



Making Sense of Child, Early and Forced Marriage Among Syrian Refugee Girls in Lebanon

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Child Marriage



- Affects **girls** more often
- Violation of **rights**
- Form of **gender-based violence**
- Profound and long-term **consequences**



Prevalence



- 15 million girls are married before the age of 18 each year
 - 28 girls every minute
 - 1 girl every 2 seconds



Objective



- Better understand the **contextual** factors contributing to child marriage
- Cognitive Edge's **SenseMaker**[®]
- Focus on the **change** in child marriage as a result of the **Syrian crisis**



Study Methods



- Mixed-methods approach
- Lebanon July–Aug 2016
- Variety of participant groups
- Audio recorded story
- Participant self-interprets their story





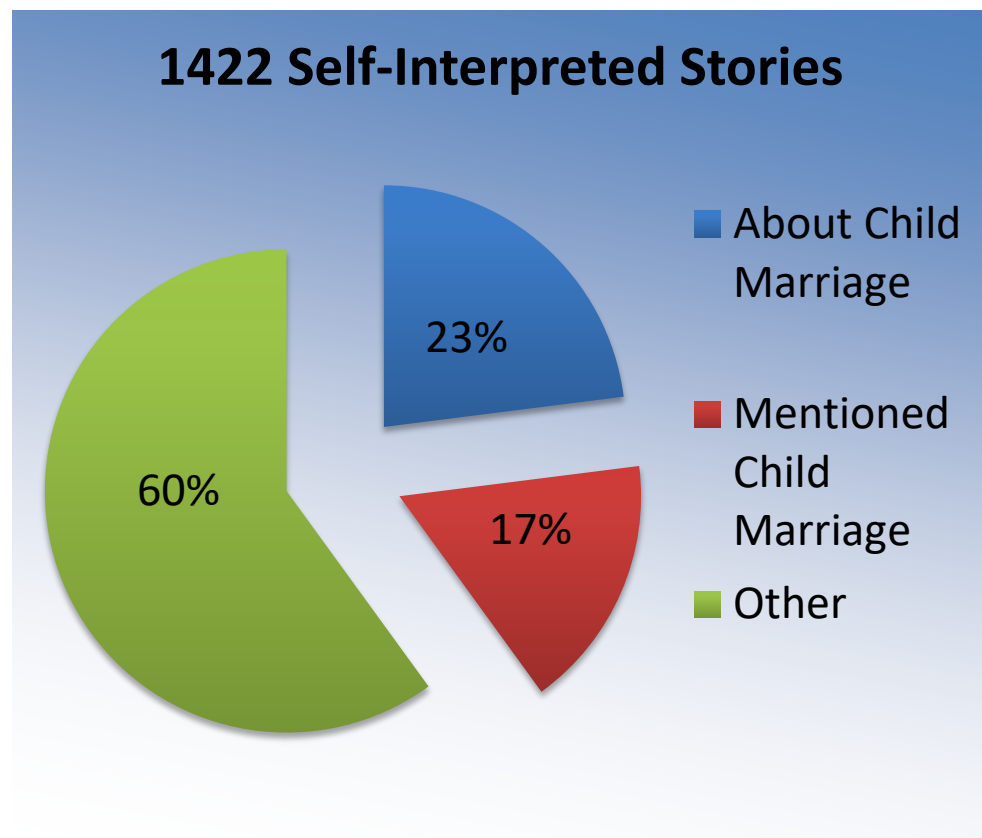
Results





Characteristic	All Respondents
Age (years)	n = 1416
13 – 17	312 (21.9)
18 - 24	335 (23.6)
25 - 34	432 (30.4)
35 - 44	203 (14.3)
> 45	134 (9.5)
Sex	n = 1420
Male	722 (50.8)
Female	698 (49.1)
Marital Status	n = 1400
Married	826 (58.1)
Single	512 (36.0)
Divorced/separated/widowed	62 (4.4)
Religion	n = 1247
Sunni	1159 (81.5)
Shia	26 (1.8)
Other	62 (4.2)

