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The abolishment of the Lebanese marriage loophole – article 522

A qualitative social movement study that analyses and explores Lebanese women's movement advocacy towards legislative changes and social change related to gender equality

(Picture by ABAAD, n.d cited in UN WOMEN, 2017)

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Abstract

In Lebanon, women have a long history of organizing and working towards equal legislation for all, just as in other countries around the world. After several rounds of advocacy by actors from the Lebanese women's movement, the gender-discriminating article 522 from the penal code was abolished in the year 2017. Before its abolished from the Lebanese penal code, article 522 would allow a person who has committed rape, abduction or statutory rape to be free from prosecution or suspended from conviction if he married the girl or woman. At the same time as Article 522 was abolished in 2017, the marriage loophole was re-embedded under article 505, which includes sex with a 15-year-old minor, as well as article 518, which deals with the seduction of a minor with the promise of marriage (BBC, 2017). However, many considered the initial abolition as an essential first step towards gender equal legislation in the Lebanese context. This study aims at understanding how actors from Lebanese women's movement advocate for legislative changes by analysing their process of abolishing article 522. To achieve this understanding, social movement theory has been applied to analyse stories that were collected through semi-structured interviews with seven female informants from the Lebanese women's rights NGO's ABAAD, KAFA, LECORVAW and LCW. The study showed that the actors involved shared different opinions on how the problem with article 522 should be framed and that the overall process had been far from linear, as the Lebanese women's movement encountered many threats and obstacles. The delay of the Lebanese government and the sectarian interference with the implementation of gender equality legislation are a few examples.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my informants and all the Lebanese activists, NGO's and associations that continue to fight for gender equality despite the daily hardships, setbacks and obstacles they face. Thanks to these hardworking people we can hopefully look forward to a day when Lebanese men and women have equal legislative rights.

List of acronyms and information about the NGO's included in this research

ABAAD: (means dimensions in Arabic) is a gender equality resource centre (founded in 2011) that advocates for the development and implementation of policies and laws that enhance women's participation through a rights-based approach that would bring about substantial changes in gender justice. In order to end gender-based violence (GBV), ABAAD adopts a holistic approach to providing protection and support to survivors / right holders of GBV during times of peace, war and disasters (ABAAD, 2019).

KAFA: (means enough in Arabic) is a feminist, secular, Lebanese, non-profit, non-governmental civil society organization founded in 2005 that seeks to create a society that is free of social, economic and legal patriarchal structures that discriminate against women. KAFA adopts a combination of different approaches, such as: advocacy for reforming the law and introducing new laws and policies, influencing public opinion, conducting research and training, empowering and providing social, legal and psychological support to women and children who have experienced violence (KAFA, n.d.).

LECORVAW: The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women was established in March 1997 in Beirut and by 1999 in Tripoli, northern Lebanon. It is a non-governmental organisation working to protect women from gender-based violence. Its objective is to combat, resist and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women by providing direct assistance to abused women, legal reform, advocacy, lobbying, research and awareness sessions with the civil society in Lebanon (Lebanese Development Network, n.d;LECORVAW, 2019).

LCW: Lebanese Council of Women (previously known as The Lebanese Arab Women's Union) is a non-governmental organisation that was founded on 6th of November 1952 as a result of the incorporation between The Lebanese Arab Women's Union, founded in 1920 and The Solidarity of Lebanese Women, founded in 1947. The council is an umbrella organisation that includes 150 women and mixed-gender organisations from different areas all around Lebanon. The committee aims to: maintain the steadiness of national reconciliation and co-existence and ensuring Lebanon's unity and stability of the Lebanese society by which all the citizen, men or women are treated equally in rights, duties and opportunities (The Lebanese Council of Women, 2017).

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1. Introduction/Background

Women's movements around the world are actively working to enhance the conditions and rights of women. Some recent 21st century examples are the Maasai women's movement in Kenya working to end female genital mutilation and early marriage (Womankind Worldwide, 2017). Argentina's NiUnaMenos movement, challenging misogyny and murder (femicide), and the worldwide #meetoomovement that brought attention to sexual harassment as a form of gender-based violence that women experience globally in their daily lives (The Guardian, 2016; O'Neil et al. 2018).

In Lebanon, women have a long history of organizing and working towards social sustainability for all, just like in other countries around the world. In 1996, Lebanon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as a significant milestone. Although the event was one of its kind, due to the Lebanese government's reservations on numerous articles and paragraphs, it was still deficient. The reservations result in continued discrimination against Lebanese women in many areas, including family issues, the passing of nationality, marriage, divorce and inheritance (Salameh, 2014, pp. 1-4).

The reason for the Lebanese government's decision not to adopt all CEDAW articles and paragraphs is that it would conflict with the Lebanese constitutional agreement to delegate all personal status laws to sect-specific religious courts. Laws around divorce, marriage, inheritance, custody of children are examples of matters that each Lebanese citizen sect-specific religious court decides over. Consequently, many of the religious court's rules are gender discriminating and unfavourable women. Here are some few examples:

> *''Women from non-Christian sects inherit less than their male counterparts and the age of marriage for women is lower than that of men across all sects. Men are considered the sole decision makers in matters of divorce, in particular, according to Muslim sects. Additionally, the prohibition of divorce in Catholic sects ultimately favours men over women, due to the unequal dominant social and economic order''*(Salameh, 2014, p. 2).

The discrimination against Lebanese women does unfortunately not end with the personal law, it extends to the civil penal code. One of these discriminating articles that still exist and were not changed when the Lebanese government ratified CEDAW was article 522 from the Lebanese penal code (Salameh, 2014, pp. 1-4). Article 522, used to belong to the last chapter on sexual offences in the Lebanese penal code under the title ‘’General Provisions’’ (BBC, 2017;KAFA, 2017). Article 522 encompassed all the previous articles in the same chapter (503-521) which dealt with sexual offences such as rape, the promise of marriage, kidnapping and intercourse with a minor. Before article 522 was abolished it stated that: ‘’ if a legal marriage is contracted between the offender of any of the crimes under the present chapter and the victim, the offender shall be free from prosecution’’ (KAFA, 2017, p. x.x). The article has infamously been called ‘’the rape law’’. Since rape within marriage is not considered illegal in the Lebanese penal code, article 522, has, since the early 20th century, served as a loophole for rapists to avoid punishment. For a long time, the women’s movement in Lebanon worked actively to abolish article 522, and in 2017 their work paid off as the article was repealed (BBC, 2017).

It is however important to note that even though a majority of the MPs in the Lebanese parliament voted to abolish article 522, the effects of article (the marriage loophole) was re-embedded under article 505, which involves sex with a minor who is 15 years of age, as well as article 518, which concerns the seduction of a minor with the promise of marriage (BBC, 2017).

There are some English scholarly articles that discusses the problematic aspect of article 522 in the Lebanese society, which will be mentioned later on in this thesis under the chapter of previous literature. However, according to my research and knowledge, I have yet not found any English scholarly articles that focus entirely on understanding the Lebanese women’s movement process to abolish article 522, which might have to do with its recent abolishment. A poll that was done the year 2016 by the women’s organisation ABAAD showed that only one per cent of the Lebanese population knew about article 522 before their campaign, which shows the importance of producing more information regarding the issue (BBC, 2017).

Furthermore, it is important to make use of the experiences and lessons of women’s movement activists to gain more insight into how to strive for gender equality. The work of

the Lebanese women's movement to abolish Article 522 may serve as an empirical example to further enhance our understanding of Middle Eastern legislative advocacy work.

1.1 Objective and research questions

This study aims to understand how actors from Lebanese women's movement advocate for legislative changes by analysing the process of abolishing article 522. The following main research question was relevant to this understanding;

How can we understand the abolition process of Article 522 through the experience of Lebanese women's movement?

To begin to understand this broad research question I have chosen to create three sub-questions which build on social theory concepts that will be introduced under the chapter of the analytical framework.

1) *How did the women's movement in Lebanon experience ''the framing process'' in relation to the abolition of article 522?*

2) *How has the Lebanese women's movement interpreted the use of ''partnerships'', ''opportunities'' and '' resources'' to abolish article 522?*

3) *How did the women's movement in Lebanon interpret the aftermath of the abolition? – '' the end or continuation of the movement''?*

1.2 Research limitations

A research limitation with this thesis is the aspect of time. With limited time comes also limited opportunities to get as many in-depth interviews as desired. Due to that, I have chosen to focus on interviewing seven representatives from KAFA, ABAAD, LECORVAW and LCW. They have all, in different ways, contributed to the process or the aftermath of the abolishment of article 522; hence they could provide me with their experiences. Another possible limitation of this study is its specific focus on legislative changes resulting from women's movement advocacy to abolish article 522. This is not to suggest that the Lebanese women's movement have not achieved other legislative or social changes outside the

abolishment of this article. However, the specific focus on the abolishment of this article gives us a starting point where we begin to understand social movement processes.

