

Being a Man in Canada: The Gendered Impacts of Resettlement Programs on Syrian
Male Immigrants in Halifax

by

Manaf Mansour

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 2022

© Copyright by Manaf Mansour, 2022

DEDICATION PAGE

This thesis work is dedicated to the memory of my mom, Mona Nehmeh, who passed away during the second wave of COVID-19 in 2021. Although she was my inspiration to pursue my degree, she was unable to see my graduation. This is for her. I dedicate this work also to my great teacher and advisor, John Cameron, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of school and life since I arrived in Canada in 2017.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	6
1.2. 1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.2.2 MAIN ARGUMENT	8
1.2.3 SCOPE.....	9
1.2.4 RESEARCH RATIONALE	9
1.3 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER I	10
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 GENDER NORMS AND MASCULINITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST (BEING A MAN IN THE MIDDLE EAST)	13
2.2 GENDER NORMS AND MASCULINITY IN SYRIA (BEING A MAN IN SYRIA)	18
2.3 CHANGING GENDER ROLES (BEING A MAN IN A NEW COUNTRY)	24
2.4 GENDER NORMS IN CANADA (THEORY AND LAW).....	28
2.5 THE EVOLUTION OF CANADIAN GENDER ROLES IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY	29
2.6 CONVERGING THE GENDER ROLES	30
2.7 MASCULINITY IN CANADA: BEING A MAN IN CANADA	32
2.8 BEING A MAN IN CANADA (EVERYDAY LIFE – FROM AN IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVE) ..	38
2.9 IMMIGRATION SERVICES IN CANADA	40
2.10 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER II.....	47
CHAPTER III: THE THEORY OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY	48
3.1 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY THEORY	48

3.2 MASCULINITY AND GENDER ROLES	56
3.3. DIFFERENCES IN MASCULINE IDENTITIES(SYRIA VS CANADA).....	58
3.4 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER III.....	62
CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY	64
4.1 RESEARCH METHODS	64
4.2 DATA COLLECTION	67
4.3 ETHICAL ISSUES	68
CHAPTER V: SHIFT IN GENDER NORMS, SYRIA & CANADA COMPARED 70	
5.1 ADAPTATION EXPERIENCE FROM SYRIAN MALE IMMIGRANTS’ PERSPECTIVES.....	70
Difficulties & Challenges	71
Traditional Masculine Norms in Syria	74
Shared Masculinity	79
Shifts in Gendered Social Norms	81
Knowledge (understanding Canadian gender norms)	86
Showing concerns to prevailing gendered social norms	88
Accepting the prevailing Canadian gendered social norms.....	90
Being aware of available services regarding gender-related issues	91
What should be done?.....	93
5.2 IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR NEWCOMERS.....	94
Dedicated Services and Programs	95
Gendered status of adaptation.....	96
5.3 THE NEED TO ADAPT (APPLYING MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS)	101
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION	107
6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	110

REFERENCES.....	112
APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	118
APPENDIX B - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS.....	121

LIST OF TABELS

Table 1.1: Pragmatic Definitions of Theoretical Concepts..... 117

Table 2. 1: The Global Gender Gap Index Rankings, Syria and Canada Compared..... 17

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 1: Conceptual Need Categories Matrix for Syrian Men in the First Two Years of Life in Canada.....	104
Figure 2. 1: Adaptation Stages Utilizing Maslow Pyramid Model.....	105

ABSTRACT

Using a phenomenological approach, this thesis examined the ways in which Syrian men experience changes in the culture of gender relations in Canada. This study aimed to understand how Syrian men perceive Canadian gender norms and struggle to adapt to them, to inform the design of immigrant support services to help immigrants to Canada to adopt more equitable understandings of gender. The research used qualitative methods supported by in-depth semi-structured interviews with 19 Syrian straight cis-gendered men and with 5 staff members from settlement organizations in Halifax (ISANS, YMCA). Using Maslow's Hierarchy of needs model helped me to locate which 'level of needs' has been addressed by settlement programs. The results showed that most men participants try to conform to Canadian dominant gender norms, either consciously or unconsciously. Focusing on male position and masculinity fosters more equitable gender relations within immigrants' families and more broadly in Canadian society.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Gender¹, gender roles, and relationships impact all processes of life, including settlement in a new country. Settlement interventions can contribute to positive changes in gender relations, help maintain the status quo or make gender relations worse. The focus of this work is the gendered impacts of resettlement programs on Syrian male newcomers in Halifax, Canada. To better understand the significance of gender issues in this context, it is imperative to examine the ways in which Syrian men experience changes in the culture of gender relations in Canada – that is, the change from gender norms in Syria to gender norms in Canada. This study presents an analysis of experiences of 19 Syrian men newcomers (who arrived in Canada between 2017 – 2020) and five staff members from immigrant settlement organizations in Halifax (ISANS and YMCA). While many advances have been made in Canada in terms of gender equality, significant gender equality gaps remain in place (Government of Canada, n.d). Nonetheless, Syrian men participants find that gender norms in Canada are more diverse and equal than in Syria. Gender norms in Canada are not static, and Syrian men participants cannot simply adapt to the gender norms in a given year (i.e., those who arrived in 2017 need to continue to adjust to changing gender norms in 2022). Table 1.1 includes a definition of key theoretical concepts such as: gender, sex, gender-based analysis, masculinity, gender

¹ It is important to note that the idea of gender as a performance was first used by the feminist philosopher Judith Butler in their 1990 book ‘Gender Trouble’. They argue that being born male or female does not determine behavior. People learn to behave in particular ways to fit into society. The idea of gender is an act, or performance.

norms, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender (trans), cisgender, LGBTQIA2S+, and integration.

In this thesis, I draw on the theory of “hegemonic masculinity” as a perception or belief could a typical Syrian male has or try to conform to it when they start navigating their new life in Canada. I acknowledge at the same time the intersectional² character of the adaptation experience for men participants. That is many of them have different experiences based on aspects of their identity including race, social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age as well as other forms of identity. These different sets of identities help us to better understand how they could impact access to some privileges and opportunities. Since I do not cover all of the social factors that build participants' masculine identities, I present gender, sexual orientation, culture (religion), age, class, and education level as key factors that shaped men participants' experience in adapting to Canadian gender norms.

This study adopts a gendered framework that focuses on the different ways in which masculinities are socially constructed. Research on the social construction of masculinity increased dramatically by the mid-1980s (Connell, 1987, 1995). Such studies inspired popular cultural reflections within western mass media which portrayed a "crisis in masculinity", that is, a confusion about what it means to be a man due to change in cultural perceptions of men's individual identities relating to their roles as fathers, their

² Intersectionality is a term coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American law professor, who explained 'intersectional feminism' as "a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other" (UN Women, n.d).

The Oxford Dictionary defines intersectionality as “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage”

place in feminist discourses, and a quest by many men for new ways to be masculine (Schwitz & Kazyak, 2016).

This study found out that the personal constructs of masculinity of most of the Syrian men who participated were significantly affected by the experience of living in Canada, especially in the first two years. Their understandings of masculinity were especially influenced by an inability to live up to the dominant masculine norms they brought with them from Syria. This study also allows a better understanding of the intersectional character of the participants' experiences and how gender represents one of the key factors that shaped their adaptation experiences. The results gave insight into how Syrian male newcomers understand Canadian gender norms including what it means to be a male in Canada, and how they behave in response to those norms. The results demonstrated also that most male participants still clinging to conceptions of masculinity that they brought with them from Syria, either consciously (being aware and responsive to Canadian gender norms) or unconsciously (being unaware and performing Canadian gender norms without realizing them).

1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The vast majority of governmental and non-governmental reports and action plans regarding the gender and sexuality of migrants focuses on females (Amnesty International, 2016; UNHCR, 2015; United Nations, 2003). In the Canadian context, although legal guarantees and considerable efforts by government and settlement agencies to apply a gender-based analysis to refugee and immigration policies and practices, gendered perspectives remain marginalized in immigration policies in general - and in current settlement practices, including training and programs for men (CCR, 2006;

IRCC, 2018). Beyond a focus on the practical needs of newcomers, which range from the satisfaction of basic needs (e.g. housing, job skills, employment opportunities, language learning) to increasing civic participation and social connections, the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), in its research report, “Gender-Based Approach to Settlement”, asserts that 'Gender-based analysis (GBA)' cannot be accomplished by focusing only on the issues and needs of refugee and immigrant women. Therefore, a gender analysis should not only acknowledge and identify the inequalities from one side (women) but work towards rebalancing the existing unequal power relationships between men and women (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2019; CCR, 2006). For example, in the efforts of achieving gender equality, the focus has often been on women: how to remove barriers to the inclusion of women, how to empower women, and how to ensure that women gain access to health, economic, educational, and other opportunities. Since inequities are often created by unequal power dynamics between men and women, efforts that shift these dynamics, encourage behavior change, and engage men and boys as allies, are central to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (UN Women, n.d). It is also critical to realize that ‘gender’ is not equivalent to ‘women’ and that a gender-based analysis cannot be achieved by having only women-specific concerns, discussions, and programs (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2019; CCR, 2006).

Within the context of settlement, however, it is evident that the existing policies and practices, and studies relating to gender equality, are heavily focused on women. This research does not argue against the focus on women's issues within immigration studies,

but rather argues that additional research focused on men and masculinity would positively contribute to the analysis of gender (in)equality.

To put it simply, many settlement services across Canada have initiated projects specific to refugee and immigrant women and making services available to them (CCR, 2006), but support focused specifically on men is largely absent, especially support to adapt to Canadian gender norms. For example, in Ontario, the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre (RIWC) offers settlement services to women from South East Asia. In addition to regular settlement services such as referral, job search, and language training, the RIWC offers counseling and intervention on violence against women and children. This is also true of YWCA Halifax, which offers similar settlement services and programs to newcomer families. In addition, they are running the 'Gender-based violence prevention project' to reduce violence against newcomer women and girls. On the other hand, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) has established a series of programs and services to address newcomers' needs and offering settlement counseling (e.g. help with stress and culture shock; life in Canada), crisis intervention services (e.g. family support), etc (ISANS,2020; YMCA, 2020) However, ISANS programs and services' framework do not specifically address the gender dimensions of settlement and integration – for either women or men. In this context, gender roles apply to everyone, not just women and girls and also involve relations between men and women. Even if the aim of a settlement intervention were to enhance the position of refugee women in their families and in society, this goal cannot be achieved by focusing only on women's challenges, because men are typically heavily involved in the lives of immigrant women. For example, a recent report study by the University of Alberta

(2017) on the Settlement experiences of Syrian refugees in Albertan cities stated that domestic violence incidents among Syrian families are perpetrated by the male figure in the family against women and children. The settlement workers reported that male violence inside the family happens primarily because of loss of their masculine power and the change in gender roles, e.g., Syrian women have more access to opportunities (jobs) than men. Also, they reported that most of the women who are victims of domestic violence are still reluctant to report the abuse as they fear divorce or loss of their children. The study goes further to recommend that men's challenges also need to be addressed and resolved if equal gender relations inside the household are to be reached. From a somewhat different angle, Syrian men participants in this study explain how they struggled with gender norms in Canada (Halifax) and how these norms influenced their adaptation experience. One Syrian man who arrived in Canada in 2018 tells a story about his experience regarding transgender identities and changing gender pronouns when he unintentionally misgendered his coworker's new gender identity, which cost him his job. In view of this, all men who participated in this research referred to the confusion they experienced with gender pronouns and interacting with transgender people. This is just a case among other many cases described in the following sections that show how most participants struggled with Canadian gender norms, with little or no support from immigrant settlement services.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The long-term goals of this thesis are: a) to understand how Syrian men understand Canadian gender norms and struggle to adapt to them, in order to b) inform the design of immigrant support services to help immigrants to Canada to adopt more

equitable understandings of gender. Although some Syrian immigrants to Canada self-identify as LGBTQ+, the majority self-identify as cis-gendered and straight, therefore, this thesis focuses on them. This does not deny the experiences of non-cis gendered identities such as gay, bisexual and transgendered men, but recognizes that cis-gendered men also need support. Gender identity and sexuality, for example, still impact them and their perceptions and lived experiences of masculinity. Thus, because they can also be part of the problems of gender violence and oppression, it is important to understand these men's experiences in order to try to reduce gendered violence and oppression...

Particularly, the study has the following sub-objectives:

- To identify the experiences, needs, and barriers that Syrian male migrants face during the settlement and integration process related to the understanding of gender norms in Canada
- To analyze the practical challenges of newcomer integration that organizations like the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and YMCA are most concerned about.
- To identify what kind of programming and supports immigrant settlement associations like ISANS and YMCA could build on to better support male immigrants from Syria (and other places) to adapt to Canadian gender norms.

1.2.RESEARCH QUESTIONS 1

While many male immigrants from a range of countries (here the case of Syrian migrants) face challenges in adapting to the Canadian gender norms, it seems that

immigrant settlement programs provide little or no support to help men to face these challenges. The main questions for this study that I aim to answer:

1) what are the experiences of Syrian male immigrants in adapting to Canadian gender norms?

2) how do immigration settlement organizations help Syrian male immigrants to understand and adapt to Canadian gender norms?

1.2.2 MAIN ARGUMENT

In this thesis, I will argue that besides the focus on satisfying some of the immediate, practical needs of immigrants (e.g., housing, job skills, employment opportunities, language learning), settlement agencies could build on their current programs and develop them to better support male immigrants from Syria (and other places) to adapt to Canadian gender norms. However, I am not arguing that settlement organizations in Halifax (ISANS and YMCA) should help men who are simply upset with their loss of status and masculine power. Syrian men I talked to referred to the differences in the roles of men and women, and while they expect that the roles will be more equal here in Canada to Syria, the inequalities still exist. Due to coming from a patriarchal culture, there is a good number of Syrian men who still exert power over women and do not accept that women should have the same freedoms and opportunities as men. Despite the claim that gender norms in Canada consider more equitable than in Syria, it remains that Syrian men need to understand and adjust to changing gender norms in Canada— for their own benefit and for the well-being of their family (wives, daughters, and sons) and others. It must be recognized however that immigrant communities often hold on to ‘traditional’ values and norms of their home countries more than the hosting

communities. Culture and traditions could change over time, but often this happens more slowly in the diaspora than in countries of origin.

1.2.3 SCOPE

The scope of this research will be both narrow and broad. It is narrow as only one small sample– that of Syrian male newcomers in Halifax – will be examined. However, it is broad in as much as it deals with Canadian resettlement policies and practices and how they affect the experiences and needs of Syrian male newcomers who arrived in Halifax between 2017-2020 and want to settle in Canada.

1.2.4 RESEARCH RATIONALE

The importance of this research lies in the fact that it will help Syrian male migrants to adjust to Canadian values. and hopefully foster more equitable gender relations within their families and more broadly in Canadian society. More importantly, the settlement and integration experiences of newcomers are integral to the success of Canada’s immigration and refugee programs. Therefore, it is necessary to bring an integrated gender equity approach to all policies affecting women and men, girls and boys as well as LGBTQ people. It must be emphasized however that this study does not intend to undermine the feminist attention to the structural nature of gender inequalities nor existing gender-oriented humanitarian work aimed at empowering women. Focusing on male position and masculinity is not an abandonment of feminist projects, but rather aims to complement them (Sinclair-Webb, 2000). Conducting this study in Halifax is appropriate due to the concentration of Syrian migrants in the city. However, it is important to mention in this chapter the issue of my positionality as a researcher. The

setting of the interview might have had an influence on the participants' answers in this research. The men interviewed were asked about their thoughts as Syrian men, while interviews were conducted using video conferencing software such as MS Teams and Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a Syrian national, I may have not retrieved the same pieces of information as a female researcher or researcher from different nationality would. The answers could also vary if the interviews were conducted in person.

1.3 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER I

The thesis is organized in the following way: this first chapter introduced the research, research question and the objectives of the research, as well as why this research is important. Then, it went through the methods used to obtain the data and the ethical issues that were taken into consideration. Chapter 2 discusses gender norms in Syria and Canada, giving an overview of the gender situation and relevant laws within the Syrian and Canadian contexts. Chapter 3 explains the theoretical framework used to analyze the data, hegemonic masculinity theory. Chapter 4 explores gender in refugee settings and examines settlement programs that exist in Halifax specifically, and Chapter 5 examines the experiences of Syrian male immigrants; finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the research and examines some of its limitations.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines gender relations and masculinities in the Middle East and Canada, and the adaptation of male immigrants to gender norms in Canada through the help of resettlement agencies. Prior to investigating whether Syrian male newcomers are able to adapt to Canadian gender norms and the varied expectations regarding masculine behavior, it is critical to examine the following questions: What are the predominant masculinities present in Syrian society? What are the Canadian societal expectations about masculine behavior? What are the available immigration services related to gender issues? This chapter tries to answer these questions by examining the existing literature.

Since ‘gender’ refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender-diverse people (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2020), bringing a gendered approach to the immigration context requires a good understanding of gender, its intersectional character, and any other external intersectional factors (social, political, and economic circumstances as well as ideological and cultural background, etc.). For instance, the social roles and life experiences of immigrants (men, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer) differ not only because of their gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation but also because of a wide variety of factors such as race, age, tradition, education level, etc. In order to fully understand what we mean by gender; we also need to understand “gender identity” and how an understanding of gender identity is essential in order to have a truly inclusive gender approach to any project and program. It is important to make a clear distinction between three important concepts: “sexual orientation”, “gender identity” and "gender

expression." According to United Nations Free & Equal (2021), *Sexual Orientation* refers to a person's physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction toward other people. Gay men and lesbians, for example, are attracted to individuals of the same sex as themselves. Heterosexual people are attracted to individuals of a different sex from themselves. Bisexual people may be attracted to individuals of the same or different sex. *Gender Identity* reflects a deeply felt and experienced sense of one's being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum (Trans, non-binary, neutral, etc.). A cisgender identity, for example, describes people whose sense of their own gender is aligned with the sex that they were assigned at birth. *Gender Expression* is the way in which we express our gender through actions and appearance. People whose gender expression does not fit into society's norms and expectations, such as men perceived as 'feminine' and women perceived as 'masculine' often face harsh sanctions, including bullying, physical and sexual violence, etc. (United Nations Free& Equal, 2021; the Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d). Many immigrants from societies with traditional understandings of gender, think of gender as built on a binary system (either male or female) and do not easily understand the areas of overlap (e.g., non-binary identities). In many countries, including Syria, culturally defined codes of acceptable behavior are restricted to a two-gender system of male and female. Therefore, as explained further in chapter five, Syrian men participants have little to no knowledge about gender-related issues and did not expect this big change in gender roles for men and women which led them to struggle to adapt to the Canadian gender norms.

2.1 Gender Norms and masculinity in the Middle East (Being a man in the Middle East)

The study of gender and gender roles in the Middle East is modest (AbuKhalil, 1997; Al-Ghanim & Badahda, 2017). To better understand gender-related issues in the Middle East, we should focus on religion and especially Islam. Religion impacts gender roles and plays a significant role in shaping culture, citizenship and family law. In some countries, religion, or sect (denomination) plays a vital role in determining someone's agency³ and status⁴ in politics or public life, as well as their right to work and education. Most (if not all) Middle Eastern countries make sure that their constitutions, laws and education curricula comply with the religious norms dominant in each society. Also, most of these countries are divided by religious, ethnic, tribal, linguistic, regional, and class differences. Yet, as a predominantly Muslim region, most debates regarding gender equality and women's empowerment point rather to Muslims' (vs. non-Muslims') patriarchal religious socialization. In other words, citizens are embedded in dominantly patriarchal religious structures, but the socialization processes within those structures differ between Muslims vs. non-Muslims and between men and women (Glas, Spierings & Scheepers, (2018); Maktabi, 2010). Nonetheless, in their study, "Re-Understanding Religion and Support for Gender Equality in Arab Countries", Glas et al., 2018; Maktabi, 2010) find that religious socialization is multifaceted and gendered and that certain men and women are inclined and equipped to deviate from dominant patriarchal religious interpretations. Beyond the focus on Islam as a set of religious beliefs grounded in the

³ According to Cambridge dictionary, agency refers to the ability to take action or to choose what action to take.

⁴According to Cambridge dictionary, status refers to the position of respect and importance given to someone or something.

‘Koran’, only the cultural norms prevalent in predominantly Islamic societies will be discussed in this thesis. Contemporary Islamic attitudes, for example, recognize the sexual desires of men while denying those of women. (Glas et al., (2018); Maktabi, 2010). However, any exploration of sexual identity/orientation issues of men or women could conflict with the established dominant Islamic values. Neither the state nor the religious establishment will permit free interpretations of issues defined as “Islamic morality.” (AbuKhalil, 1999). Generally, power relations between women and men in the domain of sexuality have been based on what Vance (1984, p. 443) has called the “traditional bargain”. Under the traditional bargain, ‘good women’, that is those who have complied with the social codes of chastity and virtue, would have men’s respect and protection. Those who fail to comply would be deprived of social respect and protection.

