, since this policy was mainly influenced by external actors, besides the national government, this external role undermined local level involvement in the enactment of such a policy. Furthermore, existing gaps in this RACE policy, such as the contradictory policies, lack of operating procedures, and proper channels of communication undermined the appropriate implementation of such a policy (Buckner et al., 2018).

Among other findings, the authors showed that, due to the fragmented and politicized environment that dominated the Lebanese fragile country, the application and the exercise of the right to education and RACE was not uniquely or consistently applied throughout different areas of the community (Buckner et al., 2018). This weak implementation was not strange in countries with limited capacity, limited coordination, weak political will, and high local resistance (Mendenhall et al., 2017). It was this fragmented nature that gave more authority to the local officials or municipal bodies to disregard the central ministry policies or strategies. It also advanced local officials' or municipal bodies' agendas through their affiliations, may

it be religious or political, with the regional ministry (Frayha, 2003). Thus, a wider range of coordination between different authorities at different levels was needed in urban settings for a better implementation of refugee policies at the local level (Mendenhall et al., 2017).

However, another unique finding raised by Buckner et al. (2018) pointed out that this fragmented Lebanese environment allowed for the existence of an “unregulated space” (p. 460) that permitted for a different kind of educational provision for the Syrian refugees and for unofficial or different forms of specialized programs to thrive. This environment developed where refugee educational policies may not have been complete in their initial form, even less in localized settings, and worse within the refugee context. This environment also flourished where refugee educational policies were not implemented in full.

Nassar and Stel (2019) elaborated on Lebanon’s unique response ability, through its “institutional ambiguity” (p. 44) when dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis. On one side, Lebanon’s lack of resources, limited government capacity dealing with an overwhelming refugee crisis, and the existence of a dysfunctional sectarian political system revealed Lebanon’s policy towards the prohibition of refugee camps. It also revealed the country’s unique regulations towards refugees. On the other side, the unique policy of the state may be intentionally developed and perceived as a “strategic component” (p. 44). This component could enable the state to negotiate through tough conditions, creating a space where the state could redefine the life of Syrian refugees in the country, and how refugee policies and politics were analyzed. The authors believed that such an approach was heavily influenced by, or paralleled the “supranational migration politics” (p. 45) that moved away from accepting

refugees into the country. This approach existed side by side with the lack of complete formal policy that dealt with refugees in Lebanon.

Nassar and Stel (2019) used agnotology theory, which was “the study of socially created and politically imposed ‘not-knowing’” (p. 46). Dealing with this mix of social and political retreat was needed for a deeper understanding of groups or spaces that were defined to be “institutionally ambiguous” (p. 46). This type of knowledge was needed to better inform politics and programs aiming for refugee humanitarian assistance. It was also needed for identifying the individual’s influence in applying certain formal or informal policies and moods of state governance. This ambiguity added uncertainty to the refugees experience in the country. It was also used as a mean to expel, marginalize, and push refugees into illegality while forwarding certain political interests. This work was done through extensive policy analysis, literature review and fieldwork data, and interviews. For that purpose, over the course of three years, Nassar managed to collect 101 semi-structured interviews with government and municipal officials, and different NGO’s.

In a study by Bircan and Sunata (2015) in Turkey, a country that hosted a large numbers of Syrian refugees, a similar conclusion was reached that addressed the need for coordination. The aim of the study was to shed light on the educational experience of the Syrian refugees found in Turkey in light of their dramatic living and educational situation in the country. Their findings showed that due to the lack of financial funding that led to inadequate development of educational programs, a large number of Syrian refugee students were in need of education at various levels, be that elementary or secondary. Accordingly, the authors advised on increased coordination among different actors in public and private sectors throughout the different levels, as well as throughout local, national, and global levels.

This fragile condition showed its effects on the way a country such as Lebanon dealt with incoming refugees. In an article written by Fakhoury (2017), the author tried to elaborate on the way Lebanon, a weak and fragile state with dysfunctional official administration (Cammett, 2015, as cited in Fakhoury, 2017), was coping and dealing with the Syrian refugee influx and how their approach has affected the policy formation and the discourses that shaped the relationship between residents and the Syrian refugees.

The author argued that Lebanon's reaction to the Syrian refugee crisis was based on several factors (Fakhoury, 2017). First, the weak governmental institutions, weak economic and social conditions, the political struggle and competing plans, and the dispute over the Syrian foreign relations have made the Syrian refugee accommodation a highly disputed subject. Within these conditions, the Syrian refugee presence was considered to be a high social, economic, and security threat (Fakhoury, 2017).

The second factor that shaped how Lebanon was reacting to the Syrian refugee influx was delegating Syrian refugee assistance to non-state actors, domestic and international actors. Such a delegation could generate both positive as well as negative results. On the one hand, this delegation could assist in creating a supportive environment for better social cohesion; while, on the other hand, the diluted role of the government versus the local and international actors caused less coordinated strategies (Fakhoury, 2017). The role of the LCRP initially sought the coordination between the government and other international and local actors (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs et al., 2015a). However, the weakened coordination between the LCRP and other actors created doubt over the duplication of services (Fakhoury, 2017) such as that of the field of refugee education.

Finally, the Lebanese state has taken advantage of the Syrian presence to maintain a power/authority vacuum and to influence some international relations with other countries. The Syrian refugee crisis has given the Lebanese government some leverage to negotiate with the international body (Fakhoury, 2017). These factors could shed some light on the logic behind the simultaneous presence of policy development and policy inaction. These factors showed how this dysfunctional system and how the dependence on non-state actors provided Lebanon means of coping with the huge refugee influx and challenges. The author added that this situation has provided an opportunity for political gains for some parties in Lebanon over others as well as with the international community. The Syrian refugee crisis has also given the Lebanese government the chance to take advantage of the downgrade in structural reforms and delay in reforms. However, all of these political gains/moves came at an extensive cost for the country where the lack of good governance and its deficiency come to light (Fakhoury, 2017).

Furthermore, Karam et al. (2017) stated that the absence of clear refugee educational policy and educational policy in general, had its effect on refugee education. The authors elaborated on the non-formal education (NFE) programs that were designed for refugees and implemented in Lebanon as an example of absence of clear policy. The authors work were based on a comparative case study between practitioners and scholars and focused on an NGO, Salam (a pseudonym). Salam was founded in 2013 and funded by Syrian expatriates in Lebanon with 1,200 students enrolled. It developed and implemented NFE programs in three different locals in Lebanon. Salam's aim was to facilitate the enrolment of students in mainstream schools in Lebanon. Karam et al.'s (2017) study aimed at finding what constituted an

appropriate refugee student curriculum and the ways to better support and train refugee teachers.

With the ever-increasing number of refugees coming into the country, the UNHCR, the organization responsible for the provision of several services including education for the refugees, faced an increasing challenge to provide education to the Syrian refugee students. Some of the barriers existed due to the limited formal school capacity. This capacity needed to be tripled if Syrian refugee students were to enroll in the school year 2012–2013 (a year that accommodated 250,000 Lebanese students). Furthermore, this educational system faced an ever-increasing challenge of providing quality education (Jalbout, 2015). In addition to that, the limited state funding to the Lebanese formal schools, especially after the civil war 1975–1990, set the public school at a disadvantage (El-Ghali, 2013, as cited in Karam et al., 2017).

Karam et al. (2017) indicated that to analyze the challenges of refugee education, it was essential to consider education in emergencies (EiE). “The Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) provides *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies* to which UNHCR’s 2012–2016 *Education Strategy* ... aligns” (pp. 449–450). The education strategy specified how refugee education should be implemented when the future of the refugees was unknown in terms of whether they would stay and integrate into the country, repatriate, or re-settle. This strategy advised that the language used in refugee education should be that of the hosting country and that refugees outside camps should aim at enrolling in mainstream education. The NFE was a means used to assist those refugee students in joining in mainstream education. In the absence of clear policies, the NGOs took the initiative to decide on matters related to curriculum, language, and teachers. However,

such an initiative or role conflicted with global education policies that found their way to the country level.

As a conclusion to their findings, Karam et al. (2017) argued that since the state still maintained influence in an ever globalized time, refugee education, whether formal or informal, remained in conflict and tension. Refugee education policy stood at the intersection of national and global policies. The nation maintained a hidden influence on teachers, teaching programs, the language of instruction, and an influence on defining the aims of NFE programs. The authors suggested that there was a need for a policy framework for NFE programs, assisting refugees in non-camp settings, to be reconsidered and developed by practitioners and scholars of EiE alike. They also found that flexibility and adaptability that addresses learners and teachers' needs as well as different UN's, NGO's and other organization's role, allowed for further access and assisted in aligning educational program designs of NFE with their intended aims. However, if such recommendations were not to be taken into consideration or find their way to execution, then the above-mentioned tensions and challenges of refugee education would persist.

### **3.5 Literature Synthesis**

In this last section, I brought the multiple parts of my review together by considering the dominant registers in play on the current reality of refugee education in Lebanon. These registers were presented in the literature by different cited authors. These registers related to the level of fragility, refugee schooling and tension between the government's and international organizations' refugee policies. These registers also discussed the relationship between Lebanese students and Syrian refugees in the formal schools, the uncertain future prospects Syrian refugee students faced and its implications on their schooling, and the factors affecting the value of this education.



Together, these conditions impacted the access and quality of Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. I addressed each of these themes in the following section.

To begin with, the subject of fragility at the national level dominated much of the literature. Lebanon was struck by the civil war that ended in 1990. After that period, the governments delayed structural reforms claiming political tensions as a reason for this delay. The political and fragmented environment in the country made access and the exercise of the right to refugee education inconsistent over various areas. Furthermore, the Syrian war and the Syrian refugee crises imposed substantial costs on Lebanon's economy, which was estimated at around USD 13.1 billion up to the year 2016 (Government of Lebanon, 2016, as cited in Human Rights Watch, 2016). It also inflicted a considerable strain on the infrastructure and the educational system in a country already suffering from a tremendous amount of debt. All the services, including those related to education, were in a weak condition with a capacity that did not match refugee needs and challenges.

To address the issue of fragility, the government maintained a state of ambiguity to facilitate negotiations and find its way through regional and global pressures. Even, at many times, politicians tried to take political advantage over their peers due to this unclear refugee policies and dependence on non-state organizations' assistance. However, additional strategies were needed to respond to the fragile national conditions. Creating clear political goals and addressing humanitarian as well as developmental needs could assist in improving the infrastructure and in creating jobs. Investments in infrastructure for education, for example, could assist and extend national boundaries to reach a regional level. Problems of follow-up and administration of funding, making any investment goal uncertain, also needed to be dealt with under these fraught political and economic conditions. All of these

conditions gave way to increased international pressures on government-led responses to the crises such as that noted for increasing access to formal schools in the LCRP policies.

The second register addressed refugee schooling in the fragile country, Lebanon, which was affected by transnational discourses and forces. Refugee education was governed by the CRC and the Universal declaration of Human Right at the global level and by the cooperation between international agencies such as the UNHCR and the government at the national and local levels. This coordination mainly targeted improving access, integration, curriculum and language, as well as financing issues, among others.

Refugee education was influenced or driven by international and supranational policies and funding. However, the fragile Lebanese context hindered the full execution of policies in the country. This cooperation between the international agencies and the national government such as that in LCRP, for example, was weakened by the general situation of the country and the lack of adequate coordination. Furthermore, in the refugee context, where refugees were considered non-nationals and the state was fragile, the policy practice gap was even more significant. Thus, more government intervention was needed to improve on issues such as access, integration, quality, and assistance coordination among others. Some authors also discussed the need for moving away from emergency paradigm to a long-term strategy to improve refugee students' longer prospects. However, such a move encountered the fragile conditions of the country. It also faced the sectarian divisions from within the country and the related political tensions with Syria that reflected itself on the Syrian refugee education and on the relation between citizens and

refugees. Tensions were created from these sometimes competing forces generated between government and international organizations.

The third register dealt with the resentment that was directed towards some Syrian refugee students. First, Lebanon was not a signatory of the 1951 convention that defined clearly who was a refugee and what rights they were entitled to. Second, the status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon was not too clear as to whether they were refugees or temporarily displaced. Third, refugee students faced the effects of ambiguous educational policy, integration challenges, discrimination (as some Lebanese students considered that refugees are using much needed resources), and language barriers. These factors led some authors (as cited above) to consider the environment in Lebanon as a hostile one. When added to the improper implementation of RACE strategies, these conditions or factors led to very low access and retention percentages, and high drop-out rates particularly at the secondary level.

Despite these ambiguities, Lebanon worked and was still working on integrating Syrian refugees into the national education system. This integration strategy into the national education system was seen as a response to the consequences of the Syrian war. It also responded to the expected prolonged refugee stay, unstable Lebanese social conditions, and low access rates.

The fourth register addressed the lack of prospects in the foreseeable future and the implications of this on the refugees' schooling. Having a temporary status, refugees in the country were not allowed to work. The lack of work, disregard of students' past educational experiences, lack of adequate access to schools, and lack of respect were significant factors that could affect the students' motivation and their schooling. These factors also drove Syrian refugee students to stop their education, and aim to leave to countries such as those in Europe rendering their education

aimless to a large extent. The uncertainty that refugees faced could also reshape the hosting society and set the students for a future of economic hardship, with little human capital benefits and loss of social and political participation. The human capital benefits and social and political participation were elements much needed to potentially rebuild their home country, benefit the hosting community, or participate in the development at the regional level.

The final register addressed factors affecting refugee education value in Lebanon, or what those refugees held on to and take with them in their life journey. Refugee education lay at the nexus of global, national, and local policies. At the global level, this education was situated between human rights, Lebanese resident or refugee rights, global aims, and how successful these aims in finding their way to the local level. At the regional level, transferable and relevant education could assist in reshaping refugees' future lives. Further coordination could open additional work prospects for the Syrian refugees. At the national level, we must consider the long-term goals for such education. Refugee education must be attuned to the individual refugee's history, present conditions, and future goals. Challenges facing these goals and that affect the quality of education lay within the general fragility of the country, use of language, curriculum, teacher training, and teacher centered pedagogy. It also lay within the students' relations with the hosting residents. All these conditions should be addressed under a respectful and not overly politicized approach to advance a higher quality and useful education for refugee students.

## Chapter Four: Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This study explored the enactment of Syrian refugee education in the formal school in Lebanon. I chose two formal state schools in two different locations in Lebanon, ‘Sayddh High School’ and ‘Badawi High School’ (pseudonyms) as the case sites. For this study, a total of twenty-three participants were selected as a sample from the two state schools and MEHE—thirteen students, seven teachers and two administrators from the schools and one ministry official as a participant to access the policy making level from the ministry. Relevant global, regional, and national policies that guided Syrian refugee education in this fragile country were also examined.

The methodology used in this study follows the qualitative research approach. I used a Vertical case study (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006) design in order to include the complex multi-level terrain shaping refugee education and to consider the uniqueness and contextual specificity of Syrian refugee education in the case of two secondary state schools. Analyzing the policy context across the levels of policy and exploring the educational experience of key educational stakeholders at different levels provided the ‘verticality’ of my vertical case study. Semi-structured and open-ended interviews were used with the participants to get deeper insights into Syrian refugee education. Non-participant observation was also used to assist in understanding the educational context of the refugee students.

The data analysis followed the inductive thematic approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to identify the main themes and patterns from participants’ interviews. Headings in different sections were used to facilitate referencing. Finally, specific participants’ ideas were used to engage with the *unique* educational experience that

some of the participants have elaborated upon. The specific details of the methodology and methods are presented in the following sections.

## **4.2 The Qualitative Approach and the Research Methodology Used**

### **4.2.1 *Qualitative Approach***

The methodology in this study followed the qualitative approach, as it focused on the “processes and meanings” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8) of educational actors and policies. A qualitative research study interprets and analyzes a phenomenon in its natural context so that it is clearer and makes sense to others (Becker, 1986, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Furthermore, the qualitative approach reflects an “interpretive, experience based, situational and personalistic” (Stake, 2010, p. 31) understanding of the situation as well as “recognis[ing] the importance of value and context, setting and the participants’ frames of reference” (James & Busher, 2009, p. 7). Understanding the events of a qualitative case study required a “wide sweep of contexts: temporal and spatial, historical, political, economic, cultural, social, [and] personal” (Stake, 2010, p. 31).

This qualitative approach presupposed the construction of reality coming out of different individuals and their perspectives (Stake, 2010). This approach was essential in understanding Syrian refugee education in Lebanon as it allowed for the presentation of the perspectives of differently positioned educational actors and how these individuals related to each other. The research findings were thus built on these actors’ life experiences and perceptions, as well as on the policy and document interpretations. In this case, the researcher had to get close to the participants, to where they worked and studied, as much as possible (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and to clearly situate his position with respect to that of the

participants. To develop a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, a trustful relationship with the participants should be established.

This study provided means for exploring the problem, in this case, the provision of Syrian refugee education in Lebanon, while redefining the issue at hand and identifying its complexities across the local, national, and international levels. This qualitative study also allowed for further elaboration of the purpose and research questions, while shaping the interview questions, data collection, and analysis of the collected data and text. Finally, this approach allowed for the development of findings and analysis while maintaining an open and flexible mindset towards the emergence of new challenges, possibilities, ideas, and explanations (Stake, 2005).

In this qualitative case study, I examined the Syrian refugee education in two state secondary formal schools to illuminate the complex relationships that link global, national, and local educational actors and policies. Illuminating these complexities helped to reveal how Syrian refugee education is conceived and institutionalized by ministry officials, teachers, and administrators, and experienced by students. Finally, I analyzed and reported the findings related to Syrian refugee education in Lebanon, whilst maintaining an open and dynamic perspective to new ideas that could generate from the field work.

#### ***4.2.2 Research Methodology—The Theoretical Aspect***

A crucial aspect of my work as a researcher, as a Lebanese citizen, and as an outside observer of the Syrian refugee community, lay in understanding the educational experiences of the Syrian refugee students living in Lebanon, as well as the contexts of the teachers, and administrators working in both schools. To that end, I employed an interpretivist paradigm that engaged with the participants' different experiences and points of view. This paradigm allowed me to understand and explain

those experiences conveyed in their interviews and the educational actors' view on refugee education in Lebanon.

The ontological assumption of this paradigm was that the “form and nature of reality” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) flowed from the subjective experiences of individuals in a society (Stake, 2010). This paradigm “*looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world*” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67).

This interpretation allowed for the creation of complex description adding on and illustrating abstract relations (Stake, 2010) and for further analysis of the influence of local situations, national fragile conditions, national educational policies, and international refugee educational policies.

Epistemologically, the “nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108) implied that the researcher was aware that his own experiences and background can affect his interpretation, and thus he tried to position himself openly (see section Coming to the Study: Introducing the Researcher) to admit this relation (Creswell, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). From this entry, the researcher aimed to interpret other's views and experiences (Creswell, 2007; Scotland, 2012).

Hermeneutic theory underlay my understanding of the educational actors' experiences. I acknowledge this theory because this work was directly related to the experiences of individuals, as well as to my understanding of the educational policies at different levels that might guide refugee education in Lebanon. I specifically use Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as explained by Palmer (1972) as the underlying orientation to the analysis through what could separate or involve the researcher in terms of time, space, culture, and setting or other barriers. Palmer (1972) adds that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics recognized the influence of the



researchers' own standpoint, history, culture, and other factors on the interpretation and understanding of the current events under study.