Stories	All Respondents
Location in Lebanon	n = 1422
Beqaa	471 (33.1)
Beirut	467 (32.8)
Tripoli	484 (34.0)
By subgroup	n = 1422
Married Syrian girls	197 (13.9)
Unmarried Syrian girls	230 (16.2)
Syrian mothers	245 (17.2)
Syrian fathers	198 (13.9)
Married men	228 (16.0)
Unmarried med	268 (18.8)
Community leaders	56 (3.9)



40% of stories were about or mentioned child marriage

One Syrian mother's story



“In Syria, my daughter was 11 years old, and she went to school... Here, we couldn't enroll her in school. We were compelled to marry her after a man proposed. She has a child now. I am aware that her situation could have been better... We wanted her to be educated, but our circumstances were overwhelming. We favored marrying her to a decent man; this is better than waiting for an unwanted act/thing to happen to her.”



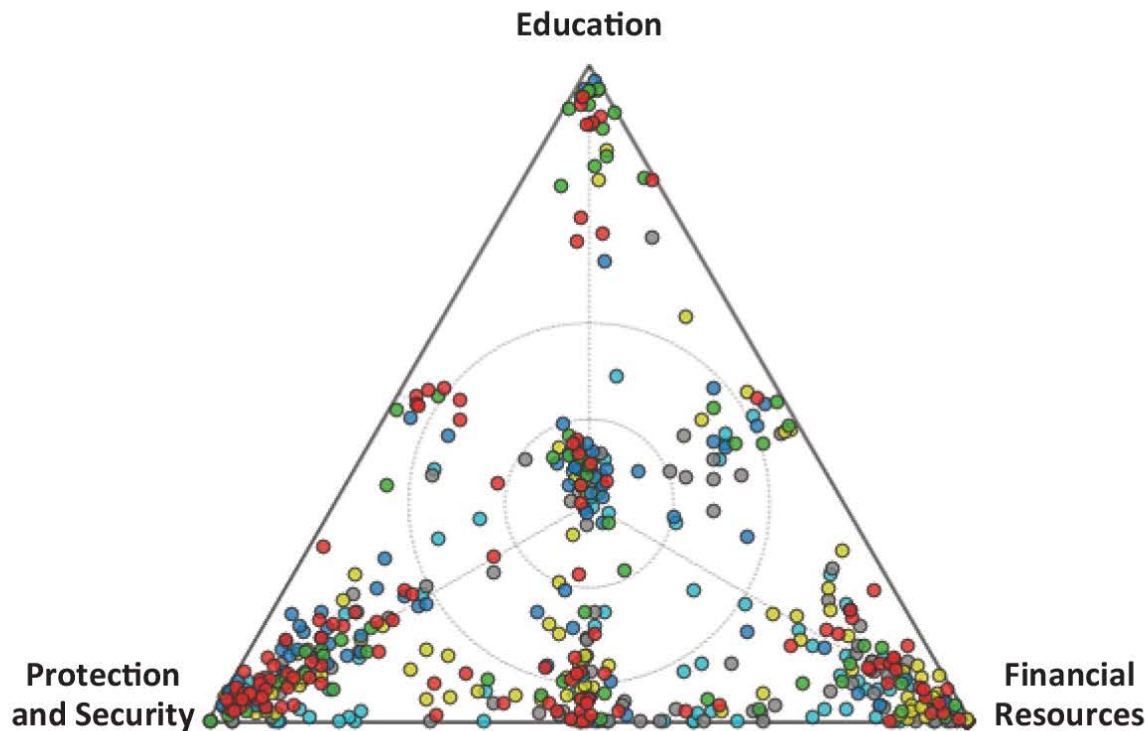
Story of a married man



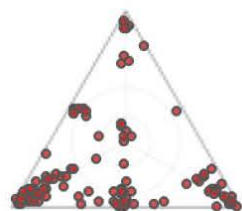
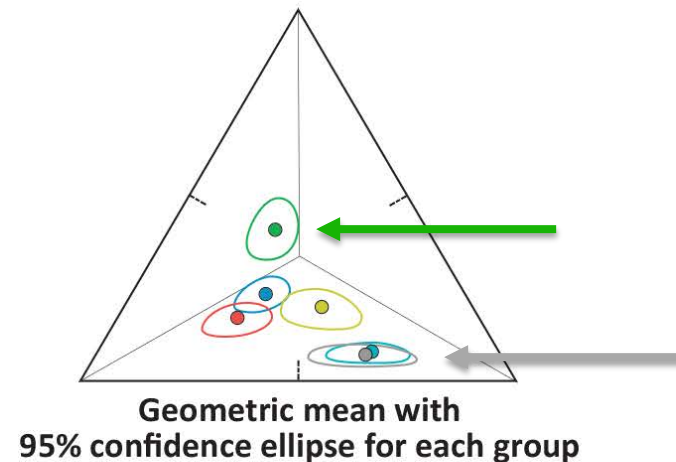
“In Lebanon, they were vulnerable, so the girls had to stop school and work...The girl had a marriage proposal but from a guy of another sect. Due to their financial status and poverty she had to marry him...After a while, she delivered a baby girl, but her husband left her and the baby.... and he never recognized his wife nor his daughter. The girl had to return back to work and return to the humiliation and poverty she faced before.”



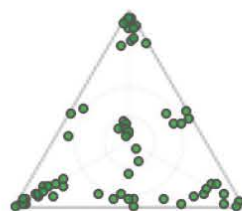
The shared story mostly relates to ...



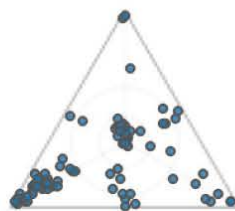
- Married Syrian girls
- Unmarried Syrian girls
- Syrian mothers
- Syrian fathers
- Married men
- Unmarried men



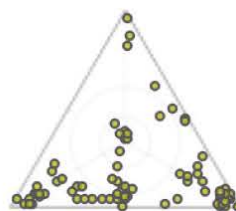
Married Syrian girls



