

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT:
THE CASE OF BEIRUT BLAST

by
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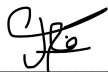
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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Disaster affects men and women differently. Some research shows that women are more vulnerable than men in disasters. Due to gender inequality, women are more affected disproportionately by disaster, such as they are more likely to lose their livelihoods and houses, gender-based violence, and loss of life pre and post the disaster. Although that, women show their capability to respond and recover from crisis through building community resilience and participating in disaster risk reduction.

Some theoretical approaches indicate the possibilities for Women's grassroots and non-profit organizations to adopt self-protective action in disasters based on their community work. In addition, some research indicates that women describe themselves as transformational leaders which have effective and impacted roles in disaster response plans. Even though, there is still a lack of research on women and disaster and particularly women leaders' roles in disaster management in Beirut Blast 2020.

This thesis explores women's leadership in disaster management in Beirut Blast 2020 focusing on disaster response, mitigation, and recovery phase. The importance of the thesis is to broaden the literature on women leadership and disaster management and to identify the significance of women leadership and building its resilience in disaster risk reduction and social change. Data were collected first from the seven women leaders of international and local NGOs and women grassroots: and three from women experts.

The present thesis will benefit researchers as a testimony to the crucial role of women leaders in disaster management in the Beirut Blast. Furthermore, the information generated by the interviewees allowed us to get a comprehensive picture of the status of Lebanese women leaders in Beirut Blast (roles, challenges, motivations, and actions). Revealed findings provide a specific roadmap for conceptualizing and enhancing Women's Leadership during and after Beirut Blast.

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ABBREVIATIONS

NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
UN	United Nations
UNDRR	The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

*To all women and girls
who are stepping up as leaders
in disaster response and recovery efforts
across the Arab Countries*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the decades, women have played an essential role and impact in disaster response and recovery. According to Enarson and Chakrabarti (2009) said that disasters are no more gender blind than the economic, political, social, and environmental development decisions that create them. Although women's capacities and skills are not used as a resource in disaster management, there is evidence that women can play the role of agents of change (Schmuck 2013). Thus, there is a need to indicate the role of women in disaster reduction, and to promote their role to be greatly involved in leadership and decision-making, and their essential position in their community.

To date, a review of the literature reveals that women's leadership can lead to disaster risk reduction and positive social transformation in the context of disaster settings. (Enarson et al. 2017). Furthermore, research studies on women and leadership show that women leaders are more “transformational” than men in the management of an organization (Carless 1998). Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders leads to positive changes in their employees through supporting and motivating them. This allow employees to be innovative and create change that develop the company. Transformational Leadership in non-profit organizations has a significant effect on building organizational resiliency and effectively motivating the volunteer workforce which enhances the service delivery to local communities during disasters and leads to social change (Valero et al. 2015). Resilience abolished women’s vulnerability in disaster through activating women's leadership and women’s grassroots groups and leads to long-term changes.

To date, there is a lack of empirical research that indicates that women's leadership leads to risk disaster reduction and social changes in Lebanon.

Therefore, the thesis contributes to the literature role of women in disaster management by taking a case study Beirut Port Explosion. First, the present thesis contributes to the literature by tackling the role of women's leadership in disaster risk reduction and social changes. Second, by investigating the role of women in disaster management during and after the Beirut Blast. Thus, the main research question is: How women's leadership leads to disaster risk reduction and social changes in the context of disasters? What is the role of women in disaster management in Lebanon during and after Beirut Explosion and what is their impacts? The methodology adopted for the thesis is a qualitative research study (Interviews) to examine and define the role of women in disaster management of the Beirut Explosion through the thoughts and experiences of interviewees.

A. Research Objective

This Literature Review will concentrate on exploring the role of women in disaster management and its relation to disaster risk reduction and social change. The Literature Review will form a theoretical and research background base for the research study of the thesis.

The objective of the thesis is to build a conceptual framework that will be comprised of two main dimensions namely:

The first is to broaden the literature on women leadership and disaster management and the second is to identify the significance of women leadership and building its resilience in disaster risk reduction and social change.

B. Overview of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters; the first chapter is the introduction that includes an overview of women's leadership in disaster, the research question, and the objective of the thesis. The second chapter is about the conceptual framework; it explains the role of women leaders in disaster risk reduction, building resilience and long-term changes. The third chapter is the literature review that explains the theoretical approaches of women and disaster and women as transformational leader during and after disaster. The fourth chapter presents women leadership in the Arab countries and disaster management. It indicates the challenges that women leaders face in disaster management and shows documented experiences of the Arab women in disaster. The fifth chapter is the methodology which is the Gioia method that is used in the data collection and the analysis and provides the source of primary data, sample, recruitment, and data collection. The sixth chapter is the discussions/findings that shows the data in four themes: Essential Role of Women during and after Beirut Blast, Challenges and Barriers faced by Women, Motivations and Incentives, and Better Integration of Women Leadership during disaster. The seventh chapter is the analysis which illustrates the roadmap of conceptualizing and Enhancing Women Leadership. The last chapter is the conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, two main themes addressing the research question will be tackled: (1) Theoretical Approaches on Women and Disaster and (2) Women Leadership in Disaster (Crisis Leadership and Transformational Leadership). The theoretical approaches will provide an insight on the role significance and the equality role of women in disaster management, response, and mitigation. Women leadership during disasters is characterized by Transformational Leadership, which emphasizes the role of women grassroots and volunteers in the disaster response and mitigation. Thus, based on these two key themes and by using two conceptual frameworks, women leadership and their resilience lead to disaster risk reduction and social changes. From that, the conceptual framework of the thesis will be presented.

A. Women and Disaster: Theoretical Approaches

There is no single theoretical framework for disaster research on women and men. Thus, most researchers, when researching about disaster from a gender perspective, adopt different approaches.

The first approach adopted is the social vulnerability approach (Blaikie et al. 2004; Bolin et al. 1998 and Hewitt 1997). This approach argues that disasters show the distribution of power between different groups (local, international, government and grassroots). And the disaster risks are socially distributed according to society's social divisions which based on

sex, race, class, culture, age, nationality, and others, and intersect with situational and contextual dimensions such as physical disabilities, citizenship status, and political relation with state authorities. This approach can drive to overgeneralizing women at a social level and overemphasizing their dependency (Fordham 2004). Nevertheless, this approach encourages researchers to investigate more on the structural sources of vulnerability related to gender, from gender violence to the rights of land and poverty (Enarson et al. 1998).

Another approach relies on feminist theories, Enarson and Phillips (2000) argue that disaster sociology that defines disaster by social processes and structures should be related with the feminist theories as they utilize similar concepts when researching on disaster such as they use these concepts social power, vulnerability, political economy, empowerment, and social change. For instance, when scholars who study sociology of the disaster state that disasters affect the social system by leading to the disruption of power between different groups, feminist theory asks what social system they are referring at, are they referring to the social system that includes only main actors like government and international organizations. The feminist theory ensures women inclusion in the disaster research.

A third strand of literature relies on development theory, such as the research studies done by Fernando et al. 1997 and Tinker 1990. From this aspect, understanding the disaster vulnerability cannot be without connecting it to patriarchy and the global capitalism, and colonialism. As men are pressured to migrate for work because of the free trade policies, which leaves women and children in unsustainable and risky living conditions. Gender and Development theorists as liberal feminists see that the main factors of gendered disaster vulnerability are poor health care system for women and children, and lack of education for

women. However, gender and development theorists emphasize the important role of women's agency to take self-protective action in disaster according to their community work.

The gender approach in disaster risk reduction also has shown that women respond more than men to disaster warnings with self-protective actions like evacuation (Fothergill 1998). This approach highlights the significant role of women and girls in disasters by changing the status of women in disasters from victims to important actors (Acar et al. 2001; Enarson et al. 2004). In addition to that, it attracts attention to the strategies that women leaders in grassroots groups adopt in a disaster situation to support marginalized groups like refugees, single mothers, and widows.

For aligning with the objective of thesis, the above extensive revision of literature is done about the theoretical approaches of gender and disaster. The four approaches adopt different arguments and perspectives, and they agree that women and girls have a significant and impacting role in disaster and the right of women and girls to be included in the disaster response plan. Basing on that, the research of the thesis will contribute in examining the role of women in disaster management.

B. Women and Crisis Leadership

In this part, three main arguments will be presented: (1) Transformational Leadership is effective in disaster response, and transformational leaders in disasters mitigate the damage of the disaster and help and support the affected through building resilience. (2) Transformational leadership in the non-profit organization leads to disaster risk reduction through empowering and supporting the volunteers. (3) Women leaders' characteristics are

similar to Transformational Leaders during the disaster.

