



HPG Working Paper

# Gender in displacement

## The state of play

Kerrie Holloway, Maria Stavropoulou  
and Megan Daigle

December 2019

**HPG**

Humanitarian  
Policy Group



## About the authors

Kerrie Holloway is a Research Officer with the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at ODI.

Maria Stavropoulou is a Senior Research Officer with the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Programme (GESI) at ODI.

Megan Daigle is a Senior Research Fellow with HPG.

## Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Simon Levine, Wendy Fenton and three peer reviewers for their careful reading of early drafts of this review. We also thank Katie Forsythe, Matthew Foley and Hannah Bass for editing and production, and Catherine Langdon, Sarah Cahoon and Isadora Brizolara for facilitating the project as a whole.

Readers are encouraged to reproduce material for their own publications, as long as they are not being sold commercially. ODI requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication. For online use, we ask readers to link to the original resource on the ODI website. The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI or our partners.

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

---

# Contents

---

	<b>List of boxes, tables and figures</b>	5
	<b>Acronyms</b>	6
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	7
	1.1 Methodology	8
	1.2 Outline	8
<b>2</b>	<b>Evolution and revolution: gender roles in displacement</b>	9
	2.1 Livelihoods and gendered divisions of labour	9
	2.2 Household and family dynamics	13
	2.3 Participation in community structures	15
	2.4 Education	15
	2.5 Gendered experiences of violence	16
	2.6 Coming home: gendered experiences of return	19
	2.7 Diverse experiences of vulnerability	21
<b>3</b>	<b>Gender and the international humanitarian system</b>	22
	3.1 Early efforts by UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations	23
	3.2 The Beijing Conference and gender mainstreaming	24
	3.3 Gender and the current humanitarian system	26
<b>4</b>	<b>Humanitarian action's impact on gender roles</b>	29
	4.1 Targeting gender	29
	4.2 Unintended consequences	30

---

<b>5</b>	<b>Challenges and gaps</b>	31
5.1	Gender-disaggregated data	31
5.2	Funding and donor-driven programming	31
5.3	Including men	31
5.4	Moving beyond the binary	32
5.5	The ethics of challenging diverse norms	32

---

<b>6</b>	<b>The road ahead</b>	33
----------	-----------------------	----

---

	<b>References</b>	34
--	-------------------	----

---

# List of boxes, tables and figures

---

## **Boxes**

Box 1: What is gender?	8
Box 2: Women-headed households	10

---

## **Tables**

Table 1: Key dates in gender and humanitarianism	22
--	----

---

## **Figures**

Figure 1: A spectrum of approaches to gender	25
--	----

---

# Acronyms

<b>ACF</b>	Action against Hunger
<b>AGDM</b>	Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CRSV</b>	conflict-related sexual violence
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>FGC</b>	female genital cutting
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>IPV</b>	intimate partner violence
<b>LGBT</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
<b>LGBTI</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
<b>POP</b>	people-oriented planning
<b>SADD</b>	sex and age disaggregated data
<b>SEA</b>	sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>SGBV</b>	sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SOGIESC</b>	sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UN Women</b>	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

---

# 1 Introduction

Over the course of the last half-century, it has been firmly established that *gender matters* in governance, peace and security, development and humanitarian action. From the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, the launch of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and the ongoing Women, Peace and Security agenda at the United Nations (UN) Security Council on one hand, to mounting outrage at conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) as well as sexual abuse scandals in the age of #MeToo, we have seen decades of commitments and calls to action.

The ostensible aims of humanitarian action – relieving suffering and supporting human dignity in the midst of crises of all kinds – require an inclusive response in keeping with the principles of humanity, neutrality and universality, informed by rights-based and needs-based approaches. Accomplishing this requires a thorough analysis of the gendered power dynamics, norms and roles that shape how and why people of all genders experience violence and exclusion in crises. Yet research shows that humanitarian policy and practice has taken gender to mean women, who are then understood as uniformly vulnerable and even problematically grouped with children. Indeed, as Freedman (2010) and Pittaway and Bartolomei (2018) have pointed out, the dominant representation of women as helpless, infantilised victims is a global trope that undercuts women’s agency and does little to address their real concerns in crises.

Gender (see Box 1) is one of the many intersectional<sup>1</sup> social and cultural identities that define a person’s lived experience and their proximity to power, alongside racialisation, ethnic identity, sexuality, socioeconomic class, disability, language, religion, caste, citizenship or nationality, among others. For refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), ‘gender affects every stage of the refugee journey, from reception to durable solutions’ (Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2018: 2). Yet, as so often is the case, gender programming is not seen as critical in the same way as other life-saving aid, even though it has long been known that situations of upheaval exaggerate gendered inequalities and can cause gender relations to shift rapidly.

This working paper interweaves two streams of thought: how gender roles change in the course of crises, particularly displacement, and how gender has been integrated (or not) into humanitarian programming. Despite the plethora of policies that have been written and conferences convened over the past four decades – refugee women were first mentioned at the 1980 UN Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen – the humanitarian sector has not yet figured out how to integrate gender in a systematic or effective way, nor has it taken on board the evidence regarding how gender roles change in displacement that has been produced, spanning anthropology, international relations, development and gender studies. Moreover, the sector itself faces growing criticism for its paternalism, a charge with distinctly gendered implications (Barnett, 2016).

---

1 ‘Intersectionality’ denotes the interdependence among social categorisations such as racialisation, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age and socioeconomic class, which create interconnected and unique formations of prejudice, exclusion and even violence.

## Box 1: What is gender?

*Gender* refers to the socially constructed roles, characteristics, expectations and behaviours assigned to men and women respectively. Conversely, ‘sex’ denotes the physiological and chromosomal differences that characterise the distinction between male and female in biological terms. One’s gender identity may or may not match the sex assigned at birth or correspond to binary categories of man/male and woman/female, which limit our ability to account for diversity in gender identities and expressions. Across cultures and societies, gendered inequalities are characterised by differing access to and control over resources; denial of autonomy and decision-making power; exclusion from education, employment and other elements of public life; and the imposition or enforcement of traditional gender roles and expressions through stigmatisation, exclusion or violence. Gender is also *intersectional*, meaning that it cannot be properly understood in isolation, as it interacts (or intersects) with other systems of oppression to produce unique rather than cumulative forms of disadvantage.

## 1.1 Methodology

This paper lays out the history of debate, policy and practice over the past 40 years, alongside research from other disciplines on how gender roles change in humanitarian crises. It draws on a comprehensive review of available literature on gender in displacement, covering research from academia, UN bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), think tanks and governments. The paper provides a foundation for HPG’s two-year project entitled ‘How gender roles change in displacement’, which analyses the impact of both displacement and humanitarian action on gendered norms, roles and power relations, drawing out their implications for the future of humanitarian action.

## 1.2 Outline

The paper is divided into six chapters. It begins by exploring existing knowledge on the impact of displacement on gender roles, norms and power dynamics, covering livelihoods, household and family relationships, community participation, education and violence, as well as the experiences of returnees. The paper then details the international humanitarian system’s efforts to incorporate gender into its policy and practice, before investigating the deliberate and inadvertent effects of humanitarian action on gender roles among populations in crisis. Finally, it examines the challenges emerging from the existing literature, before concluding with a critical assessment of the state of play for the humanitarian sector’s commitment to gender justice.



---

## 2 Evolution and revolution: gender roles in displacement

In recent years, researchers and practitioners have paid increasing attention to gender in crises. Attention has focused on how individuals are involved in and affected by conflict in different ways – often because of the different gendered roles, capacities and vulnerabilities that each society ascribes to them, and the power relations that result (Thompson, 2006). Rejecting gender essentialism,<sup>2</sup> there is also growing recognition of particular experiences of conflict and displacement among sexual and gender minorities who do not conform to either the heteronormative<sup>3</sup> or the binary standard (Myrntinen and Daigle, 2017).

Conflict and displacement generate traumatic, intense and difficult experiences that are themselves shaped by gender. But they also create conditions for socioeconomic and cultural transformation, and reconfigurations of power relations, including along axes of gender. The breakdown of traditional structures, and the disruption of the norms and practices that inform them, open up spaces and opportunities for rapid change. Those previously marginalised, such as women and non-binary people, may take on new roles and gain autonomy and authority, accelerating the transformation of gender relations and promoting equality (El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005; Petesch, 2012).

Drawing on secondary sources, this part of the review synthesises key evidence documenting shifts in everyday gendered roles, responsibilities

and practices as individuals and families adjust to life in displacement. Despite claiming to adopt a gender lens, most analysis focuses primarily on women, with less attention paid to masculinities and diverse gender identities, and on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), to the detriment of a wider consideration of women's livelihoods and agency. Women are either equated with vulnerability and victimhood, or portrayed as capable of remarkable resilience and agency, leaving little room for complexity or the multiple factors that condition their lives. Knowledge of the intersection of gender with age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability is also limited.

### 2.1 Livelihoods and gendered divisions of labour

The most significant change as a result of conflict and displacement recorded across all regions is the shift in the gendered division of labour: violence, flight and disruption provide spaces and opportunities for the reversal of conventional economic roles, with women taking on increased economic responsibilities and often becoming the primary earners, while men may find themselves unable to fulfil their most fundamental gendered role as provider.

---

2 Gender essentialism is the attribution of a supposedly innate set of shared qualities to people according to their gender, whether biological, psychological or social. It reinforces the notion of binary gender, presenting men and women as necessarily complementary or oppositional, and has been critiqued by feminists who posit gender as socially constructed (Marecek et al., 2004), performative (Butler, 1990) or relational (Myrntinen et al., 2014).

3 'Heteronormativity' refers to the beliefs, practices, attitudes and behaviours by which certain forms and expressions of heterosexuality are positioned as the only conceivable or 'normal' model for families, gender roles and relationships.

### 2.1.1 Women and work

Women's increased economic participation has been associated with demographic changes: as men are killed, injured or away fighting, women step in and take on their roles (see Box 2). An analysis of quantitative data from six countries confirms that conflict pushes women to increase their labour market participation through its impact on household composition (Justino et al., 2012).

Studies from various settings emphasise that, out of economic necessity, women search for and proactively engage in any acceptable livelihood opportunity in order to cover basic family needs in displacement (Buck et al., 2000; Franz, 2003; El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005; Sczapanikova, 2005; Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018). Women may also become the principal family earners even when their husband or other male family member also works:

Women need to work for their children: they carry everything on their shoulders (Syrian refugee woman, Lebanon, quoted in El-Masri et al., 2013: 14).

It is like women have taken the responsibility of men, becoming the breadwinners [and] getting out of the hut (Refugee woman, Kenya, quoted in Erikson and Rastogli, 2015: 3).

Most Somali refugee women in urban Kenya run market stalls, engage in door-to-door trading or sell tea (Ritchie, 2018); their economic participation increased during the conflict, with 70%–80% of families dependent on women's income (El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005). In Georgia in the late 1990s, displaced women with professional backgrounds took up trading and farming, becoming the main earners in 70% of families (Buck et al., 2000). In Colombia, rural women fled to urban areas, where many became domestic workers (Meertens, 2004). Syrian refugee women in urban Jordan engaged in home-based paid work or became shop assistants, factory workers or agricultural labourers (Ritchie, 2018). In Yemen, women have started working as butchers, barbers or poultry sellers – work that used to be considered shameful (Gressman, 2016).

Many women who work and contribute to their household speak with pride about their economic role and describe a sense of empowerment in terms of greater self-confidence, increased autonomy and enhanced voice in the household and community (Cardoso et al., 2016; Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018; Ritchie, 2018; Levine et al., 2019):

Once we came to Lebanon, Syrian women realized that women could be more active in society. We started to look and see clearly, how things are versus how they should be. Now,

## Box 2: Women-headed households

Although the economic and social vulnerability of women-headed households is often taken for granted, evidence indicates that there are different types of women-headed households, and that efforts to define 'households' and 'headship' confront significant conceptual problems. The very notion of headship has been criticised as a Western heteropatriarchal construction that reduces households solely to economic units and does not reflect diverse family structures across different cultural and social contexts (Momsen, 2002; Kibreab, 2003). Thus, a woman-headed household is typically defined as at least one adult woman, usually with children, residing without a male partner – but this erases the diversity of lone mothers, divorcees and separated spouses, widows, women in same-sex partnerships and households whose male heads are temporarily absent, often in search of work or engaged in military service. Households may also split, or a man (husband, male relative or son) may be regarded as the head even when he is not the main provider. Households headed by men may also actually fare worse in some cases (Kibreab, 2003). For example, data on Syrian refugees in Jordan shows that female principal applicant households were not more likely to be poor than male applicant ones, but poverty rates were higher for sibling households, unaccompanied children and single caregivers (Hanmer et al., 2018).

Syrian women have realized that they can make important decisions, they can work, be financially independent. After the Syria crisis, women felt the need to quit their comfort zones, take a step forward, and become active members of society, not relying on anyone for help (Syrian refugee woman, Lebanon, quoted in IPSOS Group SA, 2018: 18).

Not all displaced women are able to work, regardless of need; the low pre-displacement social status of widows and divorced women can create barriers to work, and women generally may face stigma and harassment in public for appearing to challenge norms about female dependence on men (Fraser and Nwadinobi, 2018; Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018). Iraqi women spoke about the heightened uncertainty of living in unfamiliar host communities, which led male family members to forbid them from working outside the home and monitor women's movements:

My husband doesn't allow me to work at NGOs. In addition to having childcare responsibilities, it is our tradition that I can't work. On our land, because it's ours, I could go to the farm and come back but here it is unknown so we don't like it (IDP woman, Iraq, quoted in Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018: 17; see also Dietrich and Carter, 2017).

