Survey on Perceptions of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Carole Alsharabati
(carole.alsharabati@usj.edu.lb)
Jihad Nammour
(jihad.nammour@usj.edu.lb)

The methodology used and the results obtained are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not engage the organizations that supported this study.
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Introduction

Lebanon hosts 1.2 million Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR. As the Syrian crisis continues, pressure grows, policies develop, and relationships between refugees and host communities change. There are signs that Syrian refugees are becoming increasingly vulnerable, while worries are rising among Lebanese host communities. Media talk about lack of tolerance, or raise the issue of overstretched Lebanese capacities. Some raise the humanitarian question, others talk about security… In the meantime, the international community is restricting the number of Syrians able to gain legal entry, and questions are rising about availability of funds to sustain the continuous exodus of Syrian refugees.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the perceptions and level of safety and security among Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities in light of the new policies enacted by the Lebanese Government. Are Syrian refugees able to register with UNHCR? Do they have legal residence? Are they feeling welcome? Are they feeling safe and secure? Are they subject to assaults? And if so, by whom and how are they responding? Do they have access to services? What is the perception of the Lebanese host communities with regards to Syrian refugee presence? Do Lebanese feel safe and secure? Are they subject to assaults? Are they hearing worrying stories about Syrians? Are things getting better or worse over time? What is the cause behind tensions, and what drives security feelings on both sides?

This study will answer those and other questions through a survey administered among Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities across the country. We will start by a quick summary of policies recently enacted in Lebanon and a review of selected literature on perceptions of Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities. Next, the survey sampling methodology and survey results will be presented, leading to an analytical model, conclusions and policy implication.

Recent Policies in Lebanon

Initially, Lebanon is not party to the Geneva Convention of 1951 relating to Status of Refugees. As a result, since the beginning of the war in Syria, the Lebanese government has been trying to confront the crisis in an ad hoc manner, facing problems of coordination among ministries and weak capacity and lack of resources. By spring 2014, as the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon grew above one million, concerns started to be voiced openly. Panic was amplified as hundreds of thousands of people rushed to the Syrian embassy to participate to the Syrian presidential elections.

On October 23rd of 2014, the Lebanese Council of Ministers approved a paper entitled ‘Policy Paper on Syrian Refugees Displacement.’ The paper has three goals: (i) reducing the numbers of Syrian refugees in the country, (ii) ensuring security, and (iii) easing the burdens on the infrastructure. Concerned ministries should implement the policy and report to the Council of Ministers. The October 2014 policy recommendation stipulates more specifically the following:

1. Stop refugees’ entry at the border, with the exception of unpredicted humanitarian cases.
2. Require that UNHCR refrains from registering refugees except under approval of the Ministry of Social Affairs.
3. Encourage Syrian refugees to return to their country or other countries by all possible means. New General Security regulations introduced since January 2015 make it more difficult for Syrians to renew their residency by adding additional requirements.
4. Strict enforcement of Lebanese laws and revocation of refugee status from anyone who goes to Syria or violates Lebanese laws and entry terms.
5. Protect the Lebanese in all fields of economic activity and employment. In December 2014, the Ministry of Labor outlined professions confined to Lebanese citizens, excluding from these provisions Syrian workers in agriculture, cleaning and construction. A new requirement of sponsorship was introduced for workers in order to protect Lebanese employment.

These measures were still in place when the current study took place.

Current Situation

UNHCR published on March 2015 a “Government Policy and Protection Concerns” report highlighting that Syrian refugees are at risk:

“The USD 200 fee remains prohibitive for most refugees and therefore, there is a serious risk that most refugees will lose their legal status. They will be vulnerable to arrest and detention, and will face obstacles in securing civil documentation and assistance provided through public institutions, in particular as they will limit their movements. Moreover, the requirement of providing a ‘house commitment’ is a serious obstacle given that most do not have a lease agreement. For the relatively few who do, they will be vulnerable to pressure by landlords; these requirements impose a hurdle which is ripe for abuse.

Syrians who are not registered with UNHCR must secure a Lebanese sponsor to renew their temporary residence permit for a period of six months. Those who have resided in Lebanon for one year will also have to pay a fee of USD 200 and provide four other documents from Municipalities and landowners in order to demonstrate that they have secured housing. Lebanese families can only sponsor one Syrian individual or family and not for work purposes. Commercial or agricultural enterprises can sponsor Syrian workers, provided they can justify the need for the worker to the GSO.”

The report mentions 1407 Syrian refugee detentions, 11,000 evictions in 2014, 3,850 evictions in 2015 and 28,000 remaining at risk of eviction. 70% of Syrian Refugee new born don’t have birth certificates. It mentions fears of refoulement due to the fact that Syrians with expired or without legal status are by law given self-deportation order.

It raises the issue of strained community relations in the aftermath of the Ersal events of August 2014 with the erection of roadblocks, tit-for-tat kidnappings between various groups and attacks on informal settlements.

In an article called “Attacks on Syrians in Lebanon: Scapegoating, par excellence” (sept 17, 2014), Al-Akhbar mentions:

“Attacks on Syrians in Lebanon have been increasing and have become much more public and flagrant, especially after the events in Ersal. These attacks are often incited, implicitly and explicitly, by political elites from all sides and are usually dismissed as a means to protect the country and its people from what is perceived as an existential threat. In the end, Syrians with lower incomes and who lack any form of power are the ones that pay the price.”

According to the same article:

“One can point to the various statements over the past few years by current Minister of Foreign Affairs Gebran Bassil, or former Minister of Interior Marwan Charbel and his current successor Nouhad al-Machnouk, or Kataeb Party MP Samy Gemayel as well as Michel Aoun and other MPs, or the various municipality officials for districts in the Bekaa and elsewhere, as samples of how systematic these inflammatory statements directed against Syrians are. Regardless of who said what, and where they said it, they all inherently share the common trait of presenting Syrians as a homogeneous threat to the country.”