1. Crisis Leadership: Transformational Leadership

Due to many disasters that happened in recent years, public policy research has focused more on crisis management leadership. There are different approaches suggested to improve crisis management policy and administration. According to Lan (2005), crisis management leadership is preventing the disaster from happening, whereas crisis management is taking post-disaster action.

And according to Allan (2005), there are four factors related to the crisis leadership model: (1) information gathering, (2) external conscience, (3) preparation, and (4) experience. Allan (2005) suggested this crisis leadership model could improve the leadership style by resolving issues related to it. Crisis management policies that are implemented well can reduce the damage of the property.

Inefficient crisis management leads to an increase in the damage of the property as well as life loss. A thinking commander, who can analyze the confronts of the situation in the crisis and continue to achieve his required mission, has a transformational leadership style. Through adopting a specific leadership style in different situations, thinking commanders influence a situation. According to some researchers, crisis leadership is like transformational leadership as it focuses on the interaction and developing relations with the team members or followers and their perception of the leadership influence (Yukl, 2006).

According to Frederick, Eziaku, and James (2019), transformational leadership helps in the decision-making process for existing and new post-crisis projects. It also fosters the relationship between team members of post-disaster projects. Transformational leadership

style has a major effect on the attitudes and opinions of team members. It forms a common mentality that leads to the achievement of organizational goals.

2. Transformational leadership in the nonprofit sector

In addition to that, transformational leadership has a positive relationship with commitment and engagement in nonprofit organizations. Though many research studies focused on the impact of transformational leadership in for-profit organizations, recent research studies identified the benefits of transformational leadership on the nonprofit sector. The transformational leader is characterized by a dynamic and charismatic leadership style. Transformational leadership improves the efficiency of the human resources management in the nonprofit organization by providing more effective strategies for decision-making and structuring conflict resolution. Besides, it provides effective strategies for fiscal and material resource management and strengthens the commitment and engagement of the nonprofit volunteers. Thus, it ensures sustainable service delivery organizations for the communities during and after the crisis (Witton et al., 2019).

Moreover, Transformational leaders inspire volunteers, involve them in decisions, and care about their development. This is a major component of disaster risk management strategy that seeks fostering community recovery and resilience in vulnerable regions. According to The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 "civil society, including volunteers and community-based organizations, is a vital stakeholder in supporting the implementation of disaster risk reduction at all levels." And the United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/RES/56/38) indicates that disaster response is one of the leading

fields in which volunteers contribute to the development of the society. Thus, Transformational leadership can lead to disaster risk reduction through empowering and motivating the volunteer workforce.

3. Women and Transformational Leadership during Disaster

The recent research on transformational leadership redefines "good" leadership. For instance, one research differentiates between leaders and managers. Managers focus only on maintaining the organization, and they are evaluated based on completing their job. As for leaders, they focus on changing the norm. Thus, transformational or "Good" leaders are characterized by charisma, good communication skills as they build relationships with their employees, and support toward their employees to achieve their greatest potential (Mumby, 2013).

Regarding Transformational Leadership and gender, there are no major differences between both genders if transformational leadership works. Men describe themselves as transactional leaders, who value order and structure, supervision and a system of rewards and punishments to achieve short-term goals as stated in the below quotes,

“men view job performance as a series of transactions with subordinates-exchanging rewards for services rendered or punishment for inadequate performance. The men are also more likely to use a power that comes from their organizational position and formal authority.” (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003)

While women describe themselves as transformational leaders (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003), according to Sharif (2019), women's leadership behavior is reflective of

transformational leadership. Women leaders display characteristics of the Transformational Leadership, as they encourage open communication, use relationship adaptations, and resort to trust with their employees (Khurram, 2019).

Women work on practices that change the self-interest of each team member into the interest of the whole team (Wood, 2019). Researchers point that the powers of the women come from their characteristics that are interpersonal skills, charisma, and dedication (Wood, 2019).

Additionally, women leaders seek to encourage and motivate the team members for participating and empower them to share information (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). These types of leaders see that contributing to the well-being of the team members will increase their self-esteem and lead to enhanced performance (Wood, 2019). The socializing characteristics of women are the basis for interactive leadership (Wood, 2019) Women leaders believe that the Transformational leadership style is essential as the demand for participation in the workplace is increasing (Wood, 2019).

From the above three arguments and according to Barbara and Shilpa (2003) who identify the characteristics of a transformational leader in disaster (internal control, self-acceptance, and self-confidence) (pp. 387-404), women leaders' characteristics are similar to the characteristics of a transformational leader during a crisis, which makes them effective actors during and after a disaster in reducing risks and empowering marginalized female groups through women's grassroots movements. Women leaders' resilience and initiative during and after disasters played an important role in building relations and trust with the affected people. They provide health and psychological support. And they empower local marginalized female groups to participate in disaster response and recovery plans.

Additionally, women leaders advocate women's inclusion in the decision-making process of the government disaster risk reduction plan and the international organizations' response plan. Besides that, women leaders ensure the collaboration with marginalized groups for better and effective disaster response and recovery. Thus, women transformational leadership leads to disaster risk reduction through encouraging and empowering volunteers' workforce and all women's groups.

C. Conceptual Framework

The above Literature review indicates the main women and disaster theoretical approaches and the main arguments about women and crisis leadership. Therefore, one can conclude that women transformational leadership leads to disaster risk reduction. While researching on disaster and women leadership in the Lebanese context, there is no research on women leadership during and after Beirut's Blast; thus, the thesis will present research on women leadership in disaster management, taking the case of Beirut Port Explosion. To form the thesis's conceptual framework, I have used two conceptual frameworks in line with an empirical data-collection methodology focused on the women leadership in disaster management during and after Beirut's Blast. The two conceptual frameworks show that women's leadership can lead to disaster risk reduction and social change during and after the disaster. The two conceptual frameworks are as follows: (1) activating women's grassroots movements after a disaster leads to major social changes (Enarson & Chakrabarti, 2009). Some research studies point that organized women's grassroots have been involved in relief work. Enarson et al. (2007) notes that "this demonstrates the effectiveness of women's

grassroots actions, despite limited resources and initial, external opposition in some situations” (p. 138). And (2) women’s resilience plays a significant role in disaster response, mitigation and recovery. Thus, based on the above literature review and the two conceptual frameworks, women leadership leads to disaster risk reduction and positive changes in women’s and men’s relations during a disaster, which are preserved for the longer term.

1. Women and Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster preparedness minimizes vulnerabilities and is better than post-disaster responsiveness. Building a culture of prevention is crucial to identify daily hazards and the consequences of a disaster. Disaster risk reduction is defined as

"the conceptual framework of elements considered with the possibilities to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout society, to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development." (Ginige, K. et al., 2009, p.28)

Thus, disaster risk reduction should be a significant component of policies and developmental strategies for local governments. On the another hand, disaster reduction addresses risk reduction including social equity, environmental protection, and economic growth. These three bases do not increase the vulnerability to disasters.

In addition to that, there is a need for a women inclusion perspective that is integrated in all disaster reduction policies for decreasing women’s vulnerability in disasters. For instance, women and men mainstreaming is an approach to promote empowerment of women and gender equality. It is essential to include it in the disaster reduction policies as “gender

shapes capacity and vulnerability to disasters.” Women and Men mainstreaming in disaster reduction enables women to minimize their vulnerability by identifying their specific needs during the disaster management process, and it empowers women to reach equality in their roles during disaster risk reduction. (Ginige, K. et al., 2009).

Moreover, the UN/ISDR Publication (2008), which emphasizes and illustrates the role of women in disaster preparedness and response efforts through a series of good practices from different countries around the world, shows the linkage among women’s experiences within disaster management and disaster risk reduction (DRR). It illustrates that the participation of women in community affairs is an important key step for women to realize their full potential as leaders of disaster risk reduction and the community relief and recovery practices to protect livelihoods. In addition to that, training, empowering, and supporting women during disasters leads to disaster risk reduction. For instance, the development interventions done by the NGOs (ActionAid International with the partnership with Disaster Emergency Committee) position women at the center of enhancing the resilience of the communities during climate disasters and other risks in the Andaman Islands. These interventions show that women, even in areas that have low community roles due to traditional norms, can have a significant role in reducing disaster risks and assisting their communities to adapt to climate change. Training women on disaster preparedness (like fishing, learning to swim, and water management) helped women to adapt to the predicted climate risks such as the risk of flooding and changing rainfall patterns. Therefore, training women during disasters on recovery and relief practices leads to disaster risk reduction.