Displaced women often phrase their economic achievements in terms of their roles as mothers – that is, economic necessity and hardship overrides normative expectations or inclinations to stay at home and compels them to accept paid work to take care of their families (Szczepanikova, 2005; Jansen, 2008). This privileges family survival and economic well-being over women's own economic empowerment or status by emphasising traditional family values and their roles as mothers, sisters or daughters (Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018; Franz, 2003). Some describe the blurring of gendered responsibilities as a loss of womanhood, exposing women to high levels of stress and exhaustion, and express a

wish for their husbands to resume their provider role (El-Masri et al., 2013; Gardner and El-Bushra, 2016).

## 2.1.2 Masculinities and the disempowerment of men

Men sometimes also conceptualise women's livelihood activities as an extension of their caregiving roles (Petesch, 2012), perhaps in an effort to reconcile women's economic activities with the loss of their position as breadwinners. Refugee men may experience severe identity crises as experiences such as flight, failure to protect their loved ones, trauma, encampment, destitution and loss of social status disempower them. Many find themselves unable to compete in a wage economy, face restricted opportunities for employment that is sufficient or acceptable to them and may be confined to their home to avoid conscription or arrest (Barbelet and Wake, 2017).

Faced with these challenges, men can find it very difficult to adjust to their new lives in displacement. Middle-aged, educated Bosnian refugee men tended to 'stubbornly cling' to their previous lives, where they had enjoyed wealth, status and recognition (Jansen, 2008: 195). They felt out of place in exile, trapped 'in a limbo' and refusing to compromise by accepting low-status jobs (Franz, 2003; Jansen, 2008). Similarly, Somali refugee men in Kenya noted that women could accept all manner of jobs, but men would bring shame to the wider group by doing the same:

If you have education, you cannot go cooking pancakes in the street. Can you cook sambusa? I have been a Director General, how can I? A woman and a mother can do anything (because they do not embody the honour of the clan) – there is nothing she can feel ashamed of – her children are waiting (for food). That's why the women do these kind of jobs now. It's never been a man's role (Somali refugee man, Kenya, quoted in Gardner and El-Bushra, 2016: 6).

Somali men resettled in the West spoke of humiliation at their dependence on social benefits, which challenges the masculine ideal

of self-reliance (Kleist, 2010). Similarly, Syrian refugee men in Lebanon stressed their inability to find a regular source of income, but were too ashamed to visit aid agencies:

I don't feel that I am a real man after what has happened to me now, and to be honest, I can't handle it anymore (Syrian refugee man, Lebanon, quoted in El-Masri et al., 2013: 14).

I am not able to feed my kids and wife: I always think about my failed role as father and husband (Displaced Congolese man, DRC, quoted in Slegh et al., 2014: 44).

Prolonged displacement can create a culture of idleness and negative survival strategies, such as harmful alcohol use and violence against partners to deal with frustration, anger or boredom (Lehrer, 2009). It can also contribute to mental health problems and even suicide, as reported in Northern Uganda (Dolan, 2002; Kizza et al., 2012a). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), three-quarters of conflict-affected men, including IDPs, reported frequent stress or depression, and 44% reported drinking when they are unable to find work (Slegh et al., 2014). Men have also been known to abandon their partners or stop contributing to the household income altogether (El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005; Horn et al., 2014; Hynes et al., 2016).

### 2.1.3 Sex work and transactional relationships

Faced with destitution, displaced people – particularly youth – may engage in transactional sexual relationships, from survival sex to formal sex work, in exchange for money, goods, protection or other kinds of remuneration (De Vriese, 2006; Formson and Hilhorst, 2016). Terminology varies across cultural settings, and meaningful distinctions can be difficult to draw, given that transactional relationships exist on a spectrum encompassing a range of conditions with regard to consent, power, emotional attachment, economic compensation and social acceptability (Formson and Hilhorst, 2016).

Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East (Okello and Hovil, 2007; Hampshire et al., 2008; Patel et al., 2012; Bilgili

et al., 2017; Blackwell et al., 2019) shows that women and girls engage in transactional sex to achieve basic economic or physical security for themselves and their families. Despite the risks, this coping strategy can be perceived as a pragmatic response to extreme circumstances (Anderson, 2009). In times of crisis, sex for food or other advantage, or with powerful figures such as security personnel or officials, becomes a form of bargaining power (Bouta et al., 2005):

You had your family, and they did not have any food. If you did not have a relationship with a commando, how would your family survive? ... If you didn't love a commando, they would not get food (Girl, Liberia, quoted in Utas, 2005: 416).

Now the 16-year-old girls are supporting their parents, and the parents don't ask them where they get the money, because they need it. It was different before the war (Liberian refugee woman, Ghana, quoted in Hampshire et al., 2008: 30).

Engaging in transactional sex is not limited to women and girls – indeed, conflict and hardship have led to serial marriages among Somali men, with some marrying women who are influential within their clan or from the diaspora, who could provide them with financial security and enhance their social status (Gardner and El-Bushra, 2016). High rates of sex work have also been reported among people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in urban displacement settings; in Beirut, for example, 95% of refugee trans women interviewed in one study reported being sex workers (WRC, 2016). While commercial sex can provide income, it can also deepen social exclusion, increase exposure to HIV/AIDS and other health concerns and increase the risk of arrest and prosecution, especially where same-sex sexual practices and sex work are criminalised (Nyanzi, 2013; Rumbach and Knight, 2014). Displaced people's engagement in transactional sex always exists against a backdrop of prejudice and violence against those participating in commercial sex, regardless of their gender.

## 2.2 Household and family dynamics

While displacement changes household power dynamics and family relationships, most of the available evidence focuses on the heteronormative, nuclear family and the relations between husband and wife, neglecting non-normative family units, same-sex partnerships and hierarchies among generations and genders (Lokot, 2018a; 2018b).<sup>4</sup>

### 2.2.1 Unpaid domestic and care work

Despite increased economic responsibilities, women are frequently still expected to fulfil the majority of domestic and care obligations, a double burden that leaves them with little time to rest. Displaced Angolan mothers trading for long hours in the market, for example, lamented not having the time and energy to take proper care of their children (Nzatuzola, 2005). Women perceived to be unable to fulfil their caregiving role can be stigmatised or punished by their relatives or the wider community, as reported in Iraq (Dietrich and Carter, 2017). If infrastructure and amenities are worse in displacement than previously, then the time required to collect firewood or water, cook meals and care for children and sick or injured family members only increases, as noted in Iraq and Yemen (Gressman, 2016; Dietrich and Carter, 2017). In extreme cases, women struggling alone to cope with such responsibilities take their own lives:

He [her husband] gave her no care, no support at all in the work whether it's a man's work or a woman's work she was the one to do all that. And this used to over burden my sister (IDP woman, Northern Uganda, quoted in Kizza et al., 2012b).

Such burdens are intergenerational: older South Sudanese women displaced internally and in Ethiopia and Uganda reported a significant

increase in their care work (Barbelet, 2018), while adolescent girls from Mozambique displaced in Malawi in the 1990s were involved in household work from early childhood at the expense of their education (Ager et al., 1995). Nearly 20 years later, Somali girls in Kenya whose mothers are the main providers are more likely to drop out of school to help than their male counterparts (Gardner and El-Bushra, 2016).

When displaced men remain at home, they often refrain from doing 'women's work' to avoid social ridicule and humiliation:

While some men help their wives in the housework, my husband does not help me, because he is afraid of gossip, because in our community it is not accepted for a husband to help his wife (IDP woman, Iraq, quoted in Dietrich and Carter, 2017: 19).

In other instances, however, men have shared household tasks, in the process coming to realise the scale and importance of domestic and care work. In Yemen, men's involvement in domestic chores and women's increased economic participation helped them understand and appreciate each other's contributions and develop a sense of their mutual reliance (Gressman, 2016). Some have even redefined their roles and developed more gender-equitable attitudes (Matsuoka and Sorenson, 1999; Marlowe, 2011):

Back home, men don't even know where the kitchen is. Here I cook and I look after the kids. Marriage is teamwork; I think that's the best. You have to be open-minded ... Some people may criticize me because as a husband I have become too Western. But later those same people may say it was a better way, [that] I was right (Eritrean refugee man, Canada, quoted in Matsuoka and Sorenson, 1999: 229).

<sup>4</sup> People with diverse SOGIESC may also hide their relationships and identities to avoid discrimination, harassment or violence from other displaced people or host communities, as reported by Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Myrntinen and Daigle, 2017).

### 2.2.2 Intimate relations

Most available evidence focuses on the negative impact of life in exile on intimate relationships, leading to heightened tensions, alienation, violence, separation or abandonment; women speak of emasculated men whose frustration and anger turn them against their wives and children, and men emphasise feeling disempowered and threatened by their economic dependence on others, including women (El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005; Horn et al., 2014; Dietrich and Carter, 2017; Lokot, 2018a). Very few studies explore changes in relationships across generations, beyond the husband–wife lens or among non-heteronormative families or couples (Hampshire et al., 2008; DeJong et al., 2017; Lokot, 2018a; 2018b).

A few studies emphasise the potential for displacement to bring couples together, inspire understanding of gender-based challenges and enable more respectful and mutually supportive relations (Szczepanikova, 2005; Gardner and El-Bushra, 2016; Dietrich and Carter, 2017; Levine et al., 2019). Some men express their appreciation of women’s achievements and dedication to the family, while women recognise men’s difficult position, showing empathy and support (Matsuoka and Sorenson, 1999; Kleist, 2010). In the Middle East and South Asia, physical separation from the extended family, and especially the mother-in-law, who controls both her sons and their wives in all matters related to the household, has given couples greater autonomy and intimacy and improved communication (Dietrich and Carter, 2017; Lokot, 2018a; 2018b; Levine et al., 2019). Unemployment may also offer men a chance to spend more time at home and express their feelings, bond with their wives and appreciate fatherhood, free from the gaze of gatekeepers:

I am now living alone with my husband. I am very happy because I finally had a chance to develop an understanding with my husband, we’ve had an opportunity to get to know each other properly (IDP woman, Pakistan, quoted in Levine et al., 2019: 15).

In Chechnya, I couldn’t, for example, cradle or kiss my baby in front of my father, uncle, or any other family elder. It is a kind of shame, according to our laws. But here, we are alone and I feel that I have to help her (referring to his wife Maleyka) with the kids. And I am ok with it; I feel I’m closer to them than before (Chechen refugee man, Czech Republic, quoted in Szczepanikova, 2005: 292).

### 2.2.3 Household decision-making

While women who have lost or become separated from husbands or other male relatives may suddenly find themselves entirely responsible for decision-making, evidence from households where men are still present is mixed, and most studies focus on identifying changes without analysing the underlying factors. Women’s decision-making is often understood as related to children, while husbands maintain responsibility for financial decisions, as observed among Syrian refugees in Lebanon (El-Mashri et al., 2013; IPSOS Group SA, 2018). In urban Colombia, displaced women worked longer hours and provided more than half of household income, yet their decision-making power over large purchases and daily expenditures did not increase (Calderon et al., 2011).

In other settings, women’s decision-making power may increase. In Northern Uganda, Somalia, Sudan and the Kurdistan region of Iraq, women who became primary earners strengthened their decision-making power within the household (El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005; Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018). In Yemen, women’s increased economic contributions were linked to greater decision-making and control over economic resources, especially in urban areas (Gressman, 2016):

Most of the decisions in the house are now made by women and they have the capacity to do so. They control household expenditure and also plan the household budget, and they also have decision-making power for

anything concerning their children, such as marriage, health and education (Woman, Iraq, quoted in Dietrich and Carter, 2017: 25).

When a woman works and brings money for the family, she has more power over family decisions. But the man feels humiliated and stays quiet in the house (Woman, Yemen, quoted in Gressman, 2016: 29).

## 2.3 Participation in community structures

In displacement, women's informal groups and networks of support can prepare them for entering public life for the first time, forming the foundation for more inclusive civil and political structures (Bouta et al., 2005). In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, displaced women identified representation in decision-making structures as a key need, but one that was hampered by household and childcare responsibilities and a perceived lack of leadership skills (Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018). In Lebanon, 42% of Syrian refugee women felt that women can take on such roles, with 6% reporting doing so for the first time (IPSOS Group SA, 2018; see also Ingiriis and Hoehne, 2013, on Somalia). In Kenya, displaced Somali women in urban areas have created non-clan-based women's groups where they come together to support each other, pool economic resources and skills and collaborate to achieve economic and social goals (Ritchie, 2018). In the 1980s, Guatemalan women in refugee camps in Mexico organised literacy classes, skills training and rights awareness:

We learned to be women in Guatemala. Our mothers taught us to obey and to work in the home without complaining about anything. In refuge, we are opening our eyes. We are coming to know our human rights. Here, women are different from before, though we didn't think it would turn out this way

(Guatemalan refugee woman, Mexico, quoted in Marcus, 1996: 120).

Conflict and displacement can also provide openings for those with diverse SOGIESC to create support groups and claim their rights (Myrntinen and Daigle, 2017). In Colombia, activists organised to document abuses and defend their rights (Bouvier, 2016). In Uganda, where same-sex sexual practices are outlawed, refugees created peer protective networks and support groups (WRC, 2016). A refugee from DRC, who fled his country after being outed, used his experience as a traditional chief to establish a small organisation to help fellow gay and lesbian refugees (Nyanzi, 2013). A similar refugee-led group in Uganda provides shelter services using remittances sent by resettled refugees (WRC, 2016).