Philosophical hermeneutics from Gadamer's perspective assumed that: prejudices are not just wrong; there are also positive prejudices that lead to correct understanding. We inherit our prejudices from our tradition. The epistemological task is to discover those positive prejudices. Understanding is necessarily hermeneutic understanding since one cannot escape the hermeneutic circle, as Heidegger had argued. (Schmidt, 2006, p. 8)

Schmidt (2006) argued that the researcher's knowledge is expanded by the fusion of both the text's context in history and the researcher's present understanding. Accordingly, philosophical hermeneutics underlies my evolving understanding of the conditions that influenced how I produce claims with my data analysis. Gadamer's hermeneutics took into consideration how the researcher's cultural background and their subjective interpretation affect the researcher's own understanding of what the texts were revealing. A researcher has to come to terms with their own understanding of how they interpreted past and present events by acknowledging what they brought from their own perspective to the text (Kilminster, 1991). This understanding served as an essential element in building knowledge (Alcoff, 2008). My challenge as a researcher elaborating on the Syrian refugee education in Lebanon is further discussed in the Challenges Facing the Methodology section below.

#### **4.2.3 Vertical Case Study**

This study sought to understand and explain the educational experience of Syrian refugee secondary students and the perspectives of other educational actors in two formal state secondary schools in Lebanon in addition to one official working with the ministry. This understanding was bound within the broader political, socio-

cultural, and economic framework of the Lebanese community. It was also bound within the refugee education policy framework local and international.

The case study design presented a suitable choice for a unique, specific, and bounded environment (Stake, 2005), as well as within a limited local context or time (Yin, 1994). The case study put an “emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself” (Stake, 1995, p. 8). Furthermore, the case study design should be considered when the focus of the research was how and why events evolve in this unique setting that had contextual attributes inseparable from the phenomena under study. These types of questions emphasized the case’s ability to “illuminate a *decision* or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result” (Schramm, 1971, as cited in Yin, 1994, p. 12). Finally, in a case study, the researcher is able to highlight a recent and contemporary phenomenon or issue (that could be an idea, policy, or practice) that is of public interest and grounded in real-life settings—in this case—the Syrian refugee education in formal schooling in Lebanon. The researcher was also able to study the contextual characteristics of this setting without manipulating the behavior of the participants. These contextual characteristics are then studied through multiple levels and sources of evidence to support the theoretical perspective and the reasoning behind the data gathering and analysis (Yin, 1994).

Out of the different types of case studies, I used Vavrus and Bartlett (2006) “vertical case study” (p. 96). The vertical case study played an essential role in the *connective* analysis that attended to the local settings (the students’, teachers’, and administrators’ educational experiences at the schools), to the national policies guiding refugee education, and to the related international policies. The vertical case

study had the ability to engage with a dynamic and changing environment while allowing for different possible interpretations or perspectives from the culture, context, space, and time to surface.

In this research, I worked on exploring secondary Syrian refugee education with various actors in the two schools. The aim behind this exploration was to understand how this education was enacted, what national educational policy was followed, what mechanisms allowed global refugee policies to influence the national and the local setting, and how these influences were detected at the local level. While building the case for understanding how this education was operationalized at the two schools, the analysis of the policy focused on the “process of *appropriation*, during which social actors interpret and selectively implement policies, thereby adapting ideas and discourses developed in a different place and potentially at a different historical moment and harnessing them for their own purposes” (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 2). To explore how refugee education was enacted at different levels, the vertical case study presented itself as a suitable choice.

This vertical case study covered three axes: horizontal, vertical, and transversal (Bartlett, 2014; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014). I used the “heterologous” (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 52) horizontal axis that allowed comparing the same phenomenon in “categorically distinct” (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 52) locations. This work aimed to understand how the global and national policies were applied or implicated at the two schools and at the classroom level while allowing for the contextual and historical factors to take effect in the analysis. This process elaborated on the policy application and various understanding of the policy context and possible reasons for any gaps.

The vertical axis was used to focus on the way the global and national policies, formally or informally, were affecting school practices. Ball (2016) explained how educational policies moved and relocated to another place and terrain and how different terrains engaged the same policy. Ball's (2016) approach had guided my examination of how refugee educational policies were applied and re-contextualized from the global to the national and to the local level while attending to the complex relationships and dynamics that affected the national and local settings. Furthermore, the critical discourse analysis referred to by Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) assisted in the "broader socio-cultural and political context that shapes the formation of texts and how people think, feel, and act in response to them" (p. 83).

The transversal axis elaborated on the historical influence rooted in refugee education in Lebanon, on the way social, economic, and political factors influenced education over time and space, and on the participants' engagement with refugee education and their influences over the way refugee education was enacted and understood in Lebanon. As Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) explained, the transversal axis in a CCS is essential because it takes into account the time and location of social events to understand them more deeply.

Interviews were conducted with secondary Syrian refugee students, teachers, school administrators, and a ministry official. The aim behind these interviews was to understand how the school came to host Syrian refugee students and how the teachers took responsibility for educating these students. These interviews also aimed to understand how the administrators and the ministry official engaged with the global and national policies and practices of refugee education. This research moved away from a linear interpretation of refugee education policy implementation towards a more dynamic, less bounded, un-stratified approach that highlighted connections and

relations between the Syrian refugee students, other educational actors, and national and global policies.

#### **4.2.3.1 Exploratory Case Study Aspect.**

This study attended to and investigated a current research interest or issue. The study also tried to understand, without a predefined set of outcomes, how each level in the system functioned in relation to other factors such as the policies and practices, thus creating its exploratory aspect (Yin, 1994, 2003). Through Yin's approach, I investigated and tried to understand the situation at two formal schools.

This aspect did not eliminate the need to analyze and support the work with the historical essence that played a part in creating the current issue (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). Syrian refugee education in Lebanon was a current issue that had evolved from the historical experiences of the country with other refugee groups, as well as from the political and historical factors that existed during the creation of Lebanon and reemerged during the Lebanese civil war and events that followed. These formations and shifts had occurred in relation to wider geopolitics. Upon analyzing the possible interferences on culture, context, space, and time, factors also included state fragility, and the relationship between development and education, policy enactment, and their effects on secondary Syrian refugee education in Lebanon.

#### **4.2.3.2 Instrumental Case Study Aspect.**

Even though this study was situated in two formal schools, it elaborated on secondary Syrian refugee education in Lebanon via the three axes of analysis. Since the focus was on the issue stated and not the schools themselves, this constituted the *instrumental* aspect of the case study (Stake, 1995, 2005). It also allowed for other studies related to Syrian refugee education in Lebanon or other countries to benefit

from this work's findings. The school itself remained of interest; however, a "secondary interest" (Stake, 2005, p. 445).

#### ***4.2.4 Challenges Facing the Methodology***

The described methodology associated with the interviews of different educational actors in the field of refugee education worked on elaborating upon the educational experience of those actors. It also aimed at understanding how Syrian refugee education was enacted in the country. However, this endeavor faced challenges. Palmer (1972) stated that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics recognized the researcher's own position as well as his own culture, history, time, and other factors in the process of interpretation and understanding. It also discussed the 'fusion' of perspectives, those of the participants with that of the researcher (Schmidt, 2006). Such a fusion would reflect a subjective understanding based on the participants' own understanding of the situation and the researcher's interpretation of that understanding. Denying to admit that fact, as Fine (1994) explained, would drive qualitative researchers "into a contradictory discourse of individualism, personal logic theorizing, and decontextualization" (p. 135) of the other.

As a person displaced during the Lebanese war, trying to understand refugee education in Lebanon presented several challenges. One of the challenges that I faced was how I reflected on, interpreted, and explained the viewpoints of the different educational actors in Lebanon. Another challenge was how I understood my past displacements in relation to the Syrian refugee community and the students' experiences of schooling in Lebanon. My understanding of all participants' interviews remained thus subjective, influenced by my own history and knowledge. Therefore, to deal with such a challenge, I had to recognize that my interpretation of the participants' narratives could not be excluded from my own perspective. I had to

recognize that this interpretation remained affected by my own experience of the civil war in Lebanon, displacement within Lebanon, disrupted education due to war and displacement, and economic and financial distress. It was also affected by the cultural and political differences between the two countries. Thus, I aimed to explain the students' perspective while taking into consideration their respective cultural, political, economic, and historical background as I understood it. This said, this research intersected with Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics' 'fusion' between the experiences of the participant with the interpretation of the researcher (Crotty, 1998; Schmidt, 2006) and that meanings had to be produced in combination with all participants and the researcher (Crotty, 1998).

In this co-interpretation and construction between the participants and the researcher, would the researcher still be able to represent the views of the participants? According to Becker (1996), our representation of the participants' understanding of their own experiences could never be perfectly accurate, but the nearer the researchers got to the living conditions and the factors affecting their lives, the more accurate our understanding could be. However, Becker (1996) also stated that research participants might not have presented a consistent perspective of their own understanding of their experiences, or even might have frequently changed their own minds. For that, and based on Becker's advice, I selected the information from the participants' interviews that assisted me as much as possible in building my understanding of the secondary Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. I also shared my evolving analysis with my committee members to get more outsider perspectives to lead to a more intersubjective approach.

### **4.3 Research Methods**

To address the challenges associated with understanding and explaining secondary Syrian refugee students in two formal Lebanese schools, I chose applicable ways to successfully reflect the participants' experiences. Applying the vertical case study approach, I have worked with the participants in two schools in Lebanon using multiple methods such as Interviews, document analysis, and non-participants observation. The use of varied approaches allowed for better support of construct validity, reliability, and data triangulation that supports validity (Yin, 1994).

#### **4.3.1 Document Analysis**

The first step of data collection was gathering documents. Documents were considered a good source of text data (Hodder, 2000). These documents were related to refugee educational policies in the country, gathered from MEHE and related websites. The fact that the formal schools reported to and were related to MEHE, attaining the ministry's related policies and plans was essential. I also reviewed UDHR, 3RP, LCRP, RACE I and RACE II (See Appendix A for the list of policies read and used in this document). Informed by the literature review, I have extracted themes that are significantly related to Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. These documents provided vital information on Syrian refugees, including their general condition (their rights, safety, and livelihood), the fragile condition in Lebanon, and the role of each involved party.

These national and global policies and plans provided valuable information on how Syrian refugee education was to be understood and implemented within the Lebanese national context. These policies and plans described how the Lebanese formal schools, the ministry, and the international bodies were to work together to



influence Syrian refugee education, the challenges they faced, and the efforts done to address educational challenges.

Furthermore, documents provided ideas that might not be available in the interviews conducted with the participants; however, the accuracy of the interpretation remained contextualized and a challenge to the interpreter (Hodder, 2000). Documents were attained at low cost, and they provided sources of information that reflect a situation in time and that the researcher could always refer to for further reading (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Yin (1994) highlighted several advantages of using documents as part of data sources. For one, this type of data could be used to verify some information gathered from other data sources such as interviews. Furthermore, this type of data allowed the researcher to have indications and signals for the need for further investigation or interpretation in case there were any differences between the data used.

#### **4.3.2 *Fieldwork***

This section focuses on the details of the fieldwork. I describe access to the two schools as well as the educational actors and their selection criteria. Furthermore, I discuss the selected type of interviews and their duration, among other details. Finally, I highlight the non-participant observation conducted in the schools.

##### **4.3.2.1 Gaining Access to the Research Sites.**

After securing my ethics approval from the university (see Appendix B), accessing the formal school in Lebanon began with acquiring access approval from the MEHE. It took me around three to four weeks to get the approval from the ministry. In reference to this approval, I wanted to acknowledge the willingness and helpful attitude of the ministry employees in assisting me throughout the process passing across different offices. They assisted in filling out the application, in the

follow-up, and in speeding the process as much as the laws and regulations allow, noting that a period of vacation intercepted the process.

Accessing the field followed Patton's (2015) two parts: first defining the nature of the fieldwork after negotiations with the gatekeepers and second, the researcher's entry to the field to start data collection. The administrators were actually the gatekeepers and the contact people who assisted me in entering the schools. They were very helpful and willing to elaborate on the school situation and on Syrian refugee education in their schools. After contacting and explaining my research aim and the need to conduct several interviews, the administrators asked for a copy of the ministry's approval to conduct interviews within the schools. Several days after that, and after confirming the ministry's approval, the administrators approved my entry to the site. I presumed that the staff was briefed of my arrival by the administrators, and all participants showed a welcoming and helpful attitude. The meetings with the teachers were facilitated by the administrator while I was able to explain the aim of my research in those meetings. Once I got the administrator's and teachers' consent, I was able to proceed to the interview stage. The administrators' interviews were conducted in their offices, while the teachers' and students' interviews were conducted in one of the classrooms with the exception of one teacher whose interview was conducted in the teachers' meeting room in the absence of other individuals. The same process was repeated with the students. The ministry official was more than welcoming and consented to conduct the interview after providing the ministry's approval documents. However, her meeting was conducted over the phone due to the COVID19 pandemic.

During my stay in the schools and while communicating with the ministry official, I had to explicitly explain the rights of the participants such as their ability to

leave at any point during or after the interview, the need to keep audio records of the interviews, as well as the need to attain their written signature on the consent forms. These steps were perceived to be professional and were very welcomed and accepted. With the exception of two teachers who were willing to discuss the research subject but not be audio recorded, all participants accepted to sit for the recorded interviews.

My 'friendly' approach in explaining the participants' rights and my topic addressing Syrian refugee education in Lebanese secondary schooling also seemed to facilitate good relations. I was always welcomed to the administrators' office while I was at the schools and was given access to different locations/classes to conduct the interviews. I have worked to create positive rapport to facilitate discussions and create a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere. In addition to that, I have maintained neutrality to what was being said during the interviews. Patton (2015) explains that "*Rapport is a stance vis-à-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-à-vis the content of what that person says*" (p. 457). I tried maintaining both rapport and neutrality while at the same time showed genuine interest in what participants were saying.

#### **4.3.2.2 The Schools.**

The country in which the schools were located and selected from for the purpose of this study is Lebanon. The choice of the two schools was based on the availability of Syrian secondary students and on the different socio-cultural and religious character of the area they are located in. The choice of these two schools was not intended for their differences since the specific character of the schools themselves did not represent the case and the primary factor was the presence of Syrian refugee students. The first school, 'Sayddh High School' (pseudonym), is located at the center of Lebanon at a coastal area. This area is known to have a

population with religious majority of one type. This area has been known historically to resist the Syrian military presence during and after the end of the Lebanese civil war. Many Syrians resided in this location to work even before the beginning of the Syrian war. The building consists of several floors, with a playground, library and other facilities. The general condition of the school and the classrooms needed maintenance but was still well operational. Other amenities such as drinking water and electricity were provided adequately in the school and classes. This secondary school was not initially intended for refugees; refugee students attended their classes in the afternoon shift with Lebanese students in the same classes. The school provided both English and French as options for second language. It received relatively large numbers of foreign students, whether Syrians, Palestinians or Iraqis.

The second school, 'Badawi High School' (pseudonym), is situated in the south of the country. The city in which it is located has a religious majority of one type completely different from that of the first school. The same region hosted a Palestinian camp. This area, like other areas in Lebanon, witnessed gatherings for the 2019 protests that started due to the deteriorating economic conditions. The school hosted students from different nationalities. It consisted of several floors, playgrounds, labs, a computer center, and a shop that sold food and drinks to the students. There are several classes that were in a good to fair condition and could support around twenty some students. This secondary school also was not initially intended for refugees; Syrian refugee students attended with Lebanese students the morning shift.

#### **4.3.3 Educational Actors**

The main data source was the set of participant interviews. Because of the major human factor that characterized this case study, interviews were essential to

reflect the perspectives and knowledge of the participants who were the educational actors at the two Lebanese formal secondary schools and within the ministry.

Furthermore, interviews could help in elaborating historical practices as well as a guide to other possible sources of information (Yin, 1994). I have interviewed twenty-three participants for this research study: thirteen students (including seven female and six male students), seven teachers (including six female and one male teacher), two administrators (both of which are male administrators), and one female ministry official. There was no specific order in conducting the interviews with the students, teachers, and administrators; however, the last interview was conducted with the ministry official. Overall, around 54% of the students were females and only one out of seven teachers was a male.

An explicit criterion was used in the participants' selection process. The participant students should be Syrian refugees who moved to Lebanon during the Syrian war or very shortly before it. They should have been informed of the situation in both Syria and Lebanon and should have been able and willing to express their ideas and knowledge concerning their educational experience in Lebanon. Such information could highlight the educational quality and value perceived in learning as well as the challenges these students faced in the country. All participants had volunteered for their interviews. Where more than the needed number of participants approached to be interviewed, a sampling selection technique was prepared. However, it was not used as all the participants who were willing to take the interviews were accepted for this study. To explore the participant's perspectives at different levels and to preserve the verticality of the case study, students, teachers, administrators, and a ministry official were selected to present their various viewpoints. Parents were not interviewed in the process due to time restrictions, the severe economic and social

conditions the country was passing through during the interview period, and the ongoing Covid19 widespread pandemic. Creswell's (2012) "purposeful sampling" (p. 205) was used to select the participants using "Maximal Variation Sampling" (p. 207) to allow for the various perspectives and reflections on the complexity of the educational situation in Lebanon in case large number of participants were willing to join the study. For the secondary students and teachers, age, gender, and economic background were considered. Further restriction to reflect the future ambitions was also used for the secondary Syrian students. However, due to the limited number of participants willing to be interviewed, these selection criteria were not needed.

In the below section, I provided brief information about the ministry official, administrators, and teachers, as well as about the Syrian refugee students' educational experiences mainly after joining their secondary schools in Lebanon. This information assisted in understanding the Syrian refugee educational enactment in Lebanon. This approach supported verticality from the ministry official to the Syrian refugee students. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants' pseudonyms was used.

#### **4.3.3.1 Ministry Official.**

##### **4.3.3.1.1 *Soha.***

Soha was a ministry official. She has been working with the MEHE for more than twenty years. Her teaching experience started with the secondary level at the formal school. She occupied several positions at the ministry, mainly, within the teams dealing with emergency education and RACE. She was also part of the ministry's team that negotiates with the other agencies on matters related to the Syrian refugee education and policy settings among other issues.

#### **4.3.3.2 School Administrators.**

##### **4.3.3.2.1 *Jean-Mark.***

Jean-Mark was an administrator in his late thirties. He has been working in the education sector for more than fifteen years. He had the chance of teaching Syrian refugee students in addition to the Lebanese students. His teaching experience in the school provided him with a sense of what needs to be done and what kind of solutions can be helpful. He was completing his PhD program in Education,

##### **4.3.3.2.2 *Adib.***

Adib was an administrator in his late fifties. Adib started his career in education with teaching elementary classes around forty years ago. He has completed his PhD in Philosophy and has taught the same material to the secondary classes. He also taught civic education and sociology in secondary classes in the public sector.

#### **4.3.3.3 Secondary School Teachers.**

##### **4.3.3.3.1 *Alya.***

Alya was a Sociology teacher in her early forties. Her experience extends to more than sixteen years, including three years teaching classes with both Syrian refugee students and Lebanese students. Alya has been teaching secondary classes with Syrian refugees for more than three years.

##### **4.3.3.3.2 *Takla.***

Takla was a secondary French teacher in her mid-fifties. She has more than twenty years of experience in the private sector and five in the formal secondary schools. She taught French as a second language for the English and French sections.

##### **4.3.3.3.3 *Nicholas.***

Nicholas was a History teacher in his early forties. His teaching experience extends to more than ten years in private and public sector. His education and degrees

were Interdisciplinary. He was a PhD candidate in a subject that is highly correlated with the history of Lebanon. He taught about the history of civilizations for the first secondary, World War II for the second secondary, and finally World War I and the Lebanese independence for the final year secondary class.