It is also not uncommon that different actors within and outside a movement interpret the result of their actions differently, which raises the factor of subjectivity when examining outcomes of social movements (Špehar, 2007, pp. 60-62). Therefore, I have chosen not to seek for one absolute truth but rather multiple angles of the process of advocating towards legislative changes and social change. I have designed my research questions and thesis in an inclusive and hermeneutic way that allows each informant to give their subjective interpretation and in turn, allows us as readers to interpret their stories. Moreover, the chosen social theory framework which uses community-based participatory research also adopts an inclusive methodology as it describes itself as ‘’a valuable way to empower people and groups, enhance their voice and power in society’’ (Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 333). With this said, I hope that you, as a reader, get to walk away from this thesis with a little bit more insight on advocacy work in the middle Eastern context than you had before.

1.3 Researcher Subjectivity/motivation for the choice of study

Being the daughter of two Lebanese citizens, I have roots in the country of this case study – Lebanon. Although I was born and raised in Sweden, I have been lucky enough to maintain a connection to my roots. Throughout my childhood, I visited Lebanon frequently and was always interested in understanding more about everything there was to know about the country. My mother told me early on in life that I as a Lebanese woman would not be able to pass on my nationality to my future children. Moreover, she said to me that this gender-discriminating law does not apply to Lebanese men (c.f. Human Rights Watch, 2018). The younger me was puzzled by this gender discriminating revelation and have ever since been interested in the topics of gender equality, especially when it comes to the deprived rights of women in The Middle East.

My experiences and my background played a significant role in my choice to explore the Lebanese women’s movement advocacy towards legislative changes and social change related to gender equality. As I believe everyone has preconceived ideas of their research before diving into it, I am not an exception to this. My Lebanese upbringing has most likely given me an embedded cultural assumption about the Lebanese context. Due to this, I have chosen

to, in the best way I can, establish a distance from my presumptions, through the use of MacCracken's four-step method has a focus on familiarisation and defamiliarisation with one's research topic (McCracken, 1988, pp. 29-41). Through this, I realised I had to make a conscious choice not to portray all actors within the Lebanese women's movement as a uniform category that think and act the same. Therefore, I choose to use qualitative in-depth interviews with open-ended questions and a social theory framework which allows inclusiveness. I wish to present the different experiences of my informant in the most unbiased way I can. This is also why I chose a hermeneutic orientation, which emphasises that a phenomenon is given meaning through interpretation. By allowing the informants to provide their subjective interpretation of the abolishment of article 522, I hope, in turn, that it will allow us as readers to interpret their stories and hopefully walk away from this reading with new insights.

3. Conceptual explanation

In this chapter, I will explain what I mean by the terms *women's movement* and *advocacy* related to this thesis. I will also justify the chosen definitions and how they contribute to understanding the main thesis question: *How can we understand the process of abolishing article 522 through the experience of the Lebanese women's movement?*

3.1 Defining women's movement

During the course of this research, my informants have mentioned different types of actors that have been active in the abolishment of article 522, for example MP's in the parliament, independent activists as well as NGO's. In order not to exclude these different types of actors. I have chosen a broad definition by scholar Sidney Tarrow;

> ''*A women's movement is a* ***network of organizations, groups or individuals*** *linked in a variety of ways interacting with (more or less spontaneous) public actions inside or outside state institutions with the goal of promoting gender equality and the advancement of women's interest in different spheres of social life* (quoted in Špehar, 2007, p. 46)''.

Moreover, this definition was also chosen because of its emphasis on ''women's movement'' instead of ''feminist movement''. This distinction was necessary for this thesis, to take into account that not all actors within a movement call themselves feminists, perhaps because the word is often considered a ''charged word'' (Cf. Špehar, 2007, pp. 46-54).

3.2 Defining advocacy

As previously mentioned, I have through the definition of what a women's movement is, identified a broad set of actors: ***network of organizations, groups or individuals***. Consequently, a broad set of actors, for example the society, the parliamentarians or the media can be targeted through advocacy, which lead me to choose this following definition found in a UNICEF advocacy toolkit:

> *''Advocacy is the deliberate process, based on demonstrated evidence, to, directly and indirectly,* ***influence decision makers, stakeholders and relevant***

> ***audiences*** *to support and implement actions that contribute to the fulfilment of children's and women's rights''* (UNICEF, 2010, p. 3).

The focus of this definition on '' the fulfilment of children's and women's rights'' fits well with my case of the abolition of Article 522 due to its harmful effects on girls and women who have been forced to marry perpetrators who have sexually assaulted them. However, it should be noted that advocacy in other contexts can refer to topics that go beyond the rights of children and women, such as advocating for the independence of a country or animal rights.

4. Theoretical and analytical framework

In the following chapter, I will first introduce the relevant theories of social movement on which the selected theoretical and analytical framework stems from, and then move on to explain the theoretical framework. After that, a picture of the framework will be shown. I will then present the analytical framework with the key concepts that are central to the analysis of this thesis. Finally, I will present a literature review of earlier articles and books on women's movement topics written in different contexts.

4.1 Overview of social movement theories

Social movement theory tries to understand how social change takes place by examining why and under what circumstances collective action is emerging and developing. It provides a range of various aspects and tools that can be used to better understand how social change is taking place (Tremblay et al., 2017, pp. 334-335). This section will go through resource mobilization theory, political opportunity theory, framing theory, and social movement cycles' theoretical approach. This thesis theoretical framework synthesis by authors Tremblay et al. emerged by combining these different social movement theories. In turn, this thesis analytical framework was developed through chosen concept from the Tremblay et.al framework, such as: *resources, opportunities, framing processes*, *partnerships,* and*,* the ending or beginning of the continuation of the *movement*.

The Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) argues that it is important to look at the resource aspect of a social movement to understand how the movement forms and mobilise.
The resources that RMT conceptualises can be both tangible and intangible, for example; money, contacts, space, equipment, or human resources. For a social movement to be successful according to RMT, it has to garner and strategically harness its recourses. To bring different actors together that are interested in working towards the same cause through *partnerships* is another example of how social movement can harness their resources strategically. RMT theory is often criticised for only focusing on resources and not at external factors such as the context where the movement is operating and its effect on the outcome of the movements, and it is from this critique that *The Political Opportunity Theory* (POS) was developed (Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 343;Špehar, 2007, pp. 67-69; Jasper, 2004, p. 3).

POS argues that external factors, outside the movement, are pivotal for a social movement to reach its goal. A social movements ability to take advantage of *political opportunities* such as

power changes in society or political structural changes is according to POS crucial (Špehar, 2007, pp. 67-69). A critique against POS is that it pays to much attention to political opportunities and little to threats and obstacles that a social movement can encounter (Jasper, 2004, p. 3).

Both RMT and POS have been critiqued to be too structural and too focused on using tactics to reach its goal, favouring the rational-choice theory. The criticism against the structural and rational choice theory is that the individuals do not only think about tactically ‘'maximising" their political opportunities or dealing with their resources in the best way when working towards a goal. An individual can also make choices that do not necessarily favour the movement but has a cultural or personal reason behind. This critique gave birth to *The Framing Theory* which tries to understand how collectively shared interpretations, and understandings, can bring individuals together and create a movement through *framing processes* that leads to *collective action* (Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 336, 343). According to this approach, a movement should aim to articulate a problem and a solution that others feel is worthy of paying attention to. Problematising an issue or deconstructing norms that society have taken for granted is an example of a discursive practice which, if it is done correctly, can lead to social change (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336).

According to social movement theory scholars, Lehrner, Allen and Maton, (2008) cited in the Tremblay et al. framework, it is important to view social movements as a phenomenon that develops over cycles of time (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336). By emphasising the evolutionary process of a social movement, one can better understand its dynamics. I will refer to the evolutionary process of a social movement as *the theoretical approach of social movement cycles* during this thesis to make my statements clearer. When scholars conceptualise social movement cycles, they can differ depending on a different interpretation. Four typical stages are; First, the social movements starting point when the foundation of the movement is built. Second is the stage when the discourse of the movement is created as well as when the vision and goals of the movement are laid out. The third is the transformative stage when it is time to mobilise to implement collective action. The fourth and final stage is when the movement either ‘’declines or consolidates’’. The movement can also come in different orders depending on the context of the social movement (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336).

Merging different social movement theories into one theoretical framework

In their article titled ‘’Can we Build on Social Movement Theories to Develop and Improve Community-Based Participatory Research? A Framework Synthesis Review’’ authors Tremblay, Martin, Macaulay and Pluye, uses RMT, POS, the framing theory and the theoretical approach of social movement cycles to create an eclectic conceptual framework as a new way of understanding community change that occurs as a result of community-based participatory research (CBPR). Besides using the previous mentioned social movement theories to build on the eclectic conceptual framework, the authors also analysed 58 publications of eight CBPR cases, to refine the frameworks applicability (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 333-362). As previously mentioned, it is the authors interpretation of the social movement theories, especially the theoretical approach of social movement cycles and real CBPR cases, that produced the four stages of social change which will be presented below.