The task in this thesis, however, is to explore the ways in which gender boundaries and sexual identities developed over time and especially after the Arab⁵ Spring. Now, eleven years after most protest signs have vanished, it has become clear that demands for social justice and dignity have hardly been met in most Middle Eastern countries (Moghadam 2018; Szmolka 2017). To my knowledge, no large-scale study exists assessing if the Arab Uprisings fueled feminism and gender equality among wider publics. The post-spring period has been a time of empowerment and, at the same time, disempowerment of women. Many patriarchal structures have remained intact or reemerged in new forms of masculinities such as the increased involvement of men in caring practices and especially in fathering. However, many gender roles have also

⁵ Arab” and “Muslim” are not synonymous terms. Muslims are followers of the religion of Islam. Arabs are an ethno-linguistic group of people, most of whom are Muslim in religion but many of whom are not.

changed, such as the increased labor force participation of women (Dahlerup & Darhour, 2020). In view of this, the Middle East is still the least free region of the world, and instability continues to threaten possibilities for democracy in many of its countries especially in Syria and uncertainty looms especially on the future of gender equality and women's empowerment. A recent study by Glas and Spierings (2020), "Changing Tides? On How Popular Support for Feminism Increased After the Arab Spring", questions why the Arab Uprisings may have increased public support for feminism in some Middle Eastern countries but not in others. The results showed that mass protests in countries that were already more gender equal (Tunisia) were sufficient to boost public support for feminism after the Arab Spring. The results also implied that anti-Western sentiments and civil wars shape what type of feminism (Muslim or secularist)⁶ was boosted by the uprisings. Generally, in countries with strong anti-Western sentiments, such as Egypt, secularist feminism jumped after the uprisings. So, in strongly anti-Western societies, the narrative that feminism is incompatible with Islam may be more forceful and prompt feminists to opt for a secular route. By contrast, Muslim feminism jumped in countries with sectarian protests that descended into civil wars. Still, this result remains tentative as the data of this study did not include all of the countries in which the 2011 uprisings were characterized by sectarian protests leading to civil war, such as Syria. This also leaves room for contradictory attitudes toward women's rights; for instance, some Arab Muslims may support women's education without advocating for women's political

⁶ Muslim Feminists refers to people supporting both gender equality and Shari'a. Those belonging to this typology, support women's right but refuse a secular interpretation of gender roles. Gender equality, according to this view, may be achieved through Islam.

– Secular Feminists refers to those respondents who consider theocracy a limit for gender equality. Their support for gender equality goes together with the quest for secular codes ruling family laws, dress code, gender segregation etc. (Glas and Spierings, 2020).

rights or women's control of resources (i.e., empowerment) even from anti or pro-western perspectives.

Corresponding with the above study, the available evidence suggests that very little progress has been made toward gender equality in the Middle East. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2021), Syria is in the bottom 152nd out of 156 countries on the global ranking in the gender gap index⁷ with a score of 0.568 out of 1 (0.00 = imparity; 1.00 = parity), while Canada ranked 24 out of 156 countries with a score of 0.772 out of 1. The gender gap index between Syria and Canada (see table 2.1 below) highlights the gender differences which may reflect social norms and their impact on integration, social interactions, risk preferences, and response to interventions and programs. For instance, in Syria, the labor force participation rate for female (% of female population ages 15+) remains even more extreme (15.7% of women in the labor force, 80% gap of year 2021). While in Canada there has been higher rate of female labor participation (61% of women in the labor force, 40% gap of year 2021). However, wage and salaried workers for female (% of female employment) in Syria of the year 2019 was higher (92.4%) compared to Canada (88.2%). Therefore, there is still a long way to go to close Economic Participation and Opportunity gaps in Canada. To date, 75.3% of this gap has been closed - so to reduce gaps in wages and income, Canada has yet to close over 30% of its gaps (World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, 2021).

⁷ The Global Gender Gap Index examines the gap between men and women across four fundamental categories (subindexes): Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Country	Rank		Score (out of 1)
	Regional	Global	
Canada	14 (out of 22)	24 (out of 156)	0.772
Syria	17 (out of 19)	152(out of 156)	0.568

Table 2.1: The Global Gender Gap Index Rankings, Syria and Canada Compared

Source: World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, (2021)

With respect to citizenship and family law, most western countries define the basic unit of society as the 'individualized' citizen, while most constitutions of the Middle East identify the basic unit of society as the 'family' (Joseph, 2010; Maktabi, 2010). As a source of the gender inequalities existing in the middle eastern countries, the patriarchal tradition is generally linked to the religious roots of legislation and cultural heritage. Despite what most of the Western public opinion believes, the gender cultures that can be retrieved in the Muslim-majority countries differ across societies and the status of women varies (Lomazzi, 2020). Therefore, Family law in the Middle East region, including Syria, is perceived as gender inequitable because it includes patriarchal notions of differences between the sexes and is anchored in religious laws found in Islam (shari'a), Christian church laws and Jewish laws (Halacha) (Maktabi, 2010). Muslims' (vs. non-Muslims') patriarchal religious socialization boost male dominance over women and reflect gender roles regarding obedience and sexuality, freedom of movement in the public sphere and the distribution of wealth within the household economy (Glas et al., 2018; Maktabi, 2010; AbuKhalil, 1999). For example, in some Muslim societies where women are expected to stay at home, breaking that gender norm could make it more likely for a woman to encounter violence, either physical or sexual, as a kind of revenge by men to assert control over her. Due to the hetero-normative patriarchal environment,

many women view traditional gender roles as being the right way to act and be. A woman going to work or doing “man’s work” (for example construction work or in some cases any work outside the home) could be considered unacceptable even from the perspective of women. Following this logic, the state thus solidifies a system of unequal power relations that subordinates women and perpetuates a masculine standpoint in the political system (Joseph, 2010 & Maktabi 2010).

AL-Ghanim and Badahdah (2017) state that gender stereotypes in Arab countries are prevalent and coupled with social, political, and legal restrictions imposed on women that limit their agency. A recent report by the World Bank (2013) indicated that residents of some Arab countries expressed less favorable attitudes toward women occupying positions of authority compared to people in other countries around the world. Grounded in this logic, it would then follow that the state simply reflects the norms of male supremacy inside the family and wider society and plays a role in creating and reproducing these norms, by reinforcing them in the laws and public policies: the patriarch is the father figure with the privileges of the use of force and social control over other family members. In sum, the impact of cultural and gender systems in the production of unequal relationships of Arab women and men to the laws and practices of citizenship is manifested in Middle Eastern citizenship in ways that privilege a male citizen.

2.2 Gender Norms and Masculinity in Syria (Being a man in Syria)

While there is no single masculine identity, there are predominant masculine identities in any given society. These are referred to as ‘hegemonic masculinity’. This section examines the differences in gender norms and prevailing masculine identities in

Syrian settings considering demographic attributes (age, sex, and education), social factors (religion and tribal attachment), and political factors (participation, and ideology). The government of Syria has banned publication of official population statistics on ethnic and religious identity since 1956 (Maktabi, 2010). However, some statistics indicate that the Syrian population comprises of 74% Sunni Muslims, 16% Alawite, Druze and other Muslim sects and 10% various Christian groups (The World Factbook, 2008). It must be noted that there are some important differences in gender norms and relations among these different religious groups in Syria. For Christians and Alawite groups, for example, power relationships between women and men in the domain of sexuality and work are relatively more equal (Kelly & Breslin 2010; Maktabi, 2010). Matters relating to women's choices in marriage as well as sexual intimacy are often suppressed in Syrian patriarchal society. Notions like 'sharaf' (honor) and 'ird' (a man's honor) still enable men to control many areas of women's lives (Maktabi, 2010). As a character in a novel by Najib Mahfouz says, "Nothing stigmatizes men.", in other words, nothing defames or damages the good reputation of the Middle Eastern man. This, as a result, privileges a masculine standpoint (AbuKhalil, 1997; Joseph 2010).

The Arab Middle Eastern region is commonly identified as the geographical and cultural center of honor killing, murder committed by a male family member for a woman's perceived transgression of gender norms (Gengler, Alkazemi & Alsharekh, (2021). In their study on "Who Supports Honor-Based Violence in the Middle East?", Gengler et al (2021) reveal that the strongest positive predictors of individual support for Honor-based violence are tribal attachment, religiosity, and support for political Islam. Early marriage and silence on sexual harassment and assault, including rape, are good

examples of how women in Syria remain constrained by discriminatory legal and cultural frameworks. Women who may be willing to report the rape are in a problematic position where they could find themselves being accused of having an illicit relationship or having sex outside of marriage, which are criminalized and can lead to a honor-based violence, including murder (Gengler et al., 2021, Maktabi, 2010).

Beyond the focus on religion, gender roles and boundaries in Syria are determined by family law (Syrian Law of Personal Status). As in other Middle Eastern countries where Islam is dominant, Syrian family law represents a mixture of shari'a principles and civil law (Maktabi, 2010). Although this law is influenced by Islamic shari'a laws and applies to all Syrian citizens, other sects like the Druze, Jews and Christians have their own family laws that grant them autonomy in matters related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption (Berger, 1997 as cited in Maktabi, 2010).

Under the umbrella of the Syrian constitution, both male and female citizens have equal rights (Kelly & Breslin 2010). The constitution was adopted in 1973, with revisions in 2012 guaranteeing equality between women and men. Article 23 states:

The state shall provide women with all opportunities enabling them to effectively and fully contribute to the political, economic, social and cultural life, and the state shall work on removing the restrictions that prevent their development and participation in building society.

Despite this revision, crucial parts of the Syrian Penal Code discriminate against women, as they can be punished more severely than men. For example, women and men are differently prosecuted in instances of adultery under Articles 239, 242, and 548, and women have limited possibilities to provide evidence, have broader grounds on which they can be prosecuted, as well as face longer sentences (Kelly et al. 2010; Maktabi,

2010). The personal status law differentiates the rights depending on the religious group that the person belongs to. However, in many or most cases, men and women have unequal rights under the law and, if not stated otherwise for a certain religious group, rights often differ in terms of marriage, divorce, ability to travel, or inheritance rights. Women are clearly in an inferior legal position to men, despite the Article 23 of the Constitution. However, women do have the right to work, own property, and access education. Gender equality is also reflected in some other parts of the Syrian law where women enjoy equal civil liberties as men; for example, the age of legal adulthood for both sexes is 18. In trade law, females have the right to act as economically independent subjects (Maktabi, 2010). In practice, however, citizenship law, criminal law and family law all have a gendered bias. In citizenship law, a Syrian female cannot pass Syrian citizenship to her children if married to a non-Syrian, while a Syrian man has this right. In criminal law, gentle jail sentences of two to four months are normal for 'honor killings'. In contrast, the penalty for killing a male (manslaughter) is up to 15 years in jail. Within family law, a female is required to have a male guardian when contracting her marriage (the father, brother, or another male relative), and a husband has the right to prevent his wife from moving freely if he does not agree (Shammat, 2006 as cited in Maktabi, 2010). Debates on Syrian family law, however, is influenced by minority and majority considerations due to the existence of a plurality of religious groups. For example, the Christian group (minority) follows the church not the "Shari'a" for issues such as inheritance, marriage, divorce, custody, etc. Seen from a gendered perspective, the debate is that the current Syrian family law perpetuates a patriarchal family model which

is ideologically inherent in classical Islamic law which, in turn, is manifested in a hegemonic masculine standpoint.

In view of the above, it may very well be noted that most of the Syrian laws (personal status, citizenship, etc.) are grounded in a “dominant hegemonic masculinity”. However, the archetype of the ideal Syrian man as a family ‘patriarch’ who can exert his power over women and/or other family members through coercion or even force is being challenged (Gren, 2018). Marcia Inhorn (2012) asserts that the meaning of masculinity in the Arab region is changing. In the context of resettlement and integration, the social surroundings change drastically, and a newcomer faces a series of new contexts and meanings, that pop up when settling in a new country, new culture and new community. Against this background, Inhorn (2012) argues that masculinities in the Arab region are never identical but plural and subject to change depending on social, historical and cultural factors distinctive to diverse areas and societies.

In the Syrian context, being a man involves heavily gendered social expectations about men’s responsibilities to their families and society. A Syrian is expected to be strong, diligent, educated, and employed. His work and salary are essential to continue his masculine role in society, which is to marry, protect and provide for his family. From this traditional view, Berg Lovisa (2017) examines the representation of masculinity by Syrian female novelists between 1959 and 2000. She explores how stereotypes are utilized to critique gender roles, the ways in which male and female characters collaborate to formulate and reinforce gender norms, how some female characters

capitalize on patriarchy⁸ in order to enhance their lives, how some male characters become symbols for social and political change and finally, the difficulties included in the performance of hegemonic masculinity. According to Berg (2017), the recent history of masculinity in Syria can be divided into three periods: 'The Father Figure' (1959-1970), 'the Political Man' (1970-1985), and 'Problematic Masculinity' (1985-2000). Each of the periods has been shown to construct masculinity in a specific way. This development from a hegemonic character (the Father Figure) to an aggressive or vague character (Problematic Masculinity) also follows the development of the female characters and their increasing demand for equality. Mirroring these developments was the view of 'Struggling Masculinity', that is, how the performance of masculinity, often connected to power and ability, can be an obstacle in a man's life if he is not able to perform it according to the expectations placed on him. Interestingly, most Syrian male migrants I interviewed in this study cited conservative cultural norms, age, priorities, privacy, and other factors that led them to challenge their masculine status. The personal constructs of their masculinity were affected by the changed living conditions after arriving in Canada in the first two years. Their constructs were influenced in particular by an inability to live up to the dominant masculine norms they brought with them from Syria. In the following section, I highlight the challenges that migrant men face in understanding and adapting to gender norms in a new country.

⁸ Patriarchy is commonly described as „a system of social structures and practices, in which men govern, oppress and exploit women” (UN Women, n.d).

2.3 Changing Gender roles (Being a man in a new country)

The aim of this section is to examine the challenges facing immigrant men who are unable to fulfill gendered expectations from their home countries and the challenges that immigrant men face in understanding and adapting to gender norms in a new country. Immigrant communities are constructed based on a collection of cultural and social patterns 'transported from home' (Chamberlin, 2019;). For instance, the most important masculine roles of Syrian men who participated in this study are: 1) access to work and income 2) the creation of one's own family, 3) the ability to provide protection and material needs for the family and 4) to exercise power over women and children. However, newcomer men often find themselves having to take on new roles and responsibilities that are at odds with their traditional gendered social roles, such as sharing the role of provider with a woman). Most Syrian men experienced difficulties to provide safety and material needs during the time of adaptation in the first two years after arriving in Canada (between 2018 and 2020) and finally, due to laws and social norms that place higher value on gender equity, Syrian men also experienced a feeling of disempowerment. Many male newcomers can experience severe stress and feelings of powerlessness because they are unable to fulfill their traditional role as family provider and protector. This, in some cases, could lead to negative expressions of masculinity, such as domestic violence (Chamberlin, 2019, Krabbe, 2017). It is thus crucial to explore newcomers' experiences of how their gendered social and economic roles are changing, and the negative and positive impacts these changes are having on their lives. An Oxfam research report on Syrian refugees in Lebanon asserts that Syrian men were mainly responsible for supporting their families financially and made most of the decisions about

the running of the household (Harvey, Garwood & El-Masri, 2013). However, the crisis in Syria and their new status as refugees have challenged these gendered roles. Patterns of mobility and lifestyles have changed, and both women and men are being forced to redefine core aspects of their identities: “the loss of previously established family and societal roles, forced dependency, high levels of physical and psychological pain, impotence and frustration may lead to significant levels of domestic violence and non-consensual sex following resettlement” (Pickup, 2001, p.165). Examining these factors through a gender perspective tells us that the increased violence against women, for example, is a way for men to re-establish some of their “masculinity” which they feel they have lost due to any change happen in their status. However, perceived threats to established masculine and feminine identities have exacerbated the stress that women and men are experiencing, with overwhelming feelings of powerlessness and desperation (Harvey, Garwood & El-Masri, 2013; Gren 2018). The report further recommended that people’s fears of changing roles and gender identities need to be explored in a supportive way, which can be an entry point for changing attitudes to women’s participation in economic and political life and for changing social norms, such as fewer restrictions on women’s social mobility.

In this context, it is worth illustrating some of the gender norms that may prevail in the mind of a typical Syrian male refugee when newly arrived in a new country. Krabbe (2017) outlines the prerequisites that a Syrian refugee man considers as the most relevant to maintain their masculine standards once they arrive in the Netherlands: 1) access to work and income resulting in financial independence and the ability to support one’s family; 2) the ability to provide protection and material needs for the family; and 3)

the ability to exercise power over women and children. Krabee also highlighted the difficulties that Syrian men faced regarding attempts to comply with European gender norms. For example, he reported that men who arrived in the Netherlands as single found it very difficult to find a woman in Netherlands with whom to start a family, especially relatively older men who experienced unemployment and the frustrations associated with it. In most cases men failed to meet the European gender expectations of what 'real men' are like, how they should act and represent themselves to others (Chamberlin, 2019, Krabbe, 2017). An advocacy brief on 'Engaging Men, Changing Gender Norms' by the United Nations Population Fund (n.d), indicates that many middle eastern cultures' traditional gender norms (usually inequitable) contrast with European gender equitable ones. In Syrian culture, for example, it is the norm for men not to question another man's autonomy in his own home, including the use of violence against his wife and children. A European gender norm says it is men's responsibility to speak out against physical, sexual or emotional abuse being committed by other men. Likewise, it has been the norm for men in Syria not to pay attention to their health, seeing such concerns as signs of weakness; a European gender norm has men taking responsibility for their health and well-being (.. Some research looks at how immigrants may hold on to a more rigid sense of cultural gender norms than individuals in their home countries to establish a sense of control amidst a situation in which they feel disempowered (Kabeer, 2002). Culture is fluid and changes over time – sometimes slowly, sometimes more rapidly – for a number of different factors (socioeconomical or political, etc.). Some studies, also, have shown that in some cases culture changes more rapidly in sending communities than in diaspora communities in hosting countries (Canada) for that very reason (Kabeer, 2002).

Syrian men express their concern about how exposure to foreign ways of life may damage women, the family, and their cultural heritage. To illustrate, some Syrian men who participated in this study cited that the new ways of Canadian life have affected their children's mindset and that they challenge their parents' norms. Thus, they lost control over their kids and this, in their opinion, has damaged fatherhood relationships. One Syrian participant explained: "*many Syrian men reported to the Imam (the leader of the Muslim community in Halifax) that their children began to feel that they are strangers to them, as many of the boys told their parents "Our culture is now very different from yours"*". Overall, the above characterizations show that the possibility of a loss of masculine power leads to men's negative reactions, including blame, ridicule, controlling women's mobility and social interactions, and violence.

It is useful to consider research on how immigrant men respond to the gender norms that they observe in Canada or other immigrant-receiving countries. In their study of second-generation Somali immigrants in Canada, Karimi, Bucerius & Thompson (2019) examined the role of various factors such as ethnicity, religion, the host society's cultural context, and how participants navigate these norms to construct gender identities that are compatible with both their ethnic and national identities and therefore facilitate their integration into Canadian society. The participants have been exposed to a different set of cultural norms in Canada and noticed a shift from the traditional gender views still held by their parent's generation. They cite Bachir, a 17-year-old male, who reported that second-generation Somali Canadians appear to be moving towards an "equal rights" approach to gender, in order to avoid family conflict and labor market issues that their parents experienced due to traditional gender expectations and arrangements. The

literature concerning Syrian male immigrants in Canada remains scarce. Important exceptions to this are the latest work of Hamilton, Veronis & Walton-Roberts (2020) on Syrian refugee resettlement in Canada which I will discuss below.

2.4 Gender Norms in Canada (Theory and Law)

Historically, in the 1930s through the 1960s, social citizenship in Canada was described as being built for and by the male-dominated industrial working class. Women's status and roles are barely highlighted in the dominant narratives, except when attention turns to household issues (Jenson, 2004 as cited in Abu-Laban, 2009). From the 1960s through the 1980s, the feminist movement began the task of making gender inequality visible in the 'post-war welfare state' (Abu-Laban, 2009). A post-war gender order developed in which some women achieved what was, at best, second-class citizenship, whereas other women - those marginalized by race, sexuality, and class - experienced poverty, insecurity, and exclusion. Later, during the early 1980s, Canada began to witness radical shifts where gender roles and gender inequalities were addressed in public policy. For feminists, issues such as legal equalities, political representation, sexual freedom, and protection from domestic violence were recognized as legitimate citizenship claims (Brodie, 1997 as cited in Abu-Laban, 2009). In order to understand Canadian policies on gender and migration, it is necessary to review how the feminist movement interacted with the development of Canadian identities. The three waves of the feminist movement⁹ and feminist struggles played a significant role in shaping the racialized, gendered, and classical notion of the "new immigrant." In the next paragraph,

⁹ See more details on the feminist movement in the following sections.

I will discuss in more detail the evolution of Canadian gender roles in early 20th century and how feminist movements played a significant role in shaping Canadian immigration policies and settlement services.

2.5 The evolution of Canadian gender roles in early 20th century

Evidence of the social construction of gender roles can be seen by examining these roles across societies or across time. In Canada, there has been a gradual shift from a patriarchal model to a more egalitarian one (Bakker, 1996). Referring census data collected by the Canadian Century Research Infrastructure (CCRI)¹⁰ and Statistics Canada from 1911 to 1951, documentation and instruction manuals enabled researchers to examine how gender roles have evolved and changed as changes in Canadian society occurred (Statistics Canada, 2014). Over the early part of the last century, one of the most prominent roles of a woman was to be a ‘wife’ and give birth and raise children within a male-headed family. Men more often worked outside the home for pay and assumed the role of the household head. Children were recorded as having the cultural heritage of their fathers. Men or husbands continued to be considered the head of their households up to the beginning of 1971. However, the proportion of household heads that were female grew between 1911 and 1951. In 1976 either husband or wife could be considered the head of the household. By 1981, the term was dropped completely. Until 1947, a woman’s citizenship was tied to her husband’s citizenship. On average, a woman in the

¹⁰ The Canadian Century Research Infrastructure (CCRI) is a five-year effort to build a comprehensive database of information on early 20th century Canada that might be used to address research questions from a wide variety of academic disciplines. The project has been supported by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, federal and provincial governments, a number of Canadian universities and Statistics Canada. It involves a large team of academics, researchers and specialists and is linked to a number of similar international projects.

paid workforce earned about half of what a man earned until 1941. Interestingly, although the wage gap has narrowed, in 2008 the average hourly earnings for women continued to be below those of men's—illustrating that there remain differences in labor market experiences between genders.