2. Women Resilience and Long-term changes

The researchers Moreno and Shaw (2018) found in their conceptual framework that resilience in women's and men's relations can lead to long-term changes and empower women during disasters. Women's resilience that appears in grassroots organizations and leadership showed its feasibility in leading to long-term changes. Women were able to participate more and affect decision-making processes in the areas that are restricted from them during disasters. For instance, the development of fisherwomen in the post-disaster period (The 2010 Chile earthquake and tsunami) showed that resilience leads to long term changes in the productive role of women. Thus, resilience enabled a transformation in the position of women in the community. These women conducted more positions in the social, political, and economic fields. This transformation is called transformative change. Temporal and permanent changes happen after activating resilience. Resilience appears as an adaptive capacity that can step back or move forward relying on the period of disaster (pre- or post-disaster period). Moreno and Shaw (2018) suggest that long-term changes show the resilient ability to move forward whereas short-term changes show the ability to step back. An example in this regard is the development of "Palomitas Blancas" a fisherwoman group to a large organization during Chile fishermen's crisis (Dynes, 2005) and its return to its pre-disaster level. Nonetheless, the condition of "moving forward" (the resilient ability) is as the condition that leads to women's empowerment such as in the development of women's leadership, who emerged as leaders for the community and recovered order in the community after the disaster.

Based on the above literature review and represented conceptual frameworks, supporting women's leadership through development interventions (like training) leads to

disaster risk reduction and women's resilience that appears in leadership, empowers women, and leads to long-term social changes. With the absence or less contribution of research to the study of women's leadership during the disaster, this thesis will develop more insight on this perspective. The primary reason for selecting the three topics (women leadership, disaster risk reduction, and social changes) is to verify whether there is any relationship between them or not in a disaster. Relating these three topics together will illustrate the role of women in disaster management and will be used as testimony toward any negligence of the significant role of women in disaster response and recovery plans. Therefore, it is essential to unfold the major role of women in disaster management of the Beirut Port Explosion. In other terms, does women's leadership and building its resilience lead to disaster risk reduction and social changes during and after the Beirut Port Explosion. Be that as it may, this thesis will line up the concepts that would explore the framework of women's leadership in disaster management of the Beirut Port Explosion, considering leading to disaster risk reduction and social changes.

Picking it from there, the data collection focused on documenting the role of women during and after Beirut Blasts and its impacts. The findings of this data would show the significant role that women had during and after the blast and would help understand the various challenges and opportunities faced and their ways of coping with them. Additionally, it would increase the awareness on Women Leadership in disaster management and emphasize how to better integrate them during disasters. Women's response to disaster is important as men's response. Accordingly, women's and men's role complement each other.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN THE ARAB WORLD AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

“Disaster does not discriminate, but people do” (Ahmadein et al., 2021). The impact of the disaster on individuals varies based on socio-economic measures and based on sex as women suffered disproportionately due to gender inequalities. Additionally, disasters increase and reinforce gender equality. Beirut Port Explosion worsened the situation of women and girls in Lebanon. 150,000 women are displaced after the explosion and need basic services, which urgently requires shelter and access to health care. (EuroMed Feminist Initiative and European Union, 2020). Moreover, the explosion only magnified the pre-existing economic and financial problems, making life much worse not only for Lebanese women but also for migrant and refugee women, women living with disabilities, and many others already living on the periphery and hidden beneath layered inequalities.

In the Arab World, women and girls are considered the most vulnerable populations in the world. This is due to regional barriers linked to unequal economic opportunities and gender biases on women’s jobs, incomes, and businesses which affect women more than men in financial and economic crises.

Regardless of that, Arab women's role during COVID 19 pandemic was crucial. They were at the core of the health emergency response as most workers in the healthcare and social services sectors were women. Arab women’s participation in the COVID 19 pandemic led to disaster risk reduction. (OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus, 2020)

There is lack of research on the essential role of Arab women in disasters. For that,

UNDRR - Regional Office for Arab States developed the first publication in the Arab States region, a collection of best practices based on documented experiences of mainstreaming gender in disaster risk reduction. These documented experiences are from different Arab countries (Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, State of Palestine, Somalia, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen). They are classified into five main themes: “Theme I: Integrating Gender into Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction; Theme II: Women on the Front Line in the Fight against COVID-19; Theme III: Gender Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development; Theme IV: Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence through Disaster Risk Reduction; and Theme V: Gender-Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction in the Agriculture and Water Sector” (Ahmadein et al., 2021). Each theme represents different case studies from each Arab country, and these case studies illustrate major roles of women in disaster. For instance, women in Iraq participate in building peace and collaboration in the community through mediation. Also in Lebanon, “women play an important role at various levels of the Lebanese society. They have naturally been engaged to play an equally important role in DRR and enhancing resilience. This has been especially true in relation to increasing awareness on prevention and playing the role of first responders and decision makers” (Ahmadein et al., 2021).

Despite the effective participation of women in disaster risk reduction and their leadership in building community resilience, women's actions are still disregarded. The role of women in the decision-making process for the disaster management (response and mitigation) is still at a lower level in the Arab World, especially in Lebanon due to different barriers which are:

- Patriarchal culture: Many researchers indicated that the patriarchal culture is the

main obstacle that limits the inclusion of women in the decision-making process and leadership. Women in Lebanon are seen as secondary to men, as the social foundations in Lebanon are based on the patriarchal system.

- Structure of the family: Some research shows that the family size and its composition affect the power of women in the decision-making process in households, particularly in developing countries (Hemachandra et al., 2018).

- Household workload: Women are overburdened with household work, particularly after a disaster since many men have to work outside in some developing countries (Hemachandra et al., 2018). In Lebanon, Lebanese women are considered to be responsible for domestic work like cleaning, cooking, and caring for children. This will limit their participation in the disaster risk reduction plan.

- Policies and legislation: 30% of women's representation in leadership positions were targeted and endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1990 and reinsured in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. But the reality is that most women in developing countries are not aware of policies and legislations for women's empowerment (Hemachandra et al., 2018). This leads to limiting the role of women in political, social, and economic leadership.

- Organizational Culture: The patriarchal culture of governmental organizations limits the role of women in the decision-making of Disaster Risk Reduction plans. Rachel Dore-Weeks, UN Women's representative in Lebanon, and Lina Abirafeh, Executive Director for the Arab Institute for Women at the Lebanese American University stated that: "there are profound inequalities between women and men, which are too often seen as peripheral to the so-called "real issues" of economic crisis and political insecurity. Yet, the

depth and pervasiveness of these sex biases in Lebanon shape the country. They fuel the celebration of militarism and put women and girls at higher risks of discrimination, poverty, and violence – particularly during emergencies" (Hemachandra et al., 2018).

- Political environment: Women in political positions are important not because of their strategic importance but for their benefits and impact. However, due to the minimum representation of women in the governmental sector, this reduces their decision-making power at the national level. For example, an unhealthy political environment has prevented women from participating in political positions and decision-making processes in Lebanon. For instance, the patriarchal system in Lebanon prevented women from pursuing their careers in Leadership at the governmental level and limited them from pursue jobs at the lower secretarial/ administrative level. Additionally, Lebanese women suffer from discrimination and sexual harassment in the labor market and across the community (UN Women, 2020). Lebanon has a high rate in the gender gaps around the world (145 out of a total of 153 countries based on the Global Gender Gap Report, 2020) and the lowest rates of participation of women in politics (149 out of 153 countries) and in the labor market (139 out of 153 countries) (EuroMed Feminist Initiative and European Union ,2020). This means that Lebanon has an inequality in women’s presence in the political and economic spheres. This gap will take at least 150 years to close. Beirut showed these inequalities through the deep economic disparities of the country, with large spaces of urban slums. These flaws were before the latest tragedies (UN Women, 2020).

As with the above challenges that women faced, Sujit Kumar Mohanty Chief of Office UNDRR – Regional Office for the Arab States sees that there is an opportunity for the women of the region to show strength and resilience; And the UNDRR publication, as

mentioned in the previous paragraph, “stands as testimony to the many women and girls who are already stepping up as leaders in disaster risk reduction efforts across the Arab States,” and their achievements are inspired (Ahmadein et al., 2021, p.4).

Thus, the major argument for increasing the role of women in disaster management and decision making in disaster response and recovery is that its ability of developing the government responsiveness and effectiveness. This helps in accomplishing inclusive development governance that aids in developing trust and confidence in the governmental sector and enhancing the sustainability and responsiveness of public policies (Hemachandra et al., 2018).