4.2 The four stages of the theoretical framework

1) The first stage which is called **the emergence stage,** describes the base and the early stages that represent the construction of the infrastructure of the movement. The emergence stage of a movement is a response to a **‘’problem’’** in the society that a broad set of actors wants to change or have influence over. This problem which these actors want to resolve has a social, political and historical context to it. During this stage it is crucial to take advantage of *partnerships*, *tangible and intangible resources* and *internal and external opportunities,* which are concepts borrowed from RMT and POS theory. Examples of these concepts can be the social movements ability to garner and harness intangible resources such as previous competence within the organisation, or to make use of external political opportunities outside the organisation such as a political partnership (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336-337).
2) The second stage can be characterised by **the formation of the movement’s discourse** which is done through **framing processes**. This stage lends the concept of framing processes from the previously mentioned social movement theory - *the framing theory*. Framing processes means that social movement, through the formation of a collective identity and a vision of goals, can organize and become strategic. Furthermore, framing processes can also entail that the discourse around the identified problem that the social movement is working to change, is formed between

the actors within the movement or with the community members outside the organisation that exists in the society of the experienced problem.

3) The third stage is when **collective action** becomes crucial and this stage is often called **"the movement's moment"** because of its emphasis on the movements ability to get the right actors on board (for example politicians, NGOs, or other important actors from civil society) in order to reach the goal of the movement. The concept of *collective action* is borrowed from *the framing theory* which argues that collective action is created through successfully mobilize individuals around an identified problem.
4) The fourth stage represents **the ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement**. It can, for example, fail and dissolve or achieve goals and continue working for the next change it wishes to make. The framework uses the following explanation to explain the last stage: ''*the social movement declines or consolidates, as the movement fails and dissipates, or achieves its goal and sees its results institutionalized and sustained"* which emphasises the different possible outcomes of a social movement (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336). Scholar Jessica Horn describes the fourth stage as non-linear *"As movements form, they go through stages of growth and change, in some cases growing systematically in strength and impact over time and in others fluctuating in response to internal dynamics and external pressures."* (Horn, 2013, p. 19; Tremblay et al., 2017, p.336-337).

Reasons for choosing an eclectic social theory framework

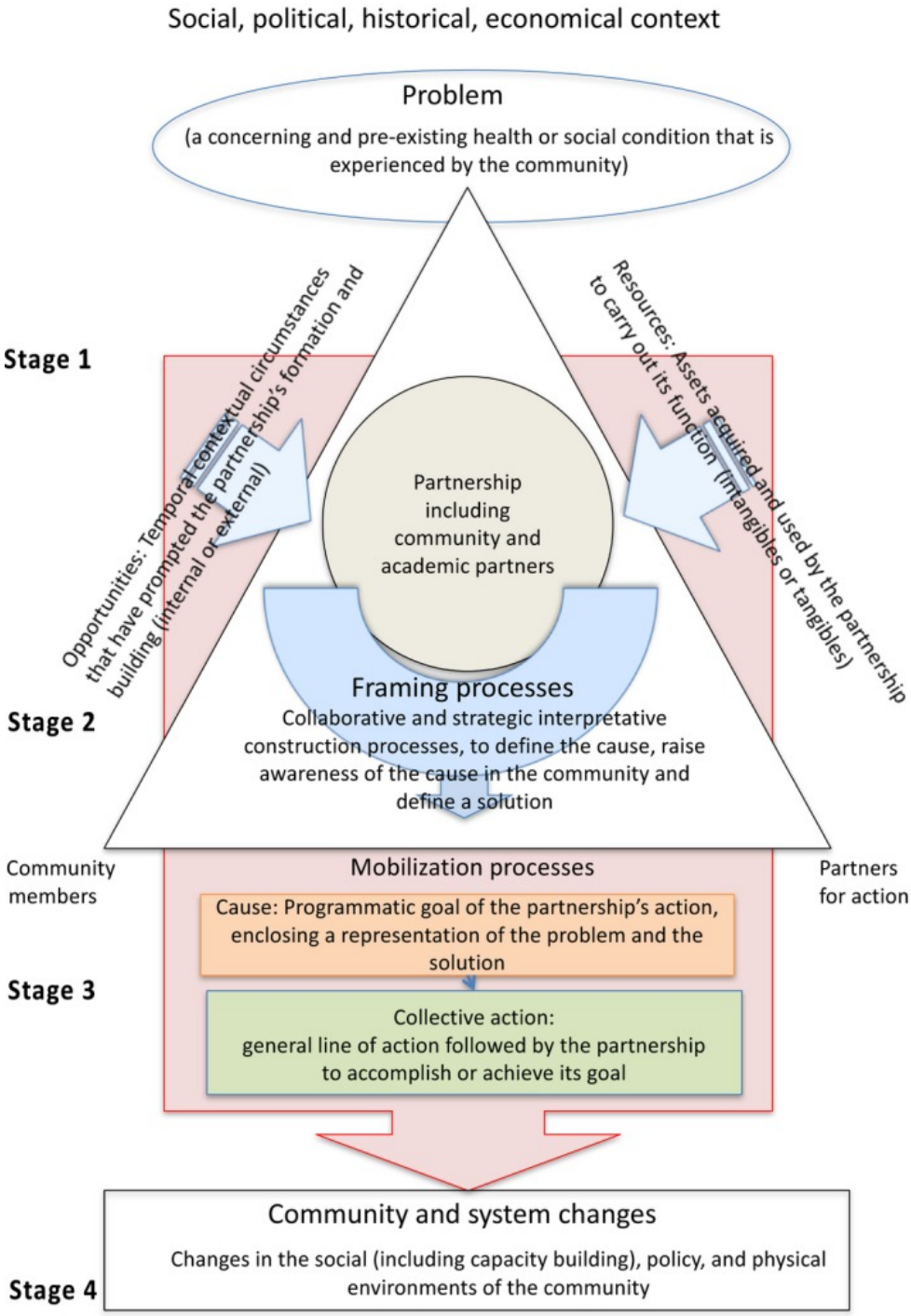
As mentioned during these stages, several useful concepts such as *tangible and intangible resources* and *internal and external opportunities, political opportunities, framing processes*, *partnerships* are presented. The framework's four stages: The emergence stage, the formation of the movement's discourse, the movement's moment and the ending or the continuation of the movement, are also practical tools to use for analytical purposes in order to understand social movement dynamics. Therefor I have found the framework to be broad enough to be used as a point of departure to begin to understand how legislative and social change occurs even in studies that are not in the context of community-based participatory research. The usefulness lies in the framework's innovative way of mixing RMT, POS, the framing theory and the theoretical approach of social movement cycles, into a combine theory, and thereby covering the various dimensions of a complex phenomenon. Because of this study's aim to get an understanding on how actors from the Lebanese women's movement advocate for

legislative changes and social change related to gender equality, choosing an eclectic approach is a strategic way of covering the different dimensions that otherwise would not have been brought up.

A further relevance of this framework is its ability to align well with the increasing importance of social movement theory as a science. Due to globalisation's improved media communication, the pace and the extent to which global challenges is becoming more and more evident to us. In turn, global challenges, for example, environmental issues, gender inequality, multinational corporate irresponsibility leads to increased social movement mobilization, activism and advocacy that aims to deal with the problems. Moreover, research on social movement seeks to explain how movements forms and why, as well as capturing its impact on the social, cultural and political spheres it operates on (McCauley, 2011, pp. 1020-1021).

During the course of this research, the frameworks four stages, namely; the emergence stage, the formation of the movement's discourse, the movement's moment and the ending or the continuation of the movement served as a departure point to the themes in my interview guide and analysis to understand social movement advocacy efforts. Furthermore, the choice of using this framework also stems from its flexible usage. One can for example chose to focus more on one stage for example; the emergence stage of a movement or the formation of the movement's discourse, depending on what is most suitable for the subject of study. The diagrammatic illustration below sums up the framework that has been explained above.

4.3 The diagrammatic illustration of the theoretical framework



Source: (Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 343)

4.4 Analytical framework

In this section I will go through the main concepts; *the problem, the emergence stage, framing processes, partnerships, opportunities, resources,* and *''the ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement''.* These concepts have been chosen from the theoretical framework in order to give the analysis more depth. Given the limiting frame time of conducting this thesis, the aforementioned concept was chosen due to their connection to each other and their ability to somehow frame the chronological beginning, middle and aftermath of the abolishment of article 522. Also, the selection of concepts was also made with the intent to answer this thesis main research question: *How can we understand the process of abolishing article 522 through the experience of Lebanese women's movements?*

The concept of ''framing processes''

By using the concept of **framing processes**, I hope that the Lebanese women's movement will not be portrayed as a uniform category that thinks and acts the same. As mentioned before in the chosen definition of what a women's movement is, the actors are described to ''*promote gender equality and the advancement of women's interest in different spheres of social life''*. Their shared vision of gender equality does not rule out the possibility of having different definition of what the goal of gender equality is. The actors might for example have a different outlook on what equality is defined or how the process of reaching that goal should proceed. The framework defines framing processes as *''interpretative processes involved in either elucidating a new representation of a taken-for-granted situation, labelling a* ***problem*** *and defining a way to resolve it (cause), or in mobilizing community members around this solution''* (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336).

In order to understand ''framing processes'' as a concept one must also understand the concept of **''the problem''** which was included (in bold) in the abovementioned definition. The concept of the problem is defined as *''a pre-existing health or social issue that is experienced by the community and that takes root inside a specific social, political, historical, and economic context which a set of actors tries to influence or change''*. In turn, the actors who are discontent and wants to change the experienced problem may have different interpretations of it and might therefore use different framing processes and discourses to frame what they think is wrong with the issue. Depending on their interpretive discourse

around the ‘’problem’’ with article 522 the desired solution might also be framed differently (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336).