2.6 Converging the gender roles

Feminism is an interdisciplinary approach to issues of equality and equity based on gender, gender expression, gender identity, sex, and sexuality as understood through social theories and political activism. Feminist theory questions inequalities along the intersectional lines of ability, class, gender, race, sex, and sexuality, and feminists seek to effect change in areas where these intersectionalities create power inequities. Historically, feminism is typically separated into three waves. The first wave of feminism (1848-??) opened up opportunities for women, with a focus on voting. In the second wave (1960-1990), sexuality and reproductive rights were dominant issues with focusing on social equality regardless of sex. In the third wave of feminism (1990 to the present), many constructs were destabilized, including the notions of "universal womanhood," body, gender, sexuality and heteronormativity (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). These three waves of the feminist movement and feminist struggles have shaped gender equity developments and today's Canadian couples aged 25 to 54 have a more equal partnership in the sharing of financial, childcare, and household responsibilities (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). However, gender differences in the division of labor are still evident, if diminishing. According to new report by Statistics Canada (2022), in 2019, Canadian women completed 50 per cent more unpaid housework than men. In 1986, 54% of men did some housework daily; by 2015, 69% did. On the other hand, women's participation in daily

housework remained steady at around 90%. Men's involvement in childcare has also grown per capita, the report found that Canadian women put in 820 hours of unpaid housework in 2019, 50 per cent more than the 540 hours of housework Canadian men did.

In the 1990s, Canada adopted a series of social policy reforms that focused on the social production process and the gender order that underlies them. Mirroring these developments was the enacting of 'individualization' as a social policy strategy, which places a priority on the development of human capital, individual self-sufficiency and labor force participation. However, according to gender-equality activists, 'individualization' masks systemic inequalities as a result of gender identity, sexual orientation and race in determining vulnerabilities to poverty, as well as capacities to achieve self-sufficiency (Jenson, 2004 as cited in Abu-Laban 2009). Following these developments, section 15 (1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms describes the equality rights of those living in Canada: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. In view of the above, Women and Gender Equality Canada (2019) argues that contemporary gender norms are outdated and could play a major role in preventing many individuals from realizing their full potential. Women, girls, transgender, and non-binary people, for example, face greater barriers to success and have access to fewer opportunities simply because of who they are. Recently, the Government of Canada has taken a number of actions to advance gender equality and to support an inclusive society, such as reducing violence against

women and girls. Announced in June 2017, Canada's strategy to prevent and address Gender-Based Violence which include preventing gender-based violence, supporting survivors and their families and promoting responsive legal and justice systems. The Strategy will fill gaps in supports for diverse populations, including women and girls; Indigenous women and girls; LGBTQ2 and gender diverse individuals; women living in rural, and remote communities; women and girls with disabilities; immigrant and refugee women (women and Gender Equality Canada).

2.7 Masculinity in Canada: Being a Man in Canada

In this section, I examine masculinity in Canada from a comparative perspective that highlights the differences between the range of masculinities in Canada that immigrants might experience and need to adapt to when they arrive from other countries, specifically Syria. Understanding masculinities within the Canadian context requires a clarification of some terms related to gender norms such as 'sexual orientation' and 'gender identity and expression' which I explained at the beginning of this chapter (Also see table 1). In Canada, despite the gender equitable progress described above, culturally defined codes of acceptable behavior still exist for a two-gender system of males and females (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2006). For example, men and boys are expected to show masculine behaviors and social roles. Thus, male adolescents are strongly discouraged from putting on makeup in many cultures because this is related to female behavior. However, in some segments of Canadian society – such as youth -expressions of non-traditional gender norms are becoming increasingly 'mainstream. For example, individuals feel more comfortable being openly gay and transgendered men or women are more open about expressing their gender identity than in the past. Similarly, women/girls

are expected to show traditional feminine gender presentation, behavior, and social roles. Female children are socialized to wear skirts, not pants, and are discouraged from playing outdoor, 'rough' games. These norms of feminine behavior, however, are rapidly changing and are being actively challenged by many women (and men). A recent study by Clarke, Laura, and Maya (2018) on older Canadian men's perceptions and experiences of embodied masculinity demonstrates that older Canadian men understood and interpreted masculinity in relation to women as well as to other men, specifically gay men. Although femininity was apparently constructed as the opposite of masculinity, homosexuality was considered to be a subordinated form of masculinity and normalized with a lack of masculine attributes and abilities. To further highlight the relational distinctions between masculinity, femininity, and homosexuality, the male participants in this study identified three indicators of hegemonic masculinity, namely: physical strength, the ability to lead (both in the family and the workplace), sexuality and virility.

Within the context of the popular media, the debate on masculinity in Canada has emerged from the pen of some writers and columnists. For example, Greig & Holloway (2012) cited David Adams Richards (citation): "*The world was changing and men acting like women and women acting like men*". In the *Globe and Mail* newspaper, a writer warned Canadians that the growing number of "fragile males" in Canada could be a "bigger threat to our future civilization than the global warming" (Mittelstaedt, 2008 as cited in Greig & Holloway, 2012). Also, according to one *National Post* columnist, the claimed undermining of a traditional 'manhood' has produced cities full of "sissies" (Blatchford, 2011 as cited in Greig & Holloway, 2012). The above statements manifest contemporary concerns over gender expression and gender relations and reflect the

contemporary debate in Canada over the state and capacity of 'Canadian manhood' (Greig & Holloway, 2012). These negative reactions in the media to changing gender norms are balanced with positive reactions on how changing gender norms enable both women, men and people who identify as neither to express themselves more freely and to fulfill themselves as human beings in ways that they could not in the past. White Ribbon Canada, for example, initiated many campaigns to support more equitable gender relationships in the community. The 'Remodeling our Masculinities' campaign, for example, created a digital series featuring young social activists and community leaders to explore the topics of masculinity, equity, social justice, gender and sexual diversity, mental health and allyship. Another good example is Shift, the Project to End Domestic Violence at the University of Calgary. They conducted a research program on engaging and mobilizing men and boys in violence prevention and gender equality. The findings of this project reveal that working with men directly helps to build allyship with women and share power, transform masculinities, and reduce violence against women. As participant said:

As we are evolving and learning, we are realizing that the root cause of sexual violence is definitely connected to gender equality; it is definitely connected to unhealthy ideals and mindsets of young men and of masculinity in general.

Qualities regarding traditional (stereotypical) views of masculinity (e.g., being strong, provider, not showing emotions), the power, and privilege associated with being a "real man" have been questioned (Chamberlin, 2019). In response to these question, Martino & Greig (2012), referenced Kaufman's statement about "men's contradictory experiences of power" - that is, of the relationship between how we have, on the one

hand, socially constructed men's power and given unequal power and privilege to men and, on the other hand, men's own experience of masculinity and the practice of that power, that is often associated with an anxiety, isolation, dissatisfaction, and emotional stress. Moreover, the experiences of power are not stable and depend not only on our personal investment in hegemonic forms of masculinity but also on the complex gender hierarchies that emerge once we incorporate race, sexual orientation, economic class, religion, immigration status, and so forth (Kaufman, 1999 as cited in Martino & Greig, 2012).

In their study, "*Tomorrow's men today*", Fotheringham & Wells (2019) reveal that the most commonly reported reason Canadian men do not get involved in gender equality issues is because of the collective socialization of males and their social privilege. Participants explained that the current dominant social construction of masculinity restricts men to certain behaviors and actions that do not include asking for help, showing empathy, or self-reflection, resulting in less engagement with gender equality issues. Some participants stated that males are often only exposed to the traditional narratives of manhood that limit gender equality and enhance social problems like violence against women. However, others stated that because privilege and oppression are not equally shared amongst men, the diversity and intersectionality of the male experience need to be a fundamental part of gender equality work. Since Canada has adopted "Intersectionality", a feminist theory, in its socio-economic policies, it is important to note the complexities of masculine privilege from an intersectional lens (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2019)

According to the Women and Gender Advocacy Center at Colorado State University, the best way to explain masculine behavior is through what is known as the “Man Box¹¹”. Inside the box is a list of socially valued roles and expectations that constitute traditional masculinity such as “strong, powerful, in control, breadwinner, muscular,” while words outside the box such as “gay, weak, homo, Mama's boy, queer” are used to confine boys and men into a narrowly constructed definition of manhood. In this way, boys and men are punished (often by other boys and men) in a particularly gendered manner. For example, if boys and men do not meet the expectations of being a man (from the inside list of the box) they are often bullied with words from outside the box (homophobic or feminizing slurs). From a Canadian context, Pam Krause, CEO of Calgary Center for Sexuality, has also referenced the "Man Box". According to Krause, inside that box are all the culturally acceptable traits assigned to men, such as dominance and stoicism, and getting men to step outside that box is not easy. She advocates for creating a population of boys and men who will step outside the narrow confines of masculinity (the box). However, Krause explains that "[h]istorically, many men have done well in our society. They don't want to lose their power and status” (Chambrlin, 2020). According to Chamberlin (2019), the stereotypical view of ‘how to be a real man’ such as ‘Gimme five’, ‘Bump shoulders’, ‘Pump iron’, ‘Don’t get emotional’, etc. is outdated. He cited some Canadian masculinist scholars such as Jean-René Leblanc, Michael Kehler, and Nolan Hill who suggest that the tradition of masculinity is so deeply embedded in our culture that any changes are bound to be slow, and battles for gender

¹¹ The term “Man Box,” was created in the early 1980's by Paul Kivel in his book: ‘Men’s Work: How to Stop the Violence That Tears Our Lives Apart’. The concept was expanded on by Tony Porter.

equality will be hard-won. He cited "the boy's club" in one of Ontario all-boys' school as an example to show that a football team of boys use the locker room as a masculine place where they can dominate, exercise their strength and privilege over others, such as make homophobic remarks and belittle other boys.

Nolan Hill, as cited in Chamberlin study (2019) sees masculinity loosening its grip on traits like strength, power, and dominance. He raises the example of a recent tweet in which a father paints his fingernails as a show of support to his gender-creative child. He comments "The story suggests a wonderfully accepting attitude", then he adds "But the reality is that there are still guys painting their nails, presenting a non-conforming type of masculinity, and they are being harassed every day." (Chamberlin, 2019). In line with this, Michael Kehler (year) as cited in Chamberlin study (2019) goes on to say that "the stereotypes of masculinity are rooted in day-to-day interactions and institutions that are narrow and restrictive, and limit what it means to be a boy and a man". Further, Jean-René Leblanc as cited in Chamberlin study (2019) sees gender as a performance rather than a biological fact. He explains the idea behind performing gender and indicates to the things we do consciously, in everyday life, that express our gender: "It's the idea that your gender isn't something you're born with physically. It is constructed through the things we do with our bodies, the way we move, the way we speak, the way we dress. This is how we create meaning and define our gender."

Canada is committed to advancing gender equality through the empowerment and protection of women and girls and more recently via the engagement of men and boys (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2019). Traditional masculinity is slow to change, however, as shown above understandings and expressions of masculinity are changing.

These differences are important as they highlight the differences between hegemonic masculinities and alternative forms of masculinity – which are becoming increasingly visible and normal, albeit slowly.

2.8 Being a man in Canada (everyday life – from an immigrant perspective)

The unprecedented rate of immigration since the 1970s has had a significant impact on the demographic profile of Canadian society (Statistics Canada, 2003). This increasingly complex and diverse profile of Canadian society has significant implications for the everyday life of performing gender roles and norms, especially for migrants from diverse gender. Western political discourse typically understands non-Western gender identities, such as Arab/Muslim, as fixed and argues that their gender perspectives are at odds with the Western values, and act as barriers to immigrant integration (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014 as cited in Karimi, Bucerius & Thompson, 2019). Gender roles cannot be universalized. For example, most men participants of this study noticed that woman in Canada can work in construction while it considered only a masculine role in Syria. Another good example is that in Arabian cultures, men should not cry or show their emotions whereas in other cultures, men do so. The study by Karimi et al. (2019) on second-generation Somali immigrants in Canada indicates they have generally been able to reconcile their ethnic (Islam) and national identities with Canadian gender norms that facilitated their integration into Canadian society. Interestingly, the study findings demonstrate that Islam among second-generation Somalis plays an important role in terms of defining their moral systems and ethnic identity but does not go against their host country's social norms. Many male participants stated that they see similarities between their own gender identities and those of their Canadian-born counterparts since

they have taken up duties that are traditionally considered feminine, such as taking care of siblings, cooking, and cleaning. One male explained that he had been exposed to a different set of cultural norms in Canada and noticed a shift from the traditional gender views still held by his parents' generation. Another research project about the life experiences of Iranian immigrants in Canada between 1991 and 1997 shows that migration to Canada has had profound implications for their sexual norms and ideology (Shahidian, 1999). According to Shahidian's study, Iranians combine 'traditional' and 'modern' norms and values to accommodate the changes they seek in gender and sexuality. In other words, Iranian immigrant men and women selectively mix and match 'traditional' norms and values with 'modern' options to improve their position in the contested domains of gender and sexuality in the host society. Perhaps the most striking aspect of immigrants is the shift in focus from the community/family - based values as constructed in their home country (Iran) to 'individuality' as a policy that has deeply constructed in Canadian society. A mother, for example, who prior to migration would have sacrificed her own success for the sake of her family may now find it more acceptable to give priority to her education or career, due in part to her experience as an immigrant in a society that recognizes the importance of women's personal accomplishment. Another way of looking at this is that for the sake of her family she is giving importance to her education or career so she can provide financially, share other roles with her man, and act as role model for her children (both male and female) of what women are able to accomplish when given the opportunity. That opportunity should be also open to men in order to achieve a more equitable gender relationship.

2.9 Immigration services in Canada

This section reviews government reports and a selected number of studies that deal with settlement services. The purpose of this review is to identify the current areas of research and point out some gaps on the gender dimensions of the settlement sector. Canadian immigration policies and settlement practices were largely written from a “gender-neutral” perspective which emphasizes the equal treatment of all genders (binary and non-binary identities). According to the University of British Columbia (2020) on ‘history of homosexual immigration in Canada’, from 1952-1977, the Immigration Act prevented homosexuals from any means of entry into Canada. From 1977-1991, the 1952 Immigration Act was refined to repeal the discriminatory measures against homosexuals. While gays and lesbians were allowed access into the country, Canadian immigration law continued to marginalize homosexuals as they only allowed heterosexuals to sponsor their partners as family class immigrants. From 1991-2002, the Department of Employment and Immigration began to grant same-sex partners entry into Canada in 1991. The Department eventually officially recognized the marginalization of homosexual couples in 1994. In 1999, the immigration minister finally announced changes to the immigration law and regulations which officially included lesbian and gay partners in the family class provisions. To understand Canadian immigration policies in this historical moment, it is necessary to review how the feminist movement interacted with the development of Canadian immigration policies and settlement services (Zhu, 2016). As I explained earlier in this chapter, feminist activists struggled to challenge the systemic oppression based on race, gender, class identities and difference, and to develop a welfare state for all. Thus, the three waves of the feminist movement and feminist

struggles played a significant role in shaping the racialized, gendered, and classical notion of the “new immigrant”. At the core of feminism stands the concept of intersectionality, which is recently embedded in Canada immigration policies. Since the 1970s, Canada has been seen as a welcoming nation for immigrants from diverse backgrounds and cultures. According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Canada receives more than 300,000 immigrants and refugees¹² every year. Settlement services are under the direct control of the Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). A Canadian model of settlement services for newcomers is usually delivered by local non-profit organizations and funded by the federal government. Starting in 2021, the government planned to start admitting a number of immigrants which is equal to 1% of Canada’s population each year (IRCC, 2018). Accordingly, those newcomers need extra support in order to overcome the challenges they face in Canada to successfully integrate. This also comes with the responsibility to ensure that newcomers integrate into Canada’s social and economic fabric, which includes acquiring proficiency in one of Canada’s official languages, becoming self-sufficient, and respecting and upholding the rule of Canadian law (IRCC, 2018).

It is important to distinguish between “settlement” and “integration” since the two terms are closely linked and sometimes used interchangeably. Both terms refer to a long and complex process through which newcomers become an integral part of the new society (IRCC, 2018; CCR, 2006) We can view the relationship between settlement and

¹²Refugee – a person who is forced to flee from persecution and who is located outside of their home country (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d)

Immigrant – a person who has settled permanently in another country (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d)

integration as a 'continuum'. “Settlement” refers to early stages of adaptation, when newcomers make the basic adjustments to life in a new country, including finding somewhere to live, beginning to learn the local language, getting a job, and learning to connect with an unfamiliar society. “Integration” is the long-term process through which newcomers become full and equal participants in all the various dimensions of society (the Canadian Council for Refugees [CCR], 2006). The IRCC has designed its 'Settlement Program' to “support newcomers’ successful settlement and integration so that they may participate and contribute to various aspects of Canadian life". Under the umbrella of this program, IRCC engages employers, sponsors, and settlement services agencies to provide settlement services on its behalf. The Settlement Program is the largest program in IRCC and there are over 500 organizations that are funded to provide settlement services such as information and orientation; language training and skills development; employment-related services; and community connections. Information and orientation services, for example, provide information that is important to settlement, such as housing, health care, finance, and the legal system, and are delivered online, on paper or in person (IRCC, 2019). To show the success of the Settlement Program, IRCC reported Statistics Canada’s latest data that suggest the effectiveness of the 'Settlement Program' in helping newcomers integrate. The department pointed out that most of the employment growth in Canada – 66% of the increase between 2016 and 2017 – was a direct result of immigrants (the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration [CIMM], 2019). To add, IRCC offers 'pre-arrival services' for immigrants to be informed about life in Canada before they arrive. These services are available to future permanent residents but are not mandatory (CIMM, 2019). They can include online and in-person

sessions on various aspects of life in Canada such as early support with foreign credential recognition, career planning, and job search; opportunities to connect with Canadian employers. Such programs help newcomers prepare for the Canadian labor market and give them a better overview of the Canadian environment (IRCC, 2018). For example, RDÉE Canada offers diverse online resources, such as fact sheets, webinars, and virtual job fairs to pre-arrival immigrants. A person who granted the right to live permanently in Canada called 'permanent resident'. The person may have come to Canada as an immigrant or as a refugee (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d). It must be noted however that the services outlined above are dedicated to immigrants.

Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has provided pre-departure orientation sessions to 127,000 refugees coming to Canada since 1998 (CIMM, 2019; IRCC, 2018). The IOM's Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) program, for example, helps refugees anticipate settlement challenges and manage their expectations. Facilitators cover a range of topics such as housing, health, money management, the role of settlement service providers, education, and rights and responsibilities (CIMM, 2019). To this end, in 2019, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM) conducted a study of settlement services for immigrants and newcomers and presented its report on "Improving Settlement Services Across Canada". The report reviews and evaluates settlement programs and services that are provided to meet immigrants and newcomers' needs. This study derived its information from 52 witnesses such as YMCA Canada and others who shared their expertise and opinion regarding all aspects of Canada's settlement services. The witnesses offered their views on the limitations of some of these programs, both in scope, duration, and availability. Many witnesses

emphasized the need to better foster the integration of women. In support of this endeavor, for example, the Metro Vancouver YWCA launched Pathways to Leadership, a pre-employment program that addresses the specific needs of single mothers who are immigrants or refugees. Also, the Hamilton YWCA offers activities and outings for Syrian refugee women (CIMM, 2019). To assess the effectiveness of the various settlement services provided, IRCC conducted a formal evaluation of the Settlement Program, completed in May 2017. This incorporated a wide range of perspectives, including program clients, stakeholders, and program officials, along with a large-scale survey of almost 15,000 newcomers. Overall, the evaluation found that the program has been effective at meeting a growing demand for settlement services. A clear majority of clients—96%—reported positive outcomes, such as improving their language ability, finding employment, and participating in their communities. Although this study has explored the current state of settlement services and offered some robust recommendations to improve the quality and the availability of these services, insufficient attention has been paid to the repercussions of migration and resettlement on gender dimensions of settlement, especially for male newcomers.

Even if the aim of a settlement intervention were to enhance the position of refugee women in their families and in society, this goal cannot be achieved by focusing only on women's challenges, because men are typically heavily involved in the lives of immigrant women. For example, several studies have linked males' aggression inside the family (e.g. intimate partner violence) to their sense of disempowerment, which is caused in turn by their economic, professional and social depletion (Choi, 2019). In this case, men's challenges also need to be addressed and resolved if equal gender relations inside

the household are to be reached. Men can feel threatened by women as they become more independent and acquire interests and goals beyond providing for their partners and children.” Freire (1995), for example, quoted an immigrant man talking about changes in his family life in Canada:

I don't understand why my wife gets so upset because I don't help around the house. It is true that we both work but men's work is always harder and heavier than women's work. She doesn't like it that I go out on weekends to play soccer and hang out with the guys. She wants me to take her and the children to the games. She never complained about any of these before we came to Canada. Now she doesn't even want to sleep with me if we have a disagreement. I really don't get it and I get very angry. Since she has been working, she has been getting all kinds of weird ideas about her rights to go out or having an affair if I do so. She forgets that what makes the difference is that I am a man, and she is a woman.