Furthermore, women leadership ensures inclusiveness of their interests and properly addresses their issues. Similarly, the role of women in DRR policy/ strategy making is not at a satisfactory level. Many international frameworks attempted to introduce women in decision making to achieve equity, equality and ensure good governance at all levels of decision making. Traditionally, women are considered as victims of disasters, but new developments have been taken place by identifying capacities and skills of women towards DRR efforts. Present roles of women in DRR efforts are uneven across different nations, regions, and continents (Hemachandra et al., 2018).

Based on the above, this research aims at examining and analyzing women leadership in Lebanon during and after Beirut Blast and its role in disaster risk reduction and social change.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

The research method that it is adopted by this thesis is qualitative methods. According to Gioia et al. (state that “researchers are involved in qualitative studies and, in considering the context people have built, that is to say, how people have a sense of their life and the interactions in the world they have.”

The research includes an in-depth empirical study. The study on women’s leadership in disaster management, taking the case of Beirut Blast. Thus, based on the article by Gioia, Corely, and Hamilton entitled: *Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology*, this thesis selected Gioia methodology.

There are two main reasons for selecting this methodology which are: first, this tool is fully compatible with the demands of the quality data analysis; second, it is a method of organizing and analyzing the raw data without losing its consistency and authenticity. Thus, the Gioia methodology is the exact tool to adopt for the data analysis for this study. According to Gioia et. al (2012), the main purpose of the Gioia methodology is to present a “systematic approach to new concept development and grounded theory articulation that is designed to bring “qualitative rigor” to the conduct and presentation of inductive research.” Gioia Methodology aims to “encourages the presentation of the research findings in a way that demonstrates the connections among data, the emerging concepts, and the resulting grounded theory.” In addition to that, the methodology aimed for “devising of an approach that allowed for a systematic presentation of both a “1st-order” analysis (i.e., an analysis using informant-centric terms and codes) and a “2nd- order” analysis (i.e., one using researcher-centric

concepts, themes, and dimensions; for the inspiration for the 1st- and 2nd-order labeling, see Van Maanen, 1979). Taken together, the tandem reporting of both voices—informant and researcher—allowed not only a qualitatively rigorous demonstration of the links between the data and the induction of this new concept, sense giving, but also allowed for the kind of insight that is the defining hallmark of high-quality qualitative research.”

A. Primary Data

The primary data are the interviews that were conducted with women leaders from different NGOs and grassroots organizations who were involved in the work during and after the Beirut Blast and Women experts. As for the secondary data are research on women and disaster (Theoretical Approaches) and women and crisis leadership, the research based on academic journals, books and articles that focus on women role during disaster and its impacts.

Due to COVID-19 health requirement, the interviews were conducted online on Zoom (secured and safe call). The interviews are recorded after the approval of the participants in both languages Arabic and English depending on the preference of the interviewees. The recordings were transcribed for coding and data analysis of the research. The English recordings were transcribed using smart transcription software (Otter) which the questions and answers were transcribed according to Speakers (Speaker 1: Question and Speaker 2: Answer). For the Arabic recordings, they were translated simultaneously while transcribing them. Therefore, an interview protocol has been developed including 10 interview questions to interviewees in English with translation to Arabic (please check the Appendix I).

1. Sample

The sample for this research included 10 women leaders and Experts from Lebanon; 8 women directors, officer and advisor from different organizations (UN Women, Khadeet Beirut Initiative at AUB, Najde, FiftyFifty, Fe-Male, The Lebanese Council To Resist Violence Against Women (LECORVAW), The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL), Beb W Chebek and Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)) and two gender experts from the American University of Beirut and other organization. The criteria of inclusion to interview participants is women leader worked during and after the Beirut Blast and women who are women experts. For the confidentiality of the research, the name of the participants was hidden. Most of these women are leaders for local and international NGOs and women experts in institutions and public sector.

2. Recruitment

For recruitment, I contacted the participants through their organizational and institutional offices and publicly available email contacts, some of participants has provided the contact of someone to contacted them as a snowball recruitment. After that, an official invitation was sent inviting them to participate in the research including a clear explanation of the research objectives and a consent form explaining that their participation in the study is voluntary and that the research assures confidentiality of all records.

Most of the participants already expressed interest to read the paper once done. The research will be shared with all participants upon request.

B. Data Collection

For confidentiality purpose as stated in the consent form in the previous paragraph and since the interviews have personal reflections on the research questions, it is recommended not to share the transcriptions at the end of the thesis. The purpose of the interviews was to examine the role of women during and after the Beirut Blast and its impacts. One challenge faced during the data collection is that some of the participants does have answer to certain questions. There was a shed light on their work that they had during Beirut Blast and their inputs on how to interfere more women in disaster management. Following, the data analysis part will present the findings of the interviews and explain about the data collected.

C. Role in the Research

Regarding my role in the research, I consider my position as an insider who has a deep understanding of the situation of women in disaster management in Lebanon. I was extensively exposed to literature on Lebanon and the Arab world and the perspective on women's role in disaster management. Literature shows that patriarchy and culture affect mainly the women's situation in this field; however, there is a lack of consideration of the significant role of women in disaster response and mitigation plans. This thesis is to contribute to the literature by showing the crucial role of women in disaster management. During the interviews, I was reacting to the interviewees' answers. This affected positively the interview as the participants were more eager to explain about their roles and their viewpoints.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSIONS/FINDINGS

As the thesis is based on qualitative data analysis, I adopted Gioia's approach, this approach provides a systemic order for the processing of raw data in the methodology. The coding is performed by using raw data, this represents the first order review. In addition, the second order review (themes) is followed by a systemic approach which based by the first order data processing (comprehensive compendial). Following the Literature review and coding the data from the interviews conducted, the analysis part is the next to perform. The data analysis is analyzing the data of the interviews obtained after implementing the Gioia methodology. This includes: First order codes from the transcripts, these codes are made as summarized concepts based on the answers of each participant. Basing on Gioia et al. which suggest to continually revisit the data to find similarities across it all and indicate the themes that would outline these codes. Performing this step leads to applying the idea of Thematic Analysis, which drawing a table that includes Themes and each theme has group of codes.

During the interviews phase, similarities and differences across the data were indicated, some participants shared the same thoughts regarding the significance of the role of women during disaster and the challenges they faced. To code the data effectively from the interviews' transcripts, cutting and sorting method is adopted. The method is based on reading the transcripts and choose and collect potent statements that are related to the research question. The content statements are copied and pasted on small cards, and on the

back of each card I wrote the reference of the quote (the interviewee who stated and where it appeared in which interview questions). Then I put the card together randomly on the table and start collect the quotes that has similar concepts. Next, after reading and analyzing each collection of quotes, I gave each of them a name which is the theme. After that, these quotes are put on table with its Themes and reference (the name of participant who stated it and its location in the transcript). This method represents how these themes are shown in the transcripts. Below the table includes all the results of this method and the themes formed.

First Order Concepts	Second Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment - Aid Distribution (Hygiene Kit, Clothes, food, and others) - Mental Health Service - Decision Making - Relief Operations - Legal Support - Advocacy and Awareness - Renovating Houses 	Role of Women led NGOs	Essential Role of Women during and after Beirut Blast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leading - Humanitarian and Direct Interventions - Volunteering and Guidance - Resilience 	Local Women Participation on the ground	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination - Patriarchy - Gender-based violence - Mental Health Disorders - Burden Responsibilities 	Social	Challenges and Barriers faced by Women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jobs Loss/ Lost their Businesses - Worsening Health Outcomes - Lost their houses - Gender Inequality - Economic Crisis 	Economic and Financial Crisis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of Leadership - No Gender Inclusion/Policy - Gender-based violence - Absence in the decision-making process 	Political/ Government	
Specific Quotes of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Women Groups Collaboration + Job Opportunities + Speaking Out + More roles for women during disaster + Make Collaborations 	Motivations and Incentives
Selected Quotes of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Self-Awareness and Empowerment +Decision Maker in Governmental Level +Awareness + Advocacy and Partnership with Local Communities +Support 	Better Integration of Women Leadership during disaster

Figure 1 Summary of the Thematic Analysis

This chapter provides a detailed examination of the findings presented in the table above. The findings demonstrated five aggregated dimensions for perspectives of women's role during and after Beirut Blast. First is the dimension of the role of women during and after Beirut Blast, which participant described about it and highlight its significance. Next, the expected findings show the challenges and barriers faced by women from different aspects (Social, Economic and Political). In addition, we have the motivation and incentives of women's role during and after the blast which are described by the interviewees. Moreover, the interviewees reflections and viewpoints on the Better Integration of Women Leadership during disaster. At the end, there is Roadmap of conceptualizing and Enhancing Women Leadership.