According to the theoretical framework framing processes starts during **the emergence stage** which is another concept linked to framing processes. The emergence stage is described as the base of the movement and the early stages that represents the construction of the infrastructure of the movement, which are also created through framing processes. During the emergence stage it is also crucial to take advantage of partnerships, tangible and intangible resources and internal and external opportunities. Through the use of the movements framing processes of the problem during the emergence stage I will also use the experiences of the Lebanese women’s movement to understand the *social, political and historical* context in which has enabled article 522 to exist in the first place. Framing processes will also help to understand what the experienced ‘’problem’’ with article 522 is. Since the informants are Lebanese women working towards gender equality, I am also interested in understanding the women’s movement early stages through analysing their experiences that led them to advocate for gender equal legislation in the first place. In turn, their experiences might tell us more about the Lebanese social, political and historical context that reproduces gender discriminating situation for girls and women, such as the marriage loophole that able sexual perpetrator to be freed from prosecution by marrying the one they perpetrated (c.f Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 336, 343).

Furthermore, the framework mentions several times that it is during the framing processes that the *identity and vision of the movement are developed around* ***a clear interpretative discourse****.* As mentioned above I do not wish to paint a picture where all actors within the Lebanese women’s movement act and think the same. I will therefore not go by the idea that their interpretative discourses regarding article 522 must be clear. However, it is still important to the study that the informant’s different experiences and understanding around 522 can be discussed which is why the Tremblay et al. framework is useful as it still allows for the interpretative discourse to be analysed through the concept of framing processes (c.f Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 336, 343; Cf. Špehar, 2007, pp. 53-54).

The concepts; ’’partnerships’’, ’’opportunities’’ and ’’resources’’

Just like the word ‘’social movement’’ entails, a movement needs more than one person to reach its desired aims. Through using the lens of ‘’partnership’’, key collaborations between

the Lebanese women movement different actors can become clearer, which helps us understand how legislative change can occur in the Lebanese context. Equally important is also the analytical tools of ‘’opportunities’’ which is defined by the framework to be ‘’*temporal contextual circumstances that have prompted the partnership's formation and development’’* that can be both internal within the movement or external. This thesis will focus on the opportunities that the informants from the women's movement feel has been central for them to abolish article 522. Furthermore, the tangible or intangible resources that Lebanese women movement managed to successfully harness in order to abolish the article, will also be used as an analytical tool. The framework defines resources as *‘’assets acquired and used by the partnership to carry out its function’’.* Tangible resources can in the case of this study, for example be the eventual funding that the informant's organisations were given, and intangible resources can be expert or technical advice on strategies on how campaigns can be carried out to raise awareness of the ‘’problem’’ (c.f Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 336-362).

Conceptualising the frameworks last stage: ‘’The ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement’’

As previously mentioned, the frameworks last stage ‘’*the social movement declines or consolidates, as the movement fails and dissipates, or achieves its goal and sees its results institutionalized and sustained*’’ emphasises the different possible outcomes of a social movement. The definition emphasizes on the movements ability to reach its goals. As mentioned above under ‘’framing processes’’, the goals of different actors might be different. The abolishment of article 522 might not be the end stop for the advocacy of implementing gender equal rights. In turn, the actor's interpretations of experienced outcome with article 522's abolishment might also be different. As mentioned in this thesis delimitation it is not uncommon that different actors within and outside a movement interpret the result of their actions differently, which raises the factor of subjectivity when examining outcomes of social movements. While using the stage of ‘’The ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement’’ as an analytical concept I will therefor explore the informant's subjective experiences with outcome of abolishing article 522, which in turn might answer what the disinvolvement or continuation of the advocacy might look like (c.f Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 336-362;Špehar, 2007, pp. 60-62).

4.5 Previous literature

This section will present existing research related to the subject of this study. The review will be limited to the topic of women's movements advocacy work toward gender equality. I will first go through previous literature written internationally before reviewing previous literature written about the Lebanese context.

In her article *An Archive of the Women's Liberation Movement: A Document of Social and Legislative Change,* scholar Polly Russel writes about women's movement from a western historical perspective. In her article Russel explains the well-documented history recordings of the activist's experiences from the well-known suffragette campaigns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries inspired her to (in collaboration with others) record the voices of the activists from the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) of the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Russel argues, just like I do in my thesis, that women's movements activists experiences can increase our understanding of social change (Russel, 2015, pp. 31-34). Moving on from previous literature of women's movement in the western context, Aili Mari Tripps article *Women in Movement Transformations in African Political Landscapes* broadens our understanding of how the creation of autonomous organizations made it possible for women's organizations to ''challenge corruption, injustice and their roots in clientelist and patronage practices'' in different countries in Africa (Tripp, 2010, pp. 233-253).

In the Lebanese context the article *Negotiating Gender Justice between State, Religion, and NGOs: A Lebanese Case* written by Anne Hege Grung can serve as a source of information on how the sectarian political system in Lebanon often interferes with the implementation of legislative changes proposed by Lebanese women's movement. That the sectarian political leaders still have not agreed on implementing civil marriage or allowing women to pass on citizenship to their children are examples of sectarian but also cultural challenges for the women's movement which is also relevant to this thesis (Grung, 2018, pp. 1-2).

A further important aspect of Grung's article to keep in mind when it comes to the process of abolishing article 522, is that legislative changes proposed through the advocacy of Lebanese actors rarely result in the immediate desired outcome. Examples of postponed legislative change can be seen in the several rounds of decision making that it took for the Lebanese parliament to pass the law (article 293) in April 1st 2014, called "The Law on the protection

of women and other members of the family from domestic violence". After the parliament studied the proposed law 293, they omitted essential details, in particular, that marital rape was not considered a crime, and thereby not something a woman can be protected from in the new law (Grung, 2018, pp. 1-2).

In Rita Stephan's article *Women's Rights after the Cedar Revolution*, a mention of women's advocacy for the abolition of Article 522 is mentioned as she acknowledges the protest made in 2012 under the so-called ' ' Delete-522 Campaign " in which thousands of protesters took part (Stephan, 2018, p. 81).

4.6 Literature gaps

It is important to make use of the experiences and lessons of women's movement activists who strive for gender equal legislation on a daily basis to gain more insight into how to strive for gender equality. A 2016 survey conducted by the women's organization ABAAD showed that only one percent of the Lebanese population knew about Article 522 prior to their campaign, demonstrating the importance of producing more information on the issue (BBC, 2017). Women's movement's work in Lebanon to abolish Article 522 may serve as an empirical example to further enhance our understanding of Middle East legislative advocacy work. Several scholarly articles on women's movements around the world and in the context of Lebanon have been produced. I have not yet found, according to my research and knowledge, any English scholarly article focused entirely on understanding the experience of the Lebanese women's movement in advocating the abolition of Article 522. This may be due to its recent abolition (2017), which makes it possible for my thesis to contribute to this relevant gap.

5. Method

The research design, methodological and epistemological approach used throughout this thesis will first pass through this chapter. I will then motivate my sampling method followed by an explanation of how I put the theoretical and analytical framework into operation in the interview guide. I will then go through my method of analysis before finishing with the ethical considerations that have been taken into account for this thesis

5.1 Research design

In this thesis, the abolition of Article 522 was chosen as a case study to explore the question of the thesis; how can we understand the abolition process of Article 522 through the experience of the movements of Lebanese women? A case study is a good option for a ‘’how-research question’’ that would otherwise have been difficult to answer by other methods, such as survey or historical research design, according to Robert Yin. The informants would not have been able to elaborate on their experiences if I were to do a survey method. In turn, a historical research design would be limited as the abolition is a recent event (2017), hence the desire to use a case study research design (Yin, 2018, pp. 1-32).

Qualitative and inclusive methodology with a hermeneutical epistemological approach

This study employs a **qualitative approach** with concepts such as; *the problem, the emergence stage, framing processes, partnerships, opportunities, resources,* and *‘’the ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement’’* borrowed from social movement theories (Tremblay et al. framework). The concepts were chosen for the analytical framework used to interpret Lebanese women’s verbal narratives as a basis for a qualitative analysis. Laurel Weldon argues that a **methodology of inclusion** can be created through implementing a research design that is grounded in the marginalised voices of women. She further argues for the usefulness of an inclusive methodology; *‘’Viewing social relations from the position of the oppressed does not just add another set of experiences to existing accounts; it forces revision of the dominant accounts, since it reveals them as partial and limited’’* (Weldon, 2007, p. 65).