Displaced people who exercise leadership in their communities may face a higher risk of gender-based violence (GBV). In Colombia, women leaders and those defending the rights of sexual and gender minorities or survivors of conflict-related sexual violence were threatened and attacked by right-wing paramilitary groups (Bouvier, 2016). Targeted women were punished not only for their activism, but also for transgressing traditional norms and seeking public roles, while others who used their socially sanctioned role as mothers to protect communities, secure basic necessities and demand peace escaped censure (Bouvier, 2016). Maternal activism has been a form of political mobilisation for peace, political change or social justice in various settings, from Latin America to West Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

## 2.4 Education

Worldwide, it is estimated that 3.7 million refugee children and adolescents are currently out of school – a problem with distinctly gendered dimensions. For every 10 refugee boys in secondary school, there are only about seven refugee girls (UNHCR, 2019). Studies stress that traditional gender roles and norms continue to operate in displacement, with girls more likely to drop out of school to help with household

tasks, get married or stay safe, while boys often leave school to contribute to household income (UNICEF, 2016) – a state of affairs that may constitute a deterioration or amelioration, depending on refugees’ experiences prior to displacement. Children and adolescents with disabilities face complicated barriers to accessing education in displacement; although detailed evidence is thin, small-scale studies suggest that girls with disabilities face double discrimination. Among Karen refugees in Thailand, 61% of children with disabilities attending school were boys, and 39% girls (UNICEF, 2017).

Conversely, for youth who lacked access previously, displacement may provide more educational opportunities (Kandiyoti, 2005; El Jack, 2010; Ecke et al., 2016). Displaced communities that did not previously endorse education may be exposed to the norms and ideas of host communities and humanitarian agencies, leading them to value education for economic advancement in a changing world. After attending school, displaced boys in peri-urban Pakistan expressed their wish to become doctors and engineers instead of going back to agricultural livelihoods (Levine et al., 2019). Likewise, by going to school, learning English and finding work with local NGOs, Burundian male refugees in Tanzania and their South Sudanese counterparts in Kenya were able to challenge intergenerational hierarchies and expectations to submit to elders, which would have been culturally unacceptable previously (Turner, 1999; Grabska and Fanjoy, 2015).

For girls, outcomes are more mixed: Guatemalan refugee girls had greater access to education in Mexican camps than previously, but had higher drop-out rates in exile than boys because of domestic obligations (Marcus, 1996). On the other hand, rural families displaced to peri-urban Pakistan began sending their daughters to school after gaining access to girls-only public schools, a host community that encouraged education and basic amenities that reduced the time girls spent on household tasks (Levine et al., 2019). For South Sudanese in Kenya, IDPs in Pakistan and Iraq, Afghans in Iran and Burundians in Tanzania, schooling was seen to improve marriage prospects (Daley, 1991; Hoodfar, 2008; Grabska, 2012; Levine et al., 2019) and

employment opportunities for girls (Daley, 1991; Hoodfar, 2008; Kaya and Luchtenberg, 2018). For girls themselves, education and exposure to new ideas enables them to learn about their rights, achieve greater mobility and exert more control over their futures. Afghan girls in urban Iran and girls in peri-urban Pakistan have used their acquired knowledge to defend their right to decide about marriage or to inherit according to Islamic law (Hoodfar, 2008; Levine et al., 2019). In light of this, many also developed aspirations for their own future children:

Because I am not educated, I can't decide my own future for myself, but I will not let this happen with my daughters. I will educate them, so that they can have the possibility to make their own decisions about their lives. They won't have to obey the decisions of their elders and parents. I want to see my daughters self-sufficient and empowered. I want my children to get an education – girls and boys – so that both can take a stand for themselves (IDP girl, Pakistan, quoted in Levine et al., 2019: 21).

## 2.5 Gendered experiences of violence

Gender norms that emphasise the subordination of femininity and normalise masculine aggression, dominance and control allow the use of violence to demonstrate privileged manhood or punish those who resist or transgress against gender norms (Jewkes et al., 2015). Evidence across all regions indicates that GBV increases during conflict and displacement (Stark and Ager, 2011). Population movements, the breakdown of social and institutional structures, economic hardship and the normalisation of violence and insecurity all heighten the risk of violence in all its forms.

### 2.5.1 Sexual violence and abuse

A systematic review of sexual violence against refugees and IDPs indicates that approximately



one in five refugee or displaced women in humanitarian emergencies experiences sexual violence – a likely underestimate, given that such crimes are under-reported due to social stigma, shame and fear of reprisal (Vu et al., 2014). According to the UN, sexual violence is both a driver and a result of forced displacement in many contexts (UN, 2019). It has also been deployed as a tactic of warfare to terrorise, control and exploit populations (Thompson, 2006) – just one of the many forms of sexual violence that occur before, during and after crises, but a phenomenon that has arguably received disproportionate attention.

Norms around feminine purity and masculine honour discourage survivors of sexual violence from disclosing what happened and seeking support and justice. Abducted women and girls who escape and rejoin their families are often assumed to have been raped and may face further abuse or death at the hands of male family members seeking to restore family honour; others, such as some women abducted by ISIS and raped, have reportedly committed suicide (Dietrich and Carter, 2017). Survivors frequently report rejection by partners and families who perceive them as dirty, useless or a threat to their status in the community:

A raped woman lost her value and she affects a man's social image. That is why he has to chase her away (Man, DRC, quoted in Sleggh et al., 2014: 56).

Women and girls who bear children as a result of rape tend to experience higher levels of stigmatisation and disadvantage than survivors without children. These children often face stigmatisation, discrimination or even rejection, and their rights and needs are typically overlooked by humanitarian actors (Neenan, 2018).

Sexual violence takes place not only during flight, but also as displaced people move through camps or new communities to work, fulfil domestic responsibilities, attend school

or collect firewood or water (Anderson, 2009; Gressman, 2016). Worried families may isolate women at home as a result, in line with their perceived duty to protect the reputation of daughters and wives (Gressman, 2016; WRC, 2016; DeJong et al., 2017; Wringe et al., 2019). Displaced people may also be targeted for sexual violence and harassment in the belief that they are unlikely to report it due to their uncertain status, and this vulnerability is intensified for those marginalised on the basis of their diverse SOGIESC or isolated by disability (WRC and IRC, 2015; WRC, 2016).

Despite the growing visibility of sexual violence against men and boys, the issue still generates discomfort and there is resistance to accepting this violence as the product of gendered hierarchies (UNHCR and Refugee Law Project, 2012; UN, 2019).<sup>5</sup> Studies on men, violence and masculinities emphasise that, in all its forms – ranging from sexual humiliation to torture, rape and mutilation of a man's genitals – sexual violence has serious physical, emotional and social implications for survivors. It also has symbolic effects that position the victim of sexual violence – regardless of their gender – as feminised and subject to shame, while asserting the masculinity and power of the perpetrator (Skjelsbæk, 2001; Zalewski et al., 2018). As a result, survivors who identify as men face increased difficulty disclosing sexual violence and accessing support, especially in contexts that stigmatise same-sex relations (UNHCR and Refugee Law Project, 2012).

Individuals with diverse SOGIESC are at particular risk from both the host community and fellow refugees, sometimes as a purported corrective measure to enforce heterosexuality (Nyanzi, 2013; WRC, 2016; 2019; Myrtilinen and Daigle, 2017):

Those boys who raped me were drunk. They said I a-shame the Kenyan refugee community because I love a fellow woman as if I am a husband. That if I have a pregnancy then people will know that I have been with a man.

5 Some commentators point to militarisation and gender-specific massacres, among other things, as examples of non-sexual GBV against men (Dolan, 2015).

None of them used a condom. As a lezie, I was not on family planning. So I got pregnant  
(Refugee woman, Uganda, quoted in Nyanzi, 2013: 458).

### 2.5.2 Intimate partner violence

While humanitarian actors appear to be primarily concerned with CRSV, a systematic review of prevalence studies reports much higher rates of intimate-partner violence (IPV) than at the hands of armed groups (Stark and Ager, 2011). Increased IPV in humanitarian settings is driven by pre-displacement norms that establish men's right to assert power over women, which are then amplified in crises by poverty, insecurity and changing gender roles. In particular, men's inability to live up to provider and protector roles as women's economic activities increase has been identified as a primary driver of IPV (Horn et al., 2014).

In urban Colombia, displaced women experienced higher rates and more severe forms of IPV than their rural counterparts (13.5% versus 7.5%) (Calderon et al., 2011). In rural Northern Uganda, displaced men's loss of agricultural livelihoods and perceived failure to protect their families from armed combatants prompted them to use violence to reaffirm their manhood, especially when women challenged them (Dolan, 2002; Okello and Hovil, 2007). Similar findings have been reported in Latin America, West Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Men may also respond with violence when they feel that women's behaviour or activities harm their honour and lose them the respect of community members (Szczepanikova, 2005; El-Masri et al., 2013; Hynes et al., 2016; Wringe et al., 2019):

Sometimes you see the husbands don't have financial means to support the home, and the wife is trying to talk of the children's school fees, trying to talk of the feeding of the home, and you will see men getting so angry and chopping on the wife and fighting ... Because he don't have to give, and then he sees the woman asking him to give, so he'll just get angry because it's shaming him. He

feels ashamed and jumps on the wife, 'you're supposed to be down, you're not supposed to give me hard time', he will jump on the wife and start to beat her  
(Woman, Liberia, quoted in Horn et al., 2014: 6).

He beats me. He beats me when he hears his relatives saying that I'm the one who makes decisions at home. He gets home very mad and he beats me  
(IDP woman, Côte d'Ivoire, quoted in Cardoso et al., 2016: 369).

Other contributing factors include exposure to trauma, the normalisation of violence (Falb et al., 2014; Horn et al., 2014) and substance abuse, as alcohol and drugs like hashish or khat are often readily available and used as coping mechanisms (Ezard et al., 2011; Ezard, 2014; Lo et al., 2017). Studies from sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Asia note that substance use and abuse increase the likelihood of violence, due to intoxication itself and conflict over substance abuse (Ezard et al., 2011; Ezard, 2014; Erikson and Rastogli, 2015):

In the camp here we have problems of men; most of them sit in the trading center drinking alcohol together with womanizing. These men just come back home to pick the little food there is in the house to take to these women. If we try to resist, they become very violent and start fighting us  
(IDP woman, Northern Uganda, quoted in Kizza et al., 2012b).

IPV is often considered a private and highly stigmatising issue – a problem accentuated by the breakdown of support networks and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that could provide some protection, mediation or assistance (Szczepanikova, 2005; Okello and Hovil, 2007; Cardoso et al., 2016). Financial dependence within families, which also increases in displacement, tends to limit the ability to leave an abusive partner (Horn et al., 2014; Dietrich and Carter, 2017).

Displacement may in some cases actually mitigate IPV. In Sierra Leone, women argued that, as men realised that women can also contribute to family income and share financial pressures with them, the likelihood of violence is gradually reduced (Horn et al., 2014). Several displaced women in peri-urban areas in Pakistan reported that violence decreased, as living in smaller family units – instead of under the constant gaze of their in-laws – enabled spouses to get to know each other, share hardships and improve their relationship. The reduced acceptability of IPV among the host community also played a role:

We learned a lot from this society [in Peshawar]. Our men behaved badly in many ways, but this is because it was the culture in our village, so we do not blame them as individuals. After living here, they changed their way of thinking. Now they are not the same ... after living for several years in Peshawar they now understand that a woman is not just for beating, so [domestic violence] is slowly disappearing in our men (IDP woman, Pakistan, Levine et al., 2019: 32).

### 2.5.3 Early marriage

Links between displacement and early marriage are not straightforward: one systematic review of evidence identified a decline in early marriage in some contexts, and an increase in others (Neal et al., 2016). A rising average age of marriage was reported for young Bosnian women due to the breakdown of social networks that might normally furnish potential partners, as well as the scarcity of young men due to ethnic cleansing and conscription (Neal et al., 2016).<sup>6</sup> Conversely, early marriage increased among displaced Syrians, which was attributed to parental concerns with protecting the honour of their daughters and financial pressures on the family (El-Masri et al., 2013; Neal et al., 2016; Wringer et al., 2019):

Now we are refugees and when you have a daughter you think to yourself that marriage will provide her with a man to protect her and relieve us from the responsibility (Syrian refugee woman, Lebanon, quoted in DeJong et al., 2017: 31).

In Yemen, the conflict has reportedly led to an increase in early marriage and polygyny, with more men marrying more than one woman and parents seeking to marry off their daughters for bride wealth (Gressman, 2016).

Adolescent girls rarely aspire to early marriage, and educational opportunities and exposure to host community norms can help them assert greater autonomy in deciding when they marry. Afghan girls in exile in urban Iran attended informal schools where they focused on Islamic studies, which they used to negotiate with their parents for the right to choose their husband, grounding their position in their families' religious values (Hoodfar, 2008). Something similar can be seen among girls displaced to Peshawar in Pakistan:

After displacement, some girls have even broken off engagements, arguing with their parents that according to Islamic Sharia it is their choice who to marry, and they did not want to marry the person who had been chosen for them (IDP woman, Pakistan, quoted in Levine et al., 2019: 21–22).

## 2.6 Coming home: gendered experiences of return

After a period away ranging from months to decades or even generations, return from exile poses its own set of challenges. Women's gains can vanish, and power inequalities and hierarchies may re-emerge as men seek to restore

6 The reasons for and likely outcomes of this trend are also unclear, as the young women in question may marry a short time after or remain single into later stages of life. Decreasing marriage rates in crisis settings may also be followed by a 'marriage boom' in the aftermath (Neal et al., 2016).

pre-existing gender roles and norms (Bouta et al., 2005). In Pakistan, displaced women who have adapted to life with basic amenities, education and health services indicated a preference for remaining in their host city of Peshawar (Levine et al., 2019). In Northern Uganda, many internally displaced women with disabilities decided to remain in camps where they could access at least some services (HRW, 2010). Similarly, Liberian refugee women found that their access to healthcare and education deteriorated following their repatriation from Ghana (Ecke et al., 2016). Young widows displaced in Sri Lankan camps, where they became economically active to support their families, were concerned that return would mean reverting to the old discriminatory caste and gender status quo (Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2004). Young Afghan women brought up in exile in Iran felt that return was not simply an undesirable but rather a dreadful option:

Often I think I should go and study theology and the Quran, and go and teach men in Afghanistan that what they are doing to women is against Islam, but deep in my heart I know there is very little hope that they are going to change. It is this that worries us about going back to our country ... Do you understand that I am a proud Afghan and love to know all about my country's history and past, but I fear going there? Not because there are no services, or because of economic hardship, because I am a woman (Afghan refugee girl, Iran, quoted in Hoodfar, 2008: 165).