In another research published in October 2013, entitled “Understanding racism against Syrian refugees in Lebanon” Bassem Chit and Mohamad Ali Nayel explain that media either focuses on scapegoating against Syrians or talks about Lebanese racism, but never addresses the structural causes behind the problems. They talk about a “culture of diversion”. They refer to examples in the media like an article mentioning the large use of motorcycles Lebanese villages as a curse, or another one talking about the rise of prices in the Souk el Ahad and resulting antagonisms between Lebanese and Syrians.

“All in all, those responsible for economic policies in Lebanon, the establishment of working and accessible transportation systems, the management of markets, such as Souk Al-Ahad, are all outside the picture the media reports when tackling questions related to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The reader is left with two conclusions; either the Lebanese are inherently racist, as an unchanging fact, or Syrian refugees are greedy workers who steal jobs from poor Lebanese citizens.

The examples of media reporting on Syrian refugees in Lebanon are many and most follow these two stereotypes in one way or another. On rare occasions, articles point to the structural causes and the political environment that

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effortlessly manage to divert existing genuine resentment against the harsh conditions people face in Lebanon, through scapegoating foreign elements."\textsuperscript{5}

All this is taking place with a background of extreme feelings of insecurity among the Lebanese population, reporting about increase in crime, and overcrowded prisons. In 2013, Northern Ireland Cooperation Overseas (NI-CO) published a report related to feelings of safety and security of the Lebanese Population. According to this report, 2\% of the Lebanese population feels safe, 15\% feels somewhat safe, 22\% feels “rather not safe”, and 62\% don’t feel safe at all.\textsuperscript{6} In the meantime, voices are mounting regarding increase in criminality in Lebanon. According to the advisor of the ministry of interior, the number of small crimes have increased by more than 60\% since 2011 because of Syrian presence, and 26\% of the population of Lebanese prisons are Syrians.\textsuperscript{7} But all analysts do not have the same point of view. Another NI-CO report analyzing data from the first 6 months of 2014 shows that Syrian refugees were often arrested, but most were “defendants” and very few turned out to be “suspects” or “perpetrators”.\textsuperscript{8}

In the middle of these discussions and contradictory analyses, a survey of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities is the best way to put the finger on the pulse and understand what is happening. This is what this study is about.

**Study Objectives**

This study has several objectives in relation with research, policy, and academic training:

1. Measure Syrian refugee perception on safety and security, access to services, and analyze the causes behind those perceptions.
2. Measure perception of the Lebanese community with regards to Syrians, access to services, and perceived threats to local communities.
3. Instant information about tension levels in the country.
4. Involve university students and professors in research related to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.
5. Plan other research projects to further deepen the understanding around migration and Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

**Methodology**

Perceptions among Syrians and Lebanese were measured through a field survey. A team of 21 Lebanese and Syrian students and 3 professors visited more than 120 cities, towns, villages, and remote areas and filled about 1800

\textsuperscript{5} Bassem Chit, Mohamad Ali Nayel, "Understanding racism against Syrian refugees in Lebanon", Civil Society Knowledge Center, Lebanon Support, October 28, 2013.
\textsuperscript{7} Conference held at USJ on March 9, 2015.
questionnaires (1200 Syrians and 600 Lebanese respondents) measuring perceptions of safety among Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities. Two questionnaires were used, one for the Syrians and one for the Lebanese.

Since the main objective was to measure Syrian perception, the sampling was done according to UNHCR data. The sample of 1200 Syrian respondents was constructed proportionally to the distribution of refugees registered with UNHCR. Then, a proportional number of Lebanese respondents was taken in every region totaling a smaller sample of 600 Lebanese respondents. While the Syrian sample was meant to be representative of the population of Syrian refugees, the Lebanese sample is not supposed to represent the Lebanese population in general, but it was constructed to tackle the perception of Lebanese who were interacting with Syrians. This is why Lebanese respondents were taken proportionally to Syrian respondents in every region. In a region like Zahle or Ersal for example, the number of Lebanese respondents was much bigger than in the South.

At a local level, segmentation was done by type of housing coupled with random selection in every household. In every city/town/village the distribution of Syrian refugees between types of residence was estimated and stratification was done according to type of Syrian residence (i.e. apartments, shelters, places below standards like garage or construction sites, camps, etc.) Then, surveyors knocked on doors with random selection in every household (see Appendix).
As the survey covered a sensitive topic for Syrians who are not in their country and may fear to speak out, it was critical to include Lebanese and Syrian surveyors in the team. This allowed to later analyze the extent to which respondents overestimated their security level or restrained from reporting assaults and incidents. Six of the 21 surveyors were Syrian students and 15 were Lebanese students. The data was collected between June 18 and June 27.

The Syrian Questionnaire was longer and more detailed than Lebanese questionnaire. It covered:

- Gender/Age/Region of origin/Occupation/etc.
- Registration with UNHCR/General Security
- Safety level
- Feelings towards authorities (Police, GS, Army, Municipality)
- Feelings towards UNHCR, NGOS
- Feelings towards Lebanese
- Exposure to threat/insult/assault/blackmailing + source + response
- Subject to Raid/Search/Arrest/Eviction/etc.
- Movement restriction
- Checkpoints/Curfews/Random checks and patrols
- Problems accessing services (Health, Education, Electricity, etc.)
- Friendships in Lebanon
- Similarities between the 2 cultures
- Feeling welcome?

Lebanese Questionnaire attempted to mirror somehow the Syrian questionnaire, covering:

- Gender/Age/Region of origin/Occupation/etc.
- Safety level
- Positive/Negative impact from Syrian refugees
- Feelings towards Syrians: hatred/fear/respect/compassion
- Interaction with Syrian refugees
- Exposure to threat/insult/assault/blackmailing + source + response
- Perceptions toward checkpoints/curfews/random checks/patrols
- Syrian impact on public services
- Syrian friendships
- Willingness to hire a Syrian refugee
- Willingness to have Syrian refugees in the neighborhood
Descriptives

Syrian Refugees
On the Syrian side, the biggest concentration of respondents was in Greater Beirut, Tripoli/Miniye-Diniye/Akkar, and Zahle/Baalbeck/West Bekaa.