I follow Weldon in her argument for an inclusive methodology and have chosen to conduct interviews with women from Lebanese women's rights NGOs who have experienced gender inequality themselves and have worked with girls and women who are suffering the consequences of gender-discriminatory legislation in the Lebanese context. Choosing a

methodology that would capture the narratives of the informant felt important. Also, a conscious choice to achieve inclusion was the selected theoretical frameworks that stem from social movement theory and community-based participatory research. The framework describes its approach as *''a valuable way to empower people and groups, enhance their voice and power in society'',* which fits in well with inclusive methodology (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 334). In addition, this study has adopted a hermeneutical epistemological approach that allows each of the informants to give their own subjective interpretation and allows us to interpret their stories as readers. I have therefore chosen not to seek an absolute truth, but rather multiple angles of the process of advocating legislative changes and social change. The approach also emphasizes that a phenomenon is given meaning through our interpretation and since that is what this thesis attempts to achieve – to understand and interpret the experience of women's movement activists advocating gender equality legislation, hence the hermeneutical approach is appropriate (Cf. Gilje Harald Grimen & Andersson, 1993, pp. 175-186).

The hermeneutical epistemological approach also leads me to construct the interview guide with semi-structured open-ended questions that were inspired by Grant McCracken's four step method on how to design and execute qualitative interviews. McCracken's guide on how to construct open-ended questions, allows the informants to share information that might not have surfaced through a structured interview (McCracken, 1988, pp. 29-41). The interview guide was also designed after chosen theoretical and analytical framework, which I will come back to under: operationalising the theoretical framework into the interview guide.

Instead of using a structured interview, I chose to adopt a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions to my research design so as not to limit the responses of informants and instead allow them to freely share information that they feel is important when analysing the abolition processes of article 522. MacCracken's four-step method has been useful for this research in many ways, especially the guides emphasizing the need to familiarise and defamiliarize with the research topic before writing the interview questions. Since I am a woman of Lebanese origin, I had to distance myself from my own deeply embedded cultural assumption of advocacy in the context of Lebanon. (McCracken, 1988, pp 29-41). Making a conscious choice not to portray that all actors within the Lebanese women's movements think and act the same is an example of a realisation that came to me through the defamiliarisation step of McCrackens guide. However, it could be an advantage to be a woman of Lebanese

origin. Iver Neumann argues that the researcher can have cultural competence as an asset. Knowing the social codes and social settings of the informants can help break the cultural barrier between the researcher and the informant and make the informant more comfortable during the interview. (Neumann, 2008, p. 64)

5.2 Sampling method

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in person with seven representatives from the non-governmental associations ABAAD, KAFA, LEVORVAW and LCW in their offices in Beirut. I chose to focus on key informants that have been active advocates during the process of abolishing article 522 and during the aftermath of the repealed article. The organisations ABAAD, KAFA, LEVORVAW and LCW were chosen because they were key actors in the process. Because the organisations were founded during different times between the years 1952-2011, they could provide different experiences that they have accumulated over the years that relate to this study. Two of the interviews were made in a group of two, while the rest of them were done one on one in accordance with the informant's preference.

The interviews took between one to one and a half hour and were conducted during one week's fieldwork in Beirut, Lebanon. Three of the interviews were conducted in Arabic while two were done in English according to the language preference of the informants. Initial contact was first made with informants from ABAAD and KAFA, since they were the ones who caught my attention through their social media campaigns and posts. Through them, the snowball method was further employed to get in contact with other informants and organisation that they knew had been key actors in the process of abolishing article 522 and therefor important for this research (cf. Beauchemin & González-Ferrer, 2011, p 177).

Because of my Lebanese background and that Arabic is my mother tongue, I was able to communicate very well with the informants. I asked the informant to rephrase themselves, which was a very useful tactic, the few occasions when I couldn't understand a particular word or expression. After the interviews, I transcripted the audio recording and translated the material from Arabic to English. After anonymising the transcript, I had my mother double check that my translation was accurate.

5.3 Operationalising the theoretical framework into the interview guide

A semi-structured interview guide inspired by McCracken's guide on how to formulate open ended questions was used to integrate the theoretical framework into the interview guide. The theoretical frameworks four stages: the emergence stage, the formation of the movement's discourse, the movement's moment and the ending and the continuation of the movement inspired the following interview categories. In turn, the interview categories contained questions related to the analytical frameworks chosen to concepts; *the problem, framing processes, partnerships, opportunities, resources,* and *the ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement;*

1) **Warmup question - experiences of being an advocate of social change in terms of women's legal rights in a Lebanese context**

Example of a research question that was asked: *Can you walk me through your experiences of being an advocate of social change in terms of women's legal rights in a Lebanese context?*

2) **Emergence stage of the movement**

Example of a research question that was asked: *why did you consider article 522 a problem for response? What kind of support, partnership and collaborations did you have in the process?*

3) **Formation of identity and vision of the movement**

Example of a research question that was asked: *What values do you think were foundational to the partnership, the partnering organizations, and the community members you teamed up within the process?*

4) **Community and system changes after the abolishment**

Example of a research question that was asked: *What changes do you think have been achieved as a result of the work done in the process of the abolishment of article 522?*

5) **Remaining information that the informant would like to add**

Example of a research question that was asked: *What else you would like to add to this interview that you feel is important?*

5.4 Method of analysis

According to Alan Bryman, thematic analysis is one of the most common and flexible approaches to qualitative data analysis involving the use of themes (Bryman, 2012, p. 34). I found thematic analysis to be very useful for this thesis since it allows the flexibility to creatively present the relevant findings to the thesis question through identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. With inspiration from step by step guide for doing the thematic analysis I did the following (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 6-26).

1. Familiarisation with data – I re-read the data several times during and after transcription. Because I worked with translated material, it was important for me to familiarise myself with the content's deeper meaning so that the cultural subtleties in the process would not get lost. If you read the transcripts only once or twice without reflecting on their deeper meaning, you can easily overlook the deep cultural context, which is why this first step is so important.

2. Searching for themes and coding – Since I was using chosen concepts from the theoretical framework in my analytical framework, I used them to search for themes that was repeated by the informants throughout the interview which resulted in the following four themes. The analysed data merged into the first and second themes by using the experiences of the informant of the concept framing processes that include the emergence stage and the problem. The first theme was; **Motivation and experiences in advocacy for gender equality in the Lebanese context** and second; **The emergence and framing processes of the ‘’problem’’ – Article 522.** The third theme was: **The process of abolishing 522** which was created through using the informants’ experiences on how the concepts of *partnerships, opportunities, resources,* became relevant to the advocacy of abolishing article 522. The informant’s experiences of concept of *the ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement* formed the fourth theme: **The aftermath of abolishing article 522 – The ending or the beginning of the continuation?**

3. Reviewing and naming topics – Several times the final names of the topic presented above have been re-named. Separating the first and second themes from each other is an example of how two themes are separated to make the reading clearer, which would otherwise collapse into each other.

4. Writing up the findings – During this stage I extracted quotes that matched and explained the different themes while simultaneously linking the results to the theoretical perspective as well as the previous literature.

5.5 Ethical considerations

The Swedish Research Council's ethical guidelines have been used in this research. The informants signed participation forms where anonymity and the right to withdraw their consent to participate in this research at any point during the interviews, but also afterwards, were promised. I informed them of the subject and purpose of the study and that they were free not to answer any questions with which they were not comfortable. I asked for their consent to record their voices before the interview began. Moreover, informants were given a choice not to be linked to the name of their organisation for their testimonies, but the participants were all right with that. Even though they consented to link their anonymous quotes to their workplace, I chose to refrain from doing that in my results unless it was essential for the understanding of the quote. The reason for this was that I did not want this thesis to turn in to a comparative case study where the organisations efforts are being assessed and compared to each other, which in turn might spark discontent and unnecessary power struggle between the informants and the researcher but also between the organisations.

6. Results

This following chapter presents the results of the interviews while at the same time interweaving the findings with my analysis where the framework will be used as a starting point to begin to understand how we can understand the process of abolishing Article 522 through the experience of Lebanese women's movements. From the five different interviews, the seven different informants were anonymized using one of the following letters A, B, C, D, E, F or G.

6.1 Motivation and experiences in advocacy for gender equality in the Lebanese context

The emergence stage argues that the process of working towards social change, in the early stages, starts with the so-called ‘’framing processes’’ of the ‘’problem’’ which is explained as the discontent of something in the society which a set of actors tries to influence or change (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336-337). In the case of the abolition of Article 522, however, I felt it was essential to build more context on the women behind the process before shifting the focus to the experienced problem as it could increase our overall understanding of the social, political and historical context in which article 522’s ‘’problem’’ exists. As a result, questions were asked about what motivates informants in the Lebanese context to work for gender equality legislation to enhance our knowledge of the conditions of the Lebanese society under which these women operate. The following stories teach us what motivates the informants, how they through their different experiences, and by being women themselves, have realized that equality and rights in the Lebanese society are lacking for them. The informant’s had different experiences that led them to becoming advocates for social change. However, their motivation – Their strong belief in the idea that all people, regardless of one’s gender, should be treated equal and have the same rights and conditions in the society was a recurrent theme in each one of their stories. An example of this shared belief is present in informant A’s story:

> *‘’My personal experience, why I chose to work with this is because it is related to me on many levels. With time as I discovered the laws that exist in Lebanon, I also discovered that they discriminate against women when it comes to many things, for example, rape, marriage, children or other things’’* (Interview 1).