Returnees coming back after protracted displacement with new ideas, attitudes and skills, including speaking different languages and wearing different clothes, often encounter resistance or rejection – especially if they are women (Watson, 1996). Returnee women in Guatemala who tried to bring with them the community activities they had taken up in camps in Mexico were perceived to be of ‘bad character’ (Marcus, 1996). Returnee women in South Sudan were often labelled loose or shameless for no longer conforming to norms of

femininity (Grabska, 2013), while returnee women in Uganda encountered heightened marital friction and accusations of sorcery, leading to brutal killings (Allen, 1996).

There are also examples of returnees maintaining the changes that had a positive impact on their lives; returnee women in Somalia, southern Ethiopia and Chad, for instance, used newly acquired skills to trade in local markets, open shops and restaurants, and build informal credit and savings associations (Getachew, 1996; Watson, 1996; Sorensen, 1998). Women in post-conflict Sierra Leone identified changes in their economic and political roles:

Before the war, women would not speak in such gatherings, it's only men, but now we even speak as women in our own space and when we are with them we talk as well, so it's a big change. Sometimes our voices are heard. We suggest, and our suggestions are being taken ... Here, we have a woman as our local councillor. Before the war, that was not happening. Before the war you can't even have a woman to aspire to paramount chieftancy, but that just happened. A woman contested to be paramount chief, and even though she didn't win, she contested. Before the war, you can't even dream about you, as a woman, being paramount chief here, let alone speak about it openly (Woman, Sierra Leone, quoted in Horn et al., 2014: 8).

In South Sudan and Ethiopia, returnee women participated in political campaigns, elections and public debates, using these platforms to support women chiefs and challenge practices around widow inheritance and arranged marriage (Getachew, 1996; Grabska, 2013; see also Yadav, 2016 in Nepal). The confidence gained from economic autonomy helped women in Chad to leave unfaithful or abusive husbands and establish their own households, while returnee women in South Sudan who had reunited with their husbands later filed for divorce as they refused to conform to the ideal of a ‘good’ – that is, submissive – wife (Watson, 1996; Grabska, 2013).

As protracted displacement becomes the norm (Crawford et al., 2015), young people may face particular obstacles reintegrating into a home country they are unlikely to even remember. Girls and boys returning to South Sudan reported feeling more alienated than they had in displacement, facing discrimination and censure from families for their style of dress, attitudes and difficulties finding work (Sommers and Schwartz, 2011; Ensor, 2014). After return some young men started using physical violence against women and espousing more traditional views on gender to align themselves with local masculine norms:

As a returnee you bring a different culture with you. In order to be accepted, you have to learn the culture and behavior of those who are here. Otherwise, you will be lonely and isolated ... In Kakuma, people were free and they did what they wanted to do. They were not controlled by their families and relatives, because they were not there  
(Returnee man, South Sudan, quoted in Grabska and Fanjoy, 2015: 85).

Access to housing, land and property is one of the most difficult issues returnees face. Women (especially elderly women or widows claiming their late husbands' land) tend to be most disadvantaged, particularly when land is scarce and in demand, as discriminatory laws and customary practices can be used against them (Bouta et al., 2005; Grabska, 2013; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014). In South Sudan, returnee widows were chased away by relatives who had claimed their land (Grabska, 2013).

## 2.7 Diverse experiences of vulnerability

Conflict and displacement disrupt the daily lives of people of all genders, causing trauma, loss, impoverishment and marginalisation – but they also create conditions for transformation through the breakdown of social, economic and political structures that reflect and reproduce gender hierarchies and inequalities. This review of research on changing gender roles in displacement reveals one core lesson: gendered concerns and experiences are unavoidably diverse. The effects of gender as an ordering system are not linear or monolithic, alternately compounded and mitigated by a range of intersectional, cultural and geographic factors. Thus, gendered experiences of displacement are also not homogenous and vary significantly according to pre-existing norms and conditions of displacement – urban/rural location, length of displacement, available resources or opportunities – but also as a result of the intersection of gender with racialisation, caste, ethnic identity, age, disability and socioeconomic class. Along with this lesson comes the impetus to reconsider the notion of vulnerability, which is central to humanitarian action, and which has tended to be applied almost unthinkingly to women as a group. The research surveyed above demonstrates that women's exposure to harm is not universal, and that people with diverse SOGIESC as well as some cisgender<sup>7</sup> men face threats from racialisation, homo- and transphobia, disability, age, poverty and other factors. This critical stance towards gender and vulnerability shapes the analysis in the next section on humanitarian policy and practice.

---

7 'Cisgender' denotes a person whose gender identity corresponds to biological sex assigned at birth.

# 3 Gender and the international humanitarian system

Concerns around gendered norms, roles and power relations in humanitarian emergencies have focused overwhelmingly on women. The particular needs and experiences of refugee women were first raised in 1980 at the UN Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen – a conference marked by political disagreement over the treatment of Palestinian women by the Israeli occupation (Jaquette, 1995). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR’s) report at the conference, though ‘thin’, ‘raised substantive awareness of the challenges that refugee women faced in exile’ and resulted in refugee women’s

inclusion in the final conference declaration (Baines, 2004: 24). In 1985, the UN Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi saw a longer, more detailed UNHCR report, though this too reinforced the idea that humanitarian practices and international refugee instruments and practices were gender-neutral. It was not until the early 1990s that UNHCR and the rest of the humanitarian sector – following demands by donors, advocates and the first International Consultation on Refugee Women in 1988 – began to think more carefully about integrating gender into their programming (Baines, 2004).

**Table 1: Key dates in gender and humanitarianism**

1975	UN First World Conference on Women in Mexico City
	UNGA proclaims UN Decade for Women
1976	UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) founded
1979	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) signed, effective 3 September 1981
1980	UN Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen
1985	UN Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi
	International Working Group for Refugee Women established (first international consultation in 1988)
1989	UNHCR appoints first senior coordinator for refugee women
1990	UNHCR publishes <i>Policy on refugee women</i>
1991	UNHCR publishes <i>Guidelines on the protection of refugee women</i>
1992	UNHCR finalises People-Oriented Planning (POP) framework
1993	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women ratified
1995	UNHCR publishes <i>Sexual violence against refugees: guidelines on prevention and response</i>
	UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, resulting in <i>Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action</i>
1997	UN adopts gender mainstreaming at ECOSOC
	UNHCR releases <i>Strategies to eradicate harmful traditional practices</i>
1998	UNHCR publishes new <i>Strategy for mainstreaming gender equality into UNHCR’s protection and programs</i>

**Table 1 cont'd: Key dates in gender and humanitarianism**

<b>1999</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) publishes <i>Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance</i>
<b>2000</b>	UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1325, establishing the Women, Peace and Security agenda – further resolutions follow in 2008 (1820), 2009 (1888 and 1889), 2010 (1960), 2013 (2106 and 2102), 2015 (2242) and 2019 (2467 and 2493)
<b>2001</b>	UNHCR releases <i>Good practices in gender equality mainstreaming: a practical guide to empowerment</i> UNHCR hosts Dialogue with Refugee Women in Geneva
<b>2002</b>	UNHCR publishes Gender Training Kit
<b>2003</b>	UNHCR publishes <i>Sexual and Gender Based Violence against refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons: Guidelines for prevention and response to SGBV</i>
<b>2004</b>	UNHCR pilots Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming initiative
<b>2005</b>	IASC publishes <i>Gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings</i>
<b>2006</b>	IASC publishes <i>Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities</i>
<b>2008</b>	UNHCR revises 1991 guidelines with <i>Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls</i> IASC publishes <i>Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action</i> UNHCR publishes <i>Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity</i>
<b>2010</b>	UN Women founded, incorporating UNIFEM and other bodies
<b>2011</b>	UNHCR publishes <i>Age, Gender and Diversity Policy</i>
<b>2015</b>	IASC revises <i>Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action</i>
<b>2016</b>	World Humanitarian Summit makes five ambitious pledges on gender
<b>2017</b>	IASC publishes updated <i>Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action</i> , along with an accountability framework
<b>2018</b>	IASC publishes updated <i>Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action</i> UNHCR publishes updated <i>Policy on age, Gender and Diversity Policy</i> G7 adopts Whistler Declaration on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action

### 3.1 Early efforts by UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations

The early 1990s saw a shift in gender policy in UNHCR with the appointment of the first Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women, Canadian Ann Howarth-Wiles, in 1989. A plethora of policy documents and guidelines followed, including UNHCR's first *Policy on refugee women* 'to integrate the resources and needs of refugee women in all aspects of programme planning and implementation' (UNHCR, 1990: 5). The policy noted that it would not be enough to introduce separate women's projects or to give aid to women as passive recipients; rather, it argued for

ensuring that needs assessments and participation included all segments of the refugee population, with women mainstreamed into general activities instead of relegated to the periphery. The following year, UNHCR published its *Guidelines on the protection of refugee women* to identify specific protection issues (manipulation, sexual and physical abuse, discrimination in service delivery) and outline reporting strategies. The guidelines acknowledged that the 1951 Refugee Convention does not include gender in its criteria for establishing refugee status, nor are women guaranteed the same refugee status as their husbands (UNHCR, 1991). These early UNHCR guidelines were based on the assumption that women and girls were particularly vulnerable,

while also assuming that economic opportunities or refugee assistance could encourage gender equality, but without questioning underlying biases or pre-crisis structures (Callamard, 2002).

The policy and guidelines were accompanied by a new style of training, known as people-oriented planning (POP). According to Howarth-Wiles, the term ‘people’ was chosen rather than ‘women’ because otherwise ‘no one would have cared’ (Berthiaume, 1995). The POP analytical framework provided for information-gathering on demographics, daily activities and control of resources (UNHCR, 1992). Among its many contentious aspects, the POP guidelines declined to call specifically for gender-responsive humanitarian action (Hyndman, 1998; Martin, 2004).

Other humanitarian organisations also published policies on women during this period (Martin, 2004). In 1993, Oxfam was one of the first NGOs ‘to embrace a concrete, formal commitment to the rights and welfare of women’ (Bryer, 1999: 1), adopting a method similar to POP that went beyond practical needs to understand changing demographics and varying levels of access to resources through a gender lens (Gell, 1999).

## 3.2 The Beijing Conference and gender mainstreaming

The UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 produced the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, which called for ‘gender-sensitive policies and programmes’ designed, implemented and monitored ‘with the full participation of women’ and ‘that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women’ (UN, 1995: 3). The document focused on ‘mainstreaming’, a term it used 23 times, to call for the full integration of women into government policies and programmes, and throughout the UN system and its operations (UN, 1995). Two years later, the UN Secretary-General took up the commitment to gender mainstreaming at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), defining the term as:

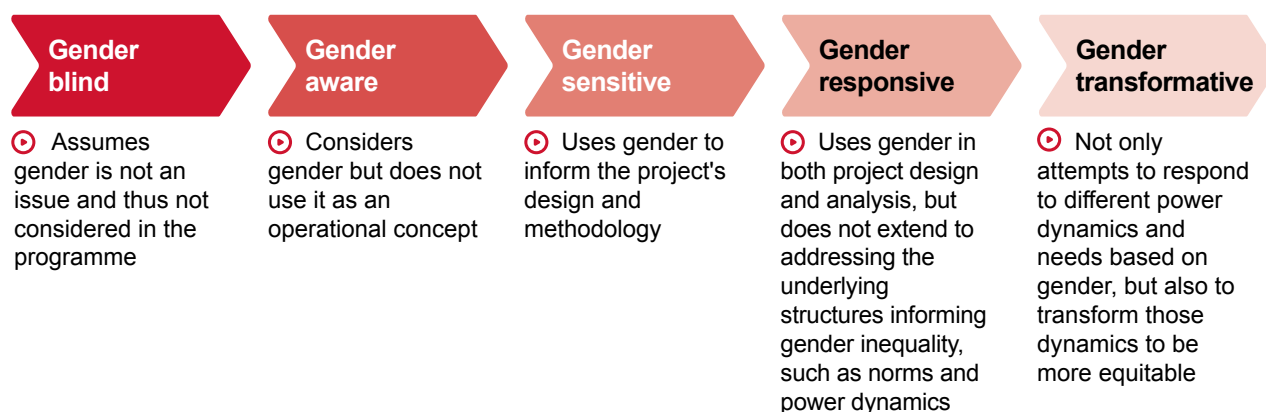
the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (UNGA, 1997: 24).

Mainstreaming was subsequently espoused across the humanitarian sector. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), for example, published a gender policy that defined gender equality as ensuring ‘that there is no sex-based discrimination in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services’ by taking ‘a culturally sensitive approach with regard to mainstreaming a gender perspective in Red Cross and Red Crescent work’ (IFRC, 1999). In its *Policy statement for the integration of a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance*, the IASC – a forum established in 1992 bringing together some of the most prominent international humanitarian agencies within and beyond the UN – committed to four points of action that covered strategies for mainstreaming in all phases of response, disaggregation of data by sex and age, expanded capacity and accountability mechanisms (IASC, 1999).