The data provides clear insights about Syrian refugees’ living conditions. The Syrian population is young and with a relatively low education level. The biggest proportion of respondents have primary/intermediary education. Very few have secondary education level or went to university. 60.3% live in apartments and shared apartments, while 34.5% live in camps and places below standards.
62% of Syrian refugees said they work, with an average family revenue in Lebanon around $392 per month, distributed between 580 for those who live in Mount Lebanon and $274 for those who live in Bekaa. Before they came to Lebanon, respondents used to earn on average $380, so almost the same amount (knowing that the purchasing power in Syria is much greater). In addition, the average family revenue earned before coming to Lebanon does not have a big variation across regions. This means that, while refugees were distributed across areas regardless of their revenue, income disparity started to appear in response to the job market where they settled.

Another breakdown of the revenue can be done by type of housing. Refugees in camps or places below standards are reporting a significantly lower income today ($222 and $255 respectively) than those living in shared apartments ($419) or shelters ($330-323). However, their income level before they came to Lebanon was almost the same across housing categories (close to $350). In other words, those living in camps and places below standards where earning almost the same in Syria as those living in shared apartments and Collective shelters; however today their revenue has become significantly lower.

Those numbers are reflected in the graphs below showing deepening inequality among Syrian refugees since they settled in Lebanon.

Interestingly, there are less Syrians in farming in Lebanon than there was in Syria (drop from 13% to 5%), more unskilled labor (increase from 11% to 26%), less business owners (drop from 16% to 6%), less students and more retired.
Lebanese Host Community

The Lebanese sample is not as young as the Syrian sample, with a higher education level (most respondents having reached secondary level), and an average revenue of $1406. Note that, as mentioned earlier, this sample is not necessarily representative of the Lebanese population as it was selected proportionally to the distribution of Syrian refugees.
Results

Registration and Safety
The survey started with an open question, asking respondents what is their main concern living in Lebanon. The top worry mentioned by 350 respondents is security. Then comes the economy, followed by legal papers, alienation, and lodging.

Next, when asked whether they are registered with UNHCR and have legal residence papers in Lebanon, 79% said they are registered with UNHCR and 70% said they don’t have legal residence papers. The main reason for not having legal residence papers according to Syrian refugees is the difficulty to find a sponsor (kafil) and the high cost of the procedure.

88% of respondents said that not having legal residence papers impacts their safety. And, when asked how safe they feel, 26% said they feel unsafe or relatively unsafe. However, this number may be an underestimation given the fear among Syrian refugees to express themselves. The best way to check whether there is underreporting is to compare answers of respondents interviewed by Syrian surveyors with answers of those interviewed by Lebanese surveyors. It turns out that, in the data provided by Lebanese surveyors, 23% of Syrian refugee feel unsafe, 39% feel relatively safe, and 38% feel safe. On the Syrian surveyors’ end, 27% of refugees feel unsafe, 51% feel relatively safe, and 22% feel safe. The difference in numbers reflects some fear among Syrian refugees to report lack of safety.

9 Sample included all Syrians (whether refugee or not), so % refugee registered with UNHCR may be actually higher.
Regional Breakdown

Safety Level is not the same across areas. Regional breakdown shows that Beirut, North Lebanon, and the Bekaa are the least safe, while the level of safety increases in Mount Lebanon and increases further in the South. In addition, when asked what time they feel safer to move around, 20% of the respondents said they feel safe to move around anytime during the day and night in Beirut, 28% in North Lebanon, 22% in Bekaa, 33% in Mount Lebanon, and 41% in the South, which is a similar distribution to the safety level across region. A very slight percentage (1 to 2%) said they feel safer moving around at night.

The difference in safety level between regions can be explained by several factors. First, it is related to legal registration, since a higher percentage of Syrian refugees are registered in the South and in Mount Lebanon than in other areas, especially Bekaa. Confirming this causal relation, when asked directly whether having legal residency enhances their safety, 87 to 91% of the respondents across all areas stated that it does.
The difference in safety level between regions can also be caused by the urban environment (since Beirut has the lowest safety level) and by the type of residence (since the South has no camps and has higher safety level). Indeed, breaking down safety level by type of housing shows a significantly lower safety level among Syrian refugees living in camps and in places below standards. Last factor to consider is density, which probably has an impact on safety which is lower in areas where the proportion of Syrians to the population is smaller.
Assault

A total 293 Syrian refugees reported assaults against themselves or their family, which is almost one quarter of the respondents. The percentages of respondents assaulted varies between 33% in Beirut and 20% in the South. 83% of those who reported assaults explicitly blamed Lebanese offenders.

Again, numbers are not the same for Lebanese and Syrian surveyors. While 31% of the respondents reported assaults against themselves, family, or friends to Lebanese surveyors, 38% of the respondents reported similar assaults to Syrian surveyors. While 57% of the respondents reported no assault to Lebanese surveyors, 47% reported no assault to Syrian surveyors.

43% of Syrian refugees reported incidents with authorities or civilians: Raids and searches, harassment, insults, detention, beating, and extortion. Civilians were involved in harassment, insults, beating and extortion, while authorities were involved in raids and searches, harassment, insults, detention, and beating mainly. What is striking is that 69% of Syrian refugees who were subject to these incidents did nothing about it, and 14% either changed residence, or changed their routine/minimized their movements. Only 13% notified. The remaining 4% confronted the offender. This high level passivity is not surprising knowing that 70% of the Syrian refugees don’t have their official papers and that, if they attempt to report to police stations, they are likely to be arrested and detained for being illegal residents.
Checkpoints and Mobility

Checkpoints are an important factor in Syrian Refugees’ lives. 71% of Syrian refugees consider checkpoints important to them, and 46% said that the main reason is to go to work, while 9% mentioned the need to have access to services.