Another story comes from informant G who has been working for women’s rights in Lebanon for several decades. This was her revelation following the account of her early career:

> *''I was working in a cigarette factory and I noticed we women had no rights. So I started the first worker's union with focus on women's labour rights. We managed to implement the notion of no discrimination between the sexes within the working sphere. One example is that we made it illegal for an employer to fire a woman because she got pregnant''* (Interview 5).

In contrast to informant G who started as a worker in the factory, informant C had a different starting point in her career in advocacy. C worked in the corporate marketing sector where she had little knowledge of women's rights or why people are fighting for them. She explained how her motivation grew when she later moved on to her second job working with the media advocacy and communication department in an NGO dealing with gender-based violence issue:

> *''When you advocate for ending violence against women, when you advocate ending rape and sexual assault against women and girls it is not just working, it is something that becomes a part of your mentality deep inside, it becomes a part of the way you talk. Before I came here, I used to say a lot of stereotypical words that we are used to saying, but now I think before saying any word that might put any woman in the stereotypical situation. It is something connected to emotion, it is not just working to for example sell a laptop. When you are working for a materialistic cause it is completely different from when you are working for a human being. Working for the corporate latter is not as touching as when you are working for the rights of a girl because you are a girl and I am a girl. I understand her situation. I live in this society. I have been put in such situations like her and I been stereotyped upon''* (Interview 3).

Finally, all three informants share stories of how they realized that women's unjust conditions in the Lebanese society that motivates them to work for gender equality. In turn, all three stories tell us about the social, political, and historical context that can be seen, for example, in informants G's historical account of how their labour union was the first to influence the politicians to make it illegal for employers to fire women due to pregnancy In turn, informant C reveals the social conditions of sexual assault and stereotyping of women.

6.2 The emergence and framing of the ‘’problem’’ – article 522

By asking the informants of why and how they came to recognize article 522 as a ‘’problem’’, their stories revealed some of the framing processes that occurred. The theoretical framework explains framing processes as ‘’*interpretative processes involved in either elucidating a new representation of a taken-for-granted situation, labelling a problem and defining a way to resolve it (cause), or in mobilizing community members around this solution’’* (Tremblay et al., 2017 p. 336-337). It became clear that the informants had different ways to label the problem and the solution. The informants account of the emergence of the movement and the framing of the problem also revealed the historical, social and political context of the article.

The informants account of article 522’s historical, cultural and social context was that it was an old law that remained from the Ottoman rule in the Lebanese penal code (Osman, 2017). They explained that Article 522 had remained in existence all these years, for example, for different cultural and social reasons: to preserve the supposed honour of the girl who was raped. Another recurring reason was the patriarchal society in which practices such as forcing a girl to marry her rapist, for example, continue to exist, which respondent E explains further:

> *‘’We studied the effects article 522 had on women and girls in the society, we discovered that the article was very harmful to them. The law had been created after the patriarchal structures and mindsets in the society which lead the girl to get married to her rapist forcefully. When this happens, they are not thinking about her psychological health and well-being, or how she might react after they have crushed her soul. How can she live with a man who will continue to rape her every day every hour every second? And how do you as parents agree to marry your daughter to someone who has done this to her is going to continue to do it just because of how the society will talk about you? So that you can be satisfied with the fact that you supposedly preserved the honour of your family. These are questions I battle with inside of myself, and it made me explode. We just had to abolish this article’’* (Interview 2).

In the interview with informant B, the same practice of preserving the girls ‘’honour’’ after the rape, was once again mentioned:

> *''The society links rape to honour, so that makes it necessary for a girl to marry her rapist to preserve the honour of the family. Otherwise, the girls who are the victim's will not be able to remarry anyone else after having this rumour about them that they are no longer virgins''* (Interview 1).

Despite that all the informants agreed that article 522 was discriminating against women and therefore a problem, there was not a harmonized consensus on the discursive way the ''problem'' should be framed. While some of the informants expressed the problem of article 522 through linking it to crimes related to rape, others felt that the ''problem'' should have been formulated in a broader way. That the article 522 was infamously called ''the rape law'', which was mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, is an example of the discursive practises that not all the informants agree with. Here is an example of informant B experiences with the problem of linking article 522 only to rape:

> *''An organization choose to do a campaign regarding article 522 where the focus was only on rape. Because they were focusing on only rape while protesting outside of the parliament, people from inside of the parliament were not pushed to talk about other issues related to the marriage loophole of article 522 that goes beyond rape''* (interview 1).

That different actors working towards a cause (in this example to enhance women's legislative rights) have different views on how to frame ''the problem'' was something that I had in mind when analysing these interviews so as not to risk portraying all actors within the women's movement as identical in their thinking and reasoning. The informant's different ways of framing ''the problem'' help us understand the plurality of framing processes that can occur during legislative changes and social change processes.

Another discursive difference was the word the informants used to describe the ones who are affected by article 522, which was also captured in the following account from informant C:

> *''Some organisations call them victims, we don't say victims, we say, survivors. For us, a victim means she is dead. She is always a survivor, never a victim; she is always a survivor unless she was sadly killed''* (Interview 3).

In conclusion, the informants linked article 522's cultural, historical and societal problem with the old and patriarchal mentality of preserving the family, the girls, or the honour of women. By forcing the girl or woman to marry a person who has sexually assaulted her, the family of those who practice the loophole of marriage, believes that she and her family are not going to be badly talked about. Since girls who have been sexually assaulted are not supposed to be able to remarry anyone, many see the option of forced marriage as the best solution because of the rumours that will spread about them that they are no longer virgins. The stories also revealed contrasting framing processes. While some informants linked the marriage loophole of article 522 to rape other informants emphasized the importance of linking the marriage loophole to all sexual offenses where the loophole could be applied. There is also a difference in the discourse about what the girls and women affected by the marriage loophole should be called. Some referred to girls and women who, for instance, were forced to marry the person who raped them as ''victims'' while others stressed the importance of naming them ''survivors'' that would take away their victimhood.

6.3 The process of abolishing 522

When I asked the informants to take me back to time when they were advocating for the abolishment of article 522, several important partnerships, recourses and opportunities were mentioned as crucial. A recurrent theme was also the topic of challenges, which is something I found important to add, in order to understand the abolition process which will be discussed in this following section.

Under the chapter of conceptual explanation, this thesis takes on Sidney Tarrow's definition of what defines a women's movement. My take on the definition was that a women's movement is a network of organisations, groups or individuals linked in a variety of ways interacting with public actions inside or outside state institutions with the goal of promoting gender equality and the advancement of women's interest in different spheres of social life (Cf. Špehar, 2007, p. 46). When analysing the information from the informants, the definition became very relevant since it reflected the case of the Lebanese women's movement work to abolish article 522. Several networks of organisations, groups, political parties, individuals etc, interact with each other during a long period of time and aligned partnerships with the goal of changing articles in the penal code that did not promote gender equality

As mentioned earlier, the various actors did not always share the same view on how to frame these legislative changes, but they did contribute to the abolition of Article 522 in different ways. Just as informant E explains in this quote, different types of advocacy actions were carried out by the organizations that completed each other in different ways:

> *''Each NGO worked after their capacity. For example, maybe we worked more with awareness and workshops while other organizations were able to work more with media. The objective of our work was of course one. Because all of us are aware of the oppression and the great harm that is caused by these articles.''* (Interview 2).

In addition, the organisations, in addition to carrying out on their own advocacy work that complemented each other in the process, also mobilized through partnerships with each other. However, during the process, the intensity of partnerships and collective action varied greatly. Sometimes there have been sporadic efforts such as groups coming together to have panel discussions, community awareness sessions, and parliamentary discussions with MPs, while sometimes there have been more elaborated campaigns being carried out where some of the organisations I interviewed have collaborated.

Another recurring finding from the interviews that was not directly linked to the concepts of resources, opportunities and partnerships, but was described by the informants as important to highlight was the time it took to abolish article 522. During different periods, the various organizations began advocating for the abolition. While some had worked with 522-related legislative changes over a decade, others started a few years ago. This was elaborated by informant D:

> *''We were not the first organisation to start working on article 522. There were several women's organization tackling the issue for about 10 to 15 years before we even mention it. What I think was different with our process was planned to have a full-on campaign towards it, previously there had been sporadic efforts to abolish 522, somebody would make a statement about the issue in a conference or during a workshop''* (Interview 4).

Here, informant D exemplifies how the advocacy work, carried out by the Lebanese women's movement over the years varied, from sometimes arranging conferences, to carry out

campaigns. The process of abolishing can be compared to scholar Jessica Horn comment, mentioned in the Tremblay et al. Framework synthesis: *"As movements form they go through stages of growth and change, in some cases growing systematically in strength and impact over time and in others fluctuating in response to internal dynamics and external pressures."* (Horn, 2013, p.19;Tremblay et al., 2017, p.336-337).

In the case of article 522, the process was strengthened and weakened over time just as Horn describes; therefore, the process was not linear. An essential factor to explain why the process was not direct can be attributed to the many obstacles that arose that became evident to me during the interviews that I feel it is important to highlight in order to understand further that it can take a long time to achieve gender-equal legislative changes in the Lebanese context.. After hearing the stories of the informants, I realised that the theoretical and analytical framework did not capture the importance of paying attention to the ability of social movements to overcome threats and obstacles (c.f Jasper, 2004, p. 3). For this reason, I have chosen to present the challenges my informants have explained.