Gender mainstreaming contrasted with earlier policies and programmes that explicitly targeted women, but these strategies have often persisted alongside one another (Charlesworth, 2005; Edwards, 2010). A range of descriptors has emerged to describe the extent to which awareness and sensitivity to gender concerns shapes programming, though not all organisations agree on these terms or their meaning (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: A spectrum of approaches to gender**



Source: Butt et al. (2019).

The uptake of gender mainstreaming by the UN system has been seen as a victory for UNHCR (Hyndman, 1998), which had advocated for the mainstreaming of refugee women's concerns since 1990. In 1998, UNHCR shifted its rhetoric from mainstreaming *women* to mainstreaming *gender* with its *Strategy for mainstreaming gender equality into UNHCR's protection and program* (UNHCR, 2013). The following year, UNHCR published a new policy on *Refugee women and a gender perspective approach*, which noted that long-term change for women would require 'transforming unequal power relations between women and men' (UNHCR, 1999a).

Following its commitment to gender mainstreaming, and based on the Dialogue with Refugee Women held in Geneva in June 2001, UNHCR set out five commitments to refugee women – meaningful participation, individual registration and documentation, food and other resources, economic empowerment and prevention of and response to SGBV – and POP was updated to highlight gender equality as a goal for the humanitarian response (UNHCR, 1999b; 2001b). UNHCR also took the significant step of including age and other diversity criteria in its Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) strategy to challenge

the widely accepted assumption that 'gender' meant 'women' (Thomas and Beck, 2010). However, an internal evaluation five years later found that, 'while important gains have been made to date, the mainstreaming process is far from complete' (Thomas and Beck, 2010: 17). This was in large part due to limited ownership at the headquarters level, made apparent in 'insufficient attention and investment' in training and systems (Thomas and Beck, 2010: 22–23; see also Groves, 2005; Edwards, 2010). In 2016, the Women's Refugee Commission (2016) found that AGDM policies were not being implemented or enforced, calling into question their status as cross-cutting organisational policies at UNHCR.

Freedman (2010) criticises UNHCR's approach for simply adding gender to existing frameworks, rather than fundamentally shifting understandings or representations of refugees, and for maintaining a discourse of women's 'vulnerability'. She also notes that gender mainstreaming is 'a notoriously difficult concept to implement, and ... it may in fact lead to gender slipping off the agenda, as it becomes dissolved within other concerns' (Freedman, 2015: 114). The mainstreaming framework has also been criticised as part of the widely derided 'add women and stir' approach to gender equality across disciplines (McLeod, 2016; El-Bushra, 2017).

### 3.3 Gender and the current humanitarian system

The cluster system,<sup>8</sup> which groups humanitarian agencies thematically in an attempt to improve coordination and address gaps, was introduced in 2005 as part of sweeping reforms to the humanitarian system. As the lead agency of the Protection cluster, UNHCR has had mixed success introducing its new AGDM strategy to the wider UN system. Many partners ignored its more intersectional approach in favour of a narrower focus on gender equality (Thomas and Beck, 2010). In terms of reproductive health, UNHCR had required its field programmes to include period management materials in their budgets since the mid-1990s, though there was often low compliance, and other reproductive health services – including services for victims of SGBV – remained rare (Martin, 2017). By the mid-2000s, however, a revision of the Sphere Standards included the minimum initial services package (MISP)<sup>9</sup> for reproductive health, and the Health cluster had included women’s reproductive health in its guidebook – both of which helped with ‘institutionalizing reproductive health services as part and parcel of humanitarian practice in refugee settings’ (Buscher, 2010: 7).

An array of new guidelines and handbooks detailed how gender should be incorporated into the clusters. The IASC’s gender handbook, published in 2006, provided guidance to fieldworkers on gender analysis and planning ‘to ensure the needs, contributions and capacities of women, girls, boys and men are considered in all aspects of humanitarian response’ (IASC, 2006: vii). The handbook covers camp coordination and management, education, food security, health, livelihoods, registration, shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene. The

Sphere Handbook, revised in 2011, outlines minimum standards in similar areas. Gender is therefore presented as a cross-cutting issue, with gender equality and fairness between men and women as purportedly inherent outcomes of humanitarian principles (Sphere Project, 2011) – although this is itself a contentious claim. Both handbooks have recently been updated to reflect a greater focus on gender transformative approaches (IASC, 2018; Sphere Project, 2018).

The mid-1990s shift in terminology from ‘women’ to ‘gender’ has not been fully embraced, even though most policies now highlight the distinction (see, for example, IFRC, 1999; CARE, 2009; Sphere Project, 2011; IFRC, 2013; ACF, 2014; Save the Children, 2017). As Hilhorst et al. (2018) point out, there is still a tendency within the humanitarian sector to use the term ‘gender’ when in fact what is actually meant is ‘women and girls’. The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN Women, was established in 2010 in an effort to maintain a focus on women and to consolidate the various UN bodies concerned with women’s status and rights, but ‘[a]s the full name of UN Women and its mandate illustrate’, write Charlesworth and Chinkin (2013: 29), ‘the terms “women” and “gender” are used more or less interchangeably in the UN’.

#### 3.3.1 Sexual and gender-based violence in crises

Protection from SGBV has become a leading focal point for humanitarianism, peacebuilding and global security in the last two decades, epitomised in the twin issue areas of CRSV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). UNHCR published its first guidelines specifically geared towards preventing and responding to SGBV in 1995, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) began directing specific services to survivors of SGBV in 1999 (Duroch and Schulte-Hillen, 2014). Both of these developments resulted

8 Although the cluster approach is not used in refugee responses, due to UNHCR maintaining (rather than delegating) accountability, the sectoral working groups deployed in refugee responses closely mirror clusters.

9 The MISP covers five objectives: 1. identifying a lead agency to implement the package, including coordinating services and supplying reproductive health kits; 2. preventing and managing the consequences of sexual violence through protection and medical/psychological services; 3. reducing HIV transmission through safe blood transfusions, standard precautions and free condoms; 4. reducing maternal/infant mortality with emergency obstetric and newborn care, referral systems and clean delivery kits; and 5. planning for integrated reproductive health services staff capacity, trainings, equipment and supplies (UNFPA, 2015).

from reports of widespread and systematic SGBV during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the Bosnian conflict in 1995. The UN Security Council subsequently passed seven resolutions<sup>10</sup> specifically addressing CRSV as part of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The international community has seen an unprecedented expansion of efforts to combat CRSV, culminating in the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2014. However, the summit has been criticised for missing ‘the opportunity to make visible the range of sexualized and other forms of gendered violence that may be connected to, or distinct from, tactical violence’ (Myrntinen and Swaine, 2015: 498). Wright (2015: 504) highlights the summit’s focus on the prosecution of perpetrators, rather than ‘preventing violence from occurring in the first place by addressing its underlying causes’.

In parallel, the 2002 publication of a UNHCR and Save the Children UK report on SEA of refugee children in West Africa sparked a sector-wide debate on the issue (UNHCR and Save the Children UK, 2002; UN Secretary General, 2002). The following year, UNHCR updated its guidelines to include sexual violence ‘perpetrated by some of the very people who have been entrusted with the task of protecting refugees and displaced persons’ (UNHCR, 2003: 3). In 2018, allegations of sexual misconduct by Oxfam employees in Haiti led to calls for accountability and a critical examination of institutional cultures (Oxfam Independent Commission, 2019). Within the UN system, however, SEA has been treated as a staffing issue, to be handled by organisations’ human resources departments, rather than a justice issue for victims. Mertens and Myrntinen (2019: 419) have also criticised efforts to tackle SEA for ‘wittingly or unwittingly [reproducing] heteronormative and neo-liberal understandings of what a “proper” individual and family should look like’.

SGBV is another area where the terms ‘gender’ and ‘women’ have been conflated: UNHCR’s 1995 guidelines on sexual violence

against refugees make clear that ‘the pronouns in these Guidelines in relation to victims of sexual violence are phrased in the feminine voice’ and perpetrators in the masculine (UNHCR, 1995: 3). By 2015, the guidelines had begun to acknowledge that SGBV can describe ‘certain forms of violence against men and boys – particularly some forms of sexual violence committed with the explicit purpose of reinforcing gender inequitable norms of masculinity and femininity’ (IASC, 2015: 5; see also Read-Hamilton, 2014). In practice, however, there has been little acknowledgement that men or gender minorities experience sexual violence and require services in response (Kirby, 2015). Recent studies by Krystalli et al. (2018), on the use of transactional sex by men and boys during their migration journeys to Europe, and by Chynoweth (2018), on Rohingya men and boys, both highlight the need for further research.

### 3.3.2 Sexual and gender diversity

Diverse SOGIESC were first discussed in a stand-alone policy by UNHCR in 2008, following a growing number of asylum claims by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)<sup>11</sup> individuals. The note acknowledged that LGBT individuals faced discrimination or persecution due to cultural or social norms, or because of national laws reflecting these attitudes, and that this was often more severe for people whose diverse SOGIESC intersects with other axes of inequality, such as racialisation, socioeconomic class or disability (UNHCR, 2008b). The note has been criticised, however, for its late arrival and for failing to adequately link such persecution with gender and non-compliance with dominant gendered social roles (LaViolette, 2010). Further policies and guidance were published by UNHCR following the large number of LGBTI asylum-seekers who entered Kenya from Uganda following passage of the Ugandan government’s Anti-Homosexuality Act in 2014 (Dolan, 2015).

The restriction of UNHCR’s policies to specifically LGBTI individuals is problematic

---

10 See UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242 and 2467.

11 Intersex had yet to be mentioned in 2008.

for several reasons. First, 'LGBTI'<sup>12</sup> itself is a set of Western identity-based concepts that are not universally recognised and do not incorporate all SOGIESC (Lavinias Picq and Thiel, 2015). The 'LGBTI' umbrella does not address people whose sexual and social practices are distinct from their identity, such as men who have sex with men but do not identify as gay, nor does it include groups such as *burrnesha* in the Balkans, *fa'afafine* in Samoa, *hijra* in South Asia, two-spirited people among North American First Nations, *waria* in Indonesia and Malaysia, *yan daudu* among the

Hausa of Nigeria or practices of *bacha posh* in Afghanistan (Myrntinen and Daigle, 2017). By adopting Western categories, local expressions of non-heteronormative SOGIESC are hidden, and refugees face pressure to conform on two fronts: the heteronormative expectations of their own communities and the agendas of Western humanitarian agencies and donors (Daigle and Myrntinen, 2018). Humanitarian agencies that collect gender-disaggregated data in binary terms only perpetuate the invisibility of people like third-gender citizens in Nepal (Bochenek and Knight, 2012).

---

12 Or any of its variants, such as LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTIQ+ and LGBTTIQQ2SA.

---

# 4 Humanitarian action's impact on gender roles

Gender roles, norms and power relations are forged in interaction with culture, religion, geographical location and socioeconomic factors, to name just a few. In humanitarian crises, the experience of displacement produces rapid change in terms of gender – explored at length above – but the presence of a large-scale humanitarian response is also a key conditioning factor, a change that has been occasionally acknowledged though little analysed (see IFRC, 1999).

## 4.1 Targeting gender

When NGOs and donors respond to a crisis, their remit encompasses everything from shelter, educational programmes and health services to livelihood interventions and promoting social inclusion and equality. The ways that humanitarian agencies have tended to target gender specifically, however, usually fall under two categories: changing cultural practices and promoting gender equality.<sup>13</sup>

### 4.1.1 Changing cultural practices

One of the main ways UN agencies, NGOs and donors have tried to bring about change in gender roles is through ending cultural practices and rituals deemed harmful, such as dowries, female genital cutting (FGC), forced and early marriage, honour killings and son preference (UNHCR, 1997; Freedman, 2015). It bears noting here that, almost without exception, it is non-Western practices that are deemed 'harmful' and understood as structural, systemic, inherently

*cultural* issues in need of redress, while practices shared by Western cultures (child sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence) are explained away (Winter et al., 2002; Olivius, 2016). Moreover, eradicating harmful cultural practices is rarely a priority of the affected population; rather, it reflects the interests or priorities of donors. In Ethiopia, for example, UNHCR staff had to tell refugees it could not fund the community's priority concerns, even as a \$2 million project was being implemented to combat FGC (Thomas and Beck, 2010).

### 4.1.2 Empowerment

Encouraging changes in gender roles and norms through empowerment, especially of women and girls, has been a focus of policies published over the past decade. The argument is that women, men, girls and boys should enjoy the same status, rights, respect and resources, and that opportunities and life choices should not be constrained by gender (see, for example, IASC, 2008; 2017; CARE, 2009; UNHCR, 2011; ACF, 2014; Plan International, 2017). In practice, these efforts are most often seen in programming to educate young girls or shift economic decision-making to women, such as via targeted cash transfers. When women have taken on conventional male roles as providers and protectors, they have been encouraged to do so by organisations that see this as the first step towards gender equality (Opata and Singo, 2004). Recent developments in this area include increasing space for women to self-organise and supporting women's civil society organisations (Pearce, 2019).

---

<sup>13</sup> Even this taxonomy is, of course, simplistic as much of the existing work focuses on gender inclusion alone without necessarily promoting equality in any transformative way.

Although endorsed by almost all humanitarian organisations, this vision of gender equality in humanitarian action is not without its critics. Olivius (2016) suggests that it positions refugee communities as ‘traditional’ or ‘backward’, refugee women as passive victims in need of rescue and refugee men as perpetrators of uncivilised masculinities in need of reform – all while painting humanitarian agencies as progressive agents of social change. Such interventions can also reinforce inequalities between humanitarian organisations and their beneficiaries (Olivius, 2016). Similar trends can be observed in the way survivors of SGBV have been presented by humanitarian campaigns and programmes as model recipients of aid, to the detriment of other affected populations and a wider understanding of the harms that merit attention in crisis settings (Ticktin, 2011).