When asked whether they have problems with checkpoints, 37% of the respondents said “yes”. This proportion varies across regions, going from 50% in the North, 41% in the Bekaa, to 34% in Beirut 32% in the south and 16% in Mount Lebanon. Clearly those who do not have legal papers are more likely to have problems with checkpoints than those who do.
Access to Services
Syrian refugees have problems accessing services. 28% said they never had access to services, 27% said they have access but sometimes. In addition, 37% said that, when they seek access to services they get worse treatment than all others, and 24% said they get treated like all other foreigners. The kind of service that is the hardest to access is health, which is mentioned by more than one third of the sample. Then comes education, followed by public utilities.

Perception of Authorities
Although 43% of Syrian refugees reported incidents and 69% didn’t do anything about it, the perception of authorities among them is not very bad. The data shows that 78% of respondents have relatively positive or positive perception towards municipalities. The numbers drop slightly but not tremendously for Lebanese citizens, Army and Police. The worse institution is General Security with 60% of positive/relative positive perceptions and 40% of negative/relatively negative perception. Those perceptions do vary across region, almost in the same proportion as feeling of safety.
Are things getting better or worse over time?

Syrian refugees were asked if they feel welcome and if their situation is getting better over time. More than half said they don’t feel welcome in all regions. 45% said things are getting worse over time, 37% said it’s the same, and the remaining 18% said they are better off than when they arrived to Lebanon. This direct question provided a first dynamic measurement of Syrian refugee conditions.
In order to get more precise information, and since respondents provided the date of their arrival to Lebanon, it was possible to break down variables by date of arrival (aggregated yearly).

1. Breaking down UNHCR registration and General Security papers by date of arrival, it turned out that the number of registrations are increasing with UNHCR but decreasing with General Security. In other words, Syrian refugees end up registering with UNHCR over time, but lose their legal papers, probably because they are unable to satisfy the renewal conditions.

2. Level of safety is decreasing over time since those who arrived earlier are reporting a lower level of safety than those who arrived more recently.

3. Relation with authorities is getting worse over time since those who arrived earlier are reporting a worse relations with authorities than those who arrived recently.

- Refugees are unable to renew their papers over time, but they manage to register in UNHCR
- Level of safety drops over time
- Quality of relations with authorities drop over time
Gender

With regards to gender the data shows a slightly higher level of safety among Syrian women, but significantly less friendships and a significantly lower level of social integration. According to the data, more women are registered with UNHCR (71% for men and 88% for women) and less women are registered with General Security (36% for men and 24% for women). They have slightly less problems on checkpoints, and feel safer. However, they have less friends in Lebanon and have worse relations with their neighbors than men.

Obviously from this data, women are more inclined to seek UNHCR help and protection and less worried about legalizing their status or working. They are less targeted on checkpoints or on the streets and feel safer, probably because they are less active and less integrated. Socially, they are a silent victim who is not going out of home very often and not in contact with neighbors.

Lebanese Feelings toward Syrian Refugees

Lebanese have diverse feelings towards Syrian Refugees. 31% say that they have hatred feelings towards Syrian refugees, 33% say that they fear Syrian refugees. 70% say they have respect and 76% say they have compassion for Syrian refugees.
When asked if they are willing to hire Syrian workers, 45% said they will not, 18% said maybe, 9% said they would if it helps save money, and 28% would certainly do. When asked why they would not hire Syrian refugees, 69% said that they take jobs away from Lebanese. So the problem on this front is market, supply and demand, and risks of unemployment.

Comparison between Syrian Refugees and Lebanese Host Communities

When comparing perceptions on the two sides, the Lebanese population shows some parallelism and some differences with Syrian refugees. First, almost half of the Lebanese said they don’t feel safe (52% in Beirut, 46% in the North, 42% in the Bekaa, 46% in Mount Lebanon, and 15% in the South). In addition, 49% said they feel safe to move days and nights (47% in Beirut, 44% in the North, 51% in the Bekaa, 48% in Mount Lebanon, and 64% in the South). So the variation across region mirrors the variation of Syrian perceptions.
When asked whether they heard stories about Syrians that made them feel threatened, 53% said they did (varying between 69% in Beirut and 42% in North Lebanon). When asked to report assaults, 9% said they or their family members have been assaulted, while 4% said some of their friends have been assaulted, and 17% said they heard stories about assaults (varying between 27% in Beirut, and 6% in the South). The level of storytelling is relatively high compared to the number of assaults actually reported.
To sum up:

- 46% of Lebanese say they don’t feel safe, while 26% of Syrians say then don’t feel safe
- 49% of Lebanese feel safe to move anytime of the day and night, while 27% of Syrians feel safe to move around anytime of the day and night.
- 9% of Lebanese report that they have been subject to personal or family assaults while 24% of Syrian refugee report that they have been subject to similar assaults.

Lebanese say they feel less safe but are more comfortable moving around days and nights. In addition, Lebanese report significantly less assaults but express significantly more feeling of unsafety. This reflects a perceptual problem among Lebanese. Institutional communication, media communication, and social communication may be the cause of this inflated feeling of unsafety.

**Vicious Cycle**

This survey shows that Syrian refugees are trapped in a vicious cycle that is causing continuous decrease in safety. Refugees have very difficult conditions to fulfill in order to renew their legal papers in Lebanon, including paying a $200 fee and providing a rent contract which need recurring income. In addition, residency requires a commitment not to work, unless there is a Lebanese sponsorship. As a result, refugees are not renewing their legal papers and are seeking a job illegally in order to sustain their basic needs. This is causing feelings of insecurity as mobility is compromised, especially in places where there are checkpoints, leading to a decrease in safety level. In the meantime, getting jobs illegally and for low salaries is impacting their relationship with Lebanese host communities which are perceiving them as unlawful competition, triggering negative reactions, assaults, and more decrease in safety. All this justifies further policies that make conditions on Syrian survival in Lebanon stricter. And we start all over again…
To test the proposed model, all key variables where entered in a stepwise regression against the variable of Safety: Gender, Age, Family Size, Head of Household, Type of Accommodation, Legal Papers, UNHCR Registration, Friends in Lebanon, Relation with local Authorities, Checkpoint Problems, Mobility Limitation, Difficulties of Access to Services, and Assault. These variables were captured by various questions in the questionnaire. They were either coded on a 4 or 5 points scale (depending on the number of answers), or coded as binary dummy variables.