A significant obstacle for the women's movement in the Lebanese context was the delay of the formation of the government which is mentioned in these following interviews:

Informant G:

> *''Do not forget that we were nine months without the government. We were not able to do anything during that time. Before that, we did not have any president for a long time. All of this has led to the abolishment taking longer time'' (Interview 5).*

Informant F:

> *''It was not possible to get appointment with the MP's or with the ministers due to the delay of the formation of the Lebanese government. We were supposed to form many round tables and meetings with them, with each MP we tried to get an appointment with they would tell us we have to wait until the cabinet of the government is formed''* (Interview 2).

The reason to why the delay of the formation of the parliament became such a significant obstacle has to do with following quote mentioned by informant B: […] ''*no law can be*

changed without the help of politics […]'' (interview 1). Since the MP's of the parliament are the ones that the Lebanese women's movement have to convince to make legislative changes, arranging meetings with the MP's, sending them policy briefs and drafts, as well as making sure they were on their side when it comes down to them voting for a legislative change, was a fundamental strategy for the NGO's I interviewed.

Another threat to the process of repealing article 522 was the political system in Lebanon where sectarianism is intertwined with the politics which has several implications for the civil society that tries to advocate for gender equality legislation. As previously mentioned in the chapter of ''previous literature'', scholar Anne Hege Grung capture this phenomenon very well when she discusses scholar Sherifa Zuhur explanation: ''*The sectarian system in Lebanon poses particular challenges for feminist NGOs and for implementing CEDAW because religious tolerance is used as an excuse for not changing the policies''* (Grung, 2018, p. 180).

An example of sectarianisms interference with women's rights in the Lebanese context was when the Lebanese parliaments decided to re-embed article 522 inside of article 505 in the penal code that has to do with sexual relations with a minor. In practice this means that '*'if a legal marriage is contracted between the offender and the victim aged between 15-18, all prosecution shall stop''* (KAFA, 2017, p. x.x) which leads to what informant A underscored: '*'Child marriage has now been legalized, I cannot support this''* (interview 1). The reason why the re-embedded marriage loophole has to do with sectarianisms interfering with women's rights is that previously only laws related to marriage were dealt with through each sectarian personal law. But when the civil code now includes a passage allowing for child marriage, which was previously only present in some of the sectarian personal laws, it can be viewed as a backlash in terms of women's rights. Understanding the personal laws in Lebanon is far from easy. When the informants were asked about the question marks, the following explanation came from Informant G, who further elaborated on the implications of interference with the personal law:

> ''*In Lebanon, our problems are with personal law. We have fifteen personal laws. Personal laws are laws that talk about engagements, marriage, divorce, who has the right to the children after a divorce. These laws are called personal law. Every sectarian division of religion has its laws about these things. For*

> *example, the Sunnis have different laws than the Shiites as well as they have other laws than the Christian orthodox and the druse. Each Lebanese person, man or woman follows their personal law. All of them are unfavourable to the women and their children. We want to change it into civil law, but the religious leaders will not accept this, they do not want to step down from their patriarchal dynasty*'' (Interview 5).

Moreover, the conducted interviews also revealed that whilst there are on one hand sectarian resistance to changing gender discriminating laws, there are also *''people inside of the parliament who are aware of gender-based violence problems start to act to change these old laws in opposition to the politicians who don't want to change these laws for religious or sectarian reasons''* (informant B, Interview 1). Which relates back to the chosen concept of opportunity which was defined as ''*temporal contextual circumstances that have prompted the partnership's formation and development''* (c.f Tremblay et al., 2017, p. 336-362).

The willingness for some parliamentarians to work towards the abolishment of gender-based violence can be seen as one of the Lebanese women's movement most important external opportunity according to informant B's experience that was mentioned earlier; […] *no law can be changed without the help of politics* […]. An example of political leaders willing to collaborate with the women's movement can be found in the recurrent mentioning of the former MP Elie Keyrouz and his team which became a valuable partner according to the following informants:

Informant E:

> *''We gave MP Elie Keyrouz the draft to abolish 522. The parliament studied it, the committee of administration and justice also studied it, and they continue to do many sessions between 2016-2017, and they decided to eliminate the article''* (interview 2).

Informant C about Elie Keyrouz:

> *''He was so supportive and, he was like: ''I will not accept to keep this law''* […] *Every time we were inside, and he talked, we started cheering, which is very wrong, you cannot cheer in the parliament. But we were very thrilled to see how things were finally working out''* (interview 3).

In addition, the internet, social media, and television channels were important to informants resources. These were all mentioned by my informants as a crucial factor in abolishing Article 522. One example of this was how fast the ABAAD organization's campaign ‘’#Undress 522’’ spread on social media and on television news. The informant’s ability to harness the media as an intangible resource resulted in an increased awareness of the issue. The #Undress 522 campaigns had several elements to it, e.g. a website where there was a display of a ripped wedding dress, where people could sign a petition, whenever a part of the dress would disappear for the abolition, until there were enough signs that the dress had completely disappeared. Another example of how the internet became a resource in the process. The ripped wedding dress that symbolised the forced marriage following the rape and was also used on several other occasions, such as in a video and during protests in front of the parliament described by the following informants:

Informant C:

> *‘’The video with the girl being forcefully dressed in a wedding dress, with blood on her, was on tv, it was verbally on the radio, it was on social media, it was on thousands of websites, it went viral, people were going crazy because it makes you feel the pain that she is being put in. So, when we released the video and parallel to that what we were doing was to dress up girls with ripped dresses, I did the dresses. They were made out of bandage, the ones that you put if you break your hand. I wrapped that around them. We used to go to the parliament and have the girls stand in front of the parliament in silence, no words, only the huge banners saying; ‘’this is what you are doing to us’’. Meanwhile we were handing out information flyers, not the girls in the dresses, but the rest of us. We wanted them to stay in silence to symbolise that they had no voice because the society, in general, are not putting them in the state where they can speak up for themselves. People thought that they were survivors for real, people started hugging them’’* (Interview 3).

Informant G:

> *‘’We are a country with a small population of approximately five million people. We have 30 to 40 different channels. Information spreads fast to all of the people. We did not have difficulty spreading the awareness, the different things that were done for example the women dressing in white dresses outside of the*

parliament, their actions were spread for about a month across all of the TV channels in Lebanon. And everywhere you went to could see big signs with pictures of this these women doing this protest in the campaign'' (Interview 5).

Informant D:

''We were also reported on BBC newspapers and from Japan, China and from various countries that normally would not report on issues relating to Lebanon, so I think that was another opportunity that helped us in the process'' (Interview 4).

Internet, media and social media was also an internal resource for the organisation in their internal mobilization process. Informant G, the representative of LCW, a council consisting of 150 different women's organisations that was founded in 1952, told me how the mobile app WhatsApp was a revolutionary asset for them. She explained: *''Before WhatsApp was invented one woman from every organization came to Beirut to forward the information on what was going on in each part of the country, now we can communicate all of our news through our group chat''* (Interview 5).

Since LCW is one of the oldest actors in the Lebanese civil society that is still fighting for women's legislative rights, their informant was able to provide me with a historical perspective of the process of abolishing article 522. When I asked about external and internal opportunities that might have prompted the success of the abolishment, she answered something that the other informants did not mention. She highlighted the important of peace as an opportunity and something that should not be taken for granted in the unstable Lebanese context where the possibility of conflict is and has been present for a long time:

Informant G:

''Firstly, we as women have not stopped demanding our rights, this has resulted in our demands accumulating over time and because of that, the pressure on them has become too big. Second, women movements have become bigger and stronger than before. And the fact that it is no war in Lebanon now have made it easier for us to work. During times of the Civil War, we would not be able to achieve this. We would be sitting in our homes or the shelters. Today we can sit

peacefully in our homes and even go down to demonstrations and participate if we wish to'' (Interview 5).

The emergence stage which entails that a social movement ability to harness resources and opportunities in its early stages is vital for their progress, helps to answer the Lebanese women's movement process of abolishing 522. Also, in the case of the Lebanese women's movement, their ability to leverage funding and expert advice that was given to them by other organisations was essential in order for them to gain momentum. Informant F exemplifies this further:*''When it came to article 522, an opportunity was the possibility of working with the Westminster for democracy. They gave us funding even though it wasn't much, less than $5,000, it gave us the first push to start our campaign''*. Furthermore informant F said ''*The Westminster for Democracy advised us with strategies on how to abolish 522. They held many workshops for us in Lebanon and in London. In short, they supported us, not only financially, but also technically as they trained our staff on how to do workshops and how to raise awareness on the issue which was very important for us''* (interview 2).

Informant D whose organisation also got external funding was also able to harness their tangible resources strategically and create a campaign, as she further explains: *''The new approach we took to hire this agency who helped us max out on the exposure. We were reported on BBC newspapers from Japan from China and from various countries that normally would not report on issues relating to this. That was an important opportunity for us''* (Interview 4).