Diaspora, Islam, and Gender (DIG)¹³ is a research project that examines the impacts of migration and displacement on gender and family relations among four different communities of Islamic culture (Iranians, Afghans, Pakistanis, and Palestinians) in Canada. The research argues that gender differences in coping with immigration are linked to the difficulty men often have in adjusting to a new society or to new conditions of life and finding satisfying jobs. Sometimes, every aspect of life seems to conflict with their expectations of power and sense of self-esteem. Women often become more confident as a result of changing gender roles while men are troubled by these changes. In turn, men idealize the “traditional family“, regret the loss of age and gender hierarchy, and try to find religious justifications for gender inequality. Women, on the other hand,

¹³ Diaspora, Islam and Gender (DIG). A SSHRC and Ford foundation funded project. Codirected by H. Moghissi, Moghissi, H; S. Rahnema, and M.J. Goodman. (2001-2005). www.atkinson.yorku.ca/~diaspora

seem to become more aware and critical of the sexist content of their culture and this may bring family relations to a crisis (Moghissi, 2005).

The above research highlight some of the challenges that certain groups of immigrant and refugee men face in their experience of settlement. Therefore, it is relevant now to ask: What kind of settlement services can best address the needs of these groups of men and help them to adapt to more equitable gender norms? While the 2006 CCR report highlights an urgent need to include gender dimensions in the settlement and integration sector, it has not been recently considered by the 2019 CIMM report:

“Settlement services are generally available for the first three years after immigration. Is it realistic to assume adequate 'integration' has been accomplished in that time period?

Does this vary by gender? It is also important for us to ask whether we are unknowingly replicating or reinforcing discrimination against certain groups, by not adequately taking into account the different experiences of people we serve” (CCR, 2006, pp. 126-129).

Gender is a key component of settlement and integration. Yet relatively little is known about the ways in which newcomer men settle and integrate within Canadian society.

Another aspect of the problem is that government and settlement agencies typically focus efforts on providing basic needs (e.g., housing, employment, language, social connection), while ignoring the impacts of changing gender roles and relations, especially for men. It is also increasingly clear from the literature that without mechanisms in place (e.g., gender-based framework) to ensure that newcomer men are adequately integrated in their newly adopted society, these groups may be at greater risk of being pushed to the margins of the democratic process, or feel isolated and lacking opportunities and choice, or perhaps acting on their frustration through domestic violence. It is, therefore, essential

that government and settlement agencies take into consideration the gender dimensions of settlement and to adopt a masculinity lens along with the feminist approach. Only then can an attempt be made to create better integration for and with them and develop societies that are inclusive and meaningful to their perspectives.

2.10 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER II

This chapter reviews current literature on immigration, settlement studies, gender norms and masculinities in both Syria and Canada. It aims to provide a masculine analysis for examining immigration settlement and integration for Syrian males. By taking a masculine standpoint, I am not arguing here that Canadian immigration settlement services and immigration policy should help men immigrants who are simply upset with their loss of status and power. The goal is to help men adjust – for their own benefit and for the well-being of their wives, daughters, sisters, etc.

CHAPTER III: THE THEORY OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

This chapter will look at the theories that I will use to examine the perspectives Syrian male migrants hold on their changing masculine status, that is the change from Syria to Canada; and settlement programs that are in place to help them adjust to. For this thesis, I will use hegemonic masculinity theory to get a better understating of men's issues within the Syrian newcomers' community in Halifax. This concept was very helpful in investigating the hegemonic masculine norms of Syrian men participants and whether they are able to meet societal expectations. The theory helped me in exploring participants' ability or inability to conform to Canadian dominant norms which affect their personal construct of masculinity. Since this research focuses on Syrian men who identified as cis-gender straight males, the concept of 'cis-gendered men' (which refers to men who identify their gender as the same as their biological sex) will be referenced when talking about gender and gender relations. This chapter will outline what Hegemonic Masculinity Theory is and why it is useful for this topic highlighting the main criticisms of the theory.

3.1 Hegemonic Masculinity Theory

Having borrowed Gramsci's idea of 'hegemony' and put it in the context of gender relations, the Australian sociologist, Raewyn Connell (2005), developed the theory of 'hegemonic masculinity' which became one of the most influential theories in the field of gender studies. Hegemony, to Gramsci, is the "cultural, moral and ideological" leadership of a group over allied and subaltern groups. Hegemony in terms of masculinity means achieving dominance leading to patriarchy, and this is done not through violence,

although it may be one of the tools used, but rather by achieving authority through cultural relations and social institutions (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The theory has its roots in feminism and Marxist sociology that concerns the power relations among the social classes of a given society. From a gender order perspective, therefore, anyone interested in power structures could see that the feminist challenge to 'patriarchy' must mean changes in the lives of men. To speak of masculinities, thus, is to speak about gender relations. The concept of hegemonic masculinity presents a unique model that understands power relations among men and between men and women in terms of 'marginalization', 'subordination', 'domination' or hegemony and 'complicity'. Connell underlines the plurality of masculinities and argues that most men are not fully able, or do not want to, practice hegemonic masculinity because it requires access to particular social and financial resources (Connell, 1995). Hegemonic masculinity can thus be seen as the foundation for patriarchal and social structures of gender inequality. The actor of hegemonic masculinity is made out to be the leader, the father figure and the only one who can guarantee the group's security and prosperity. However, even if all men benefit from patriarchy in relation to women, they do so in varying degrees. Therefore, for a better understanding of the diversities of masculinities, Connell refers to the intersectional character of gender (sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression) with other factors (e.g., race, culture, religion, and class) that could place a woman in a more powerful position than a man, in certain circumstances. (Connell, 1995 as cited in ILO, 2013 & Berg, 2017). Also, some men get more privileges and power and set the norms for what can be seen as hegemonic masculinity, whereas other men might receive their privilege by accepting and upholding the norms dictated by others.

In many parts of the world ideologies exist that justify men's supremacy on grounds of religion, biology, or cultural tradition (Connell, 1995 as cited in ILO, 2013). Considering these relations, Connell divides masculinity into four groups: (1) "*Dominant*" or "*Hegemonic*" refers to a societal pattern in which stereotypically male traits are idealized as the masculine cultural ideal, explaining how and why men maintain dominant social roles over women and other groups considered to be feminine"; (2) "*Complicit*" refers to masculinities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend (men receive rewards as participants in male gender orders, and that this takes the form of status, command and material assets), without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy. Many men, for example, who draw the patriarchal dividend also respect their wives and mothers, are never violent towards women, share some household chores, bring home the family wage. However, part and sometimes much of men's power has traditionally come from within the household such as being the breadwinner. Although many men avoid being the frontline troops, they benefit from patriarchy by simply being male.; (3) "*Subordinate*": is a form of masculinity in which a person lacks many of the qualities of hegemonic masculinity and expresses qualities opposite to hegemonic masculinity. For example, it may involve acting in a feminine way, being overly emotional, or not being heterosexual. Subordination, thus, can come from other actors, such as being unable to perform certain elements of what is considered hegemonic masculinity. For example, the inability to have children severely changes a man's perception of his own masculinity, as well as others' views of him (Inhorn, 2012); (4) "*Marginalized*": is a form of masculinity that is unable to conform to or derive benefits from hegemonic masculinity. Marginalized masculinity might refer to a lack of

some of the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, like being gay, bi, trans, etc. (Connell, 2020; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Other new types of masculinity have been added recently such as: “*Hybrid masculinities*”: which refer to the selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated masculinities and –at times femininities into privileged men’s gender performances and identities such as the hip-hop style and language adopted by some working-class white teenage boys (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (2020) argues that an important feature of hegemonic masculinity is the use of “toxic practices” such as physical violence, which may serve to reinforce men's dominance over women in Western societies. Because there are different ways of being a man, masculinities are differently valued. Hegemonic masculinity often focuses on 'ideal masculine attributes' such as wealth (resources), attractiveness, sexual and physical strength, heterosexuality, etc. These ideal qualities are often associated with 'ruling class men' who control and dominate other men (Connell, 2020; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). A large number of Syrian men I interviewed tried to adhere to the hegemonic masculinity type during their adaptation process in Canada, while others (especially young men - under 25) behaved in ways that reflected the complicit model; that is, they do not act in a way that corresponds to the hegemonic model, but still sustain it by not challenging it and receive the benefits of it. For example, the majority of young men believed in the importance of treating women as equals and allies but at the same time they benefit in general from the social dominance of men such as ‘breadwinners’ or ‘protectors’ and women as ‘careers’. Connell seems to recognize that different forms of masculinity are in constant interaction and that the formation of hegemonic masculinity

may be influenced by the existence of subordinate or marginalized models. He coins the very useful term "authorization" to suggest that the hegemonic model may authorize some elements of subordinated or marginalized masculinities. In the United States, for example, particular black athletes may be role models for hegemonic masculinity. Nevertheless, Connell has not developed these points further. In hierarchical societies, the man who benefits from 'authorization' has certain space of maneuvering in his performance of masculinity. His already powerful position in society can compensate for 'shortcomings' in his performance and still preserve his elevated position in relation to women and other men. Therefore, according to Connell, the power of certain performances of masculinity is shaped through society members' acceptance and acknowledgment of it. (Connell, 2015). Furthermore, she argues that "hegemonic masculinity cannot exist without the support of cultural and institutional power, and it forms a sort of symbiotic support system between military, business and governmental practices, which founds and upholds the factors of authorization and marginalization" (Connell, 2005). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) adapt the theory to a more globalized world and suggest that masculinities should be understood on three levels: local, regional and global. The local level is constructed through face-to-face interaction with family and community. The regional level is constructed at the level of the nation's culture and the global level is constructed through world politics and transnational media. The three levels are linked together and influence and reinforce one another. A locally constructed hegemonic masculinity might change through influences of TV or state intervention. It might correspondingly be that it is the locally constructed masculinity that is spread and given credence through different media and thus affects the national or

global view on masculinity (Connell, & Messerschmidt, 2005). The concept of hegemonic masculinity is not fixed, but rather fluid and varies across time, place and culture (Connell, 2020).

Connell constructed a hierarchical order in which ‘hegemonic masculinity’ subordinates other forms of masculinity. Gender, as a way of structuring social practices, establishes an axis of power in which women are subordinated to men. In the axis of power, hegemonic masculinity sits at the top, reproducing the social structure. Hence, the framework of hegemonic masculinity helps us to understand the anxieties over masculine gender identity. For example, if the hegemonic masculinity is constructed through bravery, toughness and strength, the individual is under constant pressure to perform what is expected from a ‘real man’. Another good example comes from the novel ‘al-Zahr al-‘ārī’ (The Naked back, 1998) by Hanrīyit Abbūdī (a Syrian female novelist), which tells the story of Adham Mālik (a Syrian man) and his transient love with a French woman, Klīr. Adham is completely under Klīr’s spell and does whatever she wants. Adham describes himself as the obedient housewife and depicts Klīr as the husband. To that end, Adham reflects, “I laughed at myself, at the manners that made me behave as if I was the woman and she was the man”. As shown by his quote, Adham finds the position he is in funny and awkward. Despite this, he goes on behaving ‘as if he was the woman’. However, he used to borrow money from his friends in order to avoid a situation where he cannot provide for his girlfriend. For him it is easier to beg from his friend than to appear unable to spend on Klīr. Through an examination of Adham's experience, it is clear how his masculinity is shaped in relation to the idea of ideal masculinity as it clashes with the everyday events in his life. According to Abbudi, Adham’s inability to

perform the ideals of hegemonic masculinity and the effect this has on his life exemplifies the hierarchical levels of masculinity performance. Furthermore, the relational nature of masculinity, how it changes through time and place, is illustrated through Adham's experience in France. Due to cultural differences, the expectations he has of himself do not correspond with what others expect of him (Abbūdī, 1998 as cited in Berg, 2017). In Connell's hierarchical pyramid, Adham's inability to adhere to the hegemonic norm in France leads to marginalization and his masculine identity, in turn, is subordinated to the hegemonic masculinity (Akin, 2016; Berg, 2017).

A move from one place to another, within the same country or to another, can thus change the framework for performances of masculinity. In a study of Iranian immigrants in Sweden, Davishpour (2015) demonstrates that the performance of masculinity in Iran is very different compared to Sweden, which makes it difficult for immigrant men and women to relate to new gender roles. A man, who in his home country upheld a position of respect and, therefore, was seen as performing hegemonic masculinity, might in the new country be counted as exhibiting a 'subordinate masculinity', due to his incorporation in the marginalized group of immigrants (Berg, 2017). Kuosmanen (1998) reaches similar conclusions about male immigrants from Finland to Sweden. He concludes that the immigrant men feel that they, despite their education and previous position, have to re-start their lives from a marginalized position in their new homeland. He goes on to say that there seems to be a gap between personal time (i.e., what the person feels and does), and historical time (i.e., how the new host society functions). This conflict in personal feelings and public sphere expectations can be seen in Adham's behavior (Berg, 2017).

One of the biggest critiques of the hegemonic masculinity approach is that it is associated with an “assemblage of toxic traits.” As I cited earlier, Demetriou (2001), argues that hegemonic masculinity is not a purely white or heterosexual arrangement of practice, but it is a “hybrid unit” that unites practices from diverse masculinities in order to ensure the reproduction of patriarchy. He shows how heterosexual men, for example, incorporate “bits and pieces [of gay male culture,]...[producing] new, hybrid configurations of gender practice that enables them to reproduce their dominance over women [and other men] in historically novel ways (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Gay masculinities, thus, are subordinated to the hegemonic model because their object of sexual desire undermines the institution of heterosexuality, which is of primary importance for the reproduction of patriarchy. To understand hegemonic masculinity as a “hybrid” is, therefore, to avoid falling into the trap of believing that patriarchy has disappeared simply because heterosexual men have a few bits and pieces of the homosexual culture (wearing earrings or putting on nail polish)’. Because it is impossible for all men to meet the hegemonic masculine ideal, adjustments must be made, not only individually, but also culturally (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). We thus find some working-class or college men (high school students) creating bar and music cultures in which they signify masculine selves through heavy drinking and aggressive or high-risk behavior (Eastman & Schrock 2008; Peralta, 2007; Tilki, 2006); economically marginalized men of color relying on sports, or military (Wacquant 2003); male immigrants using violence against women to show that they are powerful and visible. According to Schrock and Schwalbe (2009), inequality also arises because not all males are equally well equipped—by virtue of body type, skill, or social location—to adapt to

the locally prevailing hegemonic ideal. There is still, nonetheless, some common grounds: the desire to claim an identity as a member of the privileged gender group and a desire that can be satisfied only by achieving a trustworthy manhood act. In competitive, hierarchical societies, especially those that are classically patriarchal, this means signifying a capacity to exert control over oneself, the environment, and others especially women (Demetriou, 2001; Schrock & Schwalbe (2009). Inhorn (2012) argues that masculinity theory must become dynamic enough to account for these emergent and embodied changes in Middle Eastern manhood. Although these concerns are valid, what is important to remember is that masculinities are multiple and conflicted. According to Connell (2020), what is perceived as a 'marginalized' (alternative) masculine status could also be implicitly 'hegemonic'. For example, gay men may perform aspects of hegemonic masculinity (intentionally or unintentionally), by excluding women from membership, and may also practice aspects of what is perceived as femininity by sharing their feelings with each other (Barry, 2018).

3.2 Masculinity and gender roles

There is a common understanding that gender is a social construct. This means that gender is not biologically determined but rather relates to beliefs, expectations and perspectives which are influenced by social factors such as norms, history, religion, and culture (UNHCR, 2016, p. 10). The concepts used to describe this social construct, these socially defined ways of being male or female, 'masculine' and 'feminine' (Gren, 2018; Berg, 2017; Krabbe, 2017). To speak of masculinities is to speak about gender relations. Hence, it is necessary to recall again that gender and gender identity do not simply refer to males and females as more than these two genders exist, including transgender and

non-binary individuals. Gender does not always correlate with the biological or assigned sex of a person at birth (gender identity). Gender relations refer to the relationships and dynamics that exist between different genders – typically between women and men. Masculinities can be defined as the patterns of practice and behavioral norms in which people (both men and women, though predominantly men) engage (Connell, 2005). The concept of hegemonic masculinity acknowledges that masculinity can be expressed in many different ways, but also that some of those expressions are culturally dominant, considered more 'normal', and are reinforced by powerful social institutions, such as governments, academia, media, etc. Within this context of Middle Eastern and Canadian hegemonic masculinity, this research speaks to the processes of transitions from the Middle East to Canada, as men navigate and adapt to their changing social worlds, shifting from the hegemonic masculinity of one place (Syria) to the norms associated with being male in a new place (Canada).

Before taking a closer look at the academic literature of masculinity in the Middle East, it must be noted that Middle Eastern societies are highly diverse, and social norms can range from modern to traditional, liberal to conservative and moderate to radical. Therefore, it is not possible to generalize about a single hegemonic 'masculine identity' (Krabbe, 2017; Inhorn, 2012). The World Bank (2006) report, "*The Other Half of Gender*", presents a valuable summary of existing academic analysis about hegemonic masculinities worldwide. According to its report, for many cultures, being a man means to meet these key elements: 1) access to work and income resulting in financial independence, 2) the creation of one's own family, 3) the ability to provide protection and material needs for the family and 4) exercise power over women and children. It is

clear there are many similarities between cultures in who is regarded as a ‘real man’; nevertheless, there are also significant differences from culture to culture. Given that this research focuses on how Syrian male migrants navigate these differences, it is important to clearly understand the biggest differences are in the gendered expectations of men in Syria and Canada.

3.3.Differences in Masculine Identities (Syria vs Canada)

Despite the fact that there are men who exert power over women and do not accept that women should have equal freedoms and capabilities, this could be condemned by other men who see that men and women in the Middle East have different but equally important roles and that gender-equitable structures in the society exist. For example, Inhorn (2015), argues that most Arab men seek love within marriage, viewing their wives as partners in sickness and in health. Arab men want children with those wives, not only to continue the family line but for the sheer joy of parenthood. When reproductive problems arise, as they often do, men seek infertility testing, and support their wives through expensive forms of treatment, even during difficult circumstances. In line with this, some Syrian men I interviewed, especially young men, who are influenced by their dominant masculine norms (e.g., ‘be tough’, ‘be strong’, ‘don’t show emotion’), also have aspirations to be caring, respectful and loving partners and a good fathers. As one says: "you can be strong by fighting an illness, by being a good father at home, you don't have to be strong in a traditional way". In their opinion, many young men question and resist dominant norms of masculinity and engage in caring, healthy, peaceful, and equitable practices, often in spite of powerful ideas of what it means to be a man circulating around them. A key task is to draw greater attention to these practices, and to

illuminate the diverse ways in which men are living their lives and challenging stereotypes around masculinity. It is essential therefore to understand the complexity of dominant norms of masculinity in Syria and its mixed cultural context (conservative vs liberal). Dominance of masculine norms does not always stay as a 'default' position; it could take on new emerging meanings that undergo changes in the Middle East, as well as in new contexts in Canada.

In line with this, prior to investigating whether male Syrian newcomers can accept Canadian social norms and expectations regarding masculine behavior, it is important to determine what these social expectations about masculine behavior are and what are the predominant masculinities present in the Syrian society. In her research about masculine identities of Syrian refugees in the Netherlands, Krabbe (2017) demonstrates that the themes that are considered most relevant to dominant norms of masculinity among Syrian refugees are access to work and income resulting in financial independence, the creation of one's own family, the ability to provide protection and material needs for the family and the capacity to exercise power over women and children. Another important contribution is the study by Akin (2016), who argues that 'honor' (Sharaf) and 'Shame' (Al'ar) are significant components of males' self-identity. The analysis of these components through a gender lens demonstrates that men's pursuit of honor and avoidance of shame is closely related to the desire to maintain their hegemonic masculinity. For example, as hegemonic masculinity requires men to protect feminine sexual purity. Throughout the Middle East region, male honor derives from the struggle to cut any source of shame that comes from his female family members (especially wife, daughters, and sisters) and this makes men's reputation dependent upon female sexual

conduct. Men are responsible for the shame of their women ‘which is associated with sexual purity and their own honor derives in large measure from the way they discharge their responsibility. Failure to protect honor would make the individual shamed, that is, lose his role as a real man in relation to other men (Baxter, 2007). According to Akin, Syrian masculine identity has been shaped by ‘paternal’, ‘chivalrous’ (Kabaday) and ‘militarized masculinity’ characteristics that highly value terms like ‘steadfastness’ (Sumud), ‘struggle’ (nidal), and willingness to ‘sacrifice’ (tadhiya) for the unity of the state against the foreign enemies (colonial west), as portrayed by the Syrian government. Based on the studies above, it is important to consider the ways in which Syrian masculinities are interwoven with conceptions of Canadian masculinities.

Within the context of Canadian masculine identities, in her 2011 collection, ‘Making it Like a Man: Canadian Masculinities in Practice’, Christine Ramsay demolishes the view that gender is an outcome of biology or a manifestation of inner essences by showing that to “make it like a man” is not only about how the intersection of complex factors, such as race, social class, immigration status, ability, and sexuality shape men’s gender identities in complex ways, but also how masculinity is situated and formulated in specific cultural and historical discourses. Nonetheless, some socially conservative understandings of gender hold that Canadian men have been “unmanned” by the open “feminization of culture”, and modern Canadian men are now weak (Greig & Holloway, 2012).