A. Essential Role of Women during and after Beirut Blast

1. Role of Women led NGOs

This theme represents the significant role that women played during and after the Beirut Blast. There are two main groups of women that each have role according to their jobs, experience, and knowledge. The first group is women led NGOs (Director of local NGOs, Board Member of NGOs, Project officers and coordinators in NGOs) and this group engage in multiple methods that tackle different aspects of the Blast. They did an assessment, "We did a rapid assessment with other organizations to identify what the needs are exactly. Based on them, we did the response" LS1. After that, they started working on practical parts such as Aid Distribution (Hygiene Kit, Clothes, food, and others), "Lobbying with our donors so that we could buy kits and distribute to women and girls, and this was referred to as 'Hygiene

Kits' that included all items, nearly 23, related to personal hygiene of women and girls" AA1; "Most of the interventions were from local NGOs and focused on the issues like food distribution, hygiene kit, or services that are psychosocially-related" LA1; "we started to distribute dignity kits that contained all the things women needed like sanitary pads and others"GF1; "distributing them with the support of fabric aid mission of joy. Tomorrow Saturday, we have a bunch of distribution. We have got some paints, paints Ganon, and, we have distributed them to some of the people affected with the blast. We have donated 25 laptops, also to the children of the families who are affected by the Beirut Blast" ND1.

In addition, as the psychological effects of the disaster, such as stress reactions, Emotional instability, and other psychological symptoms, have a huge impact on the well-being of individuals and communities (Makwana N., 2019), women leaders of NGOs work on psychosocial support, "We worked directly with women and girls by providing healing through arts by teaching and showing them how to express themselves and through sports by launching football and basketball activities for young girls" AA2, "We also worked with the PFA for the sake of the traumatized people after Beirut's blast. We were actually working on case management, and we distributed our Hotline phone number... as when we stressed about Gender Based Violence, women felt more secure. This actually encouraged them to talk about the violence that they faced and how they defended themselves" GF4.

Moreover, this group interfere in the relief operations, for instance giving cash to the affected people, "We insisted on intervening with cash as it is the first priority identified by the affected community... we insisted on giving money on dollars not in Lebanese Pounds, and we gave money in dollars for the affected families" LA2. And renovating houses, "almost

all the windows have been renovated and closed before the winter time, because this was, you know, this was a need, and it was raised many times and on a daily basis that we need to close the windows of this, it was a priority for us, sometimes even before the medicine, because we knew that people cannot stay in that apartment, and in their houses under the rain” JA2.

Furthermore, women NGOs leaders offered legal support and played an important role in advocacy and awareness, “women from different areas come to help is to put the issue of the intersectionality on the table which is well spell out in the Charter” CG2, “so multiple organization came together and did a coalition so that response to be more towards women and to have gender lense and for women to be taken into consideration in the response and reform plan” JM2. One of the interviewees explained how women NGOs leaders enhance gender inclusion and intersectional in the international response plan, “After that, they did advocacy events with a donor community as basically the donor community was caring and responsible for funding, aids and all issues related to Beirut’s blast. Indeed, there was a rejection on sending the aids and funds through the government. So, particularly, the donor community was doing the response. First, the NGOs did a meeting with the Embassy of Canada. They presented them the Charter of demands, and they demanded the embassy that all its projects and aids to be compatible with their Charter of demands, needs, concerns and to take them into consideration. Thus, this was effectively successful. The second advocacy meeting was done with UN, World Bank and EU before writing the three RF plan. They told them what they wanted, which areas and angles they wanted to focus more, and how not to give aids to areas that were still discriminating against women, aids needed to be conditioned

that on the basis of no discrimination against women, and all different needs of women should be taken into consideration. Based on that, the three RF plan was gendered, and it was opposite to the first response plan done by the World Bank. Additionally, the task forces in the three RF plan included the presentation of women so that women are not taken as victims and beneficiaries but also as leaders in their communities, having a voice and being decision makers. This was a chief principle and one of the issues that they were focusing lot on. Hence, these NGOs and individuals became members of the three RF plan and influenced it. They affected the health sector, educational, and social in terms of gender-based violence” LS3.

2. Local Women Participation on the ground

The second women group is local women group, they were at the forefront in responding to the disaster and main support of NGOs on the ground. They were resilient, strong, and active towards reducing the risk of the disaster, “I would say that Lebanese women showed a lot of resilience, a lot of positivity, a lot of presence on the ground. You know, it's, of course it's a huge crisis, huge adversity that we all we all face, but because this also happened, it created as well, an opportunity for women to show, for Lebanese women to show, you know, their unification, to show their work, to show how smart they are, and how devoted” JA6, “the resilience of the women and girls of the explosion areas was very advanced as their strength was visible and clear, even for women who lost members of their families” AA7.

And they participated in leading on the ground, “We needed to divide women into two groups, the first group concerning the victims and the other for the affected women. These women, at the beginning (at the first stage after the explosion), were not asked about their

needs. So, NGOs immediately began to work and did not consider these women as biased. They were leaders and presented their communities, and thus should be implicated. In the second stage, after the NGOs noticed the women Blind response plan and made the Feminist Charter of demands, meetings were established in which UN representatives led them to include all those women who lived in the affected areas in the decision-making process and in the response plan. Thus, each stage differed in how it deals with women and how women were involved in the response and if they were asked to have voice in the response plan” LS4.

In addition, they interfered in the humanitarian and direct interventions, ““Most of who responded and most of NGOs in Lebanon are led and implemented by women. So, the social work is more restricted to women than men, and it is rare to find men working in the field related to social and humanitarian interventions, especially in providing services. I do not mean training and research but direct interventions” LA4. “During the blast, women were ready, and some of them discovered themselves and that they have power. We also noticed that women interfered very strongly on the ground, and their roles were very effective and their number more than men. In fact, they felt that their existence on the ground was very necessary, particularly that when entering the affected houses, their entrance was considered as safer than men. Women are indeed more understandable and sympathetic with affected people” CC4. Furthermore, they were the basis of volunteering and guidance act, “I think mobilization was part of the local and the international mobilizations that happened, where, for a moment, the world forgot about the politicians and the story was looks at these people pulling each other's bodies, they are cleaning and then look at these women doing a range of

the NGO works, we had covid then the port explosion, these all mobilizations I think women contributed to shame public officials and to start talking the intersectionality of the disaster that does not affect all of us in the same way” CG1, “ Women played an essential role during the disaster as they were assisting, helping and guiding to decrease the risk of the disaster. And the number of women who were helping in cleaning and organizing the affected areas was more than that of men. They actually brought their children to help as well, and they were working on developing the spirit of patriotism in their children” GF6, “simply the woman went to the ground, cooking for the families, helping, cleaning, So, they really played the big role” ND2, “we saw women carrying other injured women, supporting them, and taking them to hospitals” AA10.

B. Challenges and Barriers faced by Women

1. Social

Gender is indicated as one of the main aspects of disaster vulnerability and it is the major aspect of social discrimination, “if you notice how people react to men versus women, they tend to ridicule women and much more easily than they do it with men. So, you're facing not only issues of you're trying to deal with big challenges on the society but also, you're trying to deal with challenges of the perception of you and who you are, your opinion and your decision maker” LD5. Additionally, women during disaster faced patriarchal society, “you are operating in a patriarchal, male dominated environment. And that environment requires to put certain expectations on you, so even when you look in politics, how many women do we have 6 or 7 women in the parliament... I think the majority of the problem in Lebanon

that female leaders face is patriarchy in and on itself. For example, someone came and asked me: "Are you involved in any programs that are working on strengthening Women's Political involvement or training women in political life?". My main issue is that not women that needed to be trained but the culture and the environment of work that needed to be changed and not women is the problem. So, we look on the problem in a wrongful manner all together” LD6. “women and their needs are always viewed as non-essential with no need to work on them and do advocacy and lobbying. We are always accused that we are working in a different place different from what the government works on. Thus, this challenge is very essential because, unfortunately, this masculine mentality exists in the decision-maker in the Lebanese government. So, any taken decisions are influenced by such mentality.” AA9

Moreover, gender-based violence grows significantly during disaster, “increase violence against women, lack of safety on the streets affects men and women disproportionately, Financial crisis, Covid that affect women disproportionately that men, Mobility is very difficult to drive and walk around at night” CG3. Beside that, the massive effect of the disaster lead to burden the responsibilities on women “women had additional responsibilities (Family care, work and homeschooling) and we did a survey showing this and how women were burden by many responsibilities and lost their jobs as some work does not understand that women cannot be available 24 hours when working at home as they have multiple responsibilities” JM3; “ we know that the woman in Lebanon, in our society, they are responsible for both their work, and the family. So, and imagine if their work got destroyed, and the family and the house got destroyed. So can you imagine that amount of responsibility on their shoulders, also post Beirut blast. A lot of businesses get affected. And a lot of people

they fired their employees because they shut down their businesses. And whenever, unfortunately, it comes to firing employees, they are firing females, more than males because they assume that the male is the main reason of income is the family which is not true...the report issued by the World Bank, and especially after the financial and after the Beirut Blast, the percentage of females who have lost their job is much more than the males. And this takes again a lot of effort in the society itself” ND3.