## 4.2 Unintended consequences

Efforts to transform gender roles and relations can have unintended and even adverse outcomes – marginalising the women they seek to help, empowering others in their place or ignoring groups sidelined by their gender, age or other factors. In Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, some women felt like ‘token women’ rather than genuine participants when they were not fully incorporated into programmes and

administrative structures (Grabska, 2011). When Oxfam introduced a mandatory women’s post in the management of a refugee camp in northern Uganda in the mid-1990s, the result was further exclusion as it was assumed that women could only have that one post (Adoko, 1999). Research in Lukole refugee camp in Tanzania and Kakuma suggests that, rather than empowering women, UNHCR’s gender programmes benefited a small group of educated young men able to assert themselves as a new generation of village leaders (Turner, 2000; Grabska, 2011). In both situations, this reordering of social norms did little to create new spaces and opportunities for young women, and older men felt a loss of masculinity and status. By contrast, single male-headed households are typically excluded from the list of vulnerable groups and do not receive additional support (Krause, 2014).

Le Masson et al. (2016) also highlight how the presence of a humanitarian response can increase the SGBV risk due to disillusionment over unequal resource distribution, inadequate lighting and sanitation facilities and reduced parental supervision or education in camps run by humanitarian agencies. Other programmes that seek to empower women, such as livelihoods and vocational training, tend to reinforce stereotypes by training women to perform conventionally feminine trades such as home gardening, sewing and handicrafts (Hyndman and Alwis, 2003).

---

# 5 Challenges and gaps

As discussed above, there is a plethora of policies, guidelines and handbooks to help the humanitarian sector integrate gender into programming – yet little of this guidance has made it into practice due to an entrenched belief that humanitarian action is already gender-neutral (Berthiaume, 1995; Hyndman, 1998; Baines, 2004; Freedman, 2010); lack of training and support (Charlesworth, 2005); a dearth of investment and buy-in at the leadership level (Thomas and Beck, 2010); and a general inability to translate knowledge into practice (Eade, 1999; Buscher, 2010). This chapter focuses on five key gaps highlighted by the literature.

## 5.1 Gender-disaggregated data

Calls for gender-disaggregated data have been around since UNHCR's 1990 *Policy on refugee women* and re-emphasised since, but these requirements consistently go unmet (ActionAid et al., 2018). Disaggregating data is more than just ascertaining how many people who identify as men and women are present in an affected population; rather, it speaks to 'the invisibility of women in the refugee discourse' (Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2018: 8). Even when minimum standards for sex and age disaggregated data (SADD) collection are met, 'field offices don't necessarily know what to do with it', meaning that 'data in and of itself does not necessarily or reliably indicate more gender sensitive approaches, programming or better results' (Mazurana et al., 2011: 2). In order to inform programming, SADD must be properly collected but also analysed in combination with qualitative studies that give insights into the local context (IASC, 2018: 45). Advocating for better data also

means challenging assumptions about sex, gender identity and masculinity and femininity that underpin data collection, and that are themselves restrictive and do not account for intersectional forms of oppression.

## 5.2 Funding and donor-driven programming

Addressing crisis-affected people's needs and concerns should be the primary focus of humanitarian action, but all too often programming is determined by donor priorities – as seen above with programmes targeting the eradication of FGC in Ethiopia (Freedman, 2015). Another example of donor-driven aid is the United States' Mexico City policy – or the 'Global Gag Rule' – whose latest iteration refuses all health-related funding for recipients that provide abortion care, forcing recipients to choose between US funding and providing appropriate access to safe reproductive health services (Duroch and Schulte-Hillen, 2014; IPPF, 2019; Marie Stopes International, 2019). More widely, in a context where needs almost invariably exceed available funding, the programmes that tend to be cut first are those targeting gender equality (Freedman, 2010; Ward, 2016; CARE, 2018).

## 5.3 Including men

In the past ten years, men and boys have begun to be seen as potential or actual victims of gender stereotypes and SGBV, rather than simply perpetrators.<sup>14</sup> The Global Summit to End Sexual

---

<sup>14</sup> Troublingly, the topic of SGBV against men is also sometimes appropriated by anti-feminist groups against progress for women (Edwards, 2010; Connell, 2005).

Violence in Conflict was notable for explicitly mentioning men and boys as survivors of SGBV, though the evidence is still ‘nascent’, and the event opened up new space for further research and inclusion in SGBV guidelines and policies (Dakkak et al., 2007; Kirby, 2015). Dolan (2015) suggests that understanding homophobia and transphobia as forms of gendered discrimination means necessarily recognising men and gender non-conforming individuals as targets and victims of GBV and SGBV.

Even this belated attention to men and boys has seen a backlash. Bringing men into the gender and development space in the 1990s was met with arguments that such moves risked women’s hard-fought gains, and this argument persists (White, 2000). Responding to Dolan, Ward (2016: 279) argues that the inclusion of men, as well as LGBTI populations, shifts focus away from women and masks male privilege, ‘represent[ing] a regression rather than an advancement for the GBV field’.

## 5.4 Moving beyond the binary

Humanitarian work on gender operates overwhelmingly in binary terms, contrasting women and men, female and male, femininity and masculinity – and presuming that each of these maps neatly onto the others. Although men have recently begun to be included in gender programming, McGuinness and Rejali (2019: n.p.) note that the conversation ‘falls short ... of understanding the limits that a heteronormative framework for analysing gender can impose on understandings of men and masculinities (or dynamics of conflict and response as a whole)’. Only recently has there been a push to understand gender in non-binary terms and to take non-heteronormative practices and identities into account (Myrntinen and Daigle, 2017). However, while some organisations are using an intersectional approach, in practice few have gone beyond a ‘traditional, predominantly binary approach to gender and sexuality’ (McGuinness

and Rejali, 2019: n.p.). On the ground, the heteronormative nuclear family remains the basic unit of analysis for aid distributions, and little provision is made for non-binary bathroom facilities (Daigle and Myrntinen, 2018).

## 5.5 The ethics of challenging diverse norms

Questions around whose norms and ideas of gender equality should be promoted were raised as early as the 1980 UN Second World Conference on Women. Camps run by the UN and Western agencies often reconstruct Western neo-colonial systems and asymmetrical power dynamics. As noted above, the kinds of changes to gendered norms and dynamics that humanitarian actors might seek to promote – often targeting practices deemed ‘traditional’ or ‘backward’ – have themselves been criticised for perpetuating colonial relationships between humanitarian actors and populations in crisis.

Debate has centred on whether an emergency is the appropriate time to change gender norms. Some argue that crises are when opportunities for women to gain new roles and new positions of influence emerge (Gell, 1999; IASC, 2006; ECHO, 2013; Le Masson et al., 2016; Faldutra Santos, 2019). The counterargument posits that emergencies are times to provide stability and ensure that basic needs are met, while gender-transformative work should wait until the immediate crisis has been resolved. For example in Uganda, Oxfam chose to set up governing structures similar to pre-crisis ones, even if those structures did not offer women equal opportunities, so that they could be more easily assimilated into post-crisis governance (Adoko, 1999). Similarly, Islamic Relief (2015) splits its gender policy into humanitarian (immediate) or development (longer-term), with the former limited to participation, protection and accountability measures; disaster risk reduction programmes; and addressing disproportionate vulnerability.



---

## 6 The road ahead

Humanitarianism's frameworks for understanding and operationalising not just gender but also vulnerability, empowerment and protection create aporias in its ability to see, understand and act on gender. This survey of existing research on gender and displacement highlights that the persistent conflation of 'gender' with 'women' acts as a limiting factor for understanding (1) women as diverse and impacted by an intersectional range of factors; (2) GBV against men and non-binary people as *gendered*; and (3) gender as *relational*, requiring engagement with people of all genders to achieve meaningful understanding and change (Myrntinen et al., 2014).

The research surveyed here also underlines that the gender-based risks and challenges observed in crises echo those seen before, after and beyond crisis settings. That is to say, people marginalised by reason of their gender – women, non-binary individuals, certain men – live in a *constant state of crisis* that transcends humanitarian settings themselves.

Gendered threats and exclusion are certainly exacerbated by conflict and disasters, but they are not confined to those spaces alone, and thus solutions to them cannot be found in isolation either. Going forward, therefore, humanitarians would do well to question the silo-ing of their work from the interconnected fields of peacebuilding, development and gender justice – and to partner with local women's rights, feminist and LGBTI groups on feminist, consultative, grassroots, localised responses.

Research and learning on gender are often ignored in humanitarian programming, but the impact of that programming itself on affected populations also needs to be addressed (ActionAid et al., 2018). To speak to these gaps, this project will study the everyday lives of refugees and IDPs in three settings – the tribal regions of Pakistan, northern Uganda and the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh – to learn how gender roles and norms are shaped by both displacement and humanitarian response.

---

# References

- ACF – Action against Hunger (2014) *ACF gender policy: increasing the impact of ACF's work through gender equality programming*. Paris: ACF
- ActionAid and UN Women (2017) *Empower women and girls (Transformation 3D) and gender as a cross-cutting issue: analytical paper on WHS self-reporting*. New York: Agenda for Humanity
- ActionAid, UN Women and Women's Refugee Commission (2018) *Empower women and girls and gender as a cross-cutting issue: analytical paper on WHS self-reporting on agenda for humanity transformation 3D*. New York: Agenda for Humanity
- Adoko, J. (1999) 'Representative systems and accountability structures in refugee settlements in Ikafu, Uganda' in F. Porter, I. Smyth and C. Sweetman (eds) *Gender works: Oxfam experience in practice and policy*, 68–75. Oxford: Oxfam
- Ager, A., Ager, W. and Long, L. (1995) 'The differential experience of Mozambican refugee women and men' *Journal of Refugee Studies* 8(3): 265–287
- Allen, T. (1996) 'A flight from refuge: the return of refugees from Southern Sudan in northwest Uganda in the late 1980s' in T. Allen (ed.) *In search of cool ground: war, flight and homecoming in northeast Africa*. London: James Currey Ltd
- Anderson, J.L. (2009) 'Gender, local justice, and ownership: confronting masculinities and femininities in northern Uganda' *Peace Research* 41(2): 59–83
- Baines, E.K. (2004) *Vulnerable bodies: gender, the UN and the global refugee crisis*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Banda, J. and Atansah, P. (2016) *An agenda for harmful cultural practices and girls' empowerment*. Washington DC: Center for Global Development
- Barbelet, V. (2018) *Older people in displacement: falling through the cracks of emergency responses*. London: ODI
- Barbelet, V. and Wake, C. (2017) *Livelihoods in displacement: from refugee perspectives to aid agency response*. London: ODI
- Barnett, M. (ed.) (2016) *Paternalism beyond borders*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press
- Berthiaume, C. (1995) '(Refugee women) – do we really care?' *Refugees Magazine* 100
- Bilgili, Ö., Loschmann, C. and Siegel, M. (2017) *The gender-based effects of displacement: the case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda*. KNOMAD Working Paper 21
- Blackwell, A., Casey, J., Habeeb, R., Annan, J. and Falb, K. (2019) 'Women's status and qualitative perceptions of a cash assistance programme in Raqqa Governorate, Syria' *Gender and Development* 27(2): 253–271
- Bochenek, M. and Knight, K. (2012) 'Establishing a third gender category in Nepal: process and prognosis' *Emory International Law Review* 26: 11–61
- Bouta, T., Frerks, G. and Bannon, I. (2005) *Gender, conflict, and development*. Washington DC: World Bank
- Bouvier, V.M. (2016) *Gender and the role of women in Colombia's peace process*. New York: UN Women and United States Institute of Peace
- Bryer, D. (1999) 'Preface' in F. Porter, I. Smyth and C. Sweetman (eds) *Gender works: Oxfam experience in practice and policy*, 1–2. Oxford: Oxfam
- Buck, T., Morton, A., Allen N.S. and Zurikashvili, F. (2000) *Aftermath: effects of conflict on internally displaced women in Georgia*. Working Paper 310. Washington DC: USAID