Within the context of popular media, reactions over the state of Canadian manhood range between negative on changing gender norms (decline in dominant masculinity) to positive on how changing these norms enables women, men and people

who identify as neither to express themselves more freely and without fear and to fulfil themselves as human beings in ways that they could not in the past (Miele, 2020). Greig (2012) cited 'The Globe and Mail', a Canadian national newspaper, where columnist Margaret Wentz posed the question, - "What If Women Don't Need Guys Anymore?" According to Greig, this article draws on the "masculinity in crisis" discourse and claims that women are now winning the gender war¹⁴, helped fuel contemporary concerns over what it means to be a man in contemporary Canadian society. Bobby Noble's essay (2019) on 'the evolution of drag kinging in Toronto', for example, is the ultimate illustration of how there is a myriad of ways to "make it like a man" (females dress in masculine drag and personify male gender stereotypes). Media analysis reveals that media representation of masculinity in Canada is controversial. Mainstream media constructs a 'crisis in masculinity' where types of masculinity such as "hockey masculinity" – aggressive, rough, and tough, violent – is portrayed as under attack. Men's hockey is central to the construction of hegemonic masculinity (the dominant and idealized form of masculinity), and especially the Canadian masculine identity (Connell, 2005; Allain, 2008). Through hockey, boys and men learn "how to be a man" and they understand that this means one who is strong, competitive, and who shows little emotion (Colburn, 1985; Robidoux, 2001; Allain, 2008). Miele's (2020) study on 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the Ideal Male Hockey Player', examines how men's hockey injuries were represented in five popular Canadian newspapers published during the 2016-2017 national hockey league season. The study analyzed media messages regarding men's

¹⁴ The gender war is derived from the contentious happening between the concepts: 'sex', 'gender', and 'gender identity'. For more details see Middleton (2021) study on "Gender Wars and Sexuality Education in 2021: History and Politics". The highlighted part does not make sense.

hockey injuries and how these messages produced or challenged dominant ideals of masculinity. The study concluded that media depiction of men's hockey injuries rewards, encourages, and admires particular ways of being a man (be strong, be tough, don't cry, etc.), and regards as 'unmanly' behaviors, beliefs, and actions outside of this.

3.4 CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER III

This chapter introduced some background on the differences in masculinity in the Syrian and Canadian contexts and examine the literature available on the theory of hegemonic masculinity in migration settings. I adapt Connell's theory of 'hegemonic masculinity' as a framework for the analysis of my research question on how resettlement programs could better support and help male Syrian refugees to adapt to Canadian gender norms from a masculine lens. Since Connell's structure rests on the assumption that hegemonic masculinity differs across time and place, I believe that the framework of this theory is adaptable enough to allow for the cultural differences. The theoretical framework in itself does not suppose any particular characteristics in hegemonic masculinity, rather it acknowledges that characteristics differ from place to place, across cultures and change over time. Still, in every society, there is one dominant (hegemonic) way to 'be a man', even while other forms of masculinity are still possible. Although there may be strong similarities among global masculinities and the 'patriarchal' order, there are still also significant differences. Given that my research focuses on how Syrian male migrants navigate these differences, I describe what the differences are in the gendered expectations of men in Syria and Canada. The theory of hegemonic masculinities helped me to clearly identify the hegemonic forms of masculinity in Syria and Canada. Thus, this theory was very helpful in designing and guiding the research

questions, the selection of relevant data, interpreting the data, and proposing explanations of the underlying causes or influences of the new perspectives and experiences of Syrian men participants. Furthermore, using the theory of hegemonic masculinities shows how a focus on migrant men and masculinities can be an important addition to research on gender inequalities in Canadian settlement and integration services, which negatively impacts women and men alike. It is hoped that this analysis can be a useful starting point for reflection on how to expand on current immigrant men and masculinities tools and thinking, as it applies to the world of settlement and integration.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative methodology, using a framework that focuses on the ways in which masculinities are socially constructed. Further, it adopts a comparative approach (descriptive) as it aims to examine the ways in which Syrian men experience the change in the culture of gender norms from Syria to Canada. It is commonly understood that gender relations require an understanding of 'masculinity' as well – that is, how men understand gender roles and expectations and how they respond to gender norms for women. For example, do Syrian men happily accept the prevailing Canadian gender norms or do they struggle with them? Therefore, the above framework guides the research aims and questions, the choice of research framework, the ethical considerations and the methods for data collection and analysis.

4.1 Research methods

The research employed qualitative fieldwork in Halifax, Canada between September, and October 2021. Using a phenomenological approach, this thesis examines the experience of Syrian men newcomers in, Halifax, Canada from a gender perspective. According to Creswell (2017), a phenomenological study focuses on the experiences of several individuals and presents the meaning of their lived experiences of a phenomenon. The result is not only focusing on the outcome itself, i.e., 'what' the individual experience, but also shows how the experience was shaped. Through the participants' narratives about their everyday struggles and experiences to adapt to dominant gender norms, I analyze what are the changes relating to gender that emerged in their lives after arriving in Canada, what are the challenges that they face because of those changes, as

well as which parts of their lives, practices and understandings remained unchanged after arriving in Canada. All those factors create a base for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the Syrian men's experience in adapting to Canadian gender norms. However, it must be noted that I seek out to engage empathetically with Syrian men participants who are grappling to understand and adapt to Canadian gender norms. I aim to understand the process of adaptation from their perspective. This is not to suggest that I completely agree with their positions (which may reflect elements of anti-feminism and hegemonic masculinity) to take this empathetic standpoint on their challenges of adapting to gender and cultural norms in a new place, but to try to understand how Syrian newcomers understand and experience Canadian gender norms. With that said, there is a fine line between empathy and agreement, but ultimately, understanding does not require agreement. For collecting the empirical data, the following research methods have been used:

- 1) Semi-structured interviews, of about 1 hour, with 19 Syrian male newcomers of different ages, marital status, cultural, educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

- 2) Semi-structured interviews with five staff members and volunteers from ISANS and YMCA assisting Syrian male refugees during the resettlement process.

The research focuses only on Syrian men newcomers over the age of 18 who identify as cis-gendered straight males. The study has not specifically excluded any participants who identify as gay, bisexual or transgendered, but it did not seek them out. It also did not include Syrian newcomers who have been in Canada for less than a year or more than five years. The Syrian men who participated in this study landed in Canada between 2017 – 2021. The interviews with Syrian male migrants were conducted in the

Arabic language. The interview participants used different dialects from several parts of Syria. I transcribed the original interviews in Arabic and then translated them to English. It must be noted however some of the translation challenges that I encountered due to the structural variations between English and Arabic language, cultural differences, and compound words. In the Arabic language, for example, the term gender is perceived as the term “sex” by most people who tend to use both terms interchangeably. So, when you are talking about gender, people simply think that you are triggering sexual issues which is something they try to avoid. Also, there is no Arabic equivalent word to the word gender in order to clarify this term. For my participants to better understand the research problem, I had to clarify the difference between the term gender and sex to them before asking the interview questions. Thematic analysis (deductive and inductive coding) has been conducted. This involved coding all the data before identifying and reviewing themes. Each theme has been examined to gain an understanding of participants’ perceptions and motivations. The data from the interviews, and the study’s field log has been analyzed by utilizing ‘Maslow Hierarchy of Needs model¹⁵’ as a coding tool (explained in chapter 5). Maslow's pyramid helped me to locate which 'level of needs' been addressed by settlement programs. This includes "Sub-coding" of the fragments of the interviews for placing them on the various levels of the Maslow pyramid. For example, to the fragments, placed on the 3rd level, i.e., on the level of "social needs" the following sub-codes has been given: a desire for social acceptance and so forth.

¹⁵ Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory of motivation which states that five categories of human needs dictate an individual's behavior. Those needs are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1954)

4.2 Data Collection

Research was conducted in Halifax, Canada between September and November 2020. Due to the COVID-19 situation, I used 'Zoom' as the platform for video-based interviews. The research question seeks to understand the perspectives Syrian male migrants hold on various settlement programs offered by ISANs (explain what this is in full not acronyms if this is your first time using the acronym) and YMCA. The research was thus separated into two different phases: the first involved interviewing staff members of organizations that providing settlement programs, within the migrant's community in Halifax. I conducted semi-structured interviews with five staff members at two NGOs: the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth – each of which has been implementing different settlement programs to help newcomers. The five staff members included one Program manager, two program coordinators, and two settlement workers. The second phase involved interviewing Syrian male migrants. I interviewed 19 Syrian male newcomers, ranging in age from 18 to 58 with an average age of 32 All the names given to refugees in this thesis are pseudonyms. I have drawn on my own networks and connections (friends and acquaintances) to reach out to potential participants. Therefore, I interviewed a few friends and acquaintances, and I asked them to connect me with other people to interview The Syrian refugee community in Halifax is very diverse and includes individuals from various religious groups, social-economic classes, and ethnicities. The research tried to include participants who reflected this diversity.

Although I study the experiences of Syrian male migrants as to how they could adapt to Canadian gender norms through the help of settlement programs available, my study cannot be representative of the whole group because every member can experience

it differently, and my study has a limited number of participants (19). Therefore, I approach the study of the phenomenon by examining the lived experiences of all the interviewees, and based on their narratives, I interpret the meaning of this lived experience for those particular participants whom I interviewed. During the semi-structured interviews with some Syrian men, I also noticed certain common notions that the participants brought forward in our conversations, even though questions about those topics were not asked by me (such as toxic dominant cultural trends.) I, therefore, interpreted those subjects as essential to understand the experience of the participants and present the notions that were common to all conversations with them in the last chapter. By and large, the findings of this study cannot claim to be fully representative of the views held by Syrian male migrants as a whole; rather, the research seeks to identify and explore a sample of perspectives that may not be included in previous or recent studies, in order to acquire at least some insights and important lessons that may be learned and shared.

4.3 Ethical Issues

Any research on gender issues requires special efforts to ensure the comfort and well-being of participants. For immigration support organization staff and volunteers (ISANS, YMCA), the interviews were all focused on how resettlement programs could help male migrants to adapt to Canadian gender norms – which is a regular aspect of their work but was a sensitive topic for them. For example, organizations' staff members were very concerned to avoid any possible perceptions that their activities might violate the regulations of the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)'s 'Settlement Program' or that they do not provide the best possible service to new Canadians. For this

reason, there was a risk that any leakage of sensitive information that could be connected to specific participants or their organizations could result in organizational harm. In this context, there was a risk that attribution of statements to particular individuals or organizations could have negative impacts on their reputations and revenue from charitable donations. Therefore, some respondents were hesitant in answering some questions or gave short answers. Hence, I acknowledge that this is also a limitation to the study, as interviewees were not always comfortable and forthcoming in their responses.

For male Syrian immigrants, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, special attention has been paid to the psychological health of the participants and the researcher. To minimize any risk to those participating in the study, the researcher avoided questions that deliberately provoke painful memories (i.e. designing the questions in a way that does not cause participants harm, distress, disadvantage, or trauma from the past). To minimize any potential risk, the researcher also referred people to ISANS, which can provide some mental health services to new Canadians.

CHAPTER V: SHIFT IN GENDER NORMS, SYRIA & CANADA COMPARED

In this chapter, I present the themes that came about from my interviews with Syrian male immigrants and staff members from ISANS and I consider the social and cultural roles that are experienced by Syrian males to gender norms. I present examples of whether the male Syrian migrants I interviewed, consciously or unconsciously, try to conform to the hegemonic ideals of masculinity in Syria or distinguished themselves from these dominant masculine norms.

5.1 Adaptation experience from Syrian male immigrants' perspectives

I present in the following parts of this chapter important themes coming from several interviews with Syrian men that were accentuated by them and were common to their experiences and reflect points arising from the literature review. The first main theme is the 'Adaptation experiences from Syrian male immigrants' perspectives' which include the following sub-themes: 1) Difficulties & Challenges, Traditional Masculine Norms in Syria, Masculine Gender norms in Canada, Shared Masculinity, Shifts in Gendered Social Norms, Knowledge (understanding Canadian gender norms), Showing concerns to prevailing gendered social norms, Accepting the prevailing Canadian gendered social norms and Being aware of available services regarding gender-related issues. The second core theme is 'Adaptation experience from Settlement organizations Staff members' perspectives' which include the following sub-themes: Dedicated Services and Programs and Gendered status of adaptation.

Difficulties & Challenges

The dominant cultural norms of the local community influenced the process of integration of all of the study respondents. The way they coped with this new culture and mostly new social contexts underline their strong agency over their vulnerable status as immigrants and their ability to decide their future. The experience was a big challenge for many, but at the same time, it enhanced their self-confidence as men being fully able to act in different situations. However, their experiences point out how the Canadian social constructs of gender influence their daily lives. All Syrian male newcomers I interviewed identify themselves as 'straight'. Arriving in a new country, they had to start over by building their lives and proving their abilities, and today all of them are pursuing their studies to improve their English language skills or at the university level or if they are finished with their studies, they are developing their professional careers. In Canada, their past work experiences became largely irrelevant, and they were often forced to take on new roles in society, yet how they identify as a 'man' did not change much for some. The Syrian men that I interviewed expressed that they often have difficulties with making connections, acquiring new Canadian friends, and finding a job. This has been largely related to speaking the English language or trying to learn it. The language was referred to by all respondents as one of the greatest obstacles after landing in Canada. Learning English is seen as a basis for succeeding professionally and socially. Samer (52 years, completed high school), who arrived in Halifax in 2020, still has some difficulties with English language, said:

The English language is the big barrier that hinders me as a man to meet, face or communicate with Canadian people, especially my neighbors. Language is the basic thing, now I do understand what is

said but cannot express it, so I avoid being in direct contact with my neighbors and that is embarrassing to me as a man! I am shy.

All the participants agree that language and communication with others are among the most important factors that hinder them to integrate well into Canadian society. Socially speaking, some Syrian young men newcomers (18-24 years) found it very difficult to make close friends or establish good relationships with young Canadians. Ghassan (20 years, a college student), arrived in Halifax in 2019, said:

Although I am studying at a Canadian university now, I have been able to make more friends with immigrants of other nationalities but not Canadians. Should you be born here or have been integrated into the school system from a very young age, then you can make close friendships where you feel visible and not marginalized.

A good number of participants (roughly 12) referred to the term, "Unique Man". For them, to be a unique man means that you are socially strong, rely on yourself, gain people's respect, trustworthy. This uniqueness partly comes from within, shown through positive actions and behaviors in the society. Ghassan, for instance, says that to be a unique man, you must establish strong social relationships, friendships, and new acquaintances. However, this is not only the case with the youth group, some other participants who lie in the advanced age group (45-55 years old) also find it so difficult to establish relationships with other Canadian men from the same age group. Mussa (50 years, no formal education), who arrived in Halifax in 2017, complained:

I find it difficult to establish relationships with many of my Canadian neighbor's men who avoid talking with me as a new immigrant. There is no direct contact with Canadians to discover their culture in depth.

Interestingly, three other respondents (single men aged 25, 29, and 37 years respectively) stressed that it is very difficult for them now to establish new love relationships with Canadian girls and get married. This issue was

confirmed by new married man, Yousef (38 years, no formal education), arrived in Halifax in 2019, says:

If I am still single and arrived here, it will be very difficult for me to associate with a girl and make a family where I am at this age, 38 years.

Once again, without exception, all of the men interviewed reported 'age' as one of the primary reasons that undermine their integration within Canadian culture in Halifax.

Consider the following statements by some respondents:

Ghassan (20 years, college student):

Syrians who are younger or the second generation have more acceptance of gender pluralism. Most of my young Syrian friends, for example, are receptive to the LGBTQ community. Those who are of advanced age, are more conservative people, attached to the norms, traditions, and religious teachings that they acquired from the environment in which they lived and grew up.

Khalil (52 years, no formal education), who arrived in Halifax in 2018 says:

As I am at an advanced age, 52 years, my integration into Canadian culture takes longer than my children, who are still young and have adapted to this culture, and anything new to us they see as a normal thing.

Another strong factor that influences the masculine lives of most of the respondents and their adaption to the Canadian culture norms, in addition to language, is work (to find a job). As noted earlier, their past experiences (professional or educational) became largely irrelevant, and they were forced to take on new roles in a society where the competition among males in the Canadian work market is very high. Most of the respondents assert that there is more pressure on males because of their new status as newcomers, and more responsibilities and struggles to provide for their family. For them, they should be more productive or professional to compete with their Canadian

counterparts to find a decent job. Mahmoud (25 years, University student), arrived in Canada in 2017, said:

Here there is more pressure on the man, where they must be the high achiever and more productive. You must show yourself in a very professional way so that you can compete, that is, to find a decent job opportunity to keep up with the culture.

For the purposes of this thesis, I operationalize the term “hegemonic masculinity” as a perception or belief a typical Syrian male has and presents to others. Being a man in Syria, being a man in Canada, shared masculinity and the change in gender norms are the first four predominant themes in the data relating to the experiences Syrian men have as a result of their integration into the Canadian community.

Traditional Masculine Norms in Syria

Syrian men interviewees explain the complexity of what is crucial to be able to live up to with respect to Syrian masculine norms. Comparing different descriptions, most of them mention similar duties and characteristics of being a man in Syria such as ‘family leader’, ‘trustworthy’, ‘breadwinner’, ‘protector of the family’ ‘professional’, etc. To begin with, it is seen as self-evident that a man should create a family (marrying a woman and having children), work, provide for and protect his family. As Ramez (39 years, completed master’s degree and arrived in Halifax in 2018) described:

Marriage in Syria is one of the most important social norms that are largely accepted and makes you a real man who bears a responsibility to protect and support the family.

In our tradition, a man must be honest, and his word is heard in his family, and the children must obey him. He is the leader of the family, righteous and religious.

The men interviewed spoke of the pressure to achieve certain moral standards. What is considered most important for a man is to be trustworthy and have a good reputation to succeed professionally and socially, Ahmad (29 years, completed a master's degree), who arrived in Halifax in 2018, says:

In Syria, there is moral masculinity, that is, you must be a trustworthy and honest person. Morality is the base, and you must keep up with the dominant moral standards constructed by the Shari'a'

For Ahmed competition thus is not important as he illustrated:

In our culture, we do not depend on competition and high productivity but networking and reputation. You must be a unique man, that is, establish strong social relationships, friendships, and new acquaintances, rely on oneself to afford the high living costs, and gain people respect so that you become a trustworthy man.

In all cases, however, work is not seen by most men as a goal in itself but as a necessary element that creates other potentials. Six interviewees stated that work would not only help them in establishing relationships and making connections but would also help them to get over their bad past of war and trauma and to move on with their new lives. Following these descriptions, a man in Syria thus is a person that has duties imposed by society and is expected to fulfill them. It is important therefore in the general understanding of the community that he is a strong and diligent person, who pursues education and later is employed. His work and salary are essential to continue his masculine role in society, which is to marry and provide for his family. However, his gender also comes with certain freedoms. In contrast to women, he can do whatever he wants (such as finding casual sex partners), and society will not oppose that. As Daniel (37 years, completed bachelor's degree, arrived in Halifax in 2019) illustrates:

To a certain extent, I'm against stereotyping but our community view is harsh on males and from such a view, masculinity gets more power than women, so the male gets more responsibility

The characterizations above about what men in Syria should achieve and how they should behave to be able to reach a masculine ideal correspond with the explanations provided by this study in the literature review section on 'masculinity in Syria' and the theoretical framework on 'hegemonic masculinity'. One important way utilized in this study to understand participants' masculine ideals is the idea of the 'Man Box' (discussed in the literature review, section 2). This refers to a set of rigid and constraining norms or beliefs that place pressure on men to be or act a certain way. These dictate that men should: be self-sufficient; act tough; stick to rigid gender roles (e.g., around housework and caregiving); be heterosexual and homophobic; control household decisions and women's independence, etc. (Kivel, 2007). Based on this framework and interviews data of this study, most of the respondents agreed that social norms include the expectation that men must act strong, be the breadwinner and get respect from the other family members, Mohammed (37 years, completed high school), arrived in Canada in 2019, says:

Men should be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.

In contrast, young men, including single men, have views of masculinity that are more positive overall than the social norms they perceive back in Syria. Although the participants often appeared to reject some aspects of the Man Box, around a third still endorsed patriarchal notions such as "*A man should always have the final say about decisions in his family.*", Ibrahim (23 years, College student, arrived in Halifax in 2018) said. Overall, 8 out of 19 men participants believed in the importance of treating women

as equals. But others (11) still hold on to traditional norms about gender roles, seeing men as 'breadwinners' or 'protectors' and women as 'careers'. It must be noted, however, that the latter (11 participants) explicitly told me that these dominant ideas of the desirable masculine are the general more traditional ideas in Syria that reflect their personal views. Concerning hegemonic masculinities in Syria, it can be said that for most of the men I talked to, the term 'patriarchy' is still happening. The expectations by Syrian men of a 'real man' in a patriarchal society are quite similar to what academics wrote about dominant masculinities in general [see section 3 on hegemonic masculinity theory]. Again, gendered social norms varied significantly among different groups of men in this study and are shaped by different power relationships and inequalities in addition to those of gender. For example, older men face an increasing contradiction between their conscious or unconscious desire to live up to the norms they grew up with ('be tough', 'be strong', 'be independent), and the reality that they may be less able to do so. The following paragraph will demonstrate whether male Syrian immigrants themselves, consciously or unconsciously, try to conform to masculine gender norms in Canada.

All Syrian men interviewed describe what is the dominant image of Canadian men and how they act and represent themselves to others. They refer to some characteristics that Canadian men enjoy: the "patient man" who consults a lot and takes a longer time in the decision-making process; the "handyman" who helps and participates in housekeeping stuff (repair, maintenance, etc.); the "materialistic" man who does not like to save for the future but rather like to live day by day; and the "gentleman" who respects others. Again, Ahmad described the Canadian man in the other way around, the "high achiever":

Here there is more pressure on the man, where they must be the high achiever and more productive to keep up with the dominant high image or status of the North American Man like Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg and others.

He continues to say as other participants described:

In North America, there is Consumerism Masculinity or Materialist Masculinity that is, you must be a high achiever, more productive, earner and consumer to reach the top of the hierarchy.

Interestingly, there was an overwhelming consensus among most participants that Canadian men are weak and bear less responsibility than women. Basem (25 years, completed high school) who arrived in Halifax in 2020, put it that way:

The head of the family here is the woman, not the man. I noticed that the Canadian man is like the woman, but even the woman is much stronger than the man, as she enjoys more privileges and rights that enabled her to form that strong personality.