#### **4.3.3.3.4 *Lama.***

Lama was a Geography teacher in her early forties. She has around fifteen years teaching experience between middle and secondary classes. She supported creativity and arts, and believed that the Lebanese war has positively influenced the way she taught Syrian refugees. This experience made her more empathetic towards their situation.

#### **4.3.3.3.5 *Rana.***

Rana was an English teacher in her early forties. Her experience extended to more than fifteen years between private and secondary schools. She found Syrian refugee students weak in English due to their educational background that did not build a good base for their language.

#### **4.3.3.3.6 *Nawal.***

Nawal was an English teacher in her early forties. She had around fifteen years of experience, around nine of which were in the private sector and the rest were in the public schools, both intermediate and secondary classes. Nawal reflected concerns about the English language weakness. This weakness existed due to the lack of interest in second language at an early age.

### **4.3.3.4 Secondary Syrian Refugee Students.**

#### **4.3.3.4.1 *Aida.***

Aida was a sixteen-year-old student. She belonged to a family of six including her father and mother. She has been in Lebanon for around seven years, and now in



her second secondary class. She completed the first and second elementary in Syria, left to Turkey for the third year, then returned to Syria where she missed the fourth year due to war. Upon her arrival in Lebanon, she joined a school only for Syrian refugee students, and after one week in her fourth year elementary, her teacher saw that she has the qualifications to be in the fifth elementary class and decided to promote her to the next level.

#### **4.3.3.4.2 Andre.**

Andre was a member of a family of seven including a mother, a father, three sisters, and two brothers. He has entered Lebanon around the start of the Syrian war. They had left their country at an urgent speed with only the clothes they were wearing. His father worked in Lebanon and he tried to work or find work in the summer to assist with the family expenses.

#### **4.3.3.4.3 Fadia.**

Fadia was a nineteen-year-old student. She belonged to a family of seven. Her parents were uneducated and the father was the sole provider. She and her family left Syria two years after the start of the Syrian war, when she was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. When she arrived in Lebanon, she joined the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, losing two academic years due to language difficulties.

#### **4.3.3.4.4 Rita.**

Rita was a sixteen-year-old student. She belonged to a family of seven members including her mother and father. They arrived in Lebanon between the year 2012 and 2013 and started in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade in Lebanon.

#### **4.3.3.4.5 Nadine.**

Nadine was a seventeen-year-old student. She belonged to an economically disadvantaged family of six including a mother, a father, and three sisters. They

arrived in Lebanon around seven years ago. When she left Syria, she was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. When they arrived in Lebanon, she did not register in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In the first year, her family did not have enough information to inform them about their ability to register within the Lebanese formal schools. In her second year in Lebanon she registered in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade skipping the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She found the Lebanese educational level very difficult. She was outspoken about her experience with bullying but her presence in the school was an expression of her own will, as she expressed.

#### **4.3.3.4.6 Imad.**

Imad was an eighteen-year-old student. He belonged to a family of ten including a mother, a father, four boys and three girls. He has been in Lebanon for around eight years. Upon their arrival, he has lost one year until they have found a place to live in, and settled. He started his education in Lebanon in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Imad was in grade 12. He hoped to contribute to the development of the societies and their development.

#### **4.3.3.4.7 Rafqa.**

Rafqa was a sixteen-year-old student. She belonged to a family of six including a mother and a father who both work and two sisters and a brother. She has been in Lebanon for six years. She hoped to become someone important to help her society and assist in rebuilding her country.

#### **4.3.3.5 Interviews.**

The use of semi-structured and “standardized open-ended interview” (Patton, 2015, p. 438) with the participants from the schools and from the ministry was essential for this vertical case study, allowing for greater response flexibility (Creswell, 2012), and for asking follow-up questions to reach greater details. The semi-structured interviews “allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand,

to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 111).

All interviews, for all participants, were conducted as “One-on-One Interviews” (Creswell, 2012, p. 218), in addition to one focus group interview for students in each school. One-on-one interviews were conducted separately with individuals who were directly related to Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. Although this approach best suited individuals who could express their ideas clearly and comfortably (Creswell, 2012), these individual interviews would allow me to present the diversified views of each of the participants.

Participants could inform the research through their experiences and opinions. However, the analysis of the participants’ interviews were subject to biases, poor or inaccurate display of events, and could be subject to misinterpretations from both parties involved in the interview (Yin, 1994). Nonetheless, with well-prepared interview protocols and combination with other types of data sources, such as non-participant observation and documentation, those vulnerabilities can be faced.

In addition to one-on-one interviews, the students attended one focus group interview. In this interview, the participants could listen to each other and share their own ideas. The aim of this type of interview was to “get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others” (Patton, 2015, p. 475). Focus group interviews could provide a diverse perspective, enhance data quality, unfold avoided themes and topics, and engage the participants (Patton, 2015).

The interviews started before the October 2019 social unrest and economic meltdown and stretched till after the start of COVID19 pandemic in Lebanon in February 2020. All individual interviews were conducted in one or two sessions

lasting for an average of thirty minutes each. Only in cases where I found a need and ability to conduct the second interview did I exercise this option. For example, I had to conduct a second interview for eleven participants just for the purpose of member checking. In other cases, I have found that I had to get sufficient information from one session. For example, following the most recent demonstrations of October 17, 2019, I was forced, due to time constraints and interrupted schooling, to conduct one interview per participant, including the member checking section at the end of the interview. Furthermore, I spoke to some teachers and administrators informally on certain sensitive issues that they did not want to mention while recording or did not want to make official statements. All the interviewees were very generous in taking time from their own schedule to conduct the interviews, and I was very flexible to meet them at a time of their own convenience. All interviews were audio-recorded individually to ensure accurate data collection and backup. Due the spread of COVID19, I managed to rearrange the ministry official interview to respect social distancing and avoid direct contact.

The first language of all participants was Arabic. No language barrier existed with participants in the interviews since all interviews were conducted in Arabic with the exception of the ministry official's interview who willingly agreed to use English. Even though English and French languages were second official languages, Except for the ministry official's interview, I chose to conduct the interviews in Arabic especially with Syrian refugee students' whose primary language in Syria and in their schools has always been Arabic. After the completion of the interviews and their transcription, interviews in Arabic were translated into English.

#### **4.3.3.6 Non-Participant Observations.**

Non-participant observation was another source of data used in this research in addition to document analysis and participant interviews. Observation was “the process of gathering open-ended, firsthand information by observing people and places at a research site” (Creswell, 2012, p. 213). Such observations provided me with the opportunity to collect firsthand data on the classrooms, the schools, the schools’ surroundings, and the general condition in which refugee education existed. Such information was gathered during my presence on the sites and in their surroundings.

I wanted to get an idea of how the schools coped with and prepared for refugee learning, as well as to see what resources were available to assist students in coping with the learning challenges, such as the language and social barriers, among others. Outside the classroom settings, I have conducted observations on the overall school area to form an idea on the infrastructure, buildings, and facilities available. Furthermore, areas such as playgrounds and the like, where students and teachers conducted diverse activities, were also observed. These observations provided an idea about the resources and facilities available for the students. Finally, the school surrounding provided an idea on the environment where the students spent most of their time during the day, the road they took to get to school, their transportation means, and the challenges and effects of the environment during their presence in the location. However, my role remained restricted to the “Spectator-Observer” (Patton, 2015, p. 356) to take notes, without interfering or influencing the surrounding during my presence in the schools.

#### **4.3.4 *Data Analysis and Validity***

##### **4.3.4.1 Data Analysis.**

All the data gathered were closely read, and used to build up the analysis. I used typical traditional techniques to manage and analyze the data, such as using multi-colored pens to highlight the data, researcher notes, annotated bibliographies. I also used index cards to list, categorize, and sort ideas.

Data analysis followed the thematic inductive approach working with the participants' interview transcripts and policy documents that were carefully read to extract guiding ideas. Three steps were used to develop the thematic inductive analysis. From the participant interviews, I extracted the ideas and codes, built up categories, and finally generated the main themes from categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

First, the interview transcripts and documents (as informed by the literature reviews) were carefully read to identify ideas that inform my analysis and explain certain approaches in specific contexts. Similar ideas were grouped and labeled into codes. Codes were "labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 71). These codes still needed to be unpacked in terms of meanings to provide deep analysis since they were generated from the words or expressions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles et al., 2014; Williams & Moser, 2019). Thus, coding allowed for the concentration of ideas, facilitating the retrieval process, the assembly of ideas, and their analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

These codes, as well as recurring patterns generated from the codes, were grouped to create categories (Miles et al., 2014). Developing codes into categories needed a detailed examination of the similarities and uniqueness of some ideas in

order to arrange them in more coherent sets or categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Williams & Moser, 2019). Unique ideas are highlighted, presented, and analyzed independently.

Finally, all categories that shared a similar conceptual relationship were combined (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process involved the recognition of patterns where the researcher built up the different themes and set them for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). To establish these conceptual relationships, each category was defined for its unique theme.

Data analysis, coding, categories, and themes were constructed throughout all interviews from the data collection stage to final conclusions. Miles et al. (2014) advised researchers that they might have experienced a challenging task upon the completion of data collection and the beginning of data analysis. Being aware of the possibly challenging “task that frustrates the researcher and reduces the quality of the work produced” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 70) the authors suggested that researchers work on data collection and data analysis simultaneously. Creswell and Poth (2018) elaborated that “the processes of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process—they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project” (p. 185). Furthermore, Spiggle (1994) stated that iteration, the process of moving between data collection and data analysis, allowed for the progress of research in a non-sequential manner, where data collection and analysis concurrently moved hand-in-hand. Miles et al. (2014), as well as Lauckner et al. (2012), asserted that the strategy of switching between data collection and data analysis assisted the researcher in improving subsequent data collection, uncovering new issues and ideas that would have enriched the research.

#### 4.3.4.2 Data Validity.

My approach towards validity followed that of Schwandt's (1997), as cited in Creswell and Miller (2000) who adopted the definition of validity and defined it as "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them" (pp. 124–125). Yin (1994) also developed three principles for validity and reliability, two of which were used for this research.

The first principle allowed the use of multiple sources of data, such as observation, interviews, and documents, to strengthen the construct validity. These diversified resources of evidence allowed the case study to be approached from various perspectives strengthening construct validity (Yin, 1994) as well as the rationale of this vertical case study.

In addition, the diversified resources allowed for data triangulation, "the development of *converging lines of inquiry*" (Yin, 1994, p. 92) of data sources that maximized the use of these sources and allowed for more accurate and rational analysis and conclusion. "Triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Triangulation was utilized by researchers using their own lens for a validity procedure, working with data to find common themes collected from multiple methods such as interviews, documents, and observations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Through triangulation, the strength of one source compensated for the weakness of another source (Patton, 2015). For example, non-participant observation assisted in understanding the secondary Syrian refugee students' interviews, while those interviews assisted in understanding the implementation or effects of the educational policy documents gathered from the schools, MEHE, and websites.



The second principle used two formats for data collection and management to increase the reliability of the case study (Yin, 1994). The first format was in the form of notes (Yin, 1994) generated from document analysis, interviews, and observations. They may be written on the documents and on flashcards, as well as on the pdf files. The second format was in the form of documents (Yin, 1994). These documents should be well organized and properly managed into groups to facilitate data retrieval. These documents could vary in importance and size, and storage spaces were provided to safely store them.

In addition to that, I used “member checking” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). The last part of the interview section or the focus group meetings with the participants was used to confirm the interviews’ conclusion interpretations. Member checking was the process of confirming the researchers’ findings and conclusions by the participants to validate them and identify any possible gaps in the transcript readings (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 2002).

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter has covered the methodology and the method guided by the vertical case study as a frame for this research and its analysis. The study focused on the enactment of the Syrian refugee secondary students in Lebanese formal schools. Guided by the vertical case study method, I connected the national and the international policies to the local sites where students were schooled. Both in-school and out-of-school factors were integrated into the analysis of this research.

This qualitative study used the interpretive approach that integrated various perspectives and ideas across different levels. I used Vavrus's and Bartlett's (2006) vertical case study that analyzed the data across vertical, horizontal, and transversal axes where local schools, national policies, and international bodies engaged in

refugee education. The diversified data sources, such as interviews, policy documents, and non-participant observation, assisted in construct validity, data triangulation, and reliability, building up the validity of the study. In order to attain such information, I had to establish a positive rapport and an open, transparent relationship with school principals, teachers, students, and ministry employees. In the following chapter, I present the policy context of my study.

## **Chapter Five: Setting out the Policy Context**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I extract the themes from the policies, plans, and strategies that affect refugee education in Lebanon. In the literature review, under section MEHE's Engagement with Syrian Refugee Access, I focused on the three areas of response. These areas define the ministry's engagement and response evolution over time with Syrian refugee access to education. In this chapter, I will focus on the specific policy context to generate themes (informed by the literature review) assisting the discussion. The themes are derived from the UDHR, 3RP, LCRP, and RACE I and II in Lebanon. These policies and plans represent the transnational, national, and the ministry's intentions. The local formal schools follow the ministry's regulations and guidelines. The verticality of the case study requires analyzing the policy and plans across the global, regional, and local/institutional levels. Four core themes emerge as follows: access, right to work, fragility, and diversity.

### **5.2 Policy Themes**

#### **5.2.1 Access**

Access to state services, including education, is a dominant theme across several policies and plans related to refugee education. The UDHR addresses all nations and peoples to promote and thrive to work towards reaching the rights stated in the declaration. It promotes friendship, understanding, and tolerance between nations. Within its articles, the declaration sets human beings as equal in all the rights presented in the document, irrespective of their language, religion, national, or other status. One of the themes in this document addresses the issue of equal rights,

including equal right to access public services and education. Elementary education, at least, shall be freely provided (United Nations, 1948).

At the regional level, the 3RP set a unified strategy for five countries: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. The plan supports several sectors including education. It is funded by several bodies such as the United Nations and various NGOs. With respect to education, the plan aims to improve access and assistance to individuals at risk and calls upon governments to improve upon access to state services, ensure the non-repatriation of refugees, and eliminate statelessness. However, it also notes that only 54% of all education funding needs was received at the time. One of the most funded sectors of the 3RP is the NLG; it focuses on the development, education, safety, and well-being of ‘at risk’ students due to conflict or displacement. Further, it advocates for providing refugees with civil documentation to assist in personal and family information gathering. The education within the NLG focuses on three areas: strengthening national educational systems, access, and quality (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

At the national level, under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs in partnership with UN and other agencies, LCRP, the specific Lebanon-related part of the 3RP that is tailored to the Lebanese context encourages access and enhanced education quality. The plan identifies possible durable solutions for the Lebanese context such as the safe, non-repatriation of Syrian refugees while working on their resettlement to a third country. It analyzes needs on an annual basis. LCRP also supports RACE goal implementation and states that the GoL reserves its right to decide on the Syrian refugee status in the country in accordance with the Lebanese law. It presents its first strategic objective that ensures protection services for

vulnerable populations by increasing access to legal documentation and status anticipating their dignified, safe, and non-forceful return to Syria as a preferred solution. This objective progresses while Lebanon continues to give access for humanitarian cases, until they are displaced to a third country (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019).

The first two objectives of RACE (2014-2016), led by MEHE, address access to and quality of education. These two objectives along with a third—system strengthening (discussed later)—can be divided into ten subcomponents in line with the ten components of the Education Sector Development Plan that relate to the priorities set by the National Education Strategy. Some of RACE's components will be discussed here. The first goal addresses access and entails four activities. The first activity includes school rehabilitation, which relates to the school structures, (like fixing doors, roofs, doors), as well as health problems, equipment, and furniture. This activity is followed by support to vulnerable Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian refugee students, which is handled by increasing teacher/student ratio and creating second shifts in schools. This support is expressed in financial terms: paying registration fees and running costs excluding transportation costs for students in the first and second shifts and paying teachers their salaries in the second shift to improve retention and reduce dropout rates. The third activity aims to support students whose learning has been interrupted. The final one works to assist students in accessing NFE (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

The second objective aims for improving quality through three main subcomponents. The first relates to equipping students with books and stationery and some schools with libraries and reading material. The second subcomponent aims for teacher training and ensuring a child-centered approach. The training supports

inclusive education, active learning, and child-centered teaching, among others. The final subcomponent addresses community engagement, adolescent learning opportunities, and NFE. These subcomponents address areas that could hinder access, student enrolment, and retention (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

Access is a key challenge stated in RACE I. This challenge exists due to increased poverty, lack of English or French language proficiency, and absence of proper residency documentation. This challenge also exists due to the negative perception of education quality and its future benefit, especially for the second shift in formal schools. These challenges are further addressed at the national level by encouraging further engagement from the community, school administrators, and the family. Furthermore, financial subsidies, whether full or partial, are supposed to be given to formal and non-formal students. This funding is added to other related financial support packages and textbooks and stationery to be provided to all students, while transportation costs remain to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. School maintenance will be executed with special focus on schools with a high concentration of vulnerable students. This will target the school infrastructure, equipment, and furniture (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

After access, quality constitutes the second challenge. This challenge exists due to the lack of qualified teachers and difficult school experiences generated from ongoing displacement, discrimination, and violence as well as less optimal teacher pedagogy. This challenge of providing a *quality* education is to be addressed by further teacher training associated with revised curriculum and home support programs for individuals that are at risk (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

### **5.2.2 *Right to Work***

The UDHR presents another human right, the right to work. This right allows for the dignified life of the human being, the right of employment, and the free choice for work within the boundaries of the nation in which the individual lives (United Nations, 1948). At the regional level, the 3RP emphasizes the importance of work. This plan aims for increasing economic prospects and creating jobs for the refugees. The plan assists in creating short and long term employability and job opportunities for both Syrian refugees and the local residents. In the year 2017, for example, annual residency fees were eliminated for certain Syrian refugees in Lebanon facilitating their access to work (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017). At the national Level, the LCRP defines job competition and the lack of work as the main source of tension between Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees. The plan works for adding investments at the local level to support and increase jobs to assist all vulnerable communities in accordance with the Lebanese laws. One of its four strategic objectives aims at supporting the country's economy and stability. This goal focuses on expanding the economic sectors to create a more sustainable long-term hosting environment. This can be done through increasing job opportunities, production capacities, and supporting agriculture, resource management, and reforms (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019).

### **5.2.3 *Fragility***

At the regional level, the 3RP aims at providing protection and support programs that benefit Syrian refugees, hosting community members, and the national systems. To respond to the wide array of surmounting challenges the involved actors face, innovation at the national level and joint humanitarian and developmental

assistance are prioritized (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

Following the 3RP, LCRP, at the national level, aims at providing direct assistance and protection mainly to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The LCRP aims at increasing humanitarian and developmental national assistance, improving quality and access to services and developing needed policies—whilst creating a stabilizing framework for the economy (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017). Two of its four strategic goals are mentioned in this section. The first goal ensures direct and targeted assistance to the vulnerable population while maintaining service delivery. The second goal supports delivery and service infrastructure to ensure access, retention, and quality. The second goal works to strengthen social support and government investments, as well as to restore confidence in public service access and quality (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019).