2. Economic and Financial Crisis

Beirut Blast worsened the hardship on the affected women as Lebanon was facing a big economic and financial collapse beside Covid 19 pandemic. This lead for jobs Loss and loss of Businesses, “We found later that 52% of people who lived in the affected areas were females heading households, and this is a very big percentage as in Lebanon, the average percentage of female-headed households is 18%. So, those female-headed households did not just lose their houses, their work and shelter but also supported old people, like their parents, financially and healthily. Besides, they also offered great help to their children. Thus, all those crises became compounded, and those women became more responsible in taking care of everything in the house, and this added more pressured on their side” LS5, “so many women had to leave their work to stay with their children, be it for trauma or be it for what happened physically in their houses, in their apartments or because of Corona, and then Beirut Blast added on the top of everything” LA5. Additionally, the blast destroyed many houses, some of these houses were owned by women, “Some women lost their houses and did not have other places to go to... Additionally, there was no focus on shelter or where the

affected people would move to until their houses get fixed as $\frac{3}{4}$ of the houses were demolished and unsuitable for living...Thus, this is the challenge that those women were facing regarding providing shelters with no lots of people helping them. And as you know, most of the women went to live with their relatives (brother, sisters, and parents) although sometimes the houses were not fitting for all or were located far away” LS7.

The health system in Lebanon was deteriorated before the Blast because of Covid 19 pandemic and after the blast it becomes much worse, “In the beginning, hospitals were prioritizing the emergency health care service for patients who had severe injuries from the explosion and were severely ill due to COVID 19, and they considered women who were mentally and physically ill as secondary cases, so this is the health challenge that women faced. But later, women’s health was taken into consideration” LS6.

3. Political and Government

There is lack of women representation in the Lebanese government, this led to unable women to participate in the decision-making process of the government and particularly during Beirut Blast and disable them from making any policies related to women struggles during disaster such as policy related to gender based violence and women’s lost businesses, “for example, during the government that Hasan Diab formed, they did basket needs to support people during the economic crisis, they supported men blades, but they did not supported women pads which is a basic need for women. Even there were women in the government, but you need to see their agendas and if it includes women priorities” JM5.

And as mentioned previously, there is no sex equality “Because we are not in an equal area, equality is not there. There is huge difference between men and women” LD4, neither women inclusion in policies related to Beirut Blast “When we come to the decision-making levels, unfortunately, I am not sure if women were existent on the table during the response. I do not know how the response was toward Beirut’s blast, which was gender sensitive by the government. And I do not know how much the response met the expectations of the Lebanese citizens. Even more, I do not think women were presented on the table of the decision-making process for response plans” AA5.

C. Motivations and Incentives

Because of the lack of women leadership in the Lebanese political sphere, women groups collaborated during and after Beirut Blast to ensure women inclusion in the disaster decision making process, response plan and policies, “So, what happened is that the NGOs saw the response plan, and they established a Feminist Charter of demands, which was a response to the World Bank Gender Blind response plan. They included, in the Charter, what they wanted. IT was the first-time feminist NGOs in Lebanon come together and agree on one vision and narrative, so they came up with joined support from all. And this happened in an organized way, and not impulsively because each NGO was working individually on the response, and they did not work on it a lot in terms of putting vision, mission, and structure. It was like more reaction to the blast and at the same time a reaction on how the response of women and men was. So, they came together having the same vision and same reaction on the response” LS2; “we partnered with an organization, and it was very successful as we both started helping around 1000 affected houses. Later, we helped around 6000 affected houses.

We were helping all the areas regardless of sect and politics. We were scanning the areas that did not get help to support more. Today, we are working in partnership with different NGOs that had and still have effective roles CC3”; “But we have very interesting collaboration with other NGOS. Actually what we do, is like every time we go into a house, our missions is to repair as I said the doors and the windows but when we move into a house whenever there is need somewhere whether it is medical educational, emotional, psychological, or even more like the structure of the house, we talk and we redirect people towards NGOs or we contact the right NGOs to let them know about the case, so we redirect the cases” NG1; “we were partnered with the World Bank and they retained for the crisis management program. It is a crisis management online training for the people, for the woman businesses to help them survived the financial crisis” ND4.

These women’s’ groups made different effective collaborations to reduce disaster risks, “Building strategical relations with the Lebanese army and Beirut’s Municipality, and this was one of the significant opportunities for us and had credibility and transparency” LA8; “the collaboration with other women groups as cases like GBV and other NGOs so that women benefit from other services” GF11; “created an initiative called Woman for Beirut. Because, our work is around women, women leader. It's an initiative. It includes more than, 13 to 15, women lead NGOs. Every NGO, is working on specific, everyone was working at different levels, different help relief, etc. So we said let is coordinate, we created a group and coordinate together, to avoid duplication in help, and to maximize if in terms of resources, money, medicine, milk, whatever are the resources, to maximize them to the maximum number of people who can really benefit from this” JA1; “All women organizations were

doing lobbying among each other and worked 24/7 hours so that they could be able to address the needs of all communities, on the ground. Therefore, I think this was very impressive, and the coordination between the organizations was very good. I felt that it was an opportunity to highlight the role of women and emphasize how much women can do if they were given the needed chance and space. So, this was very good during the blast “AA11.

Furthermore, women had additional important roles during and after blast, “This means that there is new and better understanding in the work of the NGOs, deep understanding of the necessity and the importance of solidarity. For example, there appeared more roles of women in the field of social work on different levels, particularly individual initiatives that could be adopted by women to survive or to contribute to improve all the environment that was affected by the explosion” LA6; “Women thought and did individual initiatives to improve the economic and social situations or to benefit the small communities that surrounded them” LA7; “In my opinion, there was a catalyst, and the blast helped women into work. Because of the blast and the economic situations, some husbands let their wives work to support them. And other women who lost their jobs helped and worked in the relief system during the blast. So, during the blast ... she felt that she had an important and effective role to play.” CC6; “when the economic crises and blast, there were lot of foreign domestic workers who left Lebanon. And this gap opens a domain for women to work in cleaning houses as in the 80s Lebanese women worked in cleaning houses. women to work in cleaning houses as in the 80s Lebanese women worked in cleaning houses” JM4.

Thus, the role of women rises and developed during and after Blast, women were able to speak out, “women rose to the level of the government in fulfilling their duties. They were

making sure to put the government accountable according to different levels during the explosion. Women were leading the process to shape and name everything related to the response of the Lebanese government, and this was very important to send a voiced image to other women” AA6.

D. Better Integration of Women Leadership during disaster

“The importance of gender in the response to and recovery from disasters has been recognized as a priority by many humanitarian organizations. The Sendai Framework for Action recognizes the critical role of women in managing disaster risk and promoting gender-equitable policies (UNISDR 2015). The proliferation of guidelines and toolkits suggests that the gender perspective is successfully integrated into disaster management plans (e.g. ADB 2015; IFRC 2010; Oxfam 2011).” (Moreno, J., Shaw, D., 2018)

Additionally, the interviewees emphasize the integration of women leadership in disaster response plan. Interviewee’s inputs can be divided into 5 sub arguments for the significance of involving women in disaster recovery plan and disaster risk reduction strategies.

1. Self-Awareness and Empowerment

The interviewees indicate the importance of women self-awareness and empowerment as a tool that push women into integrating in the leaderships of disaster management. “Women should recognize that the challenges are more within themselves and not in the society. When women are able to empower themselves, they can be stronger with others and

can work for a better society. They can also eliminate the masculine thought that men are the opponents and think that men are partners. Moreover, they can collaborate with me more, regardless of the fact that they victimized them” CC5.