I am trying to become a real man here in Canada as I was in Syria, but I cannot, I feel that I am a weak man

Although most of the respondents noticed that women in Canada are more responsible for the family than men, only five of them feel that their role as 'the head of the family is over and has shifted to a 'supplementary role'. Of course, this does not apply to all men, rather it particularly applies to those who already married a woman and have children. Feelings of 'disempowerment' were most noticeable among married men. In contrast to such feelings, respondents say that their wives in the meantime often feel empowered due to the dominant Canadian social norms towards women. They assert that their wives feel more protected by Canadian law and become aware of their new rights here, which they did not have before (in Syria). Gaber (43 years, completed master's degree) who arrived in Halifax in 2018, tells his story:

I submitted a complaint about a bill for the house, but the issue was not taken seriously, but when my wife filed the same complaint, the problem was resolved immediately, although I had previously complained several” times. It is clear racism against men. Also, when I took my child to the hospital, they asked me where is his mother and why she did not come with him?

Here I lost some of my power (over). In our culture, women are inferior to men. Here men and women are not only equal, but women are superior to men.

Concerning the decision-making process inside the family, while Syrian men recognized that Canadian men enjoy more freedom and independence and bear less responsibility, they think that Canadian men do not control the decision-making process within the family. As Ayman (35 years, completed high school, arrived in Halifax in 2020) described:

Canadian men do not control the decision-making process within the family so they cannot take even a trivial decision without referring to their wives or partners.

Seen that way, 13 out of 19 of the respondents think that the Canadian man is struggling or trying to be associated with a greater role inside the family such as having a more significant voice in the decisions that should be taken in partnership.

Shared Masculinity

The comparison between the dominant masculine identities of Syrian men and their Canadian counterparts demonstrates a lot of similarities. Characteristics such as the ability to provide and be trustworthy, find a job, passion to help other people, search for a good future, and show respect for women are referred by most participants. However, Syrian men see that these common areas of manhood are not basic or mandatory

requirements here in Canada, unlike in Syria. As reported by the respondents, there is tremendous pressure on the male in general but in a different way. Wassem (32 years, University student), who arrived in Halifax in 2018, says:

There is high pressure on males more than females. Although within Canadian culture, they do not make you feel that it exists, I see it as a stereotypical behavior of men.

He goes further to say that pressure on the male in Syria is generated by the strict morality standards (moral pressure) while the pressure on males here in Canada happens as a result of the complexity of the social relationships:

I lost some features of masculinity in Syria due to society's view, however, I feel now more comfortable as the moral pressure of my tradition has disappeared.

Other respondents, Aziz (21 years, University student) who arrived in Halifax in 2019, referred to the type of environment or culture a Syrian newcomer is coming from whether it is open/free or closed/conservative. Four respondents think that they share some features of the Canadian manhood because they are coming from an open culture:

We are almost on the same path, however, there are some differences according to the degree of culture between us and them.

Coming from an open background, I respect women's rights, and this is what I share with Canadian men.

In line with the above characterization, the similarities between the Syrian and Canadian manhood indicate that although some respondents declared that the dominant Canadian ideas about desirable masculine behavior do not apply to themselves, some of them largely correspond with the hegemonic ideals of masculinity in Syrian society. What furthermore should be taken into consideration is that a small number of respondents

already explicitly distinguished themselves from the dominant masculine norms back in Syria. In their words, they were already modern (liberal) and not very typical Eastern men. It must be noted, however, that none of the interviewed Syrian men described implicitly any of the hegemonic characteristics of Syria? when talking about what masculinity means for them (in Syria and Canada). Considering the new contexts experienced, such as facing new difficulties and changing in gender issues once in Canada, the meaning of masculinity is challenged and takes on new meanings. For a few interviewees, masculinity no longer means hegemony (having power over others and following their traditions that support a strong male position in society). They rather strive for masculinity as an attitude that is respectful and responsible for those who are close to the man.

Shifts in Gendered Social Norms

This section explores how Syrian men participants address social norms connected to masculinity and challenge or change their traditional gender stereotypes in Canada today. It is essential to recognize that Syrian men interviewees have multiple and diverse identities that shape their perspectives and experiences. Masculine norms varied for different groups of men in this study, intersecting with some key identity factors such as education, age, culture, and religion. Seen that way, one participant highlighted that the intersection of masculinity and religion can present many challenges when seeking to shift gender norms. While men who are actively involved in religion may behave in similar ways to other men, *“I can see that religion does not influence Canadian society's norms.”* In this situation, the degree of adherence that some participants have to specific religious beliefs – and therefore their degree of openness to Canadian culture and norms – was seen

as significant. Another complexity is that there are differences within religions as well as between them; some forms of Christianity or Islam, for example, are quite rigid, while others are more flexible. Again, this was thought to affect the extent to which men, either individually or in groups, will respond to interventions around gender norms and has implications for adapting them, Ibrahim says:

I noticed here that religion does not influence society's norms. For instance, according to our religion, the third gender is considered a 'disgrace', while here they have full rights and freedom, and society respects them.

Although such intersecting identity factors impact their integration experiences, adapting to new customs, structures and some new gender norms was essential for some participants to adjust to Canadian society, Ibrahim continues:

I studied a course at Dalhousie University in my first year of pharmacy program called Human Sexuality, and all the focus of this course materials was on the trans, homosexual and non-binary group. As a religious Muslim man, I did not like its content, and I did not expect that it would address specific gender-related issues. Nevertheless, I realized later that it is good to learn about gender pluralism and its complexities from a different religious background.

Another participant, Ramez, said:

I want to stress that I am open to other cultures and have liberal ideas, but pressures from our culture and religion force us not to conform to some of the Canadian cultural norms. At the end of the day, we must respect any culture we live in and integrate with it.

Moreover, different norms coexisted for different ages of men. As one participant noted (a high school student), many young men are influenced by dominant masculine norms back in Syria, e.g., 'be tough', 'be strong', 'don't show emotion', but they also they have aspirations to liberate their masculinity from these rigid masculine norms and be more supportive of gender equality with women than they were previously. However, the

current gender relations in Syria, often described as hegemonic for the men and subordinate for the women, are challenged (consciously and unconsciously) by most of the Syrian men participants of my study here in Canada. For instance, the 'traditional' view of Syrian man as a family patriarch who is able to exert his power over women and other members of the family through force is currently being challenged. By and large, most of them noticed that Canadian gender norms are very different from gender norms in their home country, Syria. Mussa says:

here I lost some of my power as the leader of the family because of this new gendered social system. However, I am happy now that this new status quo changed my mindset and made me share my decisions, caring and respect my wife rights and be a good father.

A theme that arose from several participants was their position as immigrants. One participant drew attention to "the norms of the destination country sometimes conflict with their traditional culture and values", giving the example of the man being the head of the family who can control his wife and children. In addition, many were seen as needing to cope with a significant shift in their breadwinner status and self-esteem by undertaking work that undervalued their skills and achievements back in their home country. Samer says:

I cannot find a job opportunity that matches my skills as I am the main one responsible for the care and providing for my family. Being new to Canadian culture put me in an embarrassing situation in front of my wife and children

Some men who come from conservative environments in Syria find themselves supporting equal gender relations here in Canada. Their wives, for example, tend to point out the vast possibilities that were opened for them and desired equality with male

members of society. Mowafak (38 years, completed bachelor's degree) who arrived in Halifax in 2018, explained:

A lot of our roles have changed here: my wife started driving a car and going to work or shopping alone, while in Syria she could not do that, because of tradition and societal pressure.

Nonetheless, men from non-conservative environments perceive their position in relation to their tradition back in Syria as restricting their possibilities to adjust to some dominant masculine norms in Canada such as sharing household chores with their wives.

Mowafak emphasized:

I want to stress that I am open to other cultures and have liberal ideas, but pressures from our traditions force us not to conform to some of the Canadian masculine norms.

Mowafak continues to say that their tradition had a big influence on his wife's lifestyle and roles back in Syria, while here such pressure has disappeared, and that new assigned gender roles and norms have developed:

My wife is coming from a conservative culture and after she has adapted to the Canadian culture, she has changed her dress style. She used to wear the Manto, a long Islamic dress/cover back in Syria, now she has kept the hijab, but wears jeans and t-shirts. In Syria, making such a decision may be very difficult due to the increasing pressure from our tradition, while here is the exact opposite.

According to our culture, a woman is not allowed to shake hands with a man or vice versa, and this also applies to men. Here, my wife becomes more comfortable shaking hands with friends and strangers.

In line with this, most of the Syrian men I talked to stressed that they feel less limited by Canadian society and give less attention to the judgments of others of how a man should act or behave. Furthermore, their expectations of the roles of women in

Canadian society were largely surprising to them. Most of them realize the change in the gender roles of women since they arrived in Canada. For example, it was very strange to them to see, for the first time, a lot of females doing males' hard jobs such as construction work. Nizar (38 years, no formal education) who arrived in Halifax in 2018, experienced this change:

In my work, I saw a woman doing my job, metal lathe mechanist, and this was something very strange to me because it is a role that belongs to men in my country, not women.

I also saw a beautiful blonde girl working in construction with the city, and this was a very strange and new thing to me. I think this girl doesn't have to play this rough, masculine role.

Seen that way, most of the men I talked to frankly assert that they will not allow their wives to do such a masculine job. Rather, they are still in favor of the typical role of women back in Syria, that is to do a soft feminine job (nurse, secretary, etc.) which corresponds with their femininity. Additionally, the approach to how society perceives them as men has partially changed. Many of those interviewed refer back to the 'traditional masculine norms' of their home society (discussed above), which at the same time limit and impose certain duties on being a man, even though it does not affect them directly on an everyday basis here in Canada, but they aware it still existed. In terms of some dominant customs and traditions in Canadian society, some men believe that Canadian families are disrupted, that is the family bond is very weak or even non-existent. For them, maintaining a united family is a key element of the provider's role. Mussa says:

A young man or girl here is independent of their family at the age of eighteen and does not bear any responsibility towards their parents or the rest of the family members, while we have the exact opposite in Syria.

Mussa's son, Aziz, relates this to the complexity of the Canadian social norms:

My Canadian friends at school do not communicate with their parents and do not even know them, as their family and social system are very complicated.

Another participant referred to the nursing home as an unacceptable norm in their tradition:

When a man or woman gets older here, they will be sent to the 'nursing home', however, in our tradition, sons take shifts to care of their parents at the family home until their death.

Knowledge (understanding Canadian gender norms)

In this section, I examine how gender related issues were among the factors that influenced Syrian men's experiences in this study. To begin with, an important issue raised by Syrian men interviewees was the meaning of gender in general. Although few of them were aware of some gender issues (such as LGBTQ issues or gender pronouns) discussed for this study, many men did not understand basic concepts about gender:

I have now learned from you the meaning of the term gender, which I do not know its meaning in the first place, and the difference between it and the term sex. Also, I do not know much about the nature, behavior, and rules of the LGBTQ community.

Some of the respondents with more education criticized the lack of knowledge and interest in getting to know gender-related issues in Canada. Wassem said:

I become aware of some gender issues through my studies at my university, but I did not know that they were of great importance and very sensitive issues. I am still confused and can't understand how to identify a person regarding 'gender pronouns' like 'he/him' or 'she/her' or 'they /them'. However, I am grateful for this research for raising and discussing such pressing issues on gender.

I understand the other gender and their different tendencies and that their gender might fall on the spectrum from male to female or in between. Also, I understand at the same time talking about equality, inclusion, and diversity but from a gender perspective, I feel there is high pressure on males more than females.

Within the group of participants, men with less education seemed to experience the inability to conform to prevailing gender norms as problematic and are more pessimistic about their future possibilities. The more educated men articulate fewer concerns about their circumstances and prospects. This outcome can be explained if someone takes into consideration that the more knowledgeable a man is about gender-related issues, the easier he is expected to adjust to dominant gender norms. Moreover, most of the participants above (twelve of nineteen) built their lives back in Syria and experience their current situation as a serious setback.

In line with this, some participants criticized the lack of knowledge about gender pronouns and complained that most of the newcomer men do not know about them and even about the existence of an inclusive language used for the LGBTQ+ community. For them, it is a very confusing issue even for Canadian people, and they believe that it is inappropriate and makes the person who was misgendered feel awkward and responsible for comforting them, which is not their job. Wassem tells his story:

I noticed something that became more popular, that is the use of gender pronouns. Also noticed such gender pronouns inside some email signatures of different people. So this was a very strange thing and new to me. I am still confused and can't understand how to identify a person regarding 'gender pronouns' like he/him or she/her or they /them.

I once came across a question on one of my final exams that was how you can diagnose and convince a 52-year-old woman, they/ them, who is allergic to needles and vaccinations. When I wanted to write and add my explanation of her case, I got very confused as I did not know how to address her gender using the gender pronouns attached to the question, they/them. I used to address a person's gender as he/him or she/her

Showing concerns to prevailing gendered social norms

Concerning the LGBTQ+ community, these are new themes that appeared in the lived experience of Syrian men who landed in Canada between one to five years ago. Most of the participants state that what was strange and new to them was that they noticed a big presence of homosexual and trans people. They assert that although there is a very small gay, lesbian or trans group in Syria, they consider it illegal and banned: "*we do have such groups, but not as much as here. Here in Canada, they enjoy their freedom, and the community respects and supports them*". The Syrian men that I interviewed often repeated similar stories about how difficult it was for them to distinguish between homosexuals' people (e.g., girl vs gay person) and how to behave with the LGBTQ community since in Syria they were never exposed to similar situations. Gaber told his story:

I was walking on Spring Garden Road one time when I saw a gathering or parade of the LGBTQ people carrying and distributing Rambo flags. One of the supporters approached me to give me a flag, and I refused to take it from him, then he got upset with me and said, do you have a problem, are you against us? I answered him, no but I am a straight person, you are free to do or think whatever you want, and I am free to do the same! Why are you trying to impose this on me?

Gaber noticed that here in Canada any person could suddenly change their gender identity up to their mood and decide whether to become a woman or a man or both. He believes that a person who wants to transform his gender without a physiological reason just because their mood wants to do so - will be considered 'guilty' in our culture, while here they are free to do so regardless of the reason:

In my previous job, for example, my colleague was working in the office right next to me where there are no walls. One day I came to my office and found a woman sitting in my colleague's place and I was surprised that he is my colleague not any other person wearing

a long wig, skirt, and high heels? This is logically wrong. He decided to trans according to his mood not because he has encountered a sudden or specific medical condition.

Another participant recalled this situation:

I once saw inside the mall a man with a beard dressed as a woman, wearing a skirt, and putting on makeup and nail polish. This was a new and strange thing for me and my family because in my country the law does not allow a man to dress and act like a woman or else, he will be imprisoned.

Participants further assert that even if they return to Syria after 10 years, they will not change their old view of the LGBTQ community and will still ask themselves why such people are acting like this. However, because they live within this Canadian culture, they will deal with this phenomenon with respect, especially in front of their children who absorb this culture and appreciate it. To this end, most of the participants wondered how to protect their children from this phenomenon. Some participants mentioned that many Syrian men newcomers reported to the Imam (the leader of the Muslim community in Halifax) that their children began to feel that they are strangers to them, as one of the boys told his parents "My culture now is very different from yours". Other Syrian men shared their experiences regarding the ability to convince their children to not accept such a culture. Mowafak explains:

My younger son, grade 6, was playing a racing cars video game with his older brother, grade 7, and I noticed that he was putting the rainbow flag on his selected car as the game features allow. Then I asked him why you are using this specific flag? Please remove it and do not use it anymore! His older brother knows what this flag means and asked me why? He argued: are we supposed to respect them? I tried to explain to him diplomatically that yes, we should respect any culture we live in and integrate with it; however, we have our tradition, and this is not following it. I honestly struggle with these constructed dominant norms because it will negatively affect my children's mindset.

The general point is well taken, though – that most participants are suffering from this change in gender norms, as they are not so familiar with gender pluralism – but it is important to consider that they are trying to train themselves to adjust to these phenomena.

Accepting the prevailing Canadian gendered social norms

This section aims to demonstrate whether Syrian men participants living in Halifax are accept or do not accept the dominant and institutionalized norms, values, and behavioral patterns in Canadian society. While accepting or adapting to new social norms and traditions by Syrian men participants was essential for some to integrate well into Canadian society, it was a very challenging or even unacceptable issue for others. Some young men participants acknowledged that they become more acceptable for homosexual people, but this does not necessarily mean that they have to actively interact with them on front of other Syrian community. They believe that Syrians who are younger or 'the second generation' have more acceptance of gender pluralism. Some consider it as personal freedom and they must respect the privacy of others as Gaber emphasized:

I am not against gender pluralism, and I have no problem in dealing with any of my Canadian friends or colleagues who identified themselves as gay, trans or non-binary but in one condition, that they must not change their gender identity suddenly without informing me ahead.

Other respondents stated that they must accept these prevailing norms as-is because they live within this culture, and they become a part of it. Others believe that it is difficult for them as families raising their

children to change their stereotyping view that has been acquired culturally.

I cannot accept these standards because they might harm my family tradition.

Grounded in this logic, it would follow that raising children according to parents' tradition will put their children, in the long run, in a critical situation in the face of the prevailing norms in Canadian society. On the other hand, some respondents (5) stressed that they neither support nor oppose these prevailing Canadian gender norms at the same time. Mowafak said:

This is the social reality here that I must accept and respect. But if I were in Syria, I cannot accept these norms because of the strict social controls of gender.

Being aware of available services regarding gender-related issues

This section seeks to understand the views Syrian men participants hold on available services and programs offered by local immigration organizations based in Halifax such as the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs. One thing that is important to note is that none of the men I talked to were aware of any services or programs available to men newcomers to help them to adapt to Canadian gender norms. It may be that the lack of knowledge of the available resources appears to be a contributor to male newcomers not utilizing the resources of the above organizations:

Most participants stated that they are using ISANS and YMCA services such as language training, employment, health, etc. Also, they have attended some orientations organized by ISANS on public and social life in Canada. These orientations quickly

addressed some of the issues related to genders such as equality, violence against women, and other social topics. Fadi (30 years, completed high school) who arrived in Halifax in 2019, says:

I received a two-day lecture at ISANS called Introduction to Canada and it was a general, comprehensive, and brief session. Although it briefly mentioned the issues of equality and homosexual rights, it did not explain the issue of gender norms in more detail or in how to adapt to these new norms in Canada.

I did not use all of ISANS or YMCA services, but as far as I know, my Syrian friends who have used all of ISANS and YMCA services have received some information about some gender issues such as violence against women or gender equality, but none of them mentioned the existence of programs or seminars that specifically dedicated to gender norms in Canada and ways to adapt to them.

A young man participant, Aziz, talked about his experience in attending the “Men’s Action Project” at the YMCA:

I joined a couple of times the Men's Action Project which is a focused men's leadership group as part of the Gender-Based Violence prevention project. It is a space for newcomer young men to build leadership skills and discuss the unique experiences and challenges they are facing. This program quickly addressed some of the issues related to gender, and Canadian culture in general, but is not dedicated to helping immigrant men to adjust to Canadian gender norms. Also, it is optional and not compulsory, and many male migrants do not usually attend such programs as they consider it a waste of time, or not originally get registered as customers with the YMCA.

Given the above, some participants believe that ISANS or YMCA intentionally avoid addressing such sensitive topics (gender or religion) just because they do not want to cause any form of harm to the newcomers’ community. Nevertheless, other participants noticed some negligence by ISANS and YMCA, as they intentionally avoid raising such issues to not offend the newcomers. Ahamed says:

Settlement agencies know that those newcomers are coming from a culture that is not ready yet to digest these issues. I understand that they want to create a safe space for them by not opening controversial topics, but these gender-related issues should be dealt with seriously to avoid any cultural clash.

Despite being in favor of some programs offered by the above organizations, many Syrian men I interviewed cited conservative cultural norms, priorities, and some privacy issues, as barriers to resorting to organizations' resources. For example, some men consider talking about sexuality, mental health, and women's rights will threaten their patriarchal position in the family. This shows that Syrian men are challenging cultural norms even when they intend to benefit from some settlement programs. In line with this, priorities such as employment, language and education are also aspects of the newcomer's life that make dealing with social issues like gender norms a secondary thought.

What should be done?

Some participants felt that, for many men, there was a degree of what another participant, Ahmed, described as 'in-betweenness'; that is, many men see involving 'fatherhood' as part of being a man, but expectations of it not being manly to admit to certain emotions and feelings, especially around caring, are still powerful. These men can be seen as navigating both traditional and modern norms and expectations:

I can see some of the newer aspects of masculinity like being the caring father, at the same time I still caught up in some things that I might see as a hangover from the past

A similar concept was put forward by another participant who talked about what he called the 'chameleoned masculinity', highlighting those men who perform masculinity in different ways at different times and in different circumstances of their

lives, such as arriving in a new country. Some Syrian men also noted the problem of stable gender norms, suggesting that gender norms relating to men may be becoming more flexible. Others pointed out that although their masculine gender norms have shifted over the past five years of landing in Canada, many powerful patriarchal ideas remained in place and there are still very strong binary constructions that even young men feel obliged to comply with. Syrian men participants generally agreed that what it means to act like a man is less straightforward than it used to be and that there is now a bit more space for men to act differently from traditional models. In practice, according to four participants, they are distancing themselves from some harmful traditional gender norms back in Syria by embracing gender equitable viewpoints and practices, though it remains difficult for them to be visibly pro-feminist. Another participant agreed that, for many men, expectations of masculinity have been liberalized somewhat; however, he also stressed that some gender norms continue to narrow their opportunities considerably, and lead to harmful impacts on women and girls. For him, strong hierarchies, enforced through gendered social norms, remain in place both among men and between men and women. Another suggested that men see themselves as separate from dominant forms of manhood, while still putting harmful masculine norms into practice in other ways (e.g., men embracing progressive views on women's rights while enacting sexual harassment):

5.2 Immigration Services and Programs for Newcomers

The starting point of this research was the idea that it would be relevant to look at Syrian men's experiences in adapting to Canadian gender norms and whether the available services and programs offered by settlement organizations in Halifax could help them in this adaptation. In this section, I examine the available services provided by

settlement organizations in Halifax to help Syrian men newcomers to adapt to Canadian gender norms. I will look at the programs offered by ISANS, and YMCA.