The following dependent variables where determined as significant by the model: Relation with Local authorities, Checkpoint Problems, Mobility limitation, Assault, and Difficulties of Access to Services. Totally in line with the suggested model!

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The following variables were found to be significant:

- **Checkpoint Problems**
- **Mobility limited**
- **Difficulties Access Services**
- **Assault**

Finally, in an attempt to test the impact of Legal Papers on Checkpoint Problems, we ran another regression with Legal Papers and Gender as predictors and Checkpoint Problems as dependent variable. Impact is significant and coefficients are in the expected sign. Those who have legal paper are less likely to have checkpoint problems and men are more likely to have checkpoint problems.
The following graph shows the validated links in the proposed model.

In short, and to conceptualize what’s happening here, strict policies and institutional framework causes behavior among refugees and host communities to raise tensions and insecurity feelings on both sides, which produces more justification for stricter policies and the cycle keeps going… The initial reason is probably lack of strategy, lack of inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination, lack of capacity, and lack of planning… in addition to ad hoc policies which are not grounded in solid and exhaustive assessments.
Summary

This study evaluates the safety and security feelings among Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities. The data shows that there is a decrease in safety over time on both sides, that Syrian refugees are trapped in a situation where they can’t renew their registration, have limited mobility, are subject to assault, and yet have to survive in order to work, sustain themselves, and maybe try to get legal papers if they can satisfy the stringent conditions. Key the statistical output from this study is as follows:

- The Syrian refugee sample was relatively young with 19% between age 18 and 24, 34% of the respondents between age 25 and 34, 25% between 34 and 44, 14% between 45 and 54, and 8% above 55. Syrian refugees in Lebanon come, in order of importance, from Homs, Halab. Edleb, Damascus, Deraa, and Hama… 62% of Syrians work with an average salary of $393.
- Syrian refugees are most worried about security, then comes the economy and then legal papers.
- With regards to legal papers, 70% of Syrian respondents don’t have legal papers in Lebanon while 79% are registered with UNHCR. The main cause for not having papers is the need for a Lebanese sponsor and high cost.
- On safety, 34% of Syrians in Beirut do not feel safe, while 30% in the North don’t feel safe, 27% in Bekka, 18% in Mount Lebanon, and 13% in the South. In addition, 87 to 91% believe that legal papers impacts their safety.
- 293 personal/family assaults were reported out of 1200 Syrian respondents. 86% of these cases where explicitly blamed on Lebanese offenders. 43% offenses were verbal insults.
- 46% of Syrian Refugees have reported to have been in trouble in Lebanon, and 69% did nothing about it.
- 37% of Syrians had problems with checkpoints, with regional variation between 50% in North Lebanon and 16% in Mount Lebanon. Main cause is non-renewal of legal papers.
- 71% of respondents said that checkpoints are important to them, and 46% of them said that the main reason is to go to work, while 9% mentioned access to services.
- When asked about services, 28% said they don’t have access to services and 27% said that they have access “sometimes”.
- 37% said they are treated worse than others when accessing services.
- 76% of Syrians in Beirut don’t feel welcome in Lebanon. In North Lebanon and Bekaa more than 60%. In Mount Lebanon and South about 50%.
- Almost 50% say that situation is getting worse. Statistics show that relations with authorities and Level of safety are getting worse over time.
- Women feel slightly safer than man (31% for men VS 36% for women), and are less likely to have legal papers (35% for men VS 24% for women). Furthermore, women have less problems on checkpoints than men.
- More than half of the Syrians live in apartments. Safety is highest among those who live in apartments and lowest among those who live in camps.
- Around 50% of Lebanese don’t feel safe in most regions. Assaults were reported by 13% of the Lebanese, with a lot of people saying they “heard stories”.

The data reflects a vicious cycle in which Syrian refugees are trapped, leading to lack of safety with the situation getting worse over time. The cost of papers and the difficult conditions associated to legal registration at General Security are causing a large proportion (70% according to our survey) not to renew their papers. This is impeding their mobility and especially on check points. In addition, this is causing labor without permits (62% of respondents work). Work conditions do not seem to help them sustain their needs and resolve their legal papers issues, which
probably alienates the Lebanese community who complain about Syrians taking jobs. All this decreases safety on both sides and justify stricter policies towards Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

**Policy Implications**

**Legal papers: loosen conditions for issuance of Syrian Refugee legal papers and renewal. Cancel sponsorship, and lower costs.**

Papers will solve checkpoint problems; they will make Syrians less vulnerable and will encourage them to file complaints to the police or any other authority in case of offenses which they currently don’t do out of fear of being arrested. Papers will also facilitate mobility and access to services.

**Working conditions: reinforce labor law towards Syrians. Encourage equal treatment of Syrian and Lebanese neighbor.**

Municipalities should not be allowed to override the law and determine wages. Prohibition of work leads to illegal labor and harsh work conditions which is reinforced by municipal control over wages. This increases hostility from the Lebanese side and frustration from the Syrian side. Low salaries paid to Syrians are taking jobs away from the Lebanese population and do not provide to the Syrian families, especially as they have expenses, including rent.

**Expand Job market: more Research needed on labor.**

Initiate a study related to skills within the Syrian population, and job opportunities on the Lebanese market, comparing demand and supply, wages, work conditions, needs, etc. Provide funding to expend the job market in light of such study.