In summary, the abolition process of article 522 can be characterised by the ability of the Lebanese women's movements to navigate, persevere, and harness the various challenges, collaborations, and opportunities and resources that came through the various stages of the process, ultimately leading to the abolition of 522. One of the most important opportunities can be seen as the Lebanese parliamentarian Elie Keyrouz and his party's interest in partnering with women's rights organization by handing in their draft to the parliament. In addition, it also became vital to the process to harness the media, funding and technical advice as intangible and tangible resources. Through the informant's experiences, the concept of overcoming obstacles such as delaying government formation became an important recurring theme that should be taken into consideration when studying social movements.

6.4 The aftermath of abolishing article 522 - The ending or the beginning of the continuation?

After the Lebanese women's movement managed to repeal article 522, the informants from the different organisations expressed different opinions on how they interpret the aftermath and the overall process.

Due to previous mentioned re-embedded effects of article 522 in the other articles in the same chapter of sexual offences in the penal code, all of the informants explained that they have to keep working on legislative changes. When I asked them whether or not they were happy with the result, this study elicited different interpretations of the work that had been done, which due to the factor of subjectivity, is not uncommon when examining the outcomes of social movements (cf. Špehar, 2007, pp. 60-62). Here are some of the different perspectives:

Informant G:

> *''We are not satisfied because if we are satisfied, we will stop here we will continue until we are fully satisfied. Every time we have done something we are going to continue with new stuff until we get the full justice and equality* (Interview 5).

Informant: C:

> *''Of course, we were very happy, however, we are not done yet, so we were celebrating one day and the next day we were advocating for something else. Now we are working on amending the entire chapter in the penal code''* (Interview 3).

Informant B*:*

> *''We were not satisfied with the results, so we continued to hand in our suggestions to the parliamentarians to amend the changes that they made in article 505 and 518 (re-embedding the effects of article 522)''* (Interview 1).

Informant E:

> *''We feel that it has resulted in a little bit more cautiousness, people are more afraid to commit these crimes because there are legal consequences, it does not mean the mentality changed altogether. The mentality of the people still needs to*

> *be worked with, especially when it comes to the parents because it is the they who agreed to force these girls to marry their rapist in the first place''* (interview 2).

In the statements as mentioned above, it is clear that the informants feel that there is still work to be done when it comes to legislative changes and bringing awareness to communities where gender-discriminating practices still occur. Here it becomes clear that the last stage of the theoretical frameworks; ''the end or the continuation of the movement'' points to a continuation of the amendment of the penal code. Throughout the interviews, when the informants talked about previous legislative changes that had been made, it became clear that it is not uncommon to take several tries before the desired legal results are achieved in the Lebanese context.

One example of the aforementioned is the several rounds that it took to pass on the "Law on the protection of women and other members of the family from domestic violence," also known as the ''Protection Law'' or Law 293, mentioned in this thesis (previous literature, section 4.5).

After the many advocacy rounds when the law of 293 was finally passed, marital rape was not yet considered a crime (Grung, 2018, pp. 1-2). Another example that informant G gave me of the several advocacy rounds needed was the case with the previously existing ''honour law'' that allowed a man to kill his wife, sister or daughter if she does anything to disgrace his honour. A punishment was enforced in the law, but it wasn't high enough because under specific circumstances it could still free the man, but then we worked on it again and implemented a supreme law against honour killings' (Interview 5). That advocacy takes several tries to reach the desired outcome also connects back to the Scholar Jessica Horns comment on the last stage ''the ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement''. She argued that social movement processes are rarely linear, but rather cyclical, which fits in well with how advocacy in the Lebanese context work (Horn, 2013, p. 19; Tremblay et al., 2017, p.336-337).

In addition to the informants expressing devotion to continuing to amend the Lebanese Penal Code, there were some other thoughts with the resulting abolition of article 522. Here are some of the answers to these questions:

Informant D:

> *''In my observation, not based on any evidence I think because of changing this article women's rights issues became on political agenda. So, when we saw that the election that happened right after, some of the people running for election, started discussing their agendas around women's rights, this has not been the case in Lebanese politics until now. I think it has to do a lot with the achievement of the abolishment of article 522 putting women's rights on the public discourse.''* (Interview 4).

Informant C:

> *When we abolished the article, several countries contacted us such as Tunis, Jordan (if I am not mistaken) and asked if they can use our campaign to remove the same article in their countries* (Interview 3).

Informant E:

> *Yesterday we were at the meeting with members from different Middle Eastern regions, and we talked about our experiences with the advocating to repeal article 522, they said they are taking our strategies to use it in their countries* (Interview 2).

In summary, according to the informants the abolishment of article was not the end, but rather the continuation of amending remaining gender unequal legislation. The re-embedded marriage loophole into other articles in the penal code, makes it essential for the advocacy to carry on. Whether it is the growing awareness in society of harmful practices such as forced marriage after rape, the spreading of advocacy strategies between women's movement in the Middle East, or women's rights issues that have landed on the political agenda, my interviews indicated that the abolition of article 522 has resulted in results that could a ripple on the water effect. However, these potential outcomes were interpreted differently depending on the informant and the organization that she represented.

7. Conclusion

Conducting and analysing interviews with informants from the Lebanese women's movement's NGO:s; ABAAD, KAFA, LECORVAW and LCW helped to further understanding the process of abolishing article 522, which was this thesis main research question that was answered through the following three sub questions.

When it came to the first sub-questions of; *how did the women's movement in Lebanon experience ''the framing process'' in relation to the abolition of article 522?* the experiences of the informant showed the following;

Their experience with gender discrimination as well as their belief that all people should have the same rights and conditions in society regardless of one's gender, led them to become women's rights activists. The informants explained that the marriage loophole of article 522, which originates from the Ottoman era, remained due to traditional and patriarchal beliefs that it is better for a woman to marry the rapist than to disgrace her and her family as a result of the supposed ''loss of one's virginity before marriage''. The informants framed article 522's ''problem'' differently although they all agreed with its harmful physical and psychological effect on women who were forced to marry the man who sexually assaulted them. While some informants linked the marriage loophole issue to rape, others stressed the importance of linking the issue to all sexual crimes in the same chapter of the penal code applied to by the marriage loophole. Calling a girl who was forced to marry a man who sexually assaulted her, a survivor or victim, was another interpretive framework that differed among the informants.

When it came to the second sub question; *how has the Lebanese women's movement interpreted the use of ''partnerships'', ''opportunities'' and '' resources'' to abolish article 522?* the result showed several examples. One example is the opportunity to partner with MPs who were interested in gender equality issues, such as MP Elie Keyrouz who finally handed in the draft. Other examples are the partnerships that the various NGOs had with each other that resulted in panel discussions, campaigns and meetings. Some other examples are the importance of harnessing funding as a tangible resource received by various organisations as well as using the internet and media as a resource to gain national and international publicity and raise awareness of the harmful effects of article 522.

By answering the second sub question gap in the framework's applicability for this thesis case study became evident – the insufficient emphasis on how obstacles had affected the process. Through analysing a social movement encounters with threats, for instance; the delay of the Lebanese government and the sectarian interference with implementing gender equal legislation, one can expand one's knowledge on how social movement manages to overcome obstacles in order to bring about legislative or social change.

New insights were also made through the last sub question: *how did the Lebanese women's movement interpret the aftermath of the abolishment? – ''The ending or beginning of the continuation of the movement?''.* The informants agreed that the abolition was not the end, but the continuation of the revision of the remaining effects of article 522, which was re-integrated into article 505 and 518. The insight that gender equality law advocacy in the Lebanese context is cyclear and not linear, as it takes several attempts to modify articles, was also made through the stories of the informants. For example, obstacles faced by the Lebanese women's movement; the delay of the Lebanese government and the sectarian interference with the implementation of gender equality legislation may further explain the delays in the implementation of gender equality legislation.

Moreover, after the abolition, the informants experienced that although the end was not met, their advocacy inspired other movements in the Middle East region to advocate for the abolition of similar laws. Another example is increasing awareness in society of harmful practices such as forced marriage after rape on girls and women, as well as women's rights issues that land on the political agenda.

Finally, by shedding light on the experiences of the women's movement with the abolition of article 522 as a way of understanding how social change takes place in the Lebanese context, I hope that this will inspire more researchers to study how social movements manage to challenge discriminatory and inhuman laws that violate human rights in a global context. In addition, I hope this study helps to reaffirm the importance of the theory of social movement in our globalized world where global challenges such as gender inequality, environmental issues, and multinational corporate misconduct are becoming more apparent to us.

7.1 Future research

There are many aspects of this study, such as the development of a new framework for social movement, that can provide relevant topics for future research. In contrast to the Tremblay et al. framework synthesis designed to provide insight into social change achieved through community-based participatory research, a new and broader framework with mixed social movement theories could be developed to understand how social movements generally achieve social change.

Due to this thesis focus to study the recent abolishment of article 522 which occurred in 2017, the limitation of time consequently hindered a study to be made on the measurable outcomes. The aforementioned ‘’Law on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence’’, article (293), which was passed on April 1, 2014, would be an interesting case study that could explore whether or not the protection law resulted in increased safety for women and families abused by husbands or other members of the family.

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