For the medium term, this strategy aims to ease up the transition of the refugee crisis response to the national systems and structures. This plan addresses the national needs to respond for the Syrian refugee crises. It adapts to the needs of different sectors. The plan also follows a bottom-up approach in its assessment while requiring a regularly yearly follow-up and update. It also takes into consideration the possible conflict effects and analyzes conflict sensitivities with the local community (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019). The plan, however, admits that while trying to address the deteriorating conditions of refugees, it was unable to stop this declining situation and adequately



strengthen the ever-fatiguing hosting community. For that reason, the plan encourages the development of more sustainable solutions (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

In response to the increased funding demands for emergency education, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, in a special meeting to address the Syrian crisis impact on the Lebanese system, recommends an increased international and Lebanese response. This response would better address the crises and work towards the reconstruction of Syria. As a result, the GoL, through MEHE, with its international partners, agreed to build a three-year program, RACE, using already existing initiatives. RACE aims to respond to the pressing humanitarian needs and build on a development programs for the longer term while stabilizing the public sector in Lebanon. The objective is to ensure educational access and quality, to support national systems, and assist in policy making and monitoring. The existing context is summarized as economically fragile with socio-political tensions and limited public capacity. Accordingly, the plan clearly addresses a need for an improved and systematic way to face the challenge in areas of access, investment in public sectors, and improving education quality. The context reflects a deteriorating economic condition with each year as the Syrian conflict continues, and increased social and political tensions between lower and middle class Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

The third objective of RACE relates to strengthening national education systems. Its first subcomponent aims at strengthening the ministry departments, supporting the development of curricula and exams, as well as facilitating Syrian students' transition into the formal education system. The second subcomponent addresses building a comprehensive school monitoring systems to assist in data

gathering on refugee students and their conditions to facilitate appropriate responses. The final subcomponent empowers schools to effectively deal with larger influx of students (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

As an extension to RACE I, RACE II stretches over five years from 2017–2021. RACE II Strategy aims to develop a strategic response to further increase and stabilize developmental projects while integrating child protection and human rights as their main orientation. RACE II aims to provide better quality and inclusive education for non-Lebanese and vulnerable Lebanese populations alike. RACE II uses a holistic approach that addresses the systemic lack of funding and curriculum updates. It also addresses educational access opportunities, and improved teaching services quality, while focusing on providing all children with effective tools to better engage in community life. In addition, RACE II focuses on the lack of capacity, updated data, national standards, policy standards, and the ministry's own adequate resource structure within the national education system. These challenges are to be addressed by establishing a data management system, a revised curriculum, and a nation-wide learning and teacher assessment strategies, among other changes that will appear in the future (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016).

#### **5.2.4 Diversity**

At the regional level, the 3RP promotes social cohesion, acceptance, the right to nationality, and integration for the Syrian refugees and the hosting community. This plan also promotes mechanisms for conflict prevention, and dispute solving. Within the 3RP, the diversity of the Lebanese community is noted for its welcoming nature showing a sense of solidarity with the Syrian refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

As a conclusion, the analysis of the policy and plans across global, regional, and local institutional levels show the convergence of four main themes within the Syrian refugee education. Access in the international, regional, and local policy context emerge as a main theme across all levels followed by the right to work, fragility, and finally diversity. Through these policies, both Syrian refugees and the hosting community are targeted through developmental and humanitarian assistance. This assistance is addressed mainly at regional and local levels to improve Syrian refugees' access to formal education, improve educational quality, and address economic fragility and social diversity to improve the educational experience of Syrian refugee students. In the following chapter, I present the findings of my study.

## **Chapter Six: Research Findings from the School Sites**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings derived from the participants' interviews and field observations. I want to acknowledge the exceptional effort of each of my participants in giving me their time and valuable perspectives. Those participants were under time pressure and stress due to the frequent interrupted schooling, road closures, and social unrest, but were still able to find the time to meet with me. In spite of differences in school locations and socio-cultural and religious surroundings, similarities were very pronounced across participants at both schools. This is especially clear with respect to the participants' concerns and challenges regarding education in general and Syrian refugee education in particular. Uncertainty crossed all educational actors and affected perceptions of Syrian refugee education. This uncertainty was more obvious after the October 2019 social unrest and economic meltdown. Furthermore, the fragile and diverse context in Lebanon took its toll on actors' discussions and their day-to-day actions. These participants may have not had a clear view of refugee students' futures; however, they remained committed to the provision of Syrian refugee education under the challenging conditions of overwhelming flow of refugees, fragile environment, limited resources, outdated curriculum, language problems, and political divisions.

The participants were separated into three categories, the ministry official, school educational actors—teachers and administrators—and finally, the Syrian refugee students; this separation supported the verticality of the analysis. Teachers and administrators were joined under one category due to their shared experiences and responsibilities in the school sites. These findings bridge seven main points. From the ministry official, two major themes emerged: (1) challenges of contextualizing Syrian

refugee education to the local; and (2) diversity and democracy. From the teachers and administrators, also two themes were developed: (1) teachers' and administrators' coping dilemmas and (2) curricula for non-citizens. For the Syrian refugee students, three themes were constructed: (1) impact of local diversity on the educational experience, (2) uncertainty generated from curriculum and language, and (3) effects of fragility on the educational experience. These themes corresponded quite closely with the research question on the enactment of Syrian refugee education within two formal schools in Lebanon. Based on the way the participants were talking, the political divisions within the country seemed not significant and did not come to the surface within their interviews. I believe this lack of significance may be due to the teachers' and administrators' adherence and prioritization of the requirements set by MEHE. In the following section, I explain each theme with the support of participants' own words and ideas.

## **6.2 Ministry Official**

### ***6.2.1 Challenges of Contextualizing Syrian Refugee Education to the Local***

Soha, a leading official at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) who has a role in Syrian refugee education in Lebanon, situated Syrian refugee education under international law and the human rights declaration. Soha elaborated that "we [MEHE and the government in general] are educating them [Syrian refugee students] out of their right to have education." In this sense, Lebanon is guided by the Declaration of Human Rights and provided Syrian refugee students access to the Lebanese elementary and secondary formal schools as a response to such right.

Lebanon's response to the Syrian refugee crises was also derived from a long history and experience in dealing with incoming refugees. This experience equipped

the ministry with needed knowledge that made MEHE lead at the national level and in the region through its response. Soha explained that, “the Ministry of Education [and Higher Education] was the first ministry in all the hosting countries that had a strategy.” As she explained, MEHE was the first to respond through Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) strategy to the Syrian crisis well before the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) or even the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP).

Syrian refugee education in Lebanon is situated between the international demands and rights to education on one hand and the local response and fragile conditions on the other. The boundaries of the local response to the Syrian refugee crises seemed to emerge from the ministry’s understanding of the fragile conditions and the ministry officials’ knowledge of the educational system and of the country in general. In direct response to comment on the effects of fragile country conditions on the Syrian refugee education, Soha remarked that the long-term fragility was not caused by the Syrian presence and did not affect them alone. She continued to explain that the education system remains functioning irrespective of such a condition. Still, Soha admitted that the years 2019 and 2020 were exceptional and had considerable impact on education in Lebanon. With the social disruption, economic meltdown, and the Coronavirus spread during these two years, education in Lebanon had suffered a lot; as Soha remarked in a somewhat understated way, “it was not easy.”

Fragility and the reduced international funding opened the door for donors to increase pressure and interfere with the educational sector’s development. Soha explained that the international community now had “less funding and they are fatigue [*sic*] of the Syrian issue [under emergency education].” Soha explained that “they try to put ... conditions which we ... never like.” The ministry official elaborated further,

“the donors think that the Syrian response is a door or a window for them to enter into our sector system which honestly they are trying to do.” Soha explained that nine years after the beginning of the Syrian war, the UN agencies started requesting MEHE to move away from the response strategy into one that was considered a separate independent sector strategy. However, she continued, that up to the point of the interview and with the support of existing minister, their request was still unfulfilled. Even under the fragile conditions, the ministry officials were still successful in refusing or tempering requests submitted by the international organizations, such as asking the ministry to do changes like moving away from a response strategy to an independent sector strategy in education.

The ministry showed signs of resilience and resistance to the international interference in the educational system in spite of the weak country conditions. The status quo, as elaborated by the ministry official, was that if the international community would take action and stop their funding, “those children will be on the streets because we do not have the financial resources to teach them.” Soha added that even though Lebanon is educating the Syrian refugees, the country did not have enough resources to keep on providing this service and without the appropriate funding from the international organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Lebanon would not be able to maintain Syrian refugee education. This matter of fact gave the ministry power to negotiate its position, funding, demands, and it gave the ministry an ability to maintain certain autonomy. Furthermore, this autonomy according to Soha was justified especially since the

funding was not a grant from the international organizations or donors, but a loan that the Lebanese government was obliged to repay with interest.

In addition to financial constraints, there was another means or tool of resistance that the ministry official declared. It was adhering to the local policies and regulations against conflicting requests even if they originated from UN agencies. Soha explained that the ministry adapted and worked with the challenges they faced as long as they did not contradict the rules and regulations set for the ministry. She elaborated that in the early stages of providing Syrian refugee education, the ministry took primary focus on the enrolment levels and retention ability in the formal schools. This focus was mainly due to the high numbers of refugee students that required access to the formal education system. According to this ministry official, as a new way of encouraging access, with time, the focus with RACE grew from retention and class promotion to one that sought the same quality as that of the classes in the morning shifts. She proceeded to say that this access has been facilitated in such a way that maintained the local rules and regulations, and at the same time, addressed the difficult conditions Syrian refugee students experienced due to the war. For example, she explained:

If they have been in grade, let's say, 10 or 11 and they are coming to grade 12 they have the certificate, but they do not have any educational document that proves that they have followed grade 10 and 11, we will do for them a placement test. If they do not have any educational documentation we will accept them regardless of that but at least they should have grade 9 as a start.

Such actions could only be taken by someone who knew the reality of the challenges, worked on the ground, and was well aware of the limitations in which these actions could be successful. The ministry official as a responsible person in the



ministry working with refugee education was aware of the rules and regulations and had a sense of what was happening on the ground. She also had knowledge of the opportunities to stretch the boundaries when it came to the Council of Ministry, while trying to maintain international obligations for educating refugees. Without such knowledge, Syrian refugee education would face dim prospects. Furthermore, these characteristics could be difficult to find in the international organizations due to the need for specificities of the local.

Soha provided an additional case that showed how the ministry was aware of the refugee situation and adapted to maintain certain aspects of international obligations without breaking local rules and regulations. For example, according to her, the ministry used to get special approval from the Council of Ministers for those students who are unable to provide a proof of completing grade 11 or 10 to sit for the official grade 12 exams. It was not until 2019 that the council of ministers requested a certain proof before students could sit for the grade 12 official exams. However, even with this decision, the ministry still gave the refugee students their degrees due to the difficulties with attaining their residencies. The same occurred with Lebanese students exiting Nigeria when it was facing a crisis and they also had difficulties attaining their documentation.

The decision of asking Syrian students for a proof of completing grades 11 or 10, according to the ministry official, did not reflect a move away from emergency education. At a certain point, according to Soha, the Council of Ministry was asking why students were unable to provide documents of their formal education even though they had been here for the last two or three years. These kinds of decisions may have indicated the ministry's way to adapt to the existing local challenges and to the international demands.

Besides dealing with the fragile conditions and resisting or adapting to international policy demands of moving away from emergency education to develop a separate educational sector strategy, a second step towards localizing Syrian refugee education was related to the long-term integration strategy used. The ministry official had a clear negative stand on the long-term integration of Syrian refugee students. Lebanon and the ministry of education rejected the idea of long-term Syrian integration in the community. Soha explained “We are teaching them because they are in Lebanon but that does not mean we want them to stay in Lebanon forever.” Education, according to Soha, was a bridge that allowed Syrian refugee students to integrate easily and quickly once they returned to Syria or traveled to another country in the world. Thus, the long-term integration in the Lebanese context or even maintaining the longer term as a refugee was not an option. This negative stand on long-term integration could explain why the ministry official considered those who moved out of Syria due to the Syrian war as being displaced and not as refugees, even though she was completely aware of the difference between the two classifications. According to her, “historically, we don’t use the word refugees because we have the history of the Palestinian refugees.” The ministry official did not explain this point any further, but to my understanding, she tried to refer to the Palestinian involvement in the Lebanese war and to the fragile complex social and political structure in the country. This inability to integrate, on the long run, seemed to be associated with the loss of certain rights that refugees would have otherwise benefited from. With this status, refugees as non-citizens were unable to earn a citizenship and access different state services.

A third and final step in localizing Syrian refugee education was related to the ministry’s position towards work opportunities. Syrian refugees in Lebanon were not

given the right to work in the country. Soha was explicit on this point by saying that the ministry is providing this education “not because we want to use them later on when they grow up in the labor market; this is not our aim.” Still, the ministry official’s personal understanding of education was related to economic prospects. She stated that “education in itself is investment. Educating any child is investing in this child.” However, this approach did not extend to reach Syrian refugees in the country. Refugee education seemed to be limited to and bounded by education as a basic right. Unlike the Lebanese students, Syrian refugee students were not afforded the same prospects for future citizenship/economic rights by the ministry official or seemed to have no prospects beyond their schooling and school years. This position reflected on the weak economic conditions and the lack of job opportunities in the market. She explained “what we care about is to educate our Lebanese children in order to later on be fit in the market. This is not our aim for the Syrians.” Syrian refugee education should benefit irrespective of where they end up, but their country remained the best place for them, as she explained. The weak economic conditions in the country imposed themselves on Syrian refugee education. It rendered this education without economic prospects within the country and refugee students uncertain about their futures. Thus, according to Soha, the ultimate uses of this education were to be taken outside the Lebanese borders and any investment in educating Syrian refugee students should find their political and economic returns beyond the Lebanese borders.

### **6.2.2 *Diversity and Democracy***

Social diversity within the Lebanese context was perceived by the ministry official as having a positive influence on the educational experience of the Syrian refugees. Soha believed that “if we were one color in Lebanon ... maybe this color would refuse having around 600,000 school aged children in Lebanon.” Upon their

arrival to the country, Syrian refugees directly chose to live in a region with similar religious, sectarian, or cultural traits as the one they were used to in their home country or chose to live in a community that would best host them. This diversity, according to her, made the educational system more open for refugees. It increased refugees' chances of successfully living within their hosting community and reduced the likelihood of conflict with that community. The existing diversity also provided a suitable environment for educating Syrian refugee students. Lebanon and Syria shared similar culture and language as Soha explained. She continued, since teachers were dealing with students who have had similar backgrounds, teachers did not need additional training. She stated that there were psychosocial issues that might appear in the classroom on which teachers were given guidance. As such, she implied that except for these specific issues, teachers were capable of dealing with in class challenges.

A second defining character of Lebanese education was related to classroom "democracy" as mentioned by Soha. She believed that democracy in the Lebanese classes differed much from that found in the Syrian schools. "Syrians are not used to interact in the class," she elaborated. According to her, democracy within the Lebanese classes could be explained by the increased reliance on reasoning and justification in the explanation of the lessons in the classrooms as well as allowing critical engagement and thinking within the families at their homes. In addition to the spaces given to children to discuss different issues at home, Soha indicated that the ministry encouraged interactive teaching and engagement between the teacher and the students. According to her, the way they were learning in the Lebanese schools could influence the long-term attending refugee students. However, this exercise of democracy in classrooms was not without limitations as she explained. This style

might not impact the secondary students who have joined their formal Lebanese schools for a short period of time after leaving Syria or directly joined their secondary classes without benefiting from living in Lebanon years before that, as the ministry official explained. Furthermore, an additional limitation is that formal education, in general, remains constrained within the boundaries of an outdated curriculum.

### **6.3 Teachers and Administrators**

#### ***6.3.1 Teachers' and Administrators' Coping Dilemma***

With the extreme fragile country conditions and the absence of explicit refugee educational policy and adequate teacher training, teachers and administrators found themselves in an unprecedented situation. These educational actors must have dealt with the Syrian refugee challenge at the social, political, and economic dimensions. They seemed to use their best judgment and experience in their work with Syrian refugee education, most likely basing their decision on what have worked best for their local situation.

The interviewed teachers and administrators spoke about Syrian refugee education from a social humanitarian perspective. However, unlike the ministry official who also followed the humanitarian approach as a response to international demands, the teachers' and administrators' concern remained closely linked to the refugee students' participation in their schools. For example, as an administrator, Jean Mark believed that they were dealing with the Syrians on a humanitarian basis only. He explained "first of all this [the refugee student] is a human being." He explained that there was no need to stand against any students' future or block their access to school, especially if this access got the ministry's approval and if the student was serious about attaining their education. Takla explained "we don't consider them our guests and not even [consider our work as about] pity ... this [refugee student] is a

human being just like me.” She confirmed that since the Syrian refugee students were respecting other students, the teachers, and everyone else, then there was no reason for anyone not to reciprocate.

Rana believed that the relation between the Lebanese and the Syrians extended beyond agreements and signed documents (referring to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees); it was a relation that was described as one “brother” helping another in times of need “one way or the other.” She pointed out that “the right to education is the base,” added to the right to have qualified teachers, and financial assistance to education.

Some teachers and administrators believe that aside from minor differences between the Lebanese students and the Syrian refugee students, all of these students are regarded in almost the same manner. Administrators such as Adib saw that beyond the issue of language, both Syrian students and the Lebanese students were the same, as students. “The primary problem is the language.” Some teachers like Nawal used student performance results as a way to find the differences between student progress and their learning abilities. Takla believed that most of her Syrian students were able to adapt to the Lebanese lifestyle. She explained that she would not have known some students to be Syrians if it weren’t for their need of documentation. This is the time when some of them had to travel to Syria to get the needed papers for their official exams. According to Rana, the Syrians, in general, found that they were facing a different lifestyle even though they were traveling from one Arab country to another. However, this difference was restricted to lifestyle only. Within the school classes, students were successful in their integration.

Teachers and administrators were aware of social factors that eased up Syrian refugee inclusion and the work needed by teachers for that matter. For example, Jean-

Mark considered the Lebanese social diversity within the community as an assisting social factor that could reduce the differences between the Syrian refugees and the locals. Jean-Mark explained that the Syrian refugees in the country chose the region where the school was located because they had relatives in the same area, or because there were social, religious, or cultural similarities. This choice, according to him, increased the refugees' chances of having a successful integration and educational experience. "Maybe instead of starting [their life in Lebanon] from zero [scratch], they [Syrian refugee students] would start from ten, a bit higher degree."

Adib highlights another factor that could assist Syrian refugee students in their schooling. He saw that the presence of other non-Syrian refugees and Arab students in the same school helped the Syrian refugee students in their first year in school. Adib explained that the presence of other nationalities or refugees could ease up tensions and the feeling of loneliness Syrian refugees may experience.

Teachers and administrators used their personal knowledge to deal with the challenge of Syrian refugee students in their schools. With the absence of teacher training, the teachers and administrators leaned on their previous experience dealing with Lebanese displaced students in the Lebanese war. They agreed that education was a right for these refugees and thus they responded in line with international policy on the right to education while considering certain sensitivities regarding the new comers.

The sensitivities and challenges those teachers and administrators faced when dealing with Syrian refugees and their education was concentrated at two levels, first of which was set at the political level. We noted that, in the absence of clear policy guidance, teachers and administrators tried to address political tensions that could arise in their classrooms. For example, Lama was highly aware of the complex

political settings that surrounded the Lebanese and the Syrian refugee students in her class. She used her personal experience of the Lebanese war that drove her to be more engaged with the Syrian students at the personal level. She allowed discussions of different subjects in her class related to war, reasons of war, and the wider geopolitics. However, she stated, “when the subject turns into a political discussion and takes a sectarian dimension, I end the subject because we are not one sect in the classroom. There are many sects.” Furthermore, Lama never asked about the nationality of her students to avoid any possible discrimination in her class. After the events started in Syria “you are afraid when you enter the classroom to have a Lebanese student not accepting to have a Syrian refugee.” However, as Lama elaborated, after the year 2013, they started to educate the students on accepting others in their classroom and treating everyone equally the same.