**Security/Municipal Role: municipal community policing with reinforcement and human rights.**

Municipalities should get support, training, and funding to better police neighborhoods and develop partnerships with civil society and Syrian community. At the same time, Municipalities should not be allowed to impose selective curfew or security measures, which is against human rights and causes havoc and “story telling”.

**Create a transparent complaint mechanism allowing to keep the finger on the pulse.**

Syrian refugees should have a complaint mechanism that has a human face, is close to them, and represents the state at the same time.

**Special attention to collective shelters and Camps**

Addressing vulnerability of Syrians shelters, camps and places of residence that are below standards, and where safety is relatively lower.

**Gender**

Special attention should be drawn to women. Although they feel slightly safer, this is most likely because they are less active. Women are not integrated in the society and don’t seem to feel welcome in their neighborhood. Women face risks and are may not be able to defend their rights, while they can play a critical role in positive change and improve the life of their children and families, as well as their communities.

**Time factor and rise of statelessness**

With time, problems seem to accumulate: legal registration renewal, inability to register marriages and births, and most importantly statelessness, which causes difficulties accessing, education, healthcare, and other social services. Statelessness raises the risks of child trafficking, recruitment, and radicalization…
Community-level Projects: Reinforce projects between refugees and host communities.

Projects that engage both parts, involve skills and talents from both sides. Create youth clubs, diversify opportunities for socialization (especially women and youth).

Encourage joint Lebanese-Syrian teamwork on refugee projects.

This was experimented by researchers on this project as team of surveyors included Lebanese and Syrian students. It limits bias from both ends, enhances trust with both populations and gets better results.

Research, strategy and funding

Funds are needed to better know the landscape, develop strategies and implement them. Research and strategy are sine qua non conditions for funding.
Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

Syrians

1. Nationality?
   a) Lebanese   
   b) Syrian   
   b) Other   

2. Residence:
   Akkar   Baabda   Batroun   Saida
   Minnieh-Dinnieh   Aley   Baalbek-Hermel   Zahrany
   Tripoli   Chouf   Zahleh   Tyre
   Zgharta   Beirut   West Bekaa-Rashaya   Jezzine
   Koura   Metn   Jbeil   Nabatieh
   Bcharreh   Bint Jbeil   Kesrwan   Hasbaya-Marjeyoun

3. Sex?
   a) Male   
   b) Female   

4. Age? .................... Years

5. Date of Arrival in Lebanon: mm/yyyy
   ____ / __________

6. Where did you live in Syria? (town)
   Damascus
   Reef Damascus
   Qonaitra
   Dar’a
   Suweida
   Homs
   Tartous
   Ladiquiyya
   Hama
   Edleb
   Aleppo
   Raqa
   Deir el Zor
   Hassake

7. Did you have friends in Lebanon before you arrived?
   a) Yes   
   b) No   

8. What are your main concerns/worries living in Lebanon?
9. What is your current legal status in Lebanon?
   a) Have a residency (GSO residency) □
   b) Do not have a residency (No GSO residency) □

10. If 9 (a), when does your residency visa expire?
    a) Within 1 month □
    b) In 2-3 months □
    c) In 4-6 months □

11. If 9 (b), why not:
    a) Don’t have financial means & unable to pay the fee □
    b) Don’t have a Lebanese Sponsor □
    c) Could not obtain the Housing Commitment □
    d) Did not want to sign the Pledge Not to Work □
    e) Limited/restricted freedom of movement □
    f) I have personal reasons □
    g) Other (explain) □

12. Do you have UNHCR registration Certificate:
    a) Yes □
    b) No □

13. If 12(b), why not:
    a) I have not been issued one because of suspension □
    b) My file was rejected earlier by UNHCR □
    c) I do not see benefit of UNHCR Certificate □
    d) Certificate expired and not renewed yet □
    e) Other (explain) __________________________

14. Where do you live:
    a) Apartment / house (not shared) □
    b) Apartment / house (shared) □
    c) Substandard shelter (garage/construction/shop/etc.) □
    d) Collective shelter (without management) □
    e) Collective Center (with management) □
    f) Formal or informal settlement □
    g) Homeless / No shelter □

SAFETY

15. How do you feel in Lebanon?
    a) Safe □ Go to 17
    b) Somewhat safe □ Go to 17
    c) Somewhat unsafe □
    d) Unsafe □

16. Why do you feel unsafe?

17. How do you feel towards the following:
    (Very Positive, Somewhat Positive, Neutral, Somewhat Negative, Very Negative)
    a) Police
    b) GS
    c) Lebanese Army
d) Municipality
e) UNHCR
f) NGOs
g) Lebanese in General
h) Lebanese in your neighborhood

18. **To what extend do you feel towards the Lebanese**
   (A lot, Somewhat, A little, Not at all)
a) Hatred
b) Fear
c) Respect
d) Grateful

19. **Would you think that having a residency impacts your safety?**
   a) Yes ☐
b) No ☐

20. **How would you describe your interaction with Lebanese community where you live?**
   a) Very good ☐
b) Good ☐
c) Neutral ☐
d) Bad ☐
e) Very bad ☐
f) No interaction ☐

21. **During the last six months, did you ever feel unsafe in interacting with Lebanese Community?**
   a) At all times ☐
b) Sometimes ☐
c) Never ☐

22. **Did you ever experience any of the following:**
   a) Me/ my family were insulted ☐
b) Me/ my family were threatened verbally ☐
c) Me/ my family were assaulted/ beaten ☐
d) Me/ my family were blackmailed (ibtizaaz) ☐
e) My friends were insulted ☐
f) My friends were threatened verbally ☐
g) My friends were assaulted/ beaten ☐
h) Heard stories of other Syrians insulted/ threatened/ assaulted ☐

23. **Where is this happening:**
   a) In the building ☐
b) On the street ☐
c) In shops ☐
d) In health centers ☐
e) CDCs/ SDCs ☐
f) At school ☐
g) At my home ☐
h) Other (specify) ☐

24. **Who has threatened you:**
   a) Other Syrian refugees ☐
b) Landlord/ Employer ☐
c) Lebanese individuals ☐
d) Unknown persons(explain) ☐

25. **Who was responsible for the assault:**
26. Pls elaborate on the context, what happened?.............................................