“Women have to work on themselves, accept and improve their abilities, and stand out for their rights and responsibilities... Women should work on themselves to achieve what they want and not to get affected by what the society thinks and wants from them. For example, if women want to be housewives, they should convince themselves that they are good and effective even though they are not working out of their homes. They should ignore what the society thinks about them and do what they want... So, in the public affair, there should be a decision, and women should work on the decision and trust themselves. All the social movements that are happening do help women to know themselves and their abilities. So, readiness from the self and decision from the self are equally crucial.” CC7

“In our society, we have to fight a bit more to uphold our opinion to give it better that is true. But I don't think it is affected negative, I just don't find it, I just what I have to do to get what I want to get it and to achieve whatever I have in mind. I never complained about this I deal with it. Yes sometimes especially in legal situation, there people that have certain attitude as diminisher as we are working for them somehow, but it's true we have to be solid enough and make them understand that is not the case. But again, it depends on the way it is shown on our act, behaves or fields. Me personally I do not mind this attitude, I know how to get away from what I need, if it is always managed and imposing myself with what I needed.” NG2

2. Decision Maker in Governmental Level

Women should be involved in the government's decision making process for disaster management, which is in order make sure, that women are representative in the disaster response and recovery plan. "Any strategy that is set for recovery, for rebuilding Beirut and rebuilding Lebanon, for reforming Lebanon at political level, business level, economic level, and at all levels, should include fiftyfifty, should include 50% of women, we shouldn't appoint any council or elect any Council, without taking into consideration that it needs, we need to have at least 50% women. This is the model, we need to apply at all levels, not only in politics, in business as well, we don't have women in business" JA7

"Changes can happen when the Lebanese government changes its views toward women and girls in legal, social and other issues. That is why I am telling you that answering this question is very hard because I cannot ask you to choose a women minister for social affairs and sign a paper so that we integrate women in the government's response plan. This is not the problem! The problem is not due to the individuals but is because of the whole system and how it views women and girls and discriminates through law traditions and others measures." AA8

3. Awareness

Increasing the awareness of the civil society regarding the importance of the role of the women in disaster risk reduction is the main tool to enhance the integration of women in disaster leadership and management. "I think the majority of the problem in Lebanon that female leaders face is patriarchy in and on itself. For example, someone came and asked me:

"Are you involved in any programs that are working on strengthening Women's Political involvement or training women in political life?". My main issue is that not women that needed to be trained but the culture and the environment of work that needed to be changed and not women is the problem. So, we look on the problem in a wrongful manner all together." LD7

"we raised the awareness on the role of women all around during and after the explosion in public places, universities, and schools, this effectively activated the role of women." GF8

"Create an awareness about this problem, and to help or to inform donors that you need to help women as well because they are providing to their families." JA5

"There is need to change the essence of the society, as you are living in a patriarchal society where there are paternalistic factors, values, and norms. If this did not change, women cannot be integrated and you cannot forget that you are living in the Middle East, in a patriarchal society and we are for years in this struggle." JM6

4. Advocacy and Partnership with Local Communities

Furthermore, Advocacy and Partnership with Local Communities strength the role of women during disaster and push for women inclusion in government disaster recovery plan.

"But it is very important to build societal partnership as it will build issues related to sustainable development and human rights. And this is one of the issues that should be integrated in everything they do and women in particular because in women NGOs, everything related to women rights, GBV and others is mainstreamed in their activities and

services that they provide, so they are focused more on families that are headed by females and families whose number of women is more than men. This actually empowers women more to be more mainstreamed. And for advocacy, we did not work on it, but it must be much more integrated in everything.” LA8

5. Support

Additionally, support activities and initiative empower and encourage women to participate in disaster leadership and risk reduction.

“This small initiative, the activities and the learning sessions that we offered for women (like sewing) to have their own small businesses activated and enhanced the role of women during disaster. Additionally, there were NGOs helping women whose businesses were terribly implicated by Beirut’s blast by funding them. With such help, we could assist in enhancing the role of women in the disaster.” GF7

“Partnered with AUB recently on a project called Support and Accelerate women inclusion. So this our project aims at working with 10 key employers in Lebanon to draft policies related to RRP: retention, recruitment and promotion for the woman in the workplace. So what we're doing now is we're, we're working with these companies, they need to work on the society itself. We need to work on the companies to draft policies on not do any discrimination between the males and the females in the workplace, she can get promoted, she can reach high position, she can reach, senior position.” ND5.

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS

Reviewing all that has been mentioned so far, first, the literature review illustrates (1) the significance of including women in disaster response and recovery plans as it leads to risk reduction, and (2) that women's transformational leadership has a massive impact on empowering and supporting women's groups in disasters for better response and recovery. Second, the findings shape a testimony that shows the real and impactful role of women in disasters. Thus, one can come up from the literature review, findings, and participants' input that women's leadership in disaster management during and after Beirut Blast had a significant role in disaster response, recovery, and mitigation. Women were at the forefront of disaster response. They provided different rapid services (Mental and Physical Health), "Our volunteer women and girls entered affected houses to help them in cleaning and tried to find cases that were traumatized to give them mental support... we sent video clips to support the vulnerable people, mentally and socially" CC1 "we started to distribute dignity kits that contained all the things women needed like sanitary pads and others"GF1 and legal support, "we helped in legal issues. We helped people who were facing problems with the apartments' owners. We helped them in getting their rights to stay in their rented houses" CC2. There were lots of women volunteers on the ground who helped in the recovery process through supporting local women, providing guidance, humanitarian and direct Interventions and building the resilience of the affected people.

Regardless of the significance and the impacted role of women during and after Beirut

Blast, there were challenges and barriers facing women. In fact, the patriarchal system burdened the responsibilities on the affected women, just like what one of the interviewees said, “you are operating in a patriarchal, male dominated environment. And that environment requires putting certain expectations on you” LD6. Also, there was a huge increase in gender-based violence. “We started discovering cases of battered women... I think the number has increased because of the Blast, and most of the people who lost their houses said that it was like venting their anger on their wives” GF3. In addition to that, there is a big number in affected women who lost their houses and businesses. According to a women leader of an NGO, “We found later that 52% of people who lived in the affected areas were females heading households, and this is a very big percentage as in Lebanon, the average percentage of female-headed households is 18%. So, those female-headed households did not just lose their houses, their work and shelter but also supported old people, like their parents, financially and healthily.” Furthermore, the lack of women leaders in the Lebanese government even though there was females’ representation in the Lebanese parliament, their role was not effective and were not involved in the decision-making process of Beirut’s Blast. “The role of women in the Lebanese Civil War and the recent uprising was noticeable, and we saw that even though women had important roles, but they got sidelines politically and economically; they were peacebuilders and activists, but when it came for building reform governmental strategies, women were not included and distanced from them” JM5.

This paragraph is the core of the research as it flows into the thesis’s conceptual framework. The research question and objective revolve around the best way for advancing women’s leadership in disaster management toward disaster risk reduction during and after Beirut’s Blast. The question was asked to all interviewees, some shared common factors, and

others indicated a different perspective for what advances the role of women in disaster management. It is crucial to say that the role of every woman leader during and after Beirut Blast's is different and unique. The concluded roadmap consists of three different parts: Feminist Charter, Platform and Created Representative of the Local Communities. For sure, this is not an enforced roadmap for all women in the MENA region that should adapt it. Instead, this roadmap is the description by women leaders during and after Beirut's Blast and can be represented as a useful and thoughtful tool for women in MENA region and around the world. Hence, this thesis has identified the ups and downs of women role during and after disasters and provided a specific roadmap on conceptualizing and enhancing Women Leadership during and after Beirut's Blast.

A. Feminist Charter

On August 4, 2021, feminist activists and women's rights organizations in Lebanon signed a Charter which "represents concerns and demands for an immediate humanitarian assistance process that recognizes and addresses existing gender inequalities and seeks to ensure that all women and girls' needs and priorities are met and that the process is transparent and subjected to due diligence as well as clear accountability mechanisms."

"The emergence of the feminist platform, with a large group of us and the majority of women but also feminists who were not only women, but we have also other entities with us who came together and found the Charter with the UN Women in order to push for gendering the response and being a pure for gender differences of such disasters on both parts." LD3

B. Platform

The Feminist Platform had a huge, influential role. UN agencies, embassies and other international organizations were not aware of certain issues during the blast, and the Feminist Platform highlighted those issues for them, as the feminist NGOs and individuals were working on the ground with people and not just sitting in offices and putting plans. So, NGOs were able to shed light on many issues and needs and showed how the response was done from the ground. They referred them to the decision-making centers and to places where UN agencies, embassies and other international organizations were planning how to spend the funds, what projects to be implemented, and how the response was supposed to be done.

“It will become a Formal Platform, which means that they will have a permanent existence and monitor the response to ensure that women’s needs are taken into consideration on the long-term. We are creating this platform that includes referral mechanisms in terms of lobbying, advocacy, and consultancy.” LS8

“we need women in politics, we need women in governance, we need independent women voices not just symbolic representation. Plus, you need inclusive platforms before and after the explosion” CG4.

