Paper title: "The impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Lebanese host communities' security perceptions across the country – a gender angle"

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Introduction

Today, Lebanon is hosting over 1.18 million registered Syrian refugees fleeing conflict from neighbouring Syria[1]. Lebanon has received the highest number of Syrian refugees in the world comprising nearly 38 percent of the total Syrian refugee population, which is mostly concentrated in the Beqaa and Akkar, Lebanon's poorest areas[2]. The large influx of refugees over a short period of time has vastly strained the resources and capacities of the small country of around 4.5 million Lebanese[3]. Over four years into the crisis it becomes paramount to assess and understand how the Syrian refugee crisis is bringing with it a wide range of real and perceived insecurities among host communities across Lebanon.

International Alert (Alert) carried out a three-year project in partnership with the Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies (LCPS) funded by the European Union designed to enhance understanding of the challenges facing the Lebanese security sector by using a more people-centred approach to security[4]. A major component of the project consisted of understanding and analysing public perceptions of security and insecurity across the country, including how Lebanese perceived potential threats to themselves[5].

One of the main findings was related to the fact that all Lebanese communities indicated a major concern over security risks stemming from the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, even though the degree of that concern varied from one community to another[6]. Alert and LCPS commissioned a qualitative follow-up study to look more in depth at Lebanese security perception concerns emerging from the Syrian refugee presence in the country[7]. This paper will be drawing on the research conducted for the purpose of the aforementioned project, including the follow-up study.

While research is increasingly being conducted on the impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon[8] and efforts are gradually shifting from humanitarian aid towards longer term development and social

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[1] UNHCR website, 'Syria Regional Refugee Response', 2015. Available at http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122. This number does not include non-registered refugees.

[2] UNHCR website, map of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 2015. Available at http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7900

[3] World Bank website, 'Data – Lebanon', 2015. Available at http://data.worldbank.org/country/lebanon

[4] To read more about the project and access the publications, please visit: International Alert website, 'People and security in Lebanon: Promoting people-centred security sector reform', 2015. Available at http://www.international-alert.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/middle-east-and-north-africa/lebanon/projects/87

[5] H. Wannis. 'Perceptions of security in Lebanon: new research helps to promote a more inclusive approach', *International Alert*, 27 March 2015. Available at: http://www.international-alert.org/news/perceptions-security-lebanon

[6] The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies (LCPS) (4 October 2013). *Peoples' Perception of Security in Lebanon: Developing National Capability for Security and Stabilisation.* Beirut, Lebanon. Report commissioned by International Alert.

[7] Beirut Research and Innovation Centre (BRIC) (17 March 2014). *Survey of Perceptions of Security Threats Stemming from the Syrian Refugee Presence in Lebanon*. Beirut, Lebanon. Report commissioned by International Alert.

[8] T. Midgley, J. Eldebo, A. Amarani and N. Robertson (July 2013). 'Under Pressure: the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on host communities in Lebanon'. *World Vision*. Available at

cohesion projects in the country, gender dimensions are often only incorporated in a narrow scope. This paper argues that in order to have a more holistic understanding of the impact the Syrian refugee crisis is having on Lebanese's security perceptions, the gendered dimensions of this impact need to be carefully examined.

While conflict is a normal feature of human society and