AUTHORITIES

27. How would you describe the relationship between you and local authorities:
   a) Very good
   b) Good
   c) Neutral
   d) Bad
   e) Very bad
   f) Refuse to answer

28. During the last six months, did you ever feel unsafe in interacting with Lebanese authorities:
   a) At all times
   b) Sometimes
   e) Never

29. Were you or your family ever…by the authorities (mark all that applies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civilian</th>
<th>Security agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a) Raided/ searched
| b) Insulted
| c) Harassed
| d) Beaten
| e) Blackmailed (ibtizaaz)
| f) Extorted
| g) Arrested/ Detained
| h) Evicted
| i) Received departure order
| j) Deported out of Lebanon
| k) Other

30. In case you were victim of incident from above, how did you react?
   a) Reported the incident go to 30
   b) Responded to the perpetrator go to 31
   c) Limited my movement outside go to 32
   d) Changed my daily routine go to 32
   e) Changed distribution of tasks in the HH go to 33
   f) Changed accommodation go to 32
   g) Did nothing (business as usual) go to 32

31. If 29(a): What was the outcome?
   a) Concerns addressed
   b) Complaint not recorded
   c) Complaint recorded/ no response

32. If 29 (b): What did you do:
   a) I picked up a fight;
   b) I returned the insult;
   c) I reconciled with the perpetrator
   d) Other

33. If 29(c), (d), (f) (g): Why did you react that way?
   a) Lack of trust
   b) Did not want to draw attention
   c) Feared extortion
d) I was afraid for my safety  

e) I was afraid for the safety of my family  

f) Other  

34. If 29 (e), how was this managed: 

a) Women took over most tasks  

b) Children took over most tasks  

c) Neighbors took over some tasks  

d) Other  

35. What is your main safety concern in Lebanon (mark all that applies): 

a) Raids on shelters  

b) Eviction  

c) Curfews  

d) Checkpoints  

e) Arrest/ Detention  

f) Fear of being deported  

g) Fear of attacks from host community  

h) Denial of services by public institutions (health, school)  

i) Denial of services by private business (shops for food or other items)  

j) Denial of services by humanitarian agencies  

k) Other  

36. When do you feel safest to move around? 

a) In the mornings  

b) During the day, before sunset  

c) At night only  

c) Any time of the day or night  

37. Do you feel your movement is restricted? 

a) Always  

b) Most of the time  

c) Sometime  

d) Never  

e) Other (Please explain)  

38. If you are not free to move at any time, who is responsible for this: 

a) Official municipal curfew  

b) Unofficial curfew in the community  

c) Official checkpoints  

d) Unofficial checkpoints  

e) Random controls or police patrols  

f) Other family members  

g) I do not know  

h) Other  

39. Do you/ your family face problems crossing checkpoints? 

a) Yes  

b) No  

go to 41  

40. What kind of problems do you face: 

a) Verbal harassment  

b) Indecent proposals  


c) I am not allowed to cross the checkpoint  

d) I am forced to pay bribes to cross the checkpoint  

e) Other  

41. If you face problems, how do you address them?
42. How would you rate the importance of your journey through the checkpoint:
   a) Very important;  
   b) Somewhat important;  
   c) Not important;  
   d) I do not have checkpoints in the area;  

43. Why is that important:
   a) I work  
   b) my Spouse works  
   c) my child over 18 works  
   d) my minor child works  
   e) Access to services (Health, Education)  
   f) Access to Humanitarian assistance;  
   g) Other (Specify)______________________________

44. Do you think you would look for different accommodation if the problems at the checkpoint persist:
   a) Definitely 
   b) Very likely 
   c) Probably 
   d) No 
   e) Other…………………………………………………………………

SERVICES

45. Do you in general have problems accessing services?
   a) Always  
   b) Most of the time  
   c) Sometime  
   d) Never  
   e) Comments________________________________________

Specify which services________________________________________

46. How do you feel you are treated while accessing services in Lebanon:
   a) Same treatment as Lebanese  
   b) Same as other foreigners  
   c) Worse treatment than everyone else  
   d) Not accessing any services

47. Have you made close Lebanese friends in Lebanon?
   a) Yes  
   b) No  

48. Do you think there are similarities between Syrian culture and Lebanese culture?
   a. Very similar  
   b. Slightly similar  
   c. Very different

49. In your opinion, how do you feel in Lebanon today compared to when you arrived?
   a) Better  

50. **In General, do you feel welcomed in Lebanon?**
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐

51. **Do you have any other challenges that you may want to share?**

52. **What is your education level?**
   a) No education ☐
   b) Primary ☐
   c) Secondary ☐
   d) University ☐

53. **Number of persons in your household?**
   ________

54. **Are you head of household?**
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐

55. **Household income level in Syria?**
   ________ Syrian Pound

56. **Household income level in Lebanon?**
   ________ Lebanese Pound

57. **Occupation in Syria?**
   - Upper management ☐
   - Middle management ☐
   - Specialized, self-employed: doctor, lawyer, pharmacist ☐
   - Has his own business ☐
   - Farming ☐
   - Office employee ☐
   - Out-of-office employee: sales person ☐
   - Skilled worker: carpenter, technician … ☐
   - Unskilled worker: Porter … ☐
   - Student ☐
   - Unemployed ☐
   - Housewife ☐
   - Retired ☐

58. **Occupation in Lebanon?**
1. **Nationality?**
   a) Lebanese
   b) Syrian
   Stop
   b) Other