- Buscher, D. (2010) 'Refugee women: twenty years on' *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 29(2): 4–20
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge
- Butt, A.P., Jayasinghe, N. and Zaaroura, M. (2019) *Integrating gender in research planning*. Oxford: Oxfam
- Calderon, V., Gafaro, M. and Ibanez, A. M. (2011) *Forced migration, female labour force participation, and intra-household bargaining: does conflict empower women?* MICROCON Research Working Paper 56. Brighton UK: MICROCON
- Callamard, A. (2002) 'Refugee women: a gendered and political analysis of the refugee experience' in D. Joly (ed.) *Global changes in asylum regimes. migration, minorities and citizenship*: 137–153. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Cardoso, L.F., Gupta, J., Shuman, S., Cole, H., Kpebo, D. and Falb, K.L. (2016) 'What factors contribute to intimate partner violence against women in urban, conflict-affected settings? Qualitative findings from Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire' *Journal of Urban Health* 93(2): 364–378
- CARE (2009) *CARE international gender policy*. Geneva: CARE
- CARE (2018) *CARE policy discussion paper – ways forward on gender and women's participation in humanitarian action*. Geneva: CARE
- Charlesworth, H. (2005) 'Not waving but drowning: gender mainstreaming and human rights in the United Nations' *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18: 1–18
- Charlesworth, H. and Chinkin, C. (2013) *The new UN 'gender architecture': the creation of UN Women*. Canberra, Australia: Regulatory Institutions Network (RegNet)
- Chynoweth, S. (2018) *'It's happening to our men as well': sexual violence against Rohingya men and boys*. New York: Women's Refugee Commission
- Connell, R.W. (2005) 'Change among the gatekeepers: men, masculinities, and gender equality in the global arena' *Signs* 30(3): 1801–1825
- Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S. and Walicki, N. (2015) *Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile*. London: ODI/HPG
- Daigle, M. and Myrtilinen, H. (2018) 'Bringing diverse sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) into peacebuilding policy and practice' *Gender and Development* 26(1): 103–120
- Dakkak, H., Eklund, L. and Tellier, S. (2007) 'Gender and reform: getting the right data right' *Forced Migration Review* 29: 42–44
- Daley, P. (1991) 'Gender, displacement and social reproduction: settling Burundian refugees in Tanzania' *Journal of Refugee Studies* 4(3): 248–266
- DeJong, J., Sbeity, F., Schlecht, J., et al. (2017) 'Young lives disrupted: gender and well-being among adolescent Syrian refugees in Lebanon' *Conflict and Health* 11(Suppl 1)
- De Vriese, M. (2006) *Refugee livelihoods: a review of the evidence*. Geneva: UNHCR
- Dietrich, L. and Carter, S.E. (2017) *Gender and conflict analysis in ISIS affected communities of Iraq*. Oxford: Oxfam International
- Dolan, C. (2002) 'Collapsing masculinities and weak states – a case study of northern Uganda' in F. Cleaver (ed.) *Masculinities matter! Men, gender and development*. London: Zed Books
- Dolan, C. (2015) 'Letting go of the gender binary: charting new pathways for humanitarian interventions on gender-based violence' *International Review of the Red Cross* 96(894): 485–501
- Duroch, F. and Schulte-Hillen, C. (2014) 'Care for victims of sexual violence, an organization pushed to its limits: the case of Médecins Sans Frontières' *International Review of the Red Cross* 96(894): 601–624
- Eade, D. (1999) 'From the slipstream to the mainstream: incorporating gender into The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief' in Porter, F., Smyth, I. and Sweetman, C. (eds) *Gender works: Oxfam experience in practice and policy*: 286–296. Oxford: Oxfam
- ECHO – European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (2013) *Gender: different needs, adapted assistance*. Brussels: European Commission
- Ecke, J., Saydee, G., Nyan, J.W., et al. (2016) 'The subjective and economic well-being of repatriated Liberian refugees from Ghana' *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 35(3): 119–143

- Edwards, A. (2010) 'Transitioning gender: feminist engagement with international refugee law and policy 1950–2010' *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 29(2): 21–45
- El-Bushra, J. (2017) 'Why does armed conflict recur, and what has gender got to do with it?' LSE Women, Peace and Security Working Paper 8/2017
- El-Bushra, J. and Sahl, I. (2005) *Cycles of violence: gender relations and armed conflict*. Nairobi: Acord
- El Jack, A. (2010) "'Education is my mother and father": the "invisible" women of Sudan' *Refuge* 27(2): 19–29
- El-Masri, R., Harvey, C. and Garwood, R. (2013) *Shifting sands: changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon*. Oxford Oxfam International and ABAAD
- Ensor, M.O. (2014) 'Displaced girlhood: gendered dimensions of coping and social change among conflict-affected South Sudanese youth' *Refuge* 30(1): 15–24
- Erikson, A. and Rastogli, S. (2015) *Private violence, public concern: intimate partner violence in humanitarian settings*. New York: International Rescue Committee
- Eriksson Baaz, M. and Stern, M. (2013) *Sexual violence as a weapon of war? Perceptions, prescriptions, problems in the Congo and beyond*. London: Zed Books
- Ezard, N. (2014) 'It's not just the alcohol: gender, alcohol use, and intimate partner violence in Mae La refugee camp, Thailand, 2009' *Substance Use and Misuse* 49(6): 684–693
- Ezard, N., Oppenheimer, E., Burton, A., et al. (2011) 'Six rapid assessments of alcohol and other substance use in populations displaced by conflict' *Conflict and Health* 5(1)
- Fal-dutra Santos, R. (2019) *Challenging patriarchy: gender equality and humanitarian principles*. Geneva: ICRC
- Falb, K.L., Annan, J., King, E., Hopkins, J., Kpebo, D. and Gupta, J. (2014) 'Gender norms, poverty and armed conflict in Côte D'Ivoire: engaging men in women's social and economic empowerment programming' *Health Education Research* 29(6): 1015–1027
- Formson, C. and Hilhorst, D. (2016) *The many faces of transactional sex: women's agency, livelihoods and risk factors in humanitarian contexts: a literature review*. Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium Working Paper 41. London: ODI
- Franz, B. (2003) 'Bosnian refugee women in (re)settlement: gender relations and social mobility' *Feminist Review* 73: 86–103
- Fraser, E. and Nwadinobi, E. (2018) 'Harmful cultural practices towards widows'. VAWG Helpdesk research report no. 196 ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c5966f3e5274a318116c3d0/VAWG\\_Helpdesk\\_Report\\_196\\_Widows.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c5966f3e5274a318116c3d0/VAWG_Helpdesk_Report_196_Widows.pdf))
- Freedman, J. (2010) 'Mainstreaming gender in refugee protection' *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23(4): 589–607
- Freedman, J. (2015) *Gendering the international asylum and refugee debate*, 2nd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Gardner, J. and El-Bushra, J. (2016) *The impact of war on Somali men, and its effects on the family, women and children*. Rift Valley Institute Briefing Paper. Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute and UNICEF
- Gell, F. (1999) 'Gender concerns in emergencies' in F. Porter, I. Smyth and C. Sweetman (eds) *Gender works: Oxfam experience in practice and policy*: 37–46. Oxford: Oxfam
- Getachew, K. N. (1996) 'The displacement and return of pastoralists in southern Ethiopia' in T. Allen (ed.) *In search of cool ground: war, flight and homecoming in northeast Africa*. London: James Currey Ltd
- Grabska, K. (2011) 'Constructing "modern gendered civilised" women and men: Gender-mainstreaming in refugee camps' *Gender and Development* 19(1): 81–93
- Grabska, K. (2012) 'Marrying on credit: the burden of bridewealth on refugee youth' *FMR* 40: 7–8
- Grabska, K. (2013) 'The return of displaced Nuer in Southern Sudan: women becoming men?' *Development and Change* 44(5): 1135–1157

- Grabska, K. and Fanjoy, M. (2015) ‘And when I become a man’: translocal coping with precariousness and uncertainty among returnee men in South Sudan’ *Social Analysis* 59(1): 76–95
- Gressmann, W. (2016) *From the ground up: gender and conflict analysis in Yemen*. Oxford: Oxfam International
- Groves, L. (2005) *UNHCR’s age and gender mainstreaming pilot project 2004: synthesis report*. Geneva: UNHCR
- Hampshire, K., Porter, G., Kilpatrick, K., et al. (2008) ‘Liminal spaces: changing inter-generational relations among long-term Liberia’ *Human Organization* 67(1): 25–36
- Hanmer, L., Arango, D.J., Rubiano, E., et al. (2018) *How does poverty differ among refugees? Taking a gender lens to the data on Syrian refugees in Jordan*. Policy Research Working Paper 8616. Washington DC: World Bank
- Hilhorst, D., Porter, H. and Gordon, R. (2018) ‘Gender, sexuality, and violence in humanitarian crises’ *Disasters* 42(S1): S3–S16
- Hoodfar, H. (2008) ‘The long road home: adolescent Afghan refugees in Iran contemplate return’ in J. Hart (ed.) *Years of conflict: adolescence, political violence and displacement*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Horn, R., Puffer, E.S., Roesch, E. and Lehmann, H. (2014) ‘Women’s perceptions of effects of war on intimate partner violence and gender roles in two post-conflict West African countries: consequences and unexpected opportunities’ *Conflict and Health* 8(1-2): 17–33
- HPG – Humanitarian Policy Group (2016) *Time to let go: remaking humanitarian action for the modern era*. London: ODI
- HRW – Human Rights Watch (2010) *‘As if we weren’t human’: discrimination and violence against women with disabilities in northern Uganda*. New York: Human Rights Watch
- Hyndman, J. (1998) ‘Managing difference: gender and culture in humanitarian emergencies’ *Gender, Place and Culture* 5(3): 241–260
- Hyndman, J. and Alwis, M. de (2003) ‘Beyond gender: towards a feminist analysis of humanitarianism and development in Sri Lanka’ *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 31(3/4): 212–226
- Hynes, M.E., Sterk, C.E., Hennink, M., et al. (2016) ‘Exploring gender norms, agency and intimate partner violence among displaced Colombian women: a qualitative assessment’ *Global Public Health* 11(1–2): 17–33
- IASC – Inter-Agency Standing Committee (1999) *Policy statement for the integration of a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance*. Geneva: IASC
- IASC (2005) *Gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings: focusing on prevention of and response to sexual violence in emergencies*. Geneva: IASC
- IASC (2006) *Women, girls, boys and men: different needs – equal opportunities*. Geneva: IASC
- IASC (2008) *Gender equality in humanitarian action*. Geneva: IASC
- IASC (2015) *Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action: reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery*. Geneva: IASC
- IASC (2017) *Policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action*. Geneva: IASC
- IASC (2018) *The gender handbook for humanitarian action*. Geneva: IASC
- IFRC – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (1999) *Gender policy*. Geneva: IFRC
- IFRC (2013) *IFRC strategic framework on gender and diversity issues 2013–2020*. Geneva: IFRC
- Ingiriis, M.H. and Hoehne, M.V. (2013) ‘The impact of civil war and state collapse on the roles of Somali women: a blessing in disguise’ *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7(2): 314–333
- IPPF – International Planned Parenthood Foundation (2019) ‘The global gag rule’ ([www.ippf.org/global-gag-rule](http://www.ippf.org/global-gag-rule))
- IPSOS Group SA (2018) *Unpacking gendered realities in displacement: the status of Syrian refugee women in Lebanon*. Cairo: UN Women

- Islamic Relief (2015) *Gender justice policy*. Birmingham: Islamic Relief
- Jansen, S. (2008) 'Misplaced masculinities: status loss and the location of gendered subjectivities amongst "non-transnational" Bosnian refugees' *Anthropological Theory* 8(2): 181–200
- Jaquette, J. (1995) 'Losing the battle/winning the war: international politics, women's issues, and the 1980 mid-decade conference' in A. Winslow (ed.) *Women, politics, and the United Nations*: 45–59. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press
- Jewkes, R., Flood, M. and Lang, J. (2015) 'From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls' *The Lancet* 385(9977): 1580–1589
- Justino, P., Cardona, I., Mitchell, R. and Muller, C. (2012) *Women working for recovery: the impact of female employment on family and community welfare after conflict*. New York: UN Women
- Kandiyoti, D. (2005) *The politics of gender and reconstruction in Afghanistan*. Occasional Paper 4. Geneva: UNRISD
- Kaya, Z.N. and Luchtenberg, K.N. (2018) *Displacement and women's economic empowerment: voices of displaced women in the Kurdistan region of Iraq*. London: GAPS UK, LSE Centre for Women Peace and Security and Women for Women International
- Kibreab, G. (2003) 'Rethinking household headship among Eritrean refugees and returnees' *Development and Change* 34(2): 311–338
- Kirby, P. (2015) 'Ending sexual violence in conflict: the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and its critics' *International Affairs* 91(3): 457–472
- Kizza, D., Knizek, B.L., Kinyanda, E. and Hjelmeland, H. (2012a) 'Men in despair: a qualitative psychological autopsy study of suicide in northern Uganda' *Transcultural Psychiatry* 49(50): 696–717
- Kizza, D., Knizek, B.L., Kinyanda, E. and Hjelmeland, H. (2012b) 'An escape from agony: a qualitative psychological autopsy study of women's suicide in a post-conflict Northern Uganda' *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being* 7
- Kleist, N. (2010) 'Negotiating respectable masculinity: gender and recognition in the Somali diaspora' *African Diaspora* 3(2): 185–206
- Krause, U. (2014) 'Analysis of empowerment of refugee women in camps and settlements' *Journal of Internal Displacement* 4(1): 29–52
- Krystalli, R., Hawkins, A. and Wilson, K. (2018) "'I followed the flood": a gender analysis of the moral and financial economies of forced migration' *Disasters* 42: S17–S39
- Lavinas Picq, M. and Thiel, M. (2015) 'Introduction: sexualities in world politics' in M. Lavinas Picq and M. Thiel (eds) *Sexualities in world politics: how LGBTQ+ claims shape international relations*: 1–22. London: Routledge
- LaViolette, N. (2010) "'UNHCR guidance note on refugee claims relating to sexual orientation and gender identity": a critical commentary' *International Journal of Refugee Law* 22(2): 173–208
- Le Masson, V., Lim, S., Budimir, M. and Podboj, J.S. (2016) *Disasters and violence against women and girls: can disasters shake social norms and power relations?* London: ODI
- Lehrer, K. (2009) *Gender differences in labour market participation during conflict: evidence from displaced people's camps in northern Uganda*. University of British Columbia Mimeo
- Levine, S., Ullah, Z., Khan, S.U., et al. (2019) *The impact of displacement on gender roles and relations: the case of IDPs from FATA*. London: ODI
- Lo, J., Patel, P., Shultz, J.M., Ezard, N. and Roberts, B. (2017) 'A systematic review on harmful alcohol use among civilian populations affected by armed conflict in low- and middle-income countries' *Substance Use and Misuse* 52(11): 1494–1510
- Lokot, M. (2018a) 'Syrian refugees: thinking beyond gender stereotypes' *Forced Migration Review* 57: 33–35
- Lokot, M. (2018b) "'Blood doesn't become water"? Syrian social relations during displacement' *Journal of Refugee Studies* 32(1): 162–163