Adib brought out in his discussion the sensitivity of the Syrian presence in Lebanon and their history in the country.

From the social point of view, we have to remain attentive, because you know ... the Syrian refugees came and the economic situation crashed ... and they took our jobs, something like this is found in the Lebanese society and you may also find it among the students.

He elaborated on the importance of attending to the needs of the Syrian refugee students in their first year in Lebanon due to these kinds of sentiments and reactions. Adib developed and adopted this approach from his experience with newcomers to benefit his work with the Syrian refugee students arriving in a politically contentious situation.

As a form of regulating the flow of Syrian refugees within the formal school, the ministry had set certain guidelines for the administrators to follow. Jean-Mark



elaborated on the limitations to Syrian refugee access into the Lebanese formal schools. He explained that the ministry allowed schools to open classes with a minimum of ten Lebanese students. Otherwise, the class would not be available to anyone. If the class was available, the Lebanese students were given the first chance for registration. After some time, the school allowed foreigners, Syrians or others, to register. Even with foreign students, priorities could be set; those having one Lebanese parent, or Syrian students having studied the Lebanese curriculum in the previous years were to be admitted before other foreign students. Such a policy seemed to prioritize local residents over others as a means to respond to the large number of Syrian refugee students. However, Jean-Mark explained that because the school where he worked had English as a second language, as administration, they sometimes used this feature to submit special requests to the ministry to admit newly displaced Syrians, who otherwise would not be allowed.

Though limited in latitude in regards to access, teachers and administrators tried to play an important role in facilitating access and helping Syrian refugee students. Through personal initiative, Jean-Mark tried to facilitate and assist parents and students in successfully registering and presenting the required documents. The administrators followed up with the ministry, sometimes on a case-by-case basis. Jean-Mark elaborated by giving the example where sometimes students arrived at the school after the school year had already started, but instead of rejecting them, they tried to communicate with the ministry to enroll the students and save their school year. He continued explaining that since the ministry was accepting these cases and if the student was willing and intending to learn, then there is no need to impede his or her learning, especially since they had no fault or responsibility in what was going on in their country.

A second challenge that teachers and administrators faced was related to the weak fragile economic conditions of the country. These conditions challenged these teachers' and administrators' livelihoods and their commitments towards Syrian refugee students. It also questioned the sustainability of the Syrian refugees' presence in the country.

Teachers and administrators failed to see a future for the Syrian refugee students as citizens in the country. For example, Adib admitted that Syrian students did not have any future in Lebanon, and even though they might have had access to some labor work, their access to specialized areas was minimal and very specific if it existed at all. Adib explained that the same conditions applied in the case of the Palestinian refugees, who either faced unemployment in Lebanon or tried to leave the country to find work elsewhere. Takla and Nawal shared Adib's view on the vague future Syrian refugees faced in Lebanon. Takla elaborated that even if those Syrian refugee students who finish university do not know if they are able to work here in Lebanon. Rana believed that these fragile conditions affected all the Lebanese and Syrians found in the country and reduced their chances of finding work when they approach the labor market. For that reason, Rana disregarded the criticism of work discrimination against Syrians since the Lebanese themselves could not find work and face the same adverse economic conditions.

Due to the severe economic conditions, teachers and administrators questioned the sustainability of the Syrian refugee students' presence in Lebanon. Lama believed that these bad economic conditions drove teachers to think about the need to have the Syrians return to their country. Lama seemed to believe that the Syrian refugee presence in the country was not sustainable. Nawal explicitly stated "if we want to talk seriously, the conditions are not set to receive them [Syrian refugee students]."

Adib saw that the Syrian refugee students, after completing their schooling, would have no place in Lebanon. He continued that they would have to leave the country to another one to exercise what they have learned. Lebanon to them was a temporary stop used as transit into another country, “anyone of them who has this chance [to move abroad], will not hesitate,” as he explained.

Some teachers reflected their concern on the quality of the school services, the quality of the education provided, and even their own livelihood as paid teachers. Lama believed that the country had reached a severe economic crisis where schools could no longer afford to supply needed labs and teachers could not even guarantee receiving their own salaries. She explained “you know the situation. We may not even get our own salaries. What do we do? It is a problem.” Lama’s perspective reflected the harsh conditions that positions education in Lebanon at the edge of a complete shutdown. Like other teachers, Lama, was worried about her future, and her livelihood. However, she stated that she remained determined to continue teaching even under these difficult conditions.

Takla also discussed the effects of the bad economic conditions on her school’s general situation facing huge logistical problems. Some of these problems dealt with the small size of the playground, the age of the building, and the need of repairs, problems that were not resolvable to them at that moment. The limited maintenance and funding negatively influenced the quality of education.

Nawal described the education quality for Syrian refugee students at the secondary level as being “weak”; however, she saw no need for any special teacher training to address such weakness. Other teachers, who believed that there was a need for teacher training, did not have an adequate one. Takla, for example, wanted professional advice on how to deal with Syrian refugees and their education in her

class; however, the trainer did not provide much to work with and asked her to treat refugee students as any other student. Takla's concern reflected many other teachers' eagerness to enact refugee education in an improved way, through asking for detailed advice on the subject.

Nawal highlighted the further strain caused by the recent social protest that started in October 2019. She believed that the latest strikes in the country affected education negatively, causing prolonged interruptions and school closures. "We are living in an uneasy situation for all, and for them [Syrian refugees] more than others," she explained.

The teachers and administrators showed a resilient character in face of harsh economic difficulties, political tensions, and lack of adequate support, guidance, and training. These difficult conditions had put the educational actors in face of day-to-day hardships while trying to maintain their jobs. However, they seemed left to rely on their existing knowledge, personal experience, and judgement. On one hand, they tried to de-politicize their class and work within international norms on human rights to provide their best form of Syrian refugee education. On the other hand, they could not but express their concern about the economic factor that affected them directly and influenced their engagement with Syrian refugee education. Teachers' and administrators' work remained stuck in between those two spaces.

### **6.3.2 *Curricula for Non-Citizens***

Teachers and administrators questioned whether the Lebanese curriculum related to and benefited the Syrian refugee students and their future. Some of these adult participants were explicit about the need to have an alternative curriculum that better fitted Syrian refugee's needs even with the absence of adequate funding.

However, the fact was that these educators had to depend on themselves and improvise creative solutions to provide Syrian refugee education in Lebanon.

Teachers and administrators elaborated on the limitations of the Lebanese curriculum. For example, Lama and Alya explained that the curriculum was last updated in 1997 or 1998, and thus could no longer relate to students' current needs. Alya explained that since the official exams mainly followed the books, teachers remained limited in their ability to teach new and updated material. This limitation restricted teachers' abilities to a certain extent and troubled the students' understanding of citizenship in Lebanon and of civics education. From his own teaching experience, Adib found that certain subjects like civic education could only partially benefit the Syrian refugee student. He explained that the Syrian refugee students would not directly benefit from learning the Lebanese legislative system, the Lebanese governmental institutions, and the process of putting in place the laws. However, those students, like their classmates, would benefit from learning about the Declaration of Human Rights, the Arab League, and international organizations. For Adib, this part of the civics education was useful in preparing them for the time when they had to leave Lebanon.

Some of the ideas expressed by the teachers and administrators suggested the need to move away from the Lebanese curriculum. Nawal believed that the Lebanese curriculum was hard on the majority of the Syrian students due to the gap between the Lebanese curriculum level and that of the Syrian. Rana, stated that "if I want to ask for something ... a special curriculum for them [Syrian refugee students], like us [like the Lebanese curriculum] but something simpler." She added that, as an alternative, Syrian refugee students could be provided with the Lebanese curriculum after intensive courses to facilitate class integration. In this case, students' integration

within the school classes would be based on each student's "level" of achievement and not age; Alya stated that:

We are teaching them [the Syrian students] the Lebanese curriculum because they are found here and it is imposed on us to teach them the Lebanese curriculum, and if you want my personal opinion, they should not study the Lebanese curriculum. They should study the curriculum of their own country to go and work there. This is because I am talking about a fundamental problem in the Lebanese society, which is unemployment. So why should the Lebanese travel abroad to work and they [the Syrians] would take his [the Lebanese] place at work, that is what I mean.

Alya believed that the inevitability of Syrian refugee departure from Lebanon, due to the stressful economic conditions, demanded teaching a curriculum that responded to the students' needs. Imposing the Lebanese curriculum might force teachers to teach material they did not believe would suit the students' future needs.

Alya reported that the discussions, in her class, related to problems and critiques, as well as solutions to the Lebanese situation might not be understood in the same way by the Syrian students and their Lebanese counterparts. For example, when discussing the issue of funding of education, the Lebanese students related to this problem more than the Syrian students since the Syrians received their funding from different UN organizations. Alya implied the need to address Syrian students' specific context, such as their social surrounding or lifestyle, with a curriculum that helped them and answered to their necessities. To Rana, Syrian refugee students asked for their education to have increase their chances for exiting the country. "A degree is like a passport, they go out with it to another country" and thus, the Lebanese curriculum is more a tool to help them get to their final destination.

Teachers seemed to work with what they had at hand. According to Rana, Lama, and Alya, dealing with an old Lebanese curriculum pushed teachers to be innovative, to improvise, and address the needs of all students whether Syrian or Lebanese. Their work on the old curriculum drove them to be creative in making changes on their teaching styles, methods, and use of technology in classrooms. Rana, for example, encouraged critical thinking to motivate students to learn, as she believed that students are not just containers of information. Lama moved away from ready-made exams. She tried to update her material and present it in a way that is easy to grasp. This teaching approach that used critical thinking, according to her, allowed the students to enjoy and better retain information. One of the subjects she tackled in her class is the issue of globalization, the struggles between North and South (the concept of the richer Western world spreading its dominance over the poorer Southern countries) and the dominance of one over the other. Her work enriched the students' experiences, developed their geo-political understanding, as well as how they understand themselves within a bigger world. Besides enriching her teaching approach, Lama elaborated on school activities such as field trips for the students. With the absence of funding to create labs inside the school, the best way to enrich the students' experiences and knowledge, according to her, was through field trips. "I can take them for a trip to the airport to show them how to get the weather [report]," she explained. These activities also created an opportunity for students to get to know the material and make new friendships. However, after the latest social movement in Lebanon, even these trips were canceled due to the lack of funding.

These examples pointed to the high level of teachers' commitment on improving Syrian refugee and Lebanese students' education with whatever available tools, repertoire, and resources. Those teachers seemed to realize that there was still

much needed in terms of updating the curriculum and funding for this update.

However, at that time, they seemed to realize that what they needed might be far from being attained, so they continued along with their own initiatives in uncharted terrain.

Alongside the curricular challenges, teachers had to work with Language problems. Almost all teachers highlighted that Syrian students had a significant language gap. Rana identified the weakness of the Syrian refugees' English language at the secondary level. She believed that this weakness came from the elementary level. To address this language gap, she demanded additional research work from her students in her classrooms. Even though Nawal considered her knowledge of the Syrian curriculum is weak, she noted that the English language in the Syrian curriculum was marginalized, "they were not interested in the English language before that [in Syria, before their arrival to Lebanon]," as she explained. To help with the language challenge, she allowed the use of Arabic language to support the English language used in class. She stressed on the importance of Syrian students learning the English language in Lebanon as learning a different language would help them to be better equipped upon their return to Syria. It also helped them to better integrate in case they wanted to travel to other foreign countries. However, the students' success, as she elaborated, remained dependent on their specialization and the university they chose to enroll in, not the language itself. Teachers had to face these language adversities alone with Syrian refugee students. They received no mentioned training and guidance on how to work with the language gap. Teachers also found themselves dependent on their own work and experience while creating their solutions to the challenge.

Aside from the presence of other refugees in the school such as the Palestinian refugees, that according to Nawal, constituted a positive factor in the education of



Syrian refugee students, teachers and administrators were left to deal with school integration challenges. Adib elaborated that they, as administration, noticed some resentment from the Lebanese students towards the Syrian refugee students.

According to him, the Syrian students had been also noticing this resentment and dealing with it. "Some problems happened in numerous years, and we noticed that some students [Lebanese students] have this tendency, causing trouble with the student because he [the latter] is a Syrian student," he explained. However, such conflicts did not appear to reach a point where it affected their education. According to Adib, once the administration knew of any conflict between students, it responded adequately and was able to solve and deal with different students' viewpoints.

Jean-Mark also noticed few incidents between the Lebanese students and the Syrian refugee students in the school. He explained that Syrian refugee students were given the chance to participate in all activities with their Lebanese classmates. However, as he explained, he always followed up on the school events to avoid any problem between the students.

Within the school settings, the teachers and administrators were vigilant for any possible conflict between the Lebanese and the Syrian students. The Syrian refugees' presence added to the high level of political and economic tensions within the country and created a challenging environment for the teachers and administrators. This challenge remained the responsibility of these educational actors.

Even though the Lebanese curriculum might not be an ideal one for Syrian refugee students, teachers and administrators saw certain benefits from their education in Lebanon. Adib explained that education in Lebanon "will widen their horizon, I believe that because Lebanon is an open country and you can discuss different subjects ... definitely it will affect them culturally." Education in Lebanon "will leave

a positive influence and will allow them [the Syrian student] live an experience they would not have experienced if they were in Syrian schools,” Adib added. Adib believed that the education attained by the Syrian refugee students in the Lebanese formal school better prepared them to migrate abroad in comparison to education they have had in their previous schools. This widened horizon gained from learning in Lebanon, according to him, could lead to social and political change. Adib explains:

Definitely, the Syrian student who got his education in Lebanon will go back to Syria with a better experience, knowledge, and with new vision looking on a new horizon better than the Syrian student who remained in Syria especially during wartime.

Jean-Mark saw that the Syrian students were gaining new experiences from the Lebanese community. They learned how to deal with an open and diverse community like the one found in the Lebanese formal schools. The ability to cope with such a community demanded respect for the other, as Jean-Mark explained. The Syrian refugee students felt like they were living/studying with their family, friends, and a hosting community, even with the rules and regulations at the formal schools. This experience according to Jean-Mark was what remained with the student even after they went back to Syria. He explained that, respect for the other was challenging if the community where the formal school existed was of one religious or social color [race]. However, respect was also demanded in other communities where they were characterized by an even more diverse constituents or elements.

Syrian refugee students also experienced their school’s openness towards their participation in different activities. Jean-Mark explained that their school encouraged involvement in events such as celebrations, shared religious activities, and in class participation. This experience constituted the primary elements for the expected

change in their own societies; “they will have ambitions to change something [in their society] to match what they have seen here, if not now, later, I believe in that,” said Jean-Mark. These events may prepare students for the wider engagement in the larger society. One of the examples that Jean-Mark presented occurred during the Lebanese Independence Day celebrations. He elaborated that the school allowed for a maximum participation of all students, irrespective of their nationality. Though participation priorities were set to those who have certain skills that serve the occasion, students were not excluded even for the celebration of the Lebanese Independence Day.

Takla, explained that during last year’s Independence Day celebration, a Syrian student carried the flag of Lebanon. The administration clearly encouraged the students to get more involved in those activities. At that time, teachers and administrators were emotional and happy about this event. However, she explained “if I were a school principal, I would not have allowed her to carry the flag.” She believed that the students should not be at risk of losing their own identity.

Adib saw that open discussions around elections, transition of authority, free access to state services such as healthcare and schools, shaped the students’ awareness and knowledge. Adib explained that this knowledge engaged the students with concepts that deal with authority and democracy. They also drove the student to think about their own society and personal life and do comparisons. These in-class comparisons and exploration of social and legislative differences enriched the knowledge and awareness of both the Lebanese and Syrian students. He elaborated that the Lebanese teachers were definitely not equipped with information about the Syrian legislative system and were thus unable to answer some of the students’ questions. However, this exposure impacted the students’ lives at the social and political level.

Some teachers reflected on even more profound changes that influenced the individual Syrian refugee student brought by their education in Lebanon. Nicolas believed that “the Syrian student, who is learning in Lebanon, is different from the Syrian student learning in Hasaka ... He is a student who carries with him the Lebanese identity.” The education system in Lebanon may have created an individual who was similar to the Lebanese person and once these students had the chance to return to Syria, they would fight to maintain what they have had acquired in this identity. He explained that those who were studying in Beirut did not create a burden, because these people had their own homes and they would either return to it or travel abroad. Furthermore, if we left the Lebanese and Syrian students to live with each other at the school, they would do so in a great way. The change brought forward on the Syrian refugees learning in Lebanon would forever change these students to become closer to what they have experienced from their education in Lebanon. Nicolas elaborated, when a Syrian girl learned in the Lebanese school and returned to her home country, she would know that she was not just born to be married, she is a human being, educated and intellectual, and capable of contributing to her society. Nicolas added that once this girl and others did that contribution, the whole society would change. However, this change brought forward from their education in Lebanon on the student should not be considered as a process of assimilation. Nonetheless, Nicolas was not too decisive on whether those students would carry the Lebanese identity or a completely new identity.

Nicolas stressed on the important role the social surrounding conditions play in shaping the human beings' destiny and in defining their success or failure. According to him, Lebanon provided the door and a chance for this change. He explained that those who live in different regional countries had to deal with the

cultural traits of those countries and difficult issues such as early marriages. However, “the Syrian who took refuge in Lebanon alone got the opportunity to learn.”

Therefore, the treatment was different in Lebanon and those girls are finishing school and gaining confidence. He elaborated that “when the Syrian girl is learning here [in Lebanon], she knows that she is not only [destined] for marriage.” Therefore, when one asked them about what they want to do in their life, those girls would chose to be a lawyer, a pharmacist, or join the medicine faculty but would refuse to get married at an early age; those who arrived in Lebanon have gained this kind of identity.

Alya, who taught sociology, also believed that the learning exposure the Syrian refugee students were getting in her class, and in other classes, was changing their personality. However, this change, in her opinion, might cause a problem in their home country upon their return. She believed that this change would build a more modern personality while their home country was becoming an even more conservative society, which would create a problem for the student. It seems that Alya is among those teachers who believe that Syrian refugee students will eventually return to their country and accordingly is more critical and sensitive to the risks and benefits of what they are learning in Lebanon.

Teachers and administrators faced numerous challenges related to curriculum, language, and social diversity within their schools. Despite these many adversities, they convincingly reported putting significant efforts to sustain Syrian refugee education. In the absence of clear guidance and resources, they remained self-reliant to use practical approaches, extract solutions, and learn lessons from their evolving work.

## **6.4 Syrian Refugee Students**

### ***6.4.1 Impact of Local Social Diversity on the Educational Experience***

The Syrian refugee students shared their thoughts about the impact of diversity, discrimination, and political conflict in Lebanon on them; many of them admitted the challenging relation with the Lebanese students and community. Nevertheless, they expressed their interest in bypassing these issues to remain focused on their education. There was an active engagement and commitment from the students' end to find a way to make things work in an environment that held clear contradictions.

When Nadine first arrived in Lebanon, she and her family received a lot of criticism from residents, even before joining the school. "I was young when I came here and I did not understand the story," she explained. She perceived "a barrier between the Syrians and the Lebanese," something she struggled to explain. She elaborated that in her first elementary and middle school, funded by the UN and where all students were Syrians, some teachers used to tell her "go back to your home country." She added "that is nothing" compared to the difficulties she faced at that time. She was not the only one with this experience; her Syrian friends suffered in that school as well. The individuals within her community and within her elementary and middle school had shown rejection to the Syrian presence. They had expressed their rejection of her and her family within the social surrounding and within the school itself, and thereby placed tremendous pressure on the success of her educational experience.