C. Create Representative of the Local Communities

Women during the blast were guiding on the ground, and they were the key element of helping and supporting affected people. Thus, there is an essential need to create women representatives in the local communities during and after disasters to connect easily and deeply with the needs of affected people and ensure women’s representation on the ground. “In relation to the local community, attempts are on the way to create committees and activate them in the affected areas so that those committees have decisions in all the things that relate

to them and to all the decisions that are taken for them. Therefore, they can talk about their problems like losing their legal documentations in the topics related to municipality taxes and paying for houses that do not exist anymore. These issues are not known by the people who are not on the ground.” LS9

Beirut has been through consecutive crises and was rebuilt throughout the years. And according to UN Women Op-ed (2020), "there is an opportunity to build a foundation that is solid and sustainable; that takes equality as its starting point. This means, building a new city with – and for – women. Beirut could be the Arab region’s first “feminist city”. This is about more than the safety and public spaces; it is also about equality, dignity, and access to opportunities. This can be done through representation. There is a must to recognize and celebrate women’s contributions to Lebanon throughout history by honoring them with statues and memorials that represent their work and show our respect for diverse role models. This will have an incredible influence on the young population, demonstrating that this is a Lebanon by and for them, one they are happy to grow old in, rather than pressed to escape from." And this can be achieved through the above-suggested roadmap on conceptualizing and enhancing Women's Leadership in disaster management in Lebanon.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

This thesis provides insights on women's significant role in disaster management. The theoretical approaches show the transformation of the status of women in disaster management from a victim to an essential actor. Developmental theorists indicate the possibilities for Women's grassroots and non-profit organizations to adopt self-protective actions in disasters based on their community work. They make strategies to support marginalized groups like female refugees, street vendors, women agriculturalists, widows, single mothers, and impoverished women (Ahmad, 2018). Additionally, the developmental interventions, that are adopted by NGOs during a disaster, support and empower women's leadership and lead to disaster risk reduction. Besides that, women's leadership and its resilience lead to long-term changes such as women's grassroots raising awareness about gender rights which results in taking actions regarding the change of unequal gender relations in different areas such as political, social, and economic (Moreno, 2018).

In Lebanon, there is a lack of research studies on women's leadership in disaster management. Thus, the thesis examined women's leadership and building its resilience led to disaster risk reduction and social changes during and after the Beirut Port Explosion.

The study reveals that women are essential agents during and after the disaster. They are in the front, helping, assisting, and leading the disaster response and recovery strategies.

They are also the potential contributors to disaster risk reduction in first responding and building community resilience. Moreover, women leaders' collaborations (local, international, and grassroots) during disasters form a strong power towards advocating for women's inclusion in the governmental and international disaster response and recovery plans. Despite that, there are still major challenges that women leaders face such as the patriarchal system that prevents them from participating in the decision-making process of the government's disaster risk reduction plan. Thus, there is an urgent need for researching on the effective approaches that promote women's participation in managing risks and in designing and implementing woman-responsive Disaster Risk Reduction related policies, plans and programs that build women's resilience to disasters. Therefore, the question that must be addressed is, what policies should be adopted toward the effective inclusion of women in the decision-making process of the governmental disaster response and recovery plan?

APPENDIX I

Thesis | Women Leadership in Disaster Management: The Case of Beirut Blast

Research question:

What is the role of Women in Disaster Management? How women leadership leads to disaster risk reduction and social changes in the context of disasters? What is the role of Women in disaster management in Lebanon during and after Beirut Port Explosion and what is their impacts?

Interview Questions

1. What role did your organization play in the response of Beirut Blast?
2. What was the social and economic impact of your response?
3. Did you cooperate with women local community groups in response to Beirut Blast?
4. What strategies did they use? Had they any plan? Or their response was impulsive?
5. How do you assess women response to Beirut Blast?
6. In your opinion what were the impacts of women response to Beirut Blast?
7. What are the opportunities and challenges that women leaders faced during and after the Beirut Port Explosion?
8. What needs to be done to better integrate women's leadership during and after the Beirut Blast?
9. Any further insights or further information to add from your side?
10. Do you have any questions regarding my research or my thesis?

Translation to Arabic:

1. ما هو الدور الذي لعبته منظمتم في الرد على انفجار بيروت؟
2. ما هو الأثر الاجتماعي والاقتصادي لاستجابتم؟
3. هل تعاونتم مع مجموعات النسائية رداً على انفجار بيروت؟
4. ما هي الاستراتيجيات التي استخدموها؟ هل كان لديكم أي خطة؟ أم كان ردكم مندفعاً؟
5. كيف تقيمون استجابة النساء لانفجار بيروت؟
6. ما هي برأيكم تأثيرات تجاوب النساء مع انفجار بيروت؟
7. ما هي الفرص والتحديات التي واجهتها القيادات النسائية أثناء وبعد انفجار مرفأ بيروت؟
8. ما الذي يجب القيام به لتحسين دمج القيادة النسائية أثناء وبعد انفجار بيروت؟
9. هل لديكم أي مزيد من الأفكار أو مزيد من المعلومات تريدون اضافتها من جانبكم؟
10. هل لديك أي أسئلة بخصوص بحثي أو أطروحتي؟

APPENDIX II

CONSENT FORMS

Consent to participate in an Online Research Study
This notice is for an AUB-IRB Approved Research Study
for Dr. Tania Haddad at AUB.

Th18@aub.edu.lb

It is not an Official Message from AUB

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: “Women Leadership in Disaster Management: The Case of Beirut Blast”, conducted by Dr. Tania Haddad, Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the American University of Beirut. The conduct of this study will adhere to the IRB approved protocol.

The IRB approved method for approaching subjects is interviewing online. The purpose of the study is two-fold: the first is to broaden the literature on women leadership and disaster management and the second is to identify the significance of supporting women leadership and building its resilience in disaster risk reduction and social change. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your expertise in the field and could provide me with valuable input in relation to the topic of my study.

Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions that you may have. This research is mainly about is to learn about women leadership in disaster management and its significance during and after Beirut Blast. You are invited to give information that will be a valuable contribution to this research.

PROCEDURES

This message invites you to:

1. Read the consent document and consider whether you accept to be involved in the study.

And to note:

- Participation is completely voluntary.
- Completing the interview will take around 20 minutes.

Only the data you provide in the interview will be collected and analyzed.

- The results of the interview will be published in peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations and article/ thesis/ project report will be available in printed form and electronically form at AUB Libraries.

- The inclusion and exclusion criteria. Below eighteen will not be included and any public official that is employee of the government will not be included.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

You will not receive payment for participation in this study.

The benefits, which may reasonably be expected to result from this study, are visible through filling the gap in literature about the role of women during and after Beirut Blast and its significance. Also, this study will serve as a reference for future studies around this matter in the region.

POTENTIAL RISKS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR SOCIETY

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The collected data will remain confidential and anonymous.

Records will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while assuring confidentiality.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

If you voluntarily consent to take part in this study, you can change your mind and withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Refusal to participate or withdrawal from the study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and neither will it affect their relationship with their organization and AUB/AUBMC.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY

If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me Dr. Tania Haddad at: 01-350000 ext 4517 or th18@aub.edu.lb

CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS

If you have concerns or complaints about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the AUB IRB Office: Social & Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board 01-374374 ext: 5445 or irb@aub.edu.lb.

Please tick in the appropriate boxes below if you agree to participate in the study and choose the method of recording.

Participating in the study

Audiotaping

Quoting (if applicable)

APPENDIX IV
REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

AUB Social & Behavioral Sciences

INVITATION SCRIPT

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

This notice is for an AUB-IRB Approved Research Study

for Dr. Tania Haddad at AUB.

th18@aub.edu.lb

It is not an Official Message from AUB

I am inviting you to participate in a research study about Women Leadership in Disaster Management: The Case of Beirut Blast. The purpose of the study is two-fold: The first is to broaden the literature on women leadership and disaster management and the second is to identify the significance of supporting women leadership and building its resilience in disaster risk reduction and social change.

You will be asked to participate in an interview to give your opinion about Women Leadership in disaster management.

You are invited because we are targeting experts in the field and leading women in the response to disasters.

Could you kindly forward the email to managers at your organization.

if they are willing to participate, they can reply to the email.

The estimated time to complete this interview is approximately 20 minutes. The research is conducted online and is hosted on AUB server.

Please read the consent form and consider whether you want to be involved in the study.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the Dr. Tania Haddad at: 01-350000 ext 4517 or th18@aub.edu.lb

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