- Manchanda, R. (2004) 'Gender conflict and displacement: contesting "infantilisation" of forced migrant women' *Economic and Political Weekly* 39(37): 4179–4186
- Marcus, R. (1996) 'Guatemala' in B. Byrne, R. Marcus and T. Powers-Stevens (1996) *Gender, conflict and development. Volume II: case studies: Cambodia; Rwanda; Kosovo; Algeria; Somalia; Guatemala and Eritrea*. Brighton UK: IDS
- Marecek, J., Crawford, M. and Popp, D. (2004) 'On the construction of gender, sex, and sexualities' in A.H. Eagly, A.E. Beall and R.J. Sternberg (eds) *The psychology of gender*, 192–216. New York, NY, US: Guilford Press
- Marie Stopes International (2019) 'One year on: the devastating effects of the Global Gag Rule'
- Marlowe, J.M. (2011) 'Walking the line': Southern Sudanese masculinities and reconciling one's past with the present' *Ethnicities* 12(1): 50–66
- Martin, S.F. (2004) *Refugee women*. Maryland: Lexington Books
- Martin, S.F. (2017) 'UNHCR policy on refugee women: a 25-year retrospective' in S. Buckley-Zistel and U. Krause (eds) *Gender, violence, refugees*: 21–43. Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Matsuoka, A. and Sorenson, J. (1999) 'Eritrean Canadian refugee households as sites of gender renegotiation' in D. Indra (ed.) *Engendering forced migration: theory and practice*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Mazurana, D., Benelli, P., Gupta, H. and Walker, P. (2011) *Sex and age matter: improving humanitarian response in emergencies*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University
- McGuinness, E. and Rejali, S. (2019) 'Beyond binaries: an intersectional approach to humanitarian action' *Humanitarian Law and Policy*. Geneva: ICRC
- McLeod, L. (2016) 'The women, peace and security resolutions: UNSCR 1325 to 2122' in J. Steans and D. Tepe-Belfrage *Handbook on gender in world politics*, 271–279. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar
- Meertens, D. (2004) 'A life project out of turmoil: displacement and gender in Colombia' in P. Essed, G. Frerks and J. Schrijvers (eds) *Refugees and the transformation of societies: agency, policies, ethics and Politics*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Mertens, C. and Myrntinen, H. (2019) "'A real woman waits" – heteronormative respectability, neo-liberal betterment and echoes of coloniality in SGBV programming in eastern DR Congo' *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 13(4): 418–439
- Momsen, J.H. (2002) 'Myth or math: the waxing and waning of the female-headed household' *Progress in Development Studies* 2(2): 145–151
- Myrntinen, H. and Daigle, M. (2017) *When merely existing is a risk: sexual and gender minorities in conflict, displacement and peacebuilding*. London: International Alert
- Myrntinen, H. and Swaine, A. (2015) 'Monster myths, selfies and grand declarations: a conversation on the global summit to end sexual violence in conflict' *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17(3): 496–502
- Myrntinen, H., Naujoks, J. and El-Bushra, J. (2014) *Re-thinking gender in peacebuilding*. London: International Alert
- Neal, S., Stone, N. and Ingham, R. (2016) 'The impact of armed conflict on adolescent transitions: a systematic review of quantitative research on age of sexual debut, first marriage and first birth in young women under the age of 20 years' *BMC Public Health* 16(1): 1–11
- Neenan, J. (2018) *Closing the protection gap for children born of war: addressing stigmatisation and the intergenerational impact of sexual violence in conflict*. London: LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security
- Norwegian Refugee Council (2014) *Life can change: securing housing, land and property rights for displaced women*. Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council
- Nyanzi, S. (2013) 'Homosexuality, sex work, and HIV/AIDS in displacement and post-conflict settings: the case of refugees in Uganda' *International Peacekeeping* 20(4): 450–468

- Nzatuzola, J.B.L. (2005) 'Gender and family life in Angola: some aspects of the post-war conflict concerning displaced persons' *African Sociological Review* 9(2): 106–133
- OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017) *Gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected situations: a review of donor support*. Paris: OECD
- Okello, M.C. and Hovil, L. (2007) 'Confronting the reality of gender-based violence in northern Uganda' *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1(3): 433–443
- Olivius, E. (2016) 'Constructing humanitarian selves and refugee others' *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18(2): 270–290
- Opata, G.P. and Singo, S.M. (2004) *The economics of displacement: a study of the changing gender roles, relations and its impact on the livelihood and empowerment of women refugees in Kenyan camps*. Eldoret, Kenya: Moi University Press
- Oxfam Independent Commission (2019) *Committing to change, protecting people: toward a more accountable Oxfam*
- Palmay, I. (2008) 'Gender, race and culture: unpacking discourses of tradition and culture in UNHCR refugee policy' *Annual Review of Critical Psychology* 6: 125–133
- Patel, S.H., Muyinda, H., Sewankambo, N.K., et al. (2012) 'In the face of war: examining sexual vulnerabilities of Acholi adolescent girls living in displacement camps in conflict-affected Northern Uganda' *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 12(1): 38
- Pearce, E. (2019) *'We need to write our own names': gender equality and women's empowerment in the Rohingya humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar*. New York: Women's Refugee Commission
- Petesich, P. (2012) *The clash of violent conflict, good jobs, and gender norms in four economies*. Washington DC: World Bank
- Pittaway, E. and Bartolomei, L. (2018) *From rhetoric to reality: achieving gender equality for refugee women and girls*. Waterloo, Canada: Centre for International Governance Innovation
- Plan International (2017) *Global policy: gender equality and inclusion*. Woking, UK: Plan International
- Rajasingham-Senanayake, D. (2004) 'Between victim and agent: women's ambivalent empowerment in displacement' in P. Essed, G. Frerks and J. Schrijvers (eds) *Refugees and the transformation of societies: agency, policies, ethics and politics*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Read-Hamilton, S. (2014) 'Gender-based violence: a confused and contested term' *Humanitarian Exchange* 60: 5–8 (<https://odihpn.org/magazine/gender-based-violence-a-confused-and-contested-term/>)
- Ritchie, H.A. (2018) 'Gender and enterprise in fragile refugee settings: female empowerment amidst male emasculation – a challenge to local integration?' *Disasters* 42: S40–S60
- Rumbach, J. and Knight, K. (2014) 'Sexual and gender minorities in humanitarian emergencies' in L.W. Roeder (ed.) *Issues of gender and sexual orientation in humanitarian emergencies: risks and risk reduction*. Berlin: Springer Verlag
- Save the Children (2017) *Transforming inequalities, transforming lives*. London: Save the Children
- Skjelsbæk, I. (2001) 'Sexual violence and war: mapping out a complex relationship' *European Journal of International Relations* 7(2): 211–237
- Slegh, H., Barker, G. and Levitov, R. (2014) *Gender relations, sexual and gender-based violence and the effects of conflict on women and men in North Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*. Washington DC and Capetown: Promundo-US and Sonke Gender Justice
- Sommers, M. and Schwartz, S. (2011) *Dowry and division: youth and state building in South Sudan*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace
- Sorensen, B. (1998) *Women and post-conflict reconstruction: issues and sources*. Geneva: UNRISD
- Sphere Project (2011) *Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*. Geneva: The Sphere Project



- Sphere Project (2018) *Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*. Geneva: The Sphere Project
- Stark, L. and Ager, A. (2011) 'A systematic review of prevalence studies of gender-based violence in complex emergencies' *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* 12(3): 127–134
- Szczepanikova, A. (2005) 'Gender relations in a refugee camp: a case of Chechens seeking asylum in the Czech Republic' *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 18(3): 281–298
- Thomas, V. and Beck, T. (2010) *Changing the way UNHCR does business? An evaluation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy, 2004–2009*. Geneva: UNHCR
- Thompson, M. (2006) 'Women, gender, and conflict: making the connections' *Development in Practice* 16(3–4): 342–353
- Ticktin, M. (2011) 'The gendered human of humanitarianism: medicalising and politicising sexual violence' *Gender and History* 23(2): 250–265
- Turner, S. (1999) *Angry young men in camps: gender, age and class relations among Burundian refugees in Tanzania*. Working Paper 9. Denmark: Roskilde University
- Turner, S. (2000) 'Vindicating masculinity: the fate of promoting gender equality' *Forced Migration Review* 9: 8–9
- UN – United Nations (1995) *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Beijing: UN
- UN (2019) *Conflict related sexual violence: report of the United Nations Secretary-General*. New York: United Nations
- UN Secretary-General (2002) *Investigation into sexual exploitation of refugees by aid workers in West Africa*. A/57/465
- UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund (2015) *What is the minimum initial service package?* New York: UNFPA
- UNGA – United Nations General Assembly (1997) *Report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 1997*. New York: UN
- UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1990) *Policy on refugee women*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (1991) *Guidelines on the protection of refugee women*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (1992) *A framework for people-oriented planning in refugee situations taking account of women, men and children*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (1995) *Sexual violence against refugees: guidelines on prevention and response*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (1997) *Strategies to eradicate harmful traditional practices*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (1998) *Strategy for mainstreaming gender equality into UNHCR's protection and programs*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (1999a) *Refugee women and a gender perspective approach*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (1999b) *UNHCR global report 1999 – refugee women*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2001a) *Good practices in gender equality mainstreaming: a practical guide to empowerment*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2001b) *UNHCR's commitments to refugee women*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2003) *Sexual and gender-based violence against refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons: guidelines for prevention and response*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2008a) *Handbook for the protection of women and girls*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2008b) *Guidance note on refugee claims relating to sexual orientation and gender identity*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2011) *Age, gender and diversity policy: working with people and communities for equality and protection*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2013) *From 1975 to 2013: UNHCR's gender equality chronology*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2018) *Policy on age, gender and diversity*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNHCR (2019) *Stepping up: refugee education in crisis*. Geneva: UNHCR

- UNHCR and Refugee Law Project (2012) *Working with men and boy survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in forced displacement*. Geneva: UNHCR and Refugee Law Project
- UNHCR and Save the Children UK (2002) *Note for implementing and operational partners on sexual violence & exploitation: the experience of refugee children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone*. Geneva: UNHCR
- UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund (2010) *The dynamics of social change: towards the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting in five African countries*. Innocenti Insight. Florence: UNICEF
- UNICEF (2016) *Running on empty: the situation of Syrian children in host communities in Jordan*. Jordan: UNICEF Jordan Country Office
- UNICEF (2017) *Including children with disabilities in humanitarian action: general guidance: education*. New York: UNICEF
- Utas, M. (2005) ‘Victimcy, girlfriending, soldiering: tactic agency in a young woman’s social navigation of the Liberian war zone’ *Anthropological Quarterly* 78(2): 403–430
- Vu, A., Adam, A., Wirtz, A., et al. (2014) ‘The prevalence of sexual violence among female refugees in complex humanitarian emergencies: a systematic review and meta-analysis’ *PLoS Currents Disasters* 18(6)
- Ward, J. (2016) ‘It’s not about the gender binary, it’s about the gender hierarchy: a reply to “letting go of the gender binary”’ *International Review of the Red Cross* 98(1): 275–298
- Watson, C. (1996) *The flight, exile and return of Chadian refugees: a case study with a special focus on women*. Geneva: UNRISD
- White, S.C. (2000) “‘Did the Earth move?’ The hazards of bringing men and masculinities into gender and development’ *IDS Bulletin* 31(2): 33–41
- Winter, B., Thompson, S. and Jeffreys, S. (2002) ‘The UN approach to harmful traditional practices: some conceptual problems’ *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 4(1): 72–94
- WRC – Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC) (2016) *Mean streets: identifying and responding to urban refugees’ risks of gender-based violence*. New York: Women’s Refugee Commission
- WRC (2019) *‘We have a broken heart’: sexual violence against refugees in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya. The experiences of Congolese, Somali, and South Sudanese men, boys, and trans women*. New York: Women’s Refugee Commission
- WRC and IRC – Women’s Refugee Commission and International Rescue Committee (2015) *‘I See that it is possible’: building capacity for disability inclusion in gender-based violence programming in humanitarian settings*. New York: Women’s Refugee Commission and International Rescue Committee
- Wright, H. (2015) ‘Ending sexual violence and the war system – or militarizing feminism?’ *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17(3): 503–507
- Wringe, A., Yankah, E., Parks, T., et al. (2019) ‘Altered social trajectories and risks of violence among young Syrian women seeking refuge in Turkey: a qualitative study’ *BMC Women’s Health* 19(1)
- Yadav, P. (2016) ‘White sari – transforming widowhood in Nepal’ *Gender, Technology and Development* 20(1): 1–24
- Zalewski, M., Drumond, P., Prugl, E. and Stern, M. (2018) ‘Introduction: sexual violence against men in global politics’ in M. Zalewski, P. Drumond, E. Prugl and M. Stern (eds) *Sexual violence against men in global politics*. Oxford and New York: Routledge

# HPG

## Humanitarian Policy Group

---

The Humanitarian Policy Group is one of the world's leading teams of independent researchers and communications professionals working on humanitarian issues. It is dedicated to improving humanitarian policy and practice through a combination of high-quality analysis, dialogue and debate.

---

Readers are encouraged to quote or reproduce materials from this publication but, as copyright holders, ODI requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication. This and other HPG reports are available from [www.odi.org/hpg](http://www.odi.org/hpg).

This work is licensed under  
CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Humanitarian Policy Group  
Overseas Development Institute  
203 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NJ  
United Kingdom

Tel.: +44 (0) 20 7922 0300  
Fax.: +44 (0) 20 7922 0399  
Email: [hpgadmin@odi.org](mailto:hpgadmin@odi.org)  
Website: [odi.org/hpg](http://odi.org/hpg)

Cover photo: Dolls for sale at the  
Afghan Women's Bazaar, New  
Kabul Compound, Afghanistan.  
Credit: DVIDS