Now at a different school and at a different level, Nadine talked about a different experience. Her experience at the secondary school years differed dramatically from that of the elementary and middle school. She explained that the

new experience had led her to believe that with the work of her new school, this discriminatory ‘barrier’ will eventually break. Her new school was bringing together all these students and she felt welcomed and encouraged as she explained: “this [her previous negative experience at the elementary and middle school] remains with me but the teachers who are here [at the secondary school] make you feel a bit normal, same as anybody else.” With the experience of a different school and administration, Nadine revived her hope for a better educational experience and for a better future, one that made sense to her.

Nadine explained that during her presence in Lebanon, she had interacted with an environment and a school context that was diverse and rich in culture and religious sects. This diverse cultural context, according to her, assisted in building and strengthening her character. She added that this diversity also reflected itself in the way the Lebanese spoke different languages (Arabic, English, and some French) and even used them in the same sentence. Her admiration of this diversity led her to speak in the same manner and sometimes use the Lebanese dialect even at home. Nadine felt that she had found a way to make a good use of her experience in the county. She decided to make use of the diverse challenging context in a positive constructive manner.

Aida shared a similar experience to that of Nadine. Aida started her day by using public transportation, paid for by her family, to reach the school. She spent her time with her school friends. One of her worries was about her ability to access a university of her choice, and the effects of the social disruptions of 2019 on her studies. She told me that she showed no concern to her friends’ nationality. However, she added that she did experience discrimination from some of her elementary school friends and teachers. She explained “when they [Lebanese students] get in

[elementary level classroom] and ask about the nationality or something, when they know that I am from a different nationality,... they move one step back, something that annoys a bit.” Aida continued “I used to be scared sometimes and cry on the side, [thinking] why are they doing that, but now [in the secondary classes] it is all normal.” Andre, who had left his home under extreme war conditions, reported a similar experience. He explained that he had some refugee friends who assisted each other in their studies. These students had left the safety of their home and society. They entered into a new complex, diverse, and challenging environment. Within this new environment, they first experienced rejection. Then, with new schools they had an expanded experience. This exposure enabled Syrian refugee students to understand differences in the same society and find meaningful ways to try to adapt and focus on what is important in their lives.

Fadia and Rita said that they never asked about other students’ nationality in class. If it were not for some teachers asking to get some information in class, they would not have known about their classmates’ nationalities. Their friendships with their peers at the secondary schools were not gained easily nor could be generalized across all schools. Fadia considered that the difference in nationality between the Lebanese and the Syrians, as well as the differences in religious sects, did not affect the relations between the students, and projected that their generation “wants to change everything.” This friendly relation among students from different nationalities (Lebanese and Syrian) was reported by some Syrian refugee students. Fadia, like many others of her age, wanted to go beyond social differences between individuals of the same community to improve social relations. Aligned with the adult participants, Imad identified with the Lebanese educational characteristics that related to the ability to cope with different nationalities, diverse religions, ways of thinking



and flexibility in dealing with problems. These educational characteristics could help him in his future, as he explained. The participants were able to express what was needed for them to adapt to the diverse context in Lebanon. Disregarding nationality, or coping with different religions, sects, nationalities, or even building friendships in a challenging environment were all means that these students raised as ways to move forward in their education.

The issues of diversity and discrimination had created a challenge to the Syrian refugee students who used to live within a different country. Despite and through these challenges, students appeared to be giving an exceptional effort to adapt and cope with their lives in Lebanon. Students also remained focused on how their educational experience in Lebanon would benefit their future, mostly envisioned in other countries. Where students discussed what they have had acquired in terms of learning, most of them considered it in the context of future school and life outside of Lebanon.

#### ***6.4.2 Uncertainty Generated from Curriculum and Language***

The students held to the importance of education and looked for a future in which they could do more or had better control over their lives through their education. Fadia, for example, explained that nowadays one cannot envision the possibility of not having education in the society if one wanted to have a role in that society. Similarly, Imad wanted to get education to be able to leave his own mark on the society. Aida articulated that “the human being without education is nothing.” She explained that education allowed them to communicate with others and express themselves. Similarly, Andre considered that without education one “cannot do anything”; however, he was not sure whether or not education would help him reach his goals in the future. The students wanted to engage and influence their community.

They believed that education was the tool to reach their goal of participation.

However, they remained uncertain whether and where their education would find its utility.

Part of this uncertainty was related to the students' inability to identify how to benefit from the use of the curriculum they were studying. Some students believed that the Lebanese curriculum pushed them to do hard work. This hard work was much needed to face uncertain future. Nadine, for example, expected that her hard work at school and the stress from learning foreign languages could better equip her to engage globally.

Other students may have had mixed feelings about the benefits of the curriculum. Aida, for example, also saw that the tough Lebanese curriculum could better prepare her for tougher conditions. She elaborated: "the pressure we are experiencing [from the curriculum] might help us a bit in the future." However, she also believed that the Lebanese curriculum put a heavy strain on them as students. The students frequently asked teachers to ease up on them because of the curriculum demands. Aida continued to say that it is important for the student to know the rules of the country in the civics classes. However, other subjects such as history and geography had no role in her future, especially if she wanted to follow scientific classes. These subjects take much of her time and effort. Furthermore, as she expressed, "I would rather know [the history of] my country" especially given that "one keeps nostalgic to their country."

Similarly, Rafqa believed that the Lebanese curriculum "is definitely stronger" than that of Syria in terms of languages and inclusivity, and thus, could better prepare the student. However, "the curriculum in Lebanon is a bit old." She saw that civics education was outdated and the rules were not always applied, however, she was not

specific about which rules she was referring to. Furthermore, in her second interview that occurred after the social unrest in Lebanon, she seemed more open to the idea of retuning to Syria. The interview was conducted after the social unrest that started in 2019 in Lebanon. She explained that “In my opinion, a person should not leave his country only because it lacks opportunities; but rather every citizen should seek to improve his country instead of leaving it” and work to make things better. Even though she explained that they would not return until things are clearly settled for them in Syria, her ability to use the Lebanese curriculum was now even more in question. The possibility of returning to Syria now redefined the level of engagement of Syrian refugees with the Lebanese curriculum. “The displaced [Syrian refugees] are a burden [on Lebanon]” was how Rafqa understood their presence. Because she believed that there is a possibility of returning to Syria, and because she thought that refugees were a ‘burden’ on Lebanon, Rafqa as a Syrian student focused only on the subjects that could benefit her presence in Syria at a later stage and disengaged from subjects that would not. Thus, like many other students, she placed her focus on subjects such as physics and math more than civics or history.

Other students explicitly expressed the disadvantages of the Lebanese curriculum. Andre for example, believed that the curriculum demanded, in most parts, memory from the student and it was all “for nothing.” Materials such as history could easily be forgotten in two or three weeks, as he explained. Other students like Imad believed it needed updating. Fadia added that the curriculum “destroys the student” instead of helping them; it is stressful and very old; demanding a lot of work and information to read and memorize, as she explained. These students seemed to express difficulties and pointed out the negative side of the curriculum contrary to what some of their colleagues and teachers thought.

There was one orientation that all interviewed Syrian refugee students seemed to hold. Students were still searching for what might benefit them in their uncertain futures. Even though some students saw the best in the Lebanese curriculum, others took a negative or an indecisive position. The Syrian refugee students believed that at least part of the curriculum did not help them in achieving what they thought they wanted to achieve. Thus, Syrian refugee students remained sometimes disengaged, uncertain, and little able to envision the future uses of their Lebanese education. Part of the Lebanese curriculum was out of synch with the envisioned needs and wants of these Syrian refugee students.

Language constituted an added challenge to their learning process. The language gap demanded major work and effort on the behalf of the Syrian refugee student. Students expressed their difficulty in acquiring a second language at a later stage of their education. For example, even though teachers at the elementary level were assisting students by translating and explaining English words, students, according to Imad, had to do much more work to overcome the language challenge. At the elementary level, Imad explained “I used to sit five hours to summarize it [the lesson] and translate it word by word to Arabic in order to understand it,” to digest a lesson that should take half an hour. At the secondary level, as Imad elaborated, he was able to better cope with the languages taught in his class. Imad and Aida had to do rigorous work on translations using technology to expedite the process. In materials such as Physics, Chemistry, and Math, Imad explained that this work had to be done despite the similarities between the two curriculums, Syrian and Lebanese. Since the Syrian curriculum used the Arabic language—as the only official language—in classrooms, while the Lebanese curriculum used English or French with the Arabic language, Syrian students had to learn and study in an additional language.

Passing through the language barrier constituted a major milestone in the Syrian refugee education. These students entered into the classrooms with the full awareness of this gap and the needed effort to overcome it.

Their uncertain futures pushed students to think of moving abroad and seeking other alternatives. For example, Rita stated: “If I have a chance [to go and study] abroad definitely I would not say no.” Imad was looking forward to applying for special grants that would have allowed him to travel and continued this education abroad in countries like Canada or the U.S. Imad stated: “There, as a refugee, or any strange person, your situation would be better. My situation would be definitely better than here in Lebanon, as social status, economic status, and the educational status would be much better.” Nevertheless, he saw Lebanon as a last resort in case he was unsuccessful in attaining the funding required, especially since he considered returning to Syria as out of the question with the current war situation. He noted that he did not exclude the appealing idea of studying at Syrian universities in case this situation improved. The Syrian refugee students seemed to be in a state of anticipation unable to determine how their future would be shaped. The level of uncertainty remained high; still they appeared to maintain considerable optimism while they tried to work with curriculum and language challenges in their schooling pathways.

#### ***6.4.3 Effects of Fragility on the Educational Experience***

Students expressed their explicit thoughts about the effects of fragility on their education. However, their focus was mainly on their ability to remain in school and attain the required education. Also, the issue of quality and the effect of fragile educational system on their future work were raised. Despite the increased deterioration of the situation in Lebanon, their primary focus remained on completing their required education.

For example, Andre pointed out that the recent events in Lebanon caused a significant delay in their education. He said, “we were distracted, I mean we were supposed to be studying for the exams during that period but we were distracted by the revolution and such, I used to go to the streets with them sometimes” Andre explained that considerable delays over forty days of closure had occurred due to recent protests. This delay had led the students to rush in their program to cover all the missed lessons.

Imad gave a broader view on the fragile economic situation. He explained that the UNHCR failed to assist them financially even though they were registered refugees. UNHCR has provided financial assistance to cover only the cost of books for one year, as he explained. Examples of some of the additional costs which were mentioned by the Syrian refugee students, and incurred in Lebanon, included the cost of renewing their residencies, housing, and transportation to and from the schools. Imad believed that his education was influenced severely by the recent protests. During the protest period, Imad was unable to reach his school on several occasions due to road closures. “The schools were closed, the roads were closed ... I had school ... but the road was closed just below our home,” as he elaborated. “By bus, I need around 20 minutes, half an hour maximum. When the roads are closed, I had to walk two kilometers just to cross to the other side [from where the road was closed],” where he then took another bus to reach the school. The same process was followed to return home from school. He believed that the government should take good care of formal schools. These schools, according to him, needed financial assistance because they deserved it, because they had made a good impression on him, and because he wanted them to prosper even further. As for his expectations regarding university education, he had been notified that the university he was aiming to apply for had

considerably reduced its grants for students like him. This undermined his hard work to increase his grades to compete for a university grant.

Nadine was looking for a chance to study at the universities in Lebanon. However, due to the deteriorating conditions of Lebanon, the inability of her father to find work, provide their daily bread, and support his family, and finally, the inability of the UN agencies to help them in Lebanon or find a way to travel outside Lebanon, caused her to doubt her chances. Rita could not see any future in Lebanon as she believed that she could not find a job when she finished her university due to the bad economic situation. Rafqa explained that the Syrian worker earned much less for the same job if compared to their Lebanese counterpart. This wage difference put additional pressure on the Syrian families and more pressure on the Lebanese labor market due to the presence of additional competitive labor.

Education in Lebanon did not provide the participant Syrian refugee students with hope or prospects as future citizens within the country. Because of these fragile conditions, Syrian refugee students were in a constant quest to find better alternatives. Most of them aimed to leave the country to either continue their education or start working outside. They were well aware of the fragile economic conditions of the country. They also became more aware of the educational conditions that they were living in. Furthermore, they had learned from their elementary years to limit, though partially, the damaging effect of discrimination on their education. However, they were unable to change or improve their economic prospects within Lebanon. They remained unable to see a possibility for a successful future in a country struggling in all aspects of life.

To conclude, across the three levels of educational actors—from the ministry official, to school administrators and teachers, to the students experiencing ‘refugee

education’—common as well as conflicting notions of how Syrian refugee education is enacted were evident. On one side, the ministry official, administrators, and teachers all agreed that education for Syrian refugees should be considered as a right and worked towards providing refugee students access to formal schools; while on the other side, each of the educational actors were struggling with different concerns. The ministry official’s main efforts were guided towards the contextualization of Syrian refugee education to the Lebanese context, while teachers and administrators were on managing day-to-day concerns inside and outside the school context. Finally, we noted that while students could benefit from social diversity and deal with discrimination, they were more prone to the fragility of the Lebanese social, political, as well as economic conditions causing increased future uncertainty.



## **Chapter Seven: Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of chapter six. This discussion develops in relation to the research questions presented in this study that explore the enactment of Syrian refugee education within two state secondary schools. Thus, it attends to the way the adult educational actors conceptualize and operationalize Syrian refugee education and how students understand and experience their education. The discussion is also informed by the theoretical frames of development education and fragility, globalization, and citizenship education and my literature review. Finally, it attends to how the findings might inform the broader policy context.

Despite the knowledge, frames and questions that structure this research, I must admit that my findings and discussion approach the participants' understanding of their situation in a respectful and non-judgmental manner knowing that the participants' experiences are exceptional and occurring in a unique context at a specific point in time. I believe that to have a fair analysis of refugee education in Lebanon, a full chronological and detailed analysis of the refugee situation throughout the Lebanese history has to be conducted, exploring areas beyond or more comprehensively than the scope of this study. I am also wary of bringing a deficit lens to interpretations of school provision in Lebanon.

### **7.2 Funding Gap**

The fight to access stretched national resources prevails within the refugee literature. With the sociopolitical and geopolitical restrictions found within the nation, the access of noncitizens to national resources might be even more restricted (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b). To create value for refugees' education and allow refugees to

exercise their rights to education within the hosting national boundaries, Dryden-Peterson looks to global actors such as UNHCR for means of negotiating the implementation of refugees' socio-political and economic rights within hosting nation's boundaries. The need for additional national involvement is stressed with Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) who believes that, while belonging and inclusion are promoted at the global level, they are restricted at the national level and sometimes even more so at the school level.

My findings point to a more pressing challenge than the issue raised by Dryden-Peterson's (2016b); here, the problem of access is fundamentally related to resource availability. Any negotiation to attain access to national resources cannot escape the gravity of capacity, capability, and limitations of existing resources found within the hosting nation. From the interviews we notice that the lack of resources is affecting all participants at different levels. Accordingly, most of the participants including some Syrian refugee students see that formal schools need additional resources. Participants seem to realize the limited capacity and capability of the state due to its fragile situation. Thus, in this fragile context, and in the absence or reduction of external funding, any means of exerting influence on a fragile territory that is already struggling with scarce resources could lead to increased fragility and to unwelcomed results such as further destabilizing the country. Therefore, any increase in access to state resources should be the direct result of effective development within the country.

The extreme economic, social, political, and health pressing conditions influence both Lebanon citizens and the large number of Syrian school-aged refugee students. Furthermore, recently, Lebanon seems to face extended social unrest. In the education field, the low formal school access rates are highly indicative of the

fragility of the country and the magnitude of the challenges Syrian refugee education is facing in Lebanon. For example, for the school year 2015-16, the estimated numbers of school-aged Syrian refugee children in Lebanon are around 588,385 Syrian refugee students—*twice* the number of enrolled Lebanese students in the public schools. By the end of 2015-2016 school year, only 158,321 Syrian refugee students were enrolled (Visconti & Gal, 2018) constituting only around 27% of the school-aged Syrian children in Lebanon. For the school year 2016-17, the estimated number of Syrian school-aged children was 500,000 of which only 135,400 (also around 27%) were enrolled in formal schools, and only 2% registered in the secondary classes (UNICEF, 2017, as cited in Chopra & Adelman, 2017). These low access rates indicate the urgency for additional funding and development projects in the country to support an educational sector that is on the verge of a collapse. They also imply that the secondary Syrian refugee students including the student participants in my study represent a *minority* of Syrian school-aged refugees that are actually attending schools.

One important aspect of the ministry official's work with the UN and the international community relates to matters of funding. Getting the required funds is considered essential to the education of refugees and to the operation of the Lebanese educational sector. As per the ministry official, these funds are pooled from different donors given to the UNHCR<sup>1</sup>. In turn, the UNHCR provides the money to countries such as Lebanon for matters related to refugees and their education. However, the external international commitment is also an internal one as these funds constitute a debt on the country to be repaid at a later stage, as this official explains. Even where aid is to be repaid, the signs of international fatigue from the Syrian refugee issue in

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<sup>1</sup> I was unable to access information related to clear funding mechanisms that could detail and explain the amounts, sources, and uses of funds designated for Syrian refugee education in Lebanon.

Lebanon are noticed by the ministry official. Due to this fatigue, the international community seems to move even further away from the Syrian refugee engagement and work, imposing additional conditions and restrictions on MEHE. This withdrawal also means that Lebanon will be left alone facing the financial burdens caused by Syrian refugee presence and education.

The international community seems to lack a clear development education strategy for the fragile Lebanese state. Lebanon will fall short if it is left alone to deal with Syrian refugees and their education in the country. Development entails that capable states assist poorer or developing countries; education is one domain through which such assistance can be achieved (Kendall, 2009). Because of the fragility of the state, development investments need to be provided over an extended period of time to have its effects on the economy sectors (Mosselson et al., 2009). Also, because of fragility's constant moving dynamic nature, as Mosselson et al. (2009) explain, any assistance to Lebanon should stipulate quick funding in certain areas that can impact education, and a rigorous follow-up after that.

It is clearly stated by the ministry official that if funding stops, the country will not be able to provide educational services for refugees, yet we see that the international community stands at a distance. The international community even wants a further gradual move away from supporting the burdens of education for Syrian refugees. This gradual abandonment is happening before establishing proper pillars upon which the hosting state and the refugees can lean. As the ministry official indicates, the international community wants additional Lebanese involvement through asking for a separate education sector within the MEHE in spite of the crises from which the country is suffering. This may be due to political reasons.

The Lebanese economic crisis is not recent, nor has it been hidden from any person or entity including the international bodies who have been asking for economic reforms for years. Therefore, any gradual move away or indication of funding withdrawal, in the short or longer term, raises the question about the global commitment towards refugees in general and their hosting countries, especially the fragile ones. Furthermore, richer countries that are not accepting larger numbers of refugees and increasing border restrictions on migration are exerting additional pressure on neighboring countries such as Lebanon. With the retracted western countries' involvement in refugee crisis, their poor response, and border problems, all countries should be encouraged to block any move against refugees and assist in funding their presence in hosting countries.