2. **Residence:**
   Akkar
   Baabda
   Batroun
   Saida
   Minnieh-Dinnieh
   Aley
   Baalbek-Hermel
   Zahrany
   Tripoli
   Chouf
   Zahleh
   Tyre
   Zgharta
   Beirut
   West Bekaa-Rashaya
   Jezzine
   Koura
   Men
   Jbeil
   Nabatieh
   Bcharreh
   Bint Jbeil
   Kesrwan
   Hasbaya-Marjeyoun

3. **Sex?**
   a) Male
   b) Female

4. **Age?** ……………….. Years

5. **What are your main concerns/worries living in Lebanon?**
   _______________________________________________________________________

6. **How safe do you feel in Lebanon?**
   e) Safe
   f) Somewhat safe
   g) Somewhat unsafe
   h) Unsafe

7. **What aspects of your life did Syrian presence in Lebanon impact negatively?**
   _______________________________________________________________________

8. **What aspects of your life did Syrian presence in Lebanon impact positively?**
   _______________________________________________________________________

9. **Have you recently heard any statements that express hate towards Syrian refugees?**
   a. None
   b. Few
   c. A lot

10. **Where have you heard such statements?**
    In the Media / At work / In the street / Neighbors / Friends and Family / Other (specify)

11. **Have you heard statements about Syrian presence in the country that made you feel threatened?**
    a. None
    b. Few
    c. A lot

12. **Who have you heard making such statements?**
In the Media / At work / In the street / Neighbors / Friends and Family / Other (specify)

13. To what extent do you feel towards the Syrians
(A lot, Somewhat, A little, Not at all)
e) Hatred
f) Fear
g) Respect
h) Compassion

14. How would you describe your interaction with Syrian refugees where you live:
a) Very good
b) Good
c) Neutral
d) Bad
e) Very bad
f) No interaction

15. During the last six months, did you ever feel unsafe interacting with Syrian refugees:
a) At all times
b) Sometimes
c) Never

16. Did you ever experience any of the following:
i) Me/ my family were insulted
j) Me/ my family were threatened verbally
k) Me/ my family were assaulted/beaten
l) Me/ my family were blackmailed (ibtizaaz)
m) My friends were insulted
n) My friends were threatened verbally
o) My friends were assaulted/beaten
p) Heard stories of other Lebanese insulted/threatened/assaulted

17. Where is this happening:
i) In the building
j) On the street
k) In shops
l) At school
m) At my home
n) Other

18. Who was responsible for the assault:
a) Syrian refugees
b) Lebanese individuals
c) Unknown persons

19. Please elaborate on the context, what happened? ............................................

20. In case you were victim of incident from above, how did you react?
a) Reported the incident
b) Responded to the perpetrator
c) Limited my movement outside
d) Changed my daily routine
e) Changed accommodation
f) Did nothing (business as usual)

21. If 21 (a): What was the outcome?
d) Concerns addressed
  e) Complaint not recorded
  f) Complaint recorded/ no response

22. If 21 (b): What did you do:
  e) I picked up a fight;
  f) I returned the insult ;
  g) I reconciled with the perpetrator
  h) Other

23. If 21 (c), (d) or (e): Why did you react that way?
   Lack of trust
   g) Did not want to draw attention
   h) Feared extortion
   i) I was afraid for my safety
   j) I was afraid for the safety of my family
   k) Other

24. When do you feel safest to move around?
   a) In the mornings
   b) During the day, before sunset
   c) At night only
   c) Any time of the day or night

25. Curfews in your neighborhood:
   a) Make you feel safer
   b) Are insufficient, should become for frequent
   c) Are inefficient
   d) Hinder your activity

26. Checkpoints in your neighborhood:
   a) Make you feel safer
   b) Are insufficient, should become more frequent
   c) Are inefficient
   d) Hinder your activity

27. Random control or police patrols in your neighborhood:
   a) Make you feel safer
   b) Are insufficient, should become more frequent
   c) Are inefficient
   d) Hinder your activity

28. Do you have close Syrian friends?
   a) Yes
   b) No

29. Do you think there are similarities between Syrian culture and Lebanese culture?
   a. Very similar
   b. Slightly similar
   c. Very different

30. If a very competent Syrian refugee applies for a job at your institution and you are the decision maker, would you hire him?
    For sure / Yes, if I can save money on his salary / Maybe / No

31. If you will not hire him, what is the reason?
    a. Syrians are taking jobs away from Lebanese
    b. Work permit
c. I don’t like working with Syrians

32. Would you agree that a Syrian refugee lives in your neighborhood?
   a) Yes
   b) No

33. Would you agree that your child studies in a school where there are Syrian refugee students?
   a) Yes
   b) No

34. Are your children going to public school?
   a) Yes
   b) No because no space
   c) No because I prefer to send them to private schools

35. Are your children getting along with Syrian students at school?
   a. Yes, I hear no complaints
   b. No, there are tensions between other Lebanese children and Syrians students
   c. No, my child does not get along with Syrians students
   d. Don’t know

36. Do you resort to public health services?
   a. Yes
   b. No

37. Has public health services been impacted by Syrian refugee presence in the country?
   f) No Impact
   g) Drop in efficiency
   h) Drop in quality
   i) Don’t know

38. Do you think that Syrian refugees respect the law in Lebanon?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Don’t know

39. What is your education level?
   a. No education
   b. Primary
   c. Secondary
   d. University

40. Number of persons in your household?
    __________

41. Are you head of household?
   c) Yes
   d) No

42. Household income level in Lebanon?
    __________

43. Occupation in Lebanon?
Appendix 2 - Sampling

Overview

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<th>Region</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bekaa</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>More than 15% of surveyed are registered around Arsal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Lebanon</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>Large area. Many stops.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beirut</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mount Lebanon</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>Some 70% are registered in the greater Beirut area. Few are registered in mountainous areas and peripheral casas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>Large area. Few</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1700</td>
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Clusterisation

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