Dedicated Services and Programs

Every year, Canada welcomes more than 300,000 immigrants. These newcomers need support to overcome the challenges they face on arriving in Canada and to successfully integrate into their new country (ISANS, 2020). ISANS and YMCA provide newcomer families with a variety of programs and outreach services. They deliver community-based support that is inclusive and welcoming. Both organizations help newcomers integrate into their new communities while also supporting the community in understanding the issues and barriers they face. ISANS, for example, offers different orientation sessions such as the 'Canadian culture' and 'family' orientations, 'parenting' workshops, 'counseling', and 'family law'. They also have community connection and wellness programs, help to find employment, and English language training courses. With respect to available programs dedicated to men newcomers to help them to navigate the change in their masculine norms and changing gender roles, ISANS staff members referred to the 'Men's Group' sessions which aim to empower men and connect them with different resources. However, such sessions are not specifically designed for gender-related issues but to tackle social life issues in Canada, as a ISANS settlement counselor reported:

We did different cultural activities to try to get more men involved with outside home activities like camping with other males only. We are not having full sessions about gender issues - we talk sometimes about some general information related to gender.

Another settlement counselor at ISANS said that gender issues are not as discussed as much as other subjects or topics:

We don't deal with gender issues a lot, so there is a kind of social illiteracy about gender issues among newcomers. All of the new government-assisted immigrants come and attend the 'family orientation' where we partially talk about the shift in gender roles between the man and the woman. But it's just one part of the whole orientation, so we're not having a full session about gender issues.

Likewise, YMCA offers similar services and programs but with more focus on social issues faced by newcomers. They have more programs than ISANS in this area, such as the 'School Settlement', 'Active Living', 'Youth Outreach', '2SLGBTQIA+' among others. 'The Gender-Based Violence Prevention Project' (GBVP) involve some sub-programs such as the 'Men's Action project (for young men 18-24 years old) and the 'Men Talk' program (for adults 25 years old and up) where individuals can get involved in different outings and activities that enhance their social lives, leadership skills and wellbeing. The YMCA GBVP manager stated:

We offer different training and resources and develop a strategy for how to respond to gender-based violence in the settlements. Also, we do work with about 2000 men and boys a year and we provide them like the same kind of support as we would for women

She further asserts that they try to dig more into gender-related issues within some programs:

We start some discussions with young people about healthy relationships like taking care of themselves, taking care of others, knowing that gender-based violence is a social problem that impacts everybody.

Gendered status of adaptation

Traditions and cultural norms often create barriers to men seeking help no matter the kind of challenge to which they have been subjected. An ISANS staff member says:

Some of the newcomer men are open up and they benefit from our services and the programs, but some of them, when you ask: are you OK? Is everything OK? Yeah, I'm fine. Even we noticed some men tell their wives to not say anything. So, they try to be invisible just because they don't want to show their weaknesses to everybody, so it's a cultural thing.

Despite using and benefiting from some services and programs (employment, housing, language training, etc.) directly, most ISANS and YMCA staff members brought up the reality that many newcomer men have more important issues to worry about before they can focus on gender issues. These include basic needs such as shelter, finding a job, education, etc. This observation was also made by an ISANS program coordinator who reported that some newcomers told them that they are not really gaining anything from attending sessions (about social life in Canada) and would rather obtain more essential services. The perception that the programs or sessions related to Canadian social life (which include some gender topics) are not a primary concern to men newcomers could result in many men not recognizing or seeking appropriate services that help them to adapt to prevailing gender norms. Corresponding with the above reality, none of the Syrian men I talked to were aware of any of the programs that tackle gender issues available to them in Halifax. Thus, in addition to all the reasons mentioned above, lack of knowledge of the available resources appears to be a contributor to newcomers not utilizing them. However, another ISANS staff member believes that gender issues, in general, are coming up during other services such as parenting sessions, woman's group, or the language classes:

It is possible that some newcomer men got information about gender during different sessions, but since this was so overwhelming to them at the beginning so they get to the degree that they cannot remember any discussed topic like gender.

A settlement counselor at ISANS sees that some men overlook attending some sessions that aimed to discuss some important social issues:

Our interpreters call our clients and tell them that there will be a session on health tonight from 6:00 to 7:00, so when they hear about the health session, they feel lazy, or they just want to watch a movie and stay home. So, when they find it like they're stuck somewhere in a health situation, they start saying I never received this session - no one even tells me about this, but he never attended the session.

We can do workshops and we do a lot of different workshops, but it wouldn't necessarily reach all of the newcomers who come right. It just reaches the people that want to come. And then we say, hey, let's struggle with gender issues.

Considering gender issues faced by men newcomers, namely the inability to conform to dominant masculine standards, it seems that most ISANS and YMCA staff members in this study consent that dealing with Canadian gender norms is not just challenging to newcomer men but even for themselves as Canadian nationals:

Now we have the LGBTQ plus community and the first time I heard about the gender pronouns was two years ago when we had somebody come and educate us, but other than that I have never heard about this before.

Of far more significance is that most ISANS and YMCA staff members referred to the gender imbalances and the inability of men newcomers to conform to dominant masculine standards and changing gender roles which affect their adaptation process:

I have a client, a Syrian male, who stressed that I'm responsible for my family, I'm the one who needs to go and work, get money, support my family. So, he's superior in the house, and I understand his position. So, it has to do with gender stereotypes of what women should be and what men should be.

Despite the claim that the adaptation process was not significantly different for men and women coming to Canada from Syria, it was significantly different for most of the participants of this study. With that said, after arrival in Canada, most of them generally speak negatively about their new gender roles and status as a man in the new society which affects their inability to conform to prevailing masculine norms. They perceive additional difficulties in the process of integration because of their gender. This variance in different aspects of daily processes between gender is, in men's opinion, a negative experience and deprives them of any opportunity to focus on their personal growth, studies, and career. My male participants do not feel that women face similar in integration into the Canadian society but emphasize the opposite situation, that women have certain advantages because of their gender. They argue that some aspects of integration are harder for them because they are males. ISANS and YMCA staff members acknowledge that 80% of the staff who deliver services and programs are females, even though their resources are being utilized equally by both immigrant men and women. In contrast, Syrian men cited discrimination and limitation of services and programs offered by local settlement organizations in Halifax in comparison to what is available for women. For example, one participant, Emad (36 years), referred to the 'Men's Support Group' at ISANS as the only specific program for men to talk about social life in Canada. In their opinion, women are favored by Canadian policies, as well as by Canadian society. They believe there tends to be more willingness to help a female immigrant who is perceived more often as a victim. In line with this, ISANS and YMCA staff members explained that it takes a shift for men newcomers to be willing to hear about women's rights and gender equality. The general observation is that each

immigrant man comes here with the assumption that they can live the same way as they lived back home, that is to live up to their hegemonic model of masculinity:

I think Everybody comes in thinking that no, I can keep the norms and the social life as I had it before, not understanding that there would be a big shift. we need to have a better understanding of the amount of time it will take for the shift to work. A husband will not automatically give power to his wife once he arrives in Canada, some of them are just faster, and others are just a little bit later, so in their way, they will adjust eventually.

To add, staff members of ISANS and YMCA vary their opinion on the challenges faced by newcomer men to be well integrated into the local community, some of them cited age as a critical factor: "*the younger you are the easier to adjust, the older you are the harder to adjust.*", others cited 'tradition and religion': "*cultural wise, it's hard to adjust to a new country.*" ISANS and YMCA staff were asked 'do the available programs and services offered by settlement organizations in Halifax consider or apply a gender-based analysis?' In response to this question, both ISANS and YMCA staff members acknowledge that they do not know about this analysis and did not receive any training regarding it: "*We could probably do a more consistent gender-based analysis if every program in every service is aware of what a gender-based analysis is.*" However, another staff member referred to the 'assessment tool' which is used to understand the background of each newcomer family:

In terms of supporting clients to settle in Canada, the first things before we start any services with them, we use the 'assessment tool' where we try to go deeper to understand the background of each family and to try to understand what could be a benefit for this family? What are gaps for this family, and what are its strengths? or what are its weaknesses?

Hence, I believe that adopting a gender-based analysis framework by ISANS and YMCA before and during the integration process will help newcomer mento understand Canadian gender norms and how to adapt to them. By all means, this research does not intend to hold settlement organizations in Halifax (ISANS and YMCA) responsible for not considering a 'gender analysis' in their services and programs, but just to draw their attention to the importance of adopting such a new approach.

5.3 The need to adapt (Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)

In this section, I use Maslow's hierarchy of needs model to describe the stages in the adaptation process of Syrian men immigrants considering the gendered character of this process. This model will help ISANS and YMCA, or any other settlement organization, to identify whether their available resources could assist men newcomers in adjusting to changing gender roles and dominant masculine standards. I applied Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a coding tool (conceptual framework). Themes were thematically coded (inductively and deductively) to categorize data (adjustment needs) into five categories of Syrian men newcomer needs to be arranged in ascending order: *physiological*—basic needs satisfied by finding shelter (house), learning the English language, work to provide for the family; *security*—the need for a safe and supportive space to express their cultural norms; *social*—a desire for social acceptance; *esteem*—need for enhancement and acceptance of dominant standard gender norms; and *self-actualization*—striving for the full realization of unique characteristics and potentials of the good man.

Most Syrian men participants reported that they have undergone a state of socio-economic instability upon their arrival in Canada. Most of them are people who lived regular lives in their homes in Syria but happened to be put in unfortunate circumstances of a devastating war and forced to flee their country. Thus, no matter which level of the hierarchy their personality development had reached before arrival in Canada, they are pushed by various factors toward the bottom of the hierarchy. In other words, their initial concerns after arrival will be in the 'physiological' and 'security' categories mentioned above. Thereafter, with basic satisfaction of these needs (e.g. finding a house, learning the English language, finding a safe environment to express one's traditions and norms, etc.), 'social' and 'esteem' needs come to dominate. For instance, Syrian participants' concern for social contact with other people in Canadian society may not emerge until they satisfy their basic needs (finds adequate shelter or a good job to provide for their family). This corresponds with what ISANS and YMCA staff members reported that what most concerns newcomer men is just getting the benefit from essential services (housing, employment, and English training), while services related to social life issues (which include some gender topics) are not a primary concern to them and this, in turn, could result in many men not recognizing or seeking appropriate resources that help them to adapt to prevailing gender norms. It must be noted however that what constitutes "basic satisfaction" remains problematic and certainly involves individual and cultural differences. According to some Syrian men's narratives, when they feel somewhat socially secure, they may not show concern for challenging dominant gender norms but stick to their hegemonic ideal of masculinity. In the final stage (self-actualization), that is, striving for the full realization of the unique

characteristics and potentials of the good man, most Syrian men reported that it is very difficult for them to achieve or reach this level. For some, it could be reached when all their basic and social needs are gratified, and they have adjusted well to their new environment. That said, any newcomer man has an essential striving toward growth that is prevented only by sociocultural conditions (such as conforming to dominant masculine standards) from reaching the top of the hierarchy (the 'unique man' level). Adaptation, then, can be seen as a recovery process in which immigrant men gradually move up the hierarchy toward self-actualization. ISANS and YMCA need to consider this idea where they can assist men newcomers to healthily progress up the hierarchy and overcome some undesirable symptoms of adjusting such as insecurity, loneliness, stress, disempowerment, violence against women or other family members, etc., in other words, recovering from a temporary state known as "crisis in masculinity".

Most Syrian men interviewees have multiple and diverse identity factors intersected to shape their perspectives and experiences. Masculine norms, for example, varied for different groups of men in this study and intersected with some key identity factors such as education, and culture or tradition. This suggests that coping resources acquired through education or membership in a more opened culture may facilitate the adjustment process and speed up progress through the hierarchy. The Conceptual Need Categories Matrix below (figure 1.1) shows the relationship between conceptual needs and the actual needs of Syrian men newcomers manifested during the adjustment process (The numbers inside the table represents the number of participants- 19 participants in total). Since I targeted Syrian men who landed in Canada between 2017-2020, I will just consider the first two years of their adjustment for this analysis. The fit

between the actual needs categories and what the resettlement services offer to help meet such needs of men newcomers is far from perfect, most notably in the case of self-actualization, social and esteem needs and acceptance of dominant standard gender norms in Canada. Looking at the matrix, only 2 participants progressed the hierarchy to this level where they strived for two years for a full realization of their own conception of the unique man. Social concerns are initially relatively unimportant for most participants but increase in importance over time for some participants. At one point during the adaptation process, it became important for some Syrian men newcomers to establish informal social relations with other Syrian community members and some Canadian counterparts. Acceptance of dominant gender norms declines in importance for most participants, although during the first year they are, in their head, the most dominating concern. For most participants (13), the importance of housing, English training, and employment concerns is greatest in the first two-year and declines thereafter. This suggests what I have described earlier that priorities such as housing, English training and employment concerns are key aspects of the newcomer's life that make social issues such as gender norms a secondary need or concern. Finally, 11 participants see that a safe and supportive space/environment to express their cultural norms is always an important determinant.

	Basic Needs	Security Needs	Social Needs	Esteem Needs	Self-actualization
Housing, English training, employment	13	4	0	1	0
Safe and supportive space/environment	0	11	0	1	0
Social acceptance	0	0	7	5	0
Acceptance of dominant standard gender norms	0	1	1	3	0
Striving for full realization of unique man	0	0	0	0	2

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Need Categories Matrix for Syrian Men in the First Two Years of Life in Canada

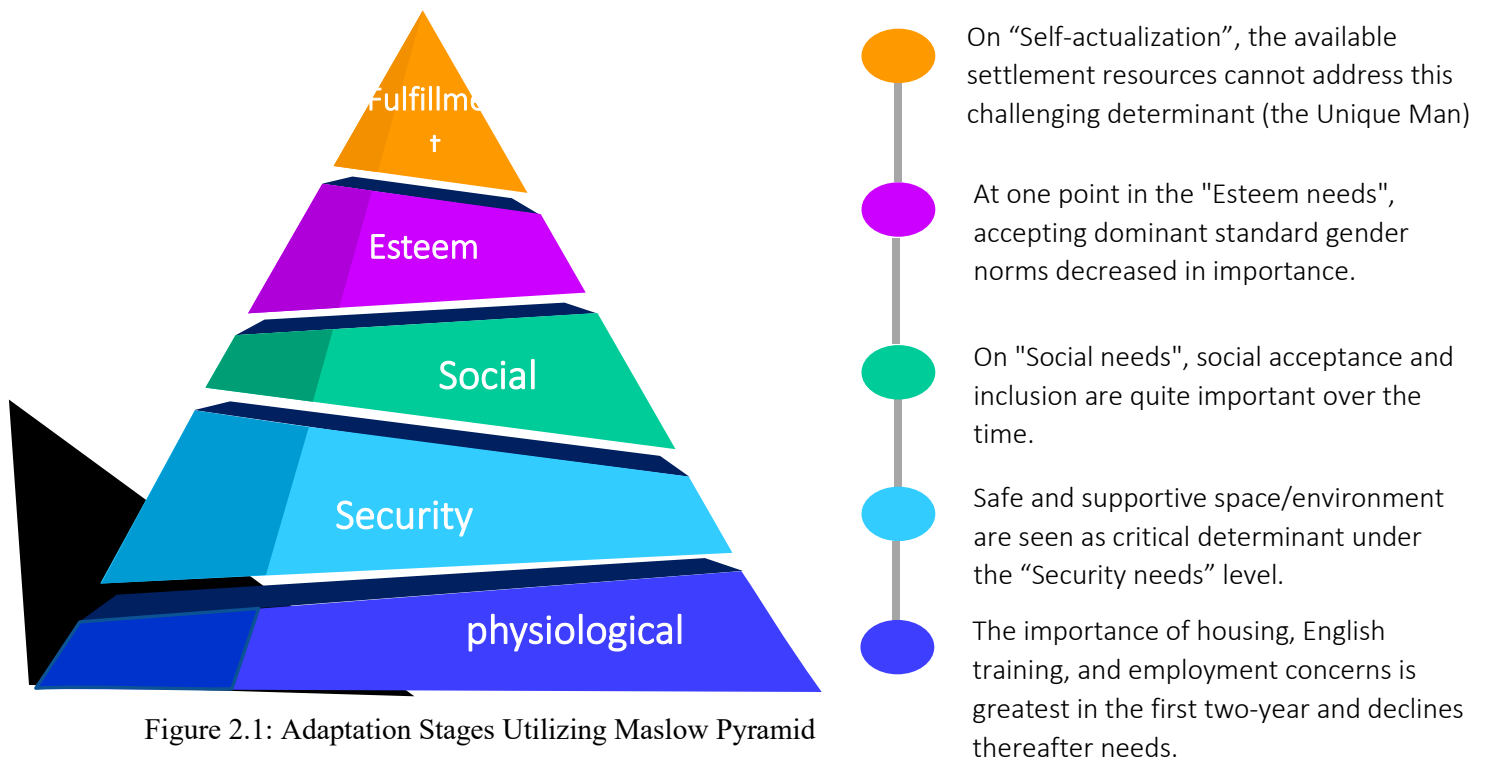


Figure 2.1: Adaptation Stages Utilizing Maslow Pyramid

It must also be noted that need categories are not independent of one another but overlap in some cases as in the case of 'social acceptance and inclusion' which reflects the social and esteem needs of some participants (see figure 2.1 above). Syrian men's concerns about housing, language, and employment have partially prevented them to progress the hierarchy and seek for resources to navigate the change in social and cultural norms. However, they have an essential striving toward growth that is prevented only by dominant sociocultural conditions from reaching a degree of masculine ideal. Grounded in this logic, it would then follow that they will fall behind in adapting to dominant gender norms (in the first two years) and they would stick to the hegemonic ideal of their masculinity. In this sense, it would also be important to relate the changing

needs of men newcomers to changes in their overt masculine behavior rather than just to their attitudes. If there is one interest that I hope to have conveyed in this description, it is to have provided settlement agencies with a more realistic view of men newcomers' experiences, through this model. ISANS and YMCA may be able to adapt their resources to the unfolding hierarchy and balance their services among overlapping needs, provide need satisfaction at the appropriate time, and thus facilitate the adaptation process.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

As gendered social norms become increasingly central to Syrian men newcomers' everyday life experiences, it is important to understand how available settlement services could facilitate their adaptation to Canadian gender norms. This study presents an analysis of the process of integration by 19 Syrian cis-gendered and straight men newcomers, who arrived in Canada between 2017 – 2020 and five staff members of ISANS and YMCA settlement organizations in Halifax, who shared with me their stories and discussed questions concerning changing gender roles and norms, masculinities and adjustment process. For the purposes of this thesis, I operationalize the theory of “hegemonic masculinity” as a perception or belief could a typical Syrian male has and present to others. Being a man in Syria, being a man in Canada, differences in masculine identities, and the change in gender norms are the first four predominant themes in the data relating to the experiences Syrian men have as a result of their integration into the Canadian community. It is essential, therefore, to recognize how Syrian men themselves understand and perceive gender-related issues and what are the existing gender relations in their society and the hosting society.

The results of the study allow a better understanding of the intersectional character of the participants' experiences, as well as how gender represents one of the key factors that shaped their adaptation experiences. Interestingly, the results gave insight into what is seen as the most important responsibilities for a typical Syrian man newcomer to consider and what kind of masculine behavior Syrian men believe is expected of them. The most relevant essentials are 1) having decent work and a good

income, 2) having a family, 3) the ability to provide for and protect the family, and 4) exercising power over women and other family members. Furthermore, the results showed that most participants in this study try to conform to these hegemonic ideals of masculinity, either consciously or unconsciously. However, young men distinguished themselves from some dominant masculine norms back in Syria and express other forms of their masculine ideals, such as being caring, respectful, loving partners and good fathers. Some men agree that there are differences in the roles of men and women, and while they strive that the roles will be equal, in Syria the inequalities still exist. Some men exert power over women and do not accept that women get more freedoms and possibilities. It was, therefore, essential to understand the complexity of the hegemonic masculine ideals and its compound cultural context for Syrian men newcomers in the first place. Men participants face actual difficulties in the attempt to comply with dominant gender norms. It turns out that in most cases men fail in meeting the expectations of what a good man is like, and how they should act and represent themselves to the Canadian people. So far, only a few feel that they succeeded. However, it is worth mentioning differences amongst the participants. For example, a few men are single, and the majority are married. Some relatively older men (above twenty-five) seem to experience more challenges and are more pessimistic about their future possibilities. The relatively younger ones (under twenty-five) articulate fewer concerns about their prevailing circumstances and prospects. Another important result gives insight into how the personal constructs of masculinity of most Syrian men who participated in this study, are affected by the changed living conditions after they arrive in Canada, especially in the first two years (from 2017 to 2019). Their constructs are influenced by the inability to live up to

dominant gender norms. Mirroring these developments was the fact that their reactions to adaptation are seen as a certain form of acceptance of the inability to meet masculine norms and how this acceptance is expressed.