The need to have regional and international support for national education systems and refugees within hosting countries is addressed in the literature. Visconti and Gal (2018) identify the need to strengthen national educational sectors due to their fragile situations and the massive refugee challenge through regional collaboration. This need is also based on the funding instability and the unknown future residence of the refugees, just as the case in Lebanon. The attempt to build a regional coalition to face the Syrian refugee challenge is another way of acknowledging the overwhelming nature of the problem at the national level and requesting international community's additional consolidation. However, clear mechanisms that respond to the full demands of the educational sectors at the national levels are still to be explored. There is also a need to highlight the uniqueness of the specific country's educational responses that allow students to make better use of their education in the specific country level. So even with cooperation at the regional level, or global level for that matter, there is a need for international clarity and national

cooperation to successfully strategize a way to contextualize solutions to refugee challenges at the national level.

Besides the ministry official's position on funding, teachers and administrators also express the challenges they face due to the immediate funding needs—at the national, school, and personal level. Teachers and administrators are more concerned with the daily operations and their ability to sustain their work due to the extreme weak and fragile situation. They are at risk of losing salaries and wages and/or losing its purchasing power due to high inflation. The financial conditions of those teachers and administrators indicate the possibility of having a complete educational shutdown due to lack of funds. Furthermore, due to the large financial deficit Lebanon has been suffering over the last forty years, the educational sector is prohibited from much needed budgetary funds for adequate training and improvement of the teaching standards. Those funds should have assisted in creating labs and furnishing classes with the required technological equipment, not to mention the need for general school buildings maintenance. Finally, the recent economic crises will force a significant number of Lebanese students to move away from the private sector into the public sector, adding considerable pressure on the latter and on the Syrian refugees' ability to find places and access the already neglected public schools. These conditions drive the Lebanese government to channel more funds towards the educational system in general instead of addressing specific refugee needs within the education system. These national challenges need to be well understood and acknowledged by the international community to inform their further involvement. They should also be seriously examined by the hosting state—Lebanon, in order to readjust policy based on both the educational sectors' and refugee students' needs alike.

Students fortunate enough to be attending secondary schooling, also suffer from the lack of appropriate funding; for example, they receive money for registration but not for school transportation among others. They have to deal with the effects of severe economic crises, recent social protests, absence of work opportunities, and fast brain drain. They also experience out-of-date curriculum, low educational quality, few in-class technologies, and insufficient labs to support the lectures they are attending. Additionally, they have to sustain a non-citizenship status that is a disadvantage for their families in the labor market and a looming cloud over their futures. All those conditions drastically affect the students' ability to see any economically feasible future in the country. They are also at risk of not completing their education due to financial instability that is affecting their personal lives and education at all levels.

The complex nature of the refugee problem entails that both national and international efforts are joined facing the refugee challenge. A holistic and relational lens that is attuned to the economic, social, and political challenges and complexities should be used. Lebanon is not a signatory state of 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol, and considers Syrian refugees as displaced (and not refugees). Nonetheless, it hosts a significant number and is making efforts towards widening the access, delivering education, adjusting national policy, and working on improving quality of education. However, without international financial support, the country's capacity and fragile situation limits its ability to sustain or maintain its position in providing educational and other needed services for the Syrian refugees in the country.

The international community through the UNHCR still has to provide much to assist hosting countries and fulfill its obligations towards refugees. Education now involves multiple players to face new access and mobility challenges (Dale and Robertson, 2007, as cited in Robertson and Dale, 2008). Globalization has already set

the grounds for changes in the sector governance, policy, and resourcing for education (Dale, 1997, as cited in Robertson & Dale, 2008). Despite the fact that the state still holds significant capabilities, it is no longer the only actor; education still being a national concern of high importance, now involves more actors within and outside the country (Robertson & Dale, 2008). The socio-cultural components, such as with Syrian refugees within Lebanon, stretch across traditional political boundaries and interests of the nation state. They exist within the nation but partially outside national interest, involving different international organizations and bodies in the process.

### **7.3 Refugee Education: Between Emergency and Development Education?**

The educational experience of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is closely linked to the support received by the educational sector. The fragility of the country situates the educational sector in acute need of different kinds of assistance whether urgent or developmental in nature. The form of backup received should reconcile the needs of the hosting country, citizens, and refugees to successfully reach desired outcomes.

Participants in this study appear to prioritize different needs. For example, the ministry official is concerned with maintaining Syrian refugee education within the emergency education paradigm. This enables the ministry to hold on to the status quo for Syrian refugees as being temporarily displaced within Lebanon and avoid any change in their status that could make them permanent refugees as in the case of the Palestinian refugees. That ministry official's concern also focuses on providing Syrian refugee students a kind of immediate urgent *access* to education within the formal schools through coordinating efforts and funding resources with the UN and international organizations. These sorts of concerns have a sense of urgency in understanding the Syrian refugee problem and in deriving the needed solution.



The administrators and teachers take a different approach from that of the ministry official, dealing with Syrian refugee education. They are concerned with managing in school discrimination, language difficulties, learning skills, in class technologies, and updating the old curriculum. They also have financial concerns related to their own work, concerns about cashing in their salaries under severe financial and economic crises, as well as concerns for their students' ability to sustain their participation in schooling. These kinds of concerns are of a lingering consequence and are best addressed through developmental projects.

Refugee students are the most fragile of the different school actors. They (and their families) are in need of both immediate and long-term assistance. For example, they need to access formal schools. They are also highly impacted by interrupted schooling due to the recent social unrest, managing transportation to and from their schools, school fees and tuitions, and most importantly their own financial situation. On the other hand, students are also aspiring for university education and possible work prospects, again, largely envisioned outside Lebanon.

We notice that the concerns of the ministry official, on one hand, and the teachers and administrators, on the other hand, are uniquely transposed. The ministry official recognizes the country's delicate social composition and fragile capability that can little support the large numbers of Syrian refugee students. However, her response is more focused towards the ministry's ability and speed to improve access to formal schools. Unlike teachers and administrators, the ministry official seems to have the fragility of the country set as a secondary issue. Furthermore, with the ministry official, the well-being of the sector, its capacity, efficiency, adjustment of the old curriculum, and the concerns of the teachers and administrators seem to remain second behind issues of immediate access to schooling and refugee integration.

We also notice that participants at different levels are finding difficulties and sometimes failing in reaching their desired goals. For example, access to formal education lags behind the desired goals. Only a minority of Syrian refugee students attend secondary formal schools. The teachers and administrators are also suffering from the lack of funding affecting their teaching quality. Finally, students are also facing a market that does not respond to their future hopes of work and stability. This means that the educational sector is in dire need of both urgent and long-term aid in order to successfully improve and change the students' educational experience.

Within the literature review, only a few authors approach the refugee problem in a way that connects both emergency and the developmental investments needed to manage the refugee problem in a fragile context. For example, Shuayb et al. (2016) believe that refugee education needs to move away from the existing emergency paradigm to integrate additional support for the refugee students. Similarly, Mitri (2015) talks about transitioning from an emergency type of response to a more developmental approach that takes into consideration the protracted nature of the refugee crises. These authors provide a sense of transitioning or moving away from one form of aid to another as means to reflect their extended engagement with the refugee problem. On the other hand, Kelley (2017) indicates that both humanitarian and developmental assistance needs to be conjoint to meet the needs of refugees and hosting countries. As such, developmental needs might be set forward at the same level and priority as humanitarian ones to ensure attaining the desired experience.

A more balanced aid approach might better respond to both the nature of the Lebanon as a (neighboring) country and to the *protracted* nature of the refugee crises. Shifting to the developmental approach alone will be rejected by the Lebanese residents. Development education works on modernizing developing countries

through creating adequate labor work force (Kendall, 2009). In Lebanon, the complex social composition might create an obstacle for any plan that takes into consideration the prolonged Syrian existence in the country. Therefore, any plan that supports the lengthy presence of the Syrian refugees in the country by integrating them into the labor force could fail or be rejected. At the same time, sole developmental assistance that needs long period to show its effects will be rejected by the Syrian refugees who are in urgent need for some sense of normalcy which schooling provides.

Similarly, maintaining a sole humanitarian assistance impedes Syrian refugee students' long-term integration in the country. Any possibility of creating a national identity within the schools (T. Waters & LeBlanc, 2005) for Syrian refugees is tenuous. Similarly, Syrian refugee citizenship development would fail in preparing Syrian refugees to be responsible citizens and a participatory group in the society (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004), if only humanitarian approach in assistance is followed. Any dynamic approach of citizenship that allows for the engagement in social or political activities (McLaughlin, 1992) would also be deferred if not terminated in this kind of assistance.

To improve the Syrian refugee student's experience, a new approach to Syrian refugee education should be created that raises the level of Syrian refugee students' engagements in the country, better equips them to uncertain futures, and attends to their long-term needs. It should also address teachers', administrators', and ministry official's concerns. Through both development education and emergency education approach, the government in Lebanon, with the international community, should allow for a particular construction of refugee education that could address the uncertainties of all the educational actors. Both approaches simultaneously assist the hosting country, residents, and their educational system to survive their drastic fragile

conditions, maintain a cohesive society and increase educational capacity. This construction should also allow for the Syrian refugees to engage at the social and at least at the economic level, if not also the political level, through increasing short-term investments and developmental projects. Clear boundaries of citizenship should be predefined, by all involved actors, as a condition for any assistance in order for a positive change in the educational experience of Syrian refugees to take place.

#### **7.4 Policy Practice Gap**

In this study, the participants' educational experience seems to be highly affected by the gap between existing policies and plans on one side, and their implementation on the other. This gap is partly caused by the unaccounted fragility factor in the genesis of local refugee-related plans and policies of the country. The effects of this gap are seen across the different levels of my participants and from the related literature review. One major consequence of the break between policies and their implementation is evident in having the form of refugee participation related more to adapting to the social/school life than to the political or economic one.

At the international and national level, the policies and plans set for refugees and their education aim towards different goals. At the international level, access to the state's services including education constitutes a primary aim for refugee related policies. The Declaration of Human Rights promotes equal rights irrespective of language, religion, national, or other status. These rights include access to formal education and to work (United Nations, 1948).

At the regional level, the 3RP calls upon and encourages governments to further increase access to their services. The 3RP also advocates for providing refugees with civil documentation that assists in personal and family information gathering. Furthermore, it encourages joint efforts of both humanitarian and

developmental aid to provide adequate resources to aid hosting states and refugees at the same time (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees & United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

At the national level, the LCRP as well as RACE I and II seem to resonate well with the international and regional plans. LCRP is the specific Lebanese related part of the 3RP. The plan recognizes of the need to support national systems while ensuring protection and assistance for vulnerable populations (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019).

Furthermore, RACE I which is developed by MEHE has primary objectives dealing with increasing access to education and improving its quality. Access objective includes school rehabilitation from building structures to furniture and equipment. It also includes providing financial assistance to vulnerable students through, for example, paying registration fees. To improve the quality of refugee education, RACE I aims at providing refugee students with books and stationary, supporting child-centered pedagogy, and increase community, school administrators, and family members engagement to improve quality of education (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014).

From what the participants explain, the problem lies in the implementation of these aims and goals. For example, participants, such as the ministry official, administrators, and teachers identify the Declaration of Human Rights as a guide on refugee matters and deal with Syrian refugees on humanitarian basis. However, the ministry official reveals challenges due to the contextualization of Syrian refugee education to the Lebanese local. As a result, we notice that access to education remains incomplete for the Syrian refugee school-aged children and barriers to entry or access persist. These challenges indicate that this international declaration is far

from being realized. Furthermore, there is a clear resistance towards global demands to create a separate educational sector that deals with refugees. There is also a resistance towards the integration of Syrian refugees within the Lebanese community as well as towards providing Syrian refugees with job opportunities that could give them economic stability and a way to benefit from their education.

The challenges cited are not exclusive to the ministry official. Teachers and administrators mainly have to rely on their personal judgment to deal with in-class complex political tensions and weak economic conditions that affect them and the Syrian students. They also have to cope with the absence of teacher training, deteriorating education quality, old curriculum, lack of adequate technological equipment, and language difficulties. All these matters are addressed by the policies and plans but have not yet found their means for implementation.

In addition to the ministry official, teachers, and administrators, some Syrian refugee students talk about discrimination within their elementary schools, schools that should be managed by the UNHCR. They also address their secondary school classmates' discrimination towards them. Furthermore, Syrian refugee students are getting their education under an uncertainty that is fueled by social unrest, old curriculum, language barriers, and inability to find work opportunities in the country. All of these conditions illustrate the policy-practice gap in the enactment of Syrian refugee education in Lebanon.

The policy practice gap is very similar to what is found by Buckner et al.'s (2018) study. Their study examines how the Lebanese educational system is enacted at the local level where refugees are involved. One of the points they present is that the gap between policy and practice widens with the case of refugees where the state authority weakens and international influence appears. The enactment of policies

under the national authority and international influence finds a challenge at the local level. This challenge in policy implementation exists for several reasons according to the authors. For example, one of these reasons is generated by the absence of clear operating procedures in the case of RACE policy. Another is external influence that undermines the national involvement in the enactment of the policy. Finally, the fragmented and politicized environment in the Lebanese community stands in the way of consistent and unique application of policy within different areas leading to the existence of an “unregulated space” (p. 460). This fragmentation causes unbalanced implementations of policies across different areas (Buckner et al., 2018). This weak implementation exists within countries with limited capacity, limited coordination, weak political will, and high resistance (Mendenhall et al., 2017).

My findings can support the first two reasons on the challenge of policy implementation mentioned by Buckner et al. (2018) but contradict the third one. First, some of those policies and plans lack the needed clarity to reach their aim. In the first example on the lack of clarity, the LCRP admits to the overwhelming effects of refugee crises on the resources of Lebanon (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019). LCRP seems to consider the huge gap between what is needed and what is available in terms of resources. As a result, by the end of 2015, the Syrian crises added additional 18.15 billion USD to the national debt due to the slowdown in the economy, loss in revenues and trade, and increased pressure on the public sector (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019). If LCRP or other plans aim for durable solutions and for assisting hosting countries as well as refugees, they seem to lag behind in their aim.

In another example that shows policies and plans lack the needed clarity, two of the aims for LCRP, RACE I and RACE II are increasing employability chances and resilience (Government of Lebanon & UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, 2019; Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014, 2016). However, it is clear that Syrian refugees are unable to find work in Lebanon. The ministry official, school administrators, and teachers are very clear that there is no room or opportunity for Syrian refugees to work in the country. Furthermore, there is a clear holdback on any political participation of Syrian refugees within the Lebanese community. Therefore, those plans miss the needed details that integrate the political context. They also miss on clarifying the plans' input and output results in terms of the amount of money that will be invested, the expected and actual results, and the improvement needs for the next year's plan.

Second, there is evidence supporting the idea of external influence undermining the national involvement in the enactment of the policy. Looking at the 3RP, LCRP, RACEI, and RACE II, we notice a similar resonance moving within them. For example, discussing developmental and humanitarian projects, the need to assist vulnerable populations, increasing access, and providing work opportunities are among the subjects that are approached. There seem to be an indication of a flow of influence passing through from the international policy to the regional ending with the local LCRP, RACE I, and RACE II. This imposed influence seems to be a cause of policy-practice gap. Disregarding the local and national concerns and not listening to the everyday challenges of the local actors undermine normative development of local policy. It also affects the implementation of any assistance for the hosting countries and the refugees living within that country. This indication of a flow of influence from the international to the local might contradict with what the ministry official



states about having RACE I and RACE II being locally conceived. It is highly important to consider top-down policy creation in light of the bottom-up re-contextualization by local actors to explore limitations and possibilities for policy implementation.

Finally, there is no indication from the two selected schools for this vertical case study that the fragmented and politicized environment in the Lebanese community stands in the way of consistent and unique application of the policy within these two schools. On the contrary, there are assisting factors such as the presence of other refugees like the Palestinians work in favor for the Syrian refugee presence. Furthermore, other community characteristics such as socio-cultural diversity also seem to be working in favor of supporting the Syrian refugees' presence in the country.

One of the results of the absence of clear procedures and the external influence on the local policies and plans is the disposition in the enactment of those policies and procedures to become more focused on the social life rather than the political or the economic. For example, even though the policies and plans aim to provide economic prospects and job opportunities through investment in the hosting country's economy, we notice that job opportunities are very limited for the Syrian refugees due to the weak economic conditions. Furthermore, Syrian refugees who are not given citizenship are not allowed political participation due to the complex and delicate sectarian composition of the Lebanese society and history. Nonetheless, Syrian refugees are allowed to reside in the society alongside the Lebanese nationals, have possible access to formal schools, and experience their education as a form of social participation.

Having stated the above, any international policy influence on national policies faces possibility of success and failure based on how well the local setting can adopt and adapt to international ideas. Ball (2016) discusses the importance of understanding how policies move and relocate to another terrain and how different terrains engage the same policy. According to Ball, “the challenge is to understand the reconfiguration of policy spaces and the movements and flows in and across this new terrain” (p. 550). Then, the best chance for success is through policies that are conceived within the complex local dynamics while maintaining an appropriate balance to respond to the international policies and agreements. Therefore, the international and the national policy makers should inform each other of their aims, goals, limitations, and possibilities where policy-practice gap can narrow.

In Lebanon, the fragile nature of the local context is one major factor explaining the gap between policy and implementation. There are clear political, social, and economic resistive factors, or in other words, friction (Paine et al., 2016) that is in play and that slows the velocity and speed of global effects (Held et al., 2002) and changes its nature within the Lebanese context. Fragility is dynamic in nature and should be addressed in a multi-level approach (Mosselson et al., 2009). Buchert (2013) explains that education, in a fragile or conflict area, must take into consideration three dimensions, sociocultural, political, and economical situated at three different levels, the macro at the level of society, meso, at the school level, and the micro, at the individual level. Thus, any format of policy that aims to assist in a global matter such as the issue of Syrian refugees and their education in Lebanon must be constructed as such. Furthermore, any policy-implementation success has to work through an iterative process between the national and the international policy makers to generate the needed policy. The primary result of such a process would be

the creation of a clear educational purpose and future as well as defined working and citizenship rights, so that the education of Syrian refugee students is not enacted only as a response to need.

## **7.5 Hope as a Major Element in the Educational Experience**

Participants in this vertical case study reveal their unique perspective on Syrian refugee education. Each from their own position, share what they believe distinguishes Syrian refugee education in the country. Hope remains a major defining character of this educational experience. In spite of multiple challenges, such as that of lack of funds, discrimination, and using the old curriculum, there seems to be a shared goal of supporting refugee students. All participants seem to work towards preserving their educational sector and providing Syrian refugee students with what is at least available for their own students. In the following section, I approach how each of the participants helps demonstrate their perspectives grounded in hope.

### **7.5.1 *Hope for a Better Future***

#### **7.5.1.1 Ministry Official.**

The ministry official's work in relation to Syrian refugee education is governed by many challenges. The ministry official is highly engaged with matters of funding and negotiations with the international community to maintain and support the education sector. Furthermore, she explains the considerable effort in facing the challenges of contextualizing Syrian refugee education to the Lebanese context. Finally, even though her work is not in direct contact with the Syrian refugee students, managing the daily concerns through creative solutions also takes considerable effort on her behalf, especially given the fragile educational sector and the country in general.

Even under difficult conditions, MEHE and the ministry official have set the grounds for improving Syrian refugee education. The ministry in general creates a second shift to compensate for the low school capacity and resources within the ministry. Furthermore, the ministry official encourages the acceptance of school-aged Syrian refugee students in the formal schools. The ministry also allows for financial aid to assist Syrian refugee students in covering their registration fees at the formal schools. More importantly is that MEHE's officials give Syrian refugee students the opportunity to work closely with Lebanese teachers and administrators as well as interact with the Lebanese students in their classes. These points, though governed by political, social, and economic difficult conditions, set the ground for other educational actors such as teachers and administrators to improve upon the Syrian refugee education.