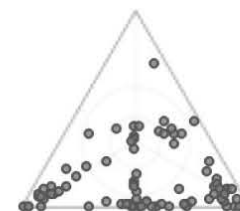
Unmarried Syrian girls



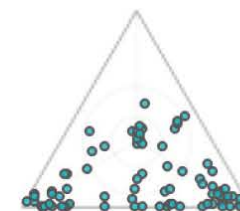
Syrian mothers



Syrian fathers



Married men



Unmarried men

One married girl's story



“I got married at the age of 14 because my parents feared for my safety. There was a lot of kidnapping in our village... Now I have marital problems... I advise parents to reject the idea of early marriage. It is not right. The girl should be allowed to live through her whole childhood. I will not approve of my daughters getting married at an early age; especially after my own experience.”



Story of an unmarried man



“I know a girl who displaced to Lebanon. She wanted to continue her education, but she was surprised with the situation here. The public schools are not good, and the other schools are very expensive. She wasn’t able to go back to school. So, her parents wed her to get some money. This is the situation of most Syrian families. They are selling their daughters.”





Discussion & Implications



Discussion



- Poverty and safety most often cited
- Marriages happening more quickly
- Gendered perspective on the experiences shared
- Short-term contractual marriages

Implications



- Gender-specific strategies to address child marriage
- Holistic approaches
- Engaging men and boys is key



Research Team



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- Nour Bakhache – Queen’s University
- Colleen Davison – Queen’s University
- Annie Bunting - York University



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- Ms. Laurie Webster (QED Insight)

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THANK YOU!

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