To better understand and describe the stages in the adaptation process of men participants considering the gendered character of this process, this study applied Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model. Having analyzed the adjustment needs (which are divided into five categories: Physiological, Security, Social, Esteem, and Fulfillment), it was found that the fit between the actual needs categories and what the resettlement services offer to help Syrian men newcomers to meet such needs is far from perfect. Syrian men's concerns about housing, English language, and employment have partially prevented them to progress up the hierarchy and seek resources to navigate the change in social and cultural norms. Consequently, most Syrian interviewees fell behind in adapting to dominant gender norms (in the first two years), and they stick to the hegemonic ideal of their masculinity. However, it is important to mention that over time, a few men adjusted partially in the fourth and fifth years, while others were still struggling.

I hope that through this study I gave the Syrian men participants a chance to express their perspectives and experiences on the process of integration into the Canadian society and at the same time underlined ISANS and YMCA's capacity to help them understand and adapt to Canadian gender norms. It is crucial at this stage to not forget to give a voice and listen to the researched people of this study since they are the ones that were exposed to critical situations and conditions. Therefore, their opinions

and feedback should be taken into consideration by academics, settlement organizations, and policymakers which can result in great improvements in the field of immigration.

6.1 Recommendations for Further Research

In view of the above, my first recommendation for further research is to examine the differences in experiences of both men/boys and women/girls newcomers in Canada. The same applies to the differences in experiences of relatively old Syrian men (above twenty-five) and relatively young Syrian men (under twenty-five). Also, there should be more attention to other gendered identities of men and boys newcomers (e.g., nonbinary identities) in immigration studies.

My second recommendation is that it would be crucial to develop a gender-specific approach or tool (e.g., Gender-Based Analysis) that could achieve a better integration process in comparison to existing approaches and policies. Such an approach will also contribute to strengthening the general understanding of the gendered-specific issues in migration and allow the reconceptualization of the prevailing fixed settings of gender norms during the adjustment process which will give both men and women newcomers the attention they need.

A third recommendation is to use ‘Maslow’s Need Hierarchy’ model in research on immigration. Through this model, ISANS and YMCA may be able to adapt their resources to the unfolding hierarchy and balance their services among overlapping needs, provide need satisfaction at the appropriate time, and thus facilitate the adaptation process.

There are legitimate concerns that gender inequality was incorporated into the 'cultures' of immigrants by media and political agendas globally (Gren, 2018). In the violence against women discourse, for instance, a 'newcomer man' coming from a 'patriarchal culture' was seen as a potential perpetrator, while a 'newcomer woman' (his wife/partner) was likely his victim. As I argued in Chapter 5, many Syrian men participants referred to the perceived inequality that happens when they seek services as more attention is given to women by different stakeholders. Hence, the last recommendation is that the efforts to engage men and boys in violence prevention must simulate the inequalities and hierarchies happening among newcomer men themselves, and the complex patterns of privilege and disadvantage which shape their lives. Learning about violence against women and girls can provoke a sense of injustice in men and boys, which should be cultivated to trigger change. It was pointed out that it can be powerful when men do speak out against violence towards women and girls, and that this, in itself, can potentially challenge dominant masculine norms.

References

- Aberman, T. (2014). Gendered perspectives on refugee determination in Canada. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 30(2), 57-66.
- AbuKhalil, A. A. (1997). Gender boundaries and sexual categories in the Arab world. *Gender Issues*, 15(1-2), 91.
- Abu-Laban, Y. (Ed.). (2009). *Gendering the nation-state: Canadian and comparative perspectives*. UBC Press.
- Akın, C. E. (2016). *THE QUEST TO MASCULINITY: GENDERING ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY, HONOR AND SHAME IN SYRIAN SELF-IDENTITY* (Doctoral dissertation, Central European University).
- Al-Ghanim, K. A., & Badahdah, A. M. (2017). Gender roles in the Arab world: development and psychometric properties of the Arab adolescents gender roles attitude scale. *Sex roles*, 77(3-4), 169-177.
- Amin, A., Kågesten, A., Adebayo, E., & Chandra-Mouli, V. (2018). Addressing gender socialization and masculinity norms among adolescent boys: policy and programmatic implications. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 62(3), S3-S5.
- Baker, A. A., & Kelly, K. (2016). Live like a king, y'all: Gender negotiation and the performance of masculinity among Southern drag kings. *Sexualities*, 19(1-2), 46-63.
- Barry, B. (2018). (Re) Fashioning Masculinity: Social Identity and Context in Men's Hybrid Masculinities through Dress. *Gender & Society*, 32(5), 638-662.
- Baxter, D. (2007). Honor thy sister: Selfhood, gender, and agency in Palestinian culture. *Anthropological quarterly*, 737-775.
- Berg, L. U. (2017). Creating a man, a mouse or a monster? Masculinity as formulated by Syrian female novelists through the second half of the 20th century.
- Bridges, T., & Pascoe, C. J. (2014). Hybrid masculinities: New directions in the sociology of men and masculinities. *Sociology compass*, 8(3), 246-258.
- Brief, M. U. A. Engaging Men, Changing Gender Norms: Directions for Gender-Transformative Action.
- Caidi, N., & Allard, D. (2005). Social inclusion of newcomers to Canada: An information problem?. *Library & Information Science Research*, 27(3), 302-324.
- Canadian Council for Refugees. (2006). Annual report. Retrieved from <http://ccrweb.ca/GBAresearch.pdf>

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research. (2020). *Gender and Health*. Retrieved from <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48642.html>
- Chamberlin, J. (2019, February). *Is there only one way to be a man? Rethinking masculinity as a rigid social construct*. Retrieved from <https://explore.ucalgary.ca/rethinking-the-definition-of-masculinity>
- Chamberlin, J. (2020, March 20). Is there only one way to be a man? Rethinking masculinity as a rigid social construct. Retrieved from <https://explore.ucalgary.ca/rethinking-the-definition-of-masculinity>
- Charrad, M. M. (2011). Gender in the Middle East: Islam, state, agency. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37, 417-437.
- Choi, S. Y. (2019). Migration, masculinity, and family. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(1), 78-94.
- Chuang, S. S., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (2013). Current perspectives on gender roles and relationships in immigrant families. In *Gender roles in immigrant families* (pp. 1-5). Springer, New York, NY.
- Connell, R. (2020). The social organization of masculinity. In *Feminist Theory Reader* (pp. 192-200). Routledge.
- Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities*. Polity.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & society*, 19(6), 829-859.
- Dahlerup, D., & Darhour, H. (2020). Introduction: The Arab Uprisings and the Rights of Women. In *Double-Edged Politics on Women's Rights in the MENA Region* (pp. 1-46). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- DAMIR-GEILSDORF, S. A. B. I. N. E., & SABRA, M. (2018). DISRUPTED FAMILIES.
- Demetriou, D. Z. (2001). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity: A critique. *Theory and society*, 30(3), 337-361.
- Department of Justice. (n.d.). *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>
- Donaldson, M., & Howson, R. (2009). 12 Men, Migration and Hegemonic Masculinity. *Migrant men: Critical studies of masculinities and the migration experience*, 20, 210.
- Earl, E. M. (2019). Gender and Social Acceptance of Immigrants in a New Destination Site.

- Fotheringham, S., & Wells, L. (2019). Tomorrow's Men Today: Canadian Men's Insights on Engaging Men and Boys in Creating a More Gender Equal Future.
- Gallagher, S. K. (2012). *Making do in Damascus: Navigating a generation of change in family and work*. Syracuse University Press.
- Gengler, J. J., Alkazemi, M. F., & Alsharekh, A. (2021). Who supports honor-based violence in the Middle East? Findings from a national survey of Kuwait. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 36(11-12), NP6013-NP6039.
- Glas, S., & Spierings, N. (2020). Changing tides? On how popular support for feminism increased after the Arab Spring. In *Double-Edged Politics on Women's Rights in the MENA Region* (pp. 131-154). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Glas, S., Spierings, N., & Scheepers, P. (2018). Re-understanding religion and support for gender equality in Arab countries. *Gender & Society*, 32(5), 686-712.
- Gossage, P., & Rutherford, R. (Eds.). (2018). *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities Across Time and Place*. ubc Press.
- Greig, C. J., & Holloway, S. (2012). Canadian manhood (s). *Canadian men and masculinities: historical and contemporary perspectives*, 119-38.
- Gren, O. (2018). Gender In Displacement: a phenomenological study of a Syrian refugee experience in Sweden from a gender perspective.(Master's thesis)
- Harvey, C., Garwood, R., & El-Masri, R. (2013). *Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon*. Oxfam International.
- Herz, M. (2019). 'Becoming' a possible threat: masculinity, culture and questioning among unaccompanied young men in Sweden. *Identities*, 26(4), 431-449.
- Hess, J. M., Isakson, B., Nelson, M., & Goodkind, J. R. (2018). "My World Is Upside Down": Transnational Iraqi Youth and Parent Perspectives on Resettlement in the United States. *Journal of immigrant & refugee studies*, 16(4), 391-412.
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). (2018). *Immigration Levels Plan*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2019.html>
- Inhorn, M. C. (2012). *The new Arab man: Emergent masculinities, technologies, and Islam in the Middle East*. Princeton University Press.
- Joseph, S. (2010). Gender and citizenship in the Arab world. *Al-Raida Journal*, 8-18.
- Kabeer, N. (2002). *The power to choose: Bangladeshi women and labor market decisions in London and Dhaka*. Verso.
- Kagaba, T. (2018). Gender boundary negotiation within the US immigrant/refugee resettlement: how transnational bridge-building matters.

- Karimi, A., Bucerius, S. M., & Thompson, S. (2019). Gender identity and integration: second-generation Somali immigrants navigating gender in Canada. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(9), 1534-1553.
- Khanlou, N., & Crawford, C. (2006). Post-migratory experiences of newcomer female youth: self-esteem and identity development. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 8(1), 45-56.
- Krabbe, B. M. J. (2017). *Masculinities in Conflict: A research about the affected masculine identities of Syrian refugees* (Master's thesis).
- Kronstal, K., & Grant, J. L. (2011). *The challenges of integrating newcomers: the Halifax case*. Atlantic Metropolis Centre.
- Lomazzi, V. (2020). Women's Rights and Shari'a Law in the Mena Region. In *Migrants and Religion: Paths, Issues, and Lenses* (pp. 231-250). Brill.
- Maktabi, R. (2010). Gender, family law and citizenship in Syria. *Citizenship Studies*, 14(5), 557-572.
- Martino, W., & Greig, C. J. (2012). *Canadian men and masculinities: historical and contemporary perspectives*. Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality* ([1st ed.]). New York: Harper.
- Miele, R. (2020). Hegemonic Masculinity and the Ideal Male Hockey Player: The Constructions of NHL Injuries in Popular Canadian Newspapers, 2016-2017.
- Moghissi, H. (2005). 10 The 'Muslim' Diaspora and Research on Gender: Promises and Perils. *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home*, 254.
- Morettini, F. M. (2016). Hegemonic Masculinity: How the Dominant Man subjugates other Men, Women and Society. *Global Policy Journal*, 27.
- Noble, J. B. (2003). Seeing double, thinking twice: The Toronto drag kings and (re-) articulations of masculinity. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 43(3-4), 251-261.
- Omidvar, R., & Richmond, T. (2005). *Immigrant settlement and social inclusion in Canada*. Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.
- Poynting, S., Noble, G., & Tabar, P. (1999). 'Intersections' of Masculinity and Ethnicity: a study of male Lebanese immigrant youth in western Sydney. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 2(1), 59-78.
- Rabo, A. (2013). Perspectives on gender and citizenship in Syria before the 'Arab spring'.
- Rowell, M. (2019). *Masculinity in the contemporary Newfoundland novel* (Doctoral dissertation, Memorial University of Newfoundland).

- Schrock, D., & Schwalbe, M. (2009). Men, masculinity, and manhood acts. *Annual review of sociology*, 35, 277-295.
- Shahidian, H. (1999). Gender and sexuality among immigrant Iranians in Canada. *Sexualities*, 2(2), 189-222.
- Siltanen, J., & Doucet, A. (2017). *Gender Relations in Canada*.
- Sinclair-Webb, E. (Ed.). (2000). *Imagined masculinities: Male identity and culture in the modern Middle East*. Saqi.
- Statistics Canada. (2014, Apr 23). *The Census and the evolution of gender roles in early 20th century Canada*. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-008-x/2010001/article/11125-eng.htm>
- Tastsoglou, E., Preston, V., & Ray, B. (2005). Gender and migration intersections. *Canadian Issues*, 91.
- Telfah, R. Bringing Gender into the Analysis of Syrian Refugee Settlement and Integration in Rural Ontario.
- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights)
- The Ontario Human Rights Commission. (n.d). *Code Grounds*. Retrieved from https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code_grounds/gender_identity
- The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM). (2019). *Annual report*. Retrieved from <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/CIMM/Reports/RP10577155/cimmp26/cimmp26-e.pdf>
- The Syrian Observer. (2021, April 20). Damascus Governorate Paints Stairs Black for Fear of “Homosexuality” [web log newa]. Retrieved from <https://syrianobserver.com/news/65570/damascus-governorate-paints-stairs-black-for-fear-of-homosexuality.html>
- University of British Columbia. (2020). History of Homosexual Immigration in Canada. Retrieved from https://wiki.ubc.ca/Intersectionality_of_Immigration_and_Gender_Identity#History_of_Homosexual_Immigration_in_Canada
- United Nations Free & Equal. (2021). DEFINITIONS. Retrieved from <https://www.unfe.org/definitions/>
- Ward, D. G. (2019). Public attitudes toward young immigrant men. *American Political Science Review*, 113(1), 264-269.
- Women and Gender Equality Canada. (2019). *Annual report*. Retrieved from <https://efc-swc.gc.ca/abu-ans/wwad-cqnf/men-boys-hommes-garcons/index-en.html>

Table 1.1: Pragmatic Definitions of Theoretical Concepts

Concept	Definition
Gender	<i>Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender-diverse people (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2020)</i>
Sex	<i>The physical and biological difference between males and females. (UNHCR, 2016)</i>
Masculinity	<i>A social construct expressing explicit and implicit expectations of what men are like, how men should act and represent themselves to others and what their respective positions in society are. It includes a cluster of institutionalized values, norms and behavioural patterns by which men are judged and assess themselves. (Connell, 2015)</i>
Gender Norms	<i>Standards and expectations to which women and men generally conform, within a range that defines a particular society, culture, and community at that point in time. Gender norms are ideas about how women and men should be and act. Internalized early in life, gender norms can establish a life cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping (United Nations Statistics Division, 2016).</i>
Gender-based analysis	<i>refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other. Gender analysis provides information that recognizes that gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, and/or another status, is important in understanding the different patterns of involvement, behavior, and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures. (Canadian International Development Agency, (CIDA))</i>
Sexual orientation	<i>refers to a person’s physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction towards other people. Gay men and lesbians are attracted to individuals of the same sex as themselves. Heterosexual people are attracted to individuals of a different sex from themselves. Bisexual (sometimes shortened to “bi”) people may be attracted to individuals of the same or different sex. (UN Free & Equal, 2021)</i>

Gender Identity	<i>reflects a deeply felt and experienced sense of one’s own gender. A person’s gender identity is typically aligned with the sex assigned to them at birth. (UN Free & Equal, 2021)</i>
Transgender (trans)	<i>is an umbrella term used to describe people with a wide range of identities – including transsexual people, cross-dressers (sometimes referred to as “transvestites”), people who identify as third gender, and others whose appearance and characteristics are seen as gender atypical and whose sense of their own gender is different to the sex that they were assigned at birth. (UN Free & Equal, 2021)</i>
Cisgender	<i>is a term used to describe people whose sense of their own gender is aligned with the sex that they were assigned at birth. (UN Free & Equal, 2021)</i>
LGTBQIA2S+	<i>is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, and the countless affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify. (UN Free & Equal, 2021)</i>
Integration	<i>refers to the process through which immigrants and refugees are able to participate fully in Canadian society (CCR, 2009)</i>

Appendix A - Interview Questions

Interview questions for staff members of settlement organizations (ISANS, YMCA):

1. What can you tell me about your organization?
2. What are your responsibilities in this organization?
3. Have you worked with male migrants/refugees before?
4. How long have you worked here?
5. What sort of programs does your organization have dedicated to help Syrian male immigrants/refugees to adapt to Canadian gender norms? Does your organization assist both men and women?
6. How long have these programs existed?
7. Do you feel your programs are welcomed by male migrants/refugees? How is your organization received by the migrant/refugee communities?
8. In your opinion, what prevents Syrian male migrants/refugees from using your services?
9. Are your resources being utilized equitably by both refugee men and women?
10. Who is utilizing them the most? women or men? or is it up to the education level and economic status?
11. Are your programs and services considering a gender-based analysis?

12. What do you think is working? What things need to be improved?
13. Besides improving your programs, what do you think needs to be done to best address the needs of these groups of men and help them to adapt to more equitable gender norms?
14. Do you have anything else you want to tell me about this issue? Is there anything I might have missed?
15. Do you have any questions for me?
16. Do you mind if I have more questions if I could follow up with you?

Interview questions for Syrian male immigrants in Arabic Language:

- 1- كيف حالك اليوم؟ أمورك تمام؟
- 2- أديش صرلك بكندا (هاليفاكس)؟
- 3- انت من وين بسوريا؟
- 4- انت متزوج؟ عندك ولاد شي؟ أديش صرلك متزوج؟
- 5- هل عم تشتغل شي؟ هل عم تشتغل ضمن مجالك (تدريب او خبرة مسبقة أو ضمن مستواك التعليمي)؟
- 6- شو اعلى مستوى تعليمي وصلتلو؟
- 7- أديش عمرك هلء؟
- 8- هل انت شخص متدين؟ عندك مانع اذا سالتك شو ديانتك؟
- 9- شو هي الصعوبات التي واجهتك كرجل في التكيف مع الثقافة الكندية؟
- 10- شو بيعني الك ان تكون رجل في سورية؟
- 11- شو بيعني الك هلء ان تكون رجل في كندا؟
- 12- شو هو الشيء المشترك بينك وبين الرجال في كندا؟
- 13- شو هي الشغلات اللي عم تعاني منها بحياتك الجديدة هون؟
- 14- هل لاحظت أي تغييرات من معايير النوع الاجتماعي في سوريا إلى معايير النوع الاجتماعي في كندا؟
- 15- هل بتعتقد أنو الرجال السوريين بيتقبلو بفرح الأعراف الكندية السائدة بين الجنسين ، أم أنو عم يعانون معها؟

16- برأيك، شو هو الشئ اللي ممكن يساعد عند التعامل مع هذه المشكلة؟ شو هي الموارد المتاحة اللي بتحب تشوفها؟

17- هل أنت على علم بأي برامج تم وضعها لدعم المهاجرين الذكور ومساعدتهم على التكيف مع المعايير الكندية المتعلقة بالنوع الاجتماعي؟

18- شو لازم ينعمل اكثر من هيك للرجال المهاجرين بخصوص برامج التوظيف (ISANS/YMCA)؟

19- هل عندك أي شئ تاني حابب تزيدو او تخبرني عنو حول هذه المشكلة؟ نقصت شي انا؟

20- عندك اي سؤال حابب تسالو؟

Interview questions for Syrian male immigrants in English Language:

1. How are you today? How are you feeling?
2. How long have you been in Halifax?
3. Where are you from in Syria?
4. Are you married? Do you have children? How long have you been married?
5. Are you working now? Are you working in a field in which you were trained or educated?
6. What is the highest level of education you have received?
7. How old are you?
8. Are you a religious individual? Do you mind if I ask what religion you practice?
9. What were the difficulties for you as a man in adjusting to Canadian culture?
10. What does it mean for you to be a man in Syria?
11. What does it mean for you today in Canada?
12. What do you have in common with men in Canada?
13. What kind of things are you struggling with, in your new life?
14. Have you noticed any changes from gender norms in Syria to gender norms in Canada?
15. Do you think that Syrian men happily accept the prevailing Canadian gender norms, or do the struggle with them?
16. In your opinion, what could be helpful when dealing with this issue? What resources would you like to see?
17. Are you aware of any programs that have been established to support and help male migrants to adapt to Canadian gender norms?
18. What more could be done for migrant men with respect to settlement programs?
19. Do you have anything else you want to tell me about this issue? Is there anything I might have miss?
20. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix B - Demographic data of participants

Pseudonym	Age	Arrived in Canada	Educational level	Marital status	Religion	Working	From
Ahmad	29	2018	Completed master's degree	Single	Spiritual	Yes	Damascus
Ayman	35	2020	Completed high school	Married	Muslim	No	Aleppo
Mohammed	37	2019	Completed high school	Married	Muslim	Yes	Aleppo
Daniel	37	2019	Completed bachelor's degree	Single	Christian	Yes	Damascus
Gaber	43	2018	Completed master's degree	Married	Christian	Yes	Homs
Mahmoud	25	2017	University student	Single	Muslim	Yes	Damascus
Mussa	50	2017	No formal education	Married	Muslim	No	Aleppo
Nizar	38	2018	No formal education	Married	Muslim	Yes	Homs
Ramez	39	2018	completed master's degree	Married	Christian	Yes	Lattakia
Samer	52	2020	Completed high school	Married	Muslim	Yes	Homs
Mowafak	38	2018	Completed bachelor's degree	Married	Muslim	No	Damascus
Wassem	32	2018	University student	Married	Muslim	No	Daraa
Aziz	21	2019	University student	Single	Muslim	No	Aleppo
Ghassan	20	2019	College student	Single	Muslim	No	Daraa
Basem	25	2020	Completed high school	Single	Muslim	Yes	Homs

Khalil	52	2018	No formal education	Married	Muslim	No	Aleppo
Ibrahim	23	2018	College student	Single	Muslim	No	Aleppo
Fadi	30	2019	Completed High school	Single	Muslim	Yes	Homs
Yousef	38	2019	No formal education	Married	Muslim	Yes	Daraa