#### **7.5.1.2 Administrators and Teachers.**

Syrian refugee education faces certain challenges at the level of teachers and administrators. Similar to the ministry official's stand on integration, teachers and administrators do not see prospects for the Syrian students in the country after they graduate. They also do not expect Syrian refugee students to stay in the country. Many of those teachers and administrators were forthright in rejecting the idea of integrating Syrian refugees in the Lebanese workforce. The high unemployment rate, weak economy, and the complex political and social conditions are the main reasons they rationalize this position. Teachers and administrators also struggle to maintain an in-class depoliticized environment avoid escalations of bad feelings or conflict between students. They also claim to work hard to tackle discrimination problems promptly and on site.

In spite of difficulties, teachers and administrators play an important role in defining the experience of Syrian refugee secondary students within the Lebanese secondary formal schools. Those teachers and administrators prioritize the humanitarian approach in their work and most of them consider the Syrian students as their own children and “brother”/sister. They report giving the Syrian students the same attention as their Lebanese classmates. They also show exceptional commitment for educating Syrian refugee students in spite of the severe economic uncertainty that affects all teachers’ and administrators. They express a genuine concern in spite of the lack of training/professional development, and their inability to see any possible future for the Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

#### **7.5.1.3 Syrian Refugee Students.**

The secondary Syrian refugee students have unique relations with their schools, teachers, and administrators. They struggle with their everyday chores trying to adapt to a different country, neighborhoods, schools, and classmates. Some of the students face experiences of discrimination, mainly in their elementary schools and partially in the secondary schools. They also struggle with an outdated curriculum, second language, and information about a country that they believe will not be their final home.

Even in this context, the Syrian refugee students think highly of their schools. For example, they report that they would not change their schools even if they are provided with the choice. Most importantly, they think highly of most of their teachers and they are very appreciative of their teachers’ efforts in class. Some students even wonder if additional funding can be provided for their formal school out of their appreciation for its efforts. They also regard their education in Lebanon as essential for their lives. They set high expectations from this education even though

they are well aware of the economic condition and the high level of unemployment in the country. Most of these students also believe that their education in Lebanon is better than might have been attained in Syria mainly due to learning English or French.

#### **7.5.1.4 A Relation of Hope.**

In Lebanon, the relationship between the Lebanese educational actors: ministry official, administrators, and teachers on one side and Syrian refugee students on the other, suggest hope for the Syrian refugee students' future. On one side, we see that teachers and administrators are still dedicated to their humanitarian commitments of educating Syrian students in spite of all the uncertainties. These teachers and administrators welcome Syrian refugee students into their schools and classes in spite of the political tensions and the very fragile economic conditions of the country. They also work with Syrian refugee students as they do with the Lebanese students even in a larger context that refuses refugee integration. Teachers provide Syrian students the same opportunities given to their Lebanese classmates. Nicolas, for example, is very clear on the development potential and influence brought about especially to Syrian girls who now reject the idea of early marriages and start to think about their professional development.

On the other side, Syrian refugee students well receive the efforts of their teachers, and administrators. They appreciate the work done for them. They also seem to notice that even in the absence of state resources, their teachers and administrators still provide access and an equal chance for learning inside their formal schools. Refugee students reflect a sense of gratitude for their education at the formal school. Exposure to diversity and the exercise of communication and interactivity in the classroom are highly appreciated by those students. Some refugee students also show

pride in their Lebanese education as better than that of Syria. Their level of engagement within the school and with their colleagues is described as high, even with some demotivating materials such as those taken in history and civics classes.

As a result, most of the students are looking forward to continue their education, join universities, work, and even act to participate in their future societies. Their experience with the teachers, administrators, and with their secondary schools overshadows the difficulties they face every day in their community. It seems that the Lebanese complex history, social composition, fragility, and the teachers' unique previous experience with war and refugees create, in an intriguing way, a space for hope and a kind of cultural inclusivity within the society. This hope seems to inspire Syrian refugee students and push them to work for more and achieve more in spite of the larger limiting conditions.

The relationship between the different educational actors and the Syrian refugee students defines a form of (global) citizenship education for Syrian refugee students. With this sense of hope, administrators and teachers shape refugee students' proto-citizenship formation and how they understand and interact with their community. Citizenship education as Akar (2017) explains defines the relationship between the individual and their community. In Lebanon, the educational sector is able to deal, though partially, with the effects of fragility on citizenship education. As Pluim (2017) explains, in a fragile context citizenship education should not be independent from the environmental, sociocultural, political, and historical norms of the context in which it is being provided. What information is being taught and how it is being taught shape citizenship formation and their participation in their communities (T. Waters & LeBlanc, 2005). In Lebanon, teachers and administrators are intentionally or unintentionally, building up sensitivities to divisions and

diversities among students. They are directly or indirectly building up an individual who can relate to the different other and is aware of this difference. By doing that, Syrian refugee students are indirectly attaining an education that can help them in their integration in other societies. This building up occurs in spite of all the challenges within the Lebanese community and the absence of any right to participate in political and economic life.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter discusses and analyzes the findings in light of the theoretical frame and related literature review. I argue that there is a need for further corroboration and clarity between national and international bodies to secure additional funding facing the overwhelming flow of refugees and the deteriorating economic Lebanese conditions. The global and inter-dependent nature of the refugee problem, the local fragile conditions as well as the participants' feedback emphasize the need for increased international funding and further national involvement. This funding and engagement have to be maintained through simultaneous emergency as well as developmental long-term assistance to improve the educational experience of Syrian refugees in the country and to assist the hosting countries in their endeavor. These challenges stand amidst a policy-practice gap caused by a disregard of policy contextualization. The existing gap formulates the educational experience of refugees and contains their engagement within the social frame isolated from the economic or political engagement. However, there is a unique trait that distinguishes Syrian refugee education in Lebanon or perhaps is a sign of coalescing vernacular global citizenship. This trait is the ongoing hope for a better future for Syrian refugee students in a more hyper-connected world. In spite of all the challenges facing the ministry official's efforts and the teachers' and administrators' work, each of these



educational actors are still engaged with Syrian refugee education and present their humanitarian approach as a doorway to cross through the complexity of the Lebanese context. Furthermore, the Syrian refugee students appreciate the importance of their schooling and aspire to better futures.

In the following concluding chapter, I discuss some recommendations for the educational sector, such as updating the curriculum, enhancing the sector structure, and the need for further support for formal schools. I also discuss the study limitations. Finally, I suggest the possible foci for future research.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **8.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I conclude my study by reflecting on the findings and discussion to provide a set of recommendations for Syrian refugee education in Lebanon. These recommendations aim to assist the GoL, MEHE as well as other educational stakeholders in the country. Additionally, I address the limitations of the study and potential future research.

Accompanying the analysis of literature, policy, and non-participant observations, I use the thematic inductive approach to analyze the participants' interviews. At the ministry official's level, two major themes emerged: (1) challenges of contextualizing Syrian refugee education to the local; and (2) diversity and democracy. At the teachers' and administrators' levels, two themes are developed: (1) teachers' and administrators' coping dilemmas and (2) curricula for non-citizens. At the Syrian refugee students' level, three themes are generated: (1) impact of local diversity on the educational experience, (2) uncertainty generated from curriculum and language, and (3) effects of fragility on the educational experience. It became clear in the discussion of the findings that exploring Syrian refugee education in Lebanon presented challenging results, limitations, as well as future research trajectories.

### **8.2 Summary**

Within the policy context relevant to Syrian refugee education in Lebanon, different educational actors face different challenges. At the level of the ministry official, the main challenge focus on the contextualization of Syrian refugee education responding to international and local influences. At this level, issues of fragility,

funding, type of funding, and the increasing demands to move away from emergency education towards a separate education sector dominate. At the level of teachers and administrators, the day-to-day challenge within and outside the school is uncovered. Within the school, teachers and administrators have to work with depoliticizing class environment, student discrimination, language barriers, outdated curriculum, and lack of adequate funding to develop teaching quality and improve student experience. Outside the school, teachers and administrators face financial and economic crisis that increase their concerns over their livelihoods. At the Syrian refugee student level, the focus is on finding ways to participate, the diverse and fragile environment, the outdated curriculum and the language barriers, and how to use their education to attain a better future. Facing all these challenges, we still see commitment towards educating Syrian refugee students under the existing economically, socially and politically fragile environment.

### **8.3 Recommendations for the Educational Sector**

In this section, I present recommendations generated from the finding of this study. These recommendations are addressed in three areas:

#### ***8.3.1 Need for Updated Curriculum***

The students must be able to use the material taught in their classes. The disadvantage of an outdated curriculum is that it equips these students with content/skills that no longer fit or address the current context or problems. This leaves students less fit to engage challenges they may face during the course of their lives. From the research findings from the school sites chapter, I see that Syrian refugee students are very explicit in expressing their need to have an up-to-date curriculum. Some teachers, in parallel, indicate that the Lebanese curriculum may not be the best choice for the Syrian refugees who eventually will either return to their country or

travel to another destination. Some teachers even suggest having a hybrid curriculum joining elements from both the Syrian and Lebanese curricula. According to those teachers, such a format can help Syrian refugee students to better integrate within the Lebanese schools and within the society they may end up in. The need to update the Lebanese curriculum and integrate flexible aspects to address the large number of Syrian refugee students in the country is very evident.

### ***8.3.2 Need for Enhancing Sector Structure***

The educational sector is suffering from the negative macroeconomic factors that are affecting the whole country. Thus, there is an urgent need to digitize information regarding the number of schools, school distribution, population distribution, number of students available, number of students projected within the next five years, student nationalities, language proficiencies, and the cost per student per nationality. There is also a need for teacher training and information regarding the number of teachers, their remaining time before retirement, and the need for further teacher recruitment. This information should enable the ministry to have a better grip on the financial needs for the Lebanese as well as Syrian refugee students in the future. Furthermore, there is a need for complete financial restructuring for the educational sector to better rationalize revenues and expenditures. This would also provide the necessary information for any future negotiations with funding agencies.

### ***8.3.3 Need for Additional Financial Support for the Syrian Refugee Students***

Syrian refugee students are in dire need for additional financial support. Although covering the tuition costs have positive effects on access to formal schools, the devastating macroeconomic effects is hitting hard on families' financial situation. The cost of food, medicine, electricity, and the absence of minimum state services demand interference from the government and more so from the international

agencies. The latest financial and economic crises that started in Lebanon in 2019 push back any developmental projects and set refugees in need for humanitarian emergency funding as well as eliminated any hopes for developmental projects. At this time, to assist all students including the Syrian refugee students, it is highly recommended to maintain emergency funding and to reinitiate developmental projects. With the deterioration of the economy and monetary situation, these developmental projects cost much less in terms of land acquisition and labor.

#### **8.4 Study Limitations**

There are three main limitations noted in this study. First, this study is conducted in only two secondary formal schools in Lebanon in two different Lebanese cities with a small sample of participants. As a result, the findings are not representative of the educational experiences of secondary Syrian refugee students across different formal and private schools in country. Educational experiences in other secondary schools may reflect different challenges as a result of different Syrian student backgrounds, socio-economic conditions, and administrators' or teachers' approaches. Furthermore, the findings in this study do not reflect the educational experiences of secondary non-Syrian refugee students in Lebanon. However, recommendations derived from this study that have possible implications on refugee education may still be used for secondary non-Syrian refugee students in formal schools.

Second, the participants interviewed are limited to a ministry official, administrators, teachers, and students. This selection is made to ensure that the verticality of analysis, fulsome understanding, and the perspectives from diversely positioned actors are preserved across two different formal secondary schools. However, interviewing further groups such as Syrian refugee students at the

university level, Lebanese students, and UN officials in charge of Syrian refugee education in Lebanon may provide new and additional perspectives on formal secondary schooling and Syrian refugee education in Lebanon, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, interviewing Syrian refugee parents would add information to the analysis that could extend our understanding of the current situation of the Syrian refugee students. However, the situation in the country during the time I was doing fieldwork was extremely difficult and in some sense I was fortunate to be able to collect the data I did. This period is characterized by high social unrest, road closures, economic and monetary meltdown, and the spread of worldwide Covid19 pandemic. These unexpected and harsh conditions render movements and meetings a very challenging task, and interviewing additional groups of participants, which may add further perspectives to the analysis of this work, risky.

Third, past educational experiences in the Syrian schools are not considered in this study. However, due to the differences between the Lebanese and Syrian cultural backgrounds, illuminating previous educational experiences of Syrian students in Syria could be helpful. If the previous educational experience, their hopes, and expectations, are compared to their experience, hopes, and expectations during their stay in Lebanon, we may be able to construct a curriculum that better addresses their concerns. Such a comparison would also better assist in drawing or aligning the students' past with their present and future to complete our understanding of refugee education.

## **8.5 Future Research Suggestions**

Understanding the educational enactment of Syrian refugee students in two Lebanese formal schools is better attained from diverse sources of literature, policy documents, and participants' interviews. This study shows how the Syrian refugee

students use their education to create a better future in light of their relation with their colleagues, teachers, MEHE, and global actors. Further research may involve and focus on teachers and their teaching techniques in classes with no refugees, mixed local and refugee students, or exclusively refugee students. In-depth interviews, teaching techniques and philosophies, and in class observations would create a complementing view on the class administration and teaching improvements.

In this research, the analysis of the experiences of Syrian refugee students is not based on gender differences, though, the experiences of the Syrian girls' differ from that of the boys. These differences can occur at the personal level, within the bigger community, or within the schools. Future research would benefit from a comparative gender analysis showing how the experiences of Syrian refugee female students differ from male refugee students in a hosting country.

Future research should be directed toward a longitudinal analysis on the effects and results of Syrian refugees' education in Lebanon. Such a study would enable the researchers to track the students' experiences through a long period of time. This period would stretch from their schooling year to reach the university and after university graduation. For that purpose, students interviewed at the schools would be interviewed again after their school graduation, a third time after their university graduation, and for a final time few years after that. Feedback collected from all the interviews generates insightful information that could be used to further analyze the enactment of refugee education and improve upon it. It would also be able to engage my findings on the 'hope.' Perhaps this hope is in the end a naïve hope or perhaps it is generative in fueling the kinds of aspirations to which my participants were holding.

Finally, future refugee research could attend to the vertical analysis as an essential and integral part of the analysis. The vertical case study has provided a comprehensive cross-level understanding of how different educational actors work with refugee students, with each other, and their surroundings. Such an approach can assist in building a comprehensive overall view and complete our understanding of the subject at hand. To conclude, this study explores the enactment of Syrian refugee education in two formal secondary schools in Lebanon within a vertical case study. The study shows that challenges are facing all educational actors at different levels. Due to the overwhelming recent events in Lebanon, it is urgent to review funding needs and the corroboration between the GoL and the international organizations like UNHCR. There is a need to sustain both humanitarian as well as developmental investments in the country and to address policy practice gap while attending to the fragile Lebanese context. However, with all these challenges, educational actors remain committed to Syrian refugee education in the country—a definitive characteristic of education in Lebanon that generates hope for Syrian refugee students and their future.



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**Appendix A: Key Policies**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) I Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) II
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## Appendix B: Ethics Approval



# Western Research

Date: 6 March 2019

To: Dr. Paul Tarc

Project ID:

Study Title: Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanese Secondary Schooling: A Vertical Case Study

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: April 5 2019

Date Approval Issued: 06/Mar/2019

REB Approval Expiry Date: 06/Mar/2020

Dear Dr. Paul Tarc

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

### Documents Approved:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Classroom Recruitment Script_Students - Version 04 01 2019	Oral Script	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Classroom Recruitment Script_Teachers - Version 04 01 2019	Oral Script	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Focus Group interview Protocol - Students - Version 04 01 2019	Focus Group(s) Guide	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Interview Protocol - Administrators - Version 04 01 2019	Interview Guide	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Interview Protocol - Students - Version 04 01 2019	Interview Guide	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Interview Protocol - Teachers - Version 04 01 2019	Interview Guide	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Interview Protocol - Student (2) - Version 04 01 2019	Interview Guide	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Letter of Information and Consent-Administrator - Version 24 02 2019	Written Consent/Assent	24 Feb 2019	24/02/2019
Letter of Information and Consent-Student - Version 24 02 2019	Written Consent/Assent	24 Feb 2019	24/02/2019
Letter of Information and Consent-Teacher - Version 24 02 2019	Written Consent/Assent	24 Feb 2019	24/02/2019
Non - Participant's Observation Protocol - Version 04 01 2019	Non-Participant Observation Guide	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019
Telephone Script_Administrator - Version 04 01 2019	Recruitment Materials	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019

### Documents Acknowledged:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Student Interview Screening - Version 04 01 2019	Screening Form/Questionnaire	04 Jan 2019	04/01/2019

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Patterson, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).*



# Western Research

Date: 25 March 2020

To: Dr. Paul Tare

Project ID:

Study Title: Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanese Secondary Schooling: A Vertical Case Study

Application Type: NMREB Amendment Form

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: May 1 2020

Date Approval Issued: 25/Mar/2020

REB Approval Expiry Date: 06/Mar/2021

Dear Dr. Paul Tare,

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the amendment, as of the date noted above.

## Documents Approved:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Interview Protocol-Ministry Official Arbo-Version 09 02 2020	Translated Documents	09-Feb-2020	09/02/2020
Interview Protocol-Ministry Official-Version 09 02 2020	Interview Guide	09-Feb-2020	09/02/2020
Letter of Information and Consent-Ministry Arbo-Version 0	Translated Documents	09-Feb-2020	09/02/2020
Letter of Information and Consent-Ministry Official-Version 09 02 2020	Written Consent/ Assent	09-Feb-2020	09/02/2020
Telephone Script - Ministry Official Arbo-Version 09 02 2020	Translated Documents	09-Feb-2020	09/02/2020
Telephone Script - Ministry Official-Version 09 02 2020	Recruitment Materials	09-Feb-2020	09/02/2020

## Documents Acknowledged:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Translator Letter- Ministry Official	Translation Certificate	09-Feb-2020	09/02/2020

REB members involved in the research project do not participate in the review, discussion or decision.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Patterson, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).*



# Western Research

Date: 10 July 2020

To: Dr. Paul Tarc

Project ID:

Study Title: Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanese Secondary Schooling: A Vertical Case Study

Application Type: NMREB Amendment Form

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: August 7 2020

Date Approval Issued: 10 Jul 2020

REB Approval Expiry Date: 06 Mar 2021

Dear Dr. Paul Tarc,

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the amendment, as of the date noted above.

**Documents Acknowledged:**

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Transcriber Non-Disclosure Agreement - Version 30 05 2020	Cover Letters/Memos	30 May 2020	30 05/2020

REB members involved in the research project do not participate in the review, discussion or decision.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Patterson, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

*Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).*

### Curriculum Vitae

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**Name:** Georges Wakim

**Post-secondary:** Notre Dame University-Louaize

**Education and Degrees:** Notre Dame University-Louaize  
Louaize, Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon  
Master of Business Administration – Finance  
2002-2006  
University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
PhD Candidate Education  
2016-2022

**Related Work Experience:** Teaching Assistant

The University of Western Ontario 2018-2019

**Publication:** Faubert, B. C., Le, A. T. H., Swapp, D., Wakim, G., & Watson, K.  
(2019). Using the EBAM Across Educational Contexts: Calibrating for Technical,  
Policy, Leadership Influences. *International Journal of Education Policy and  
Leadership*, 14(4). <https://doi.org/10.22230/ijepl.2019v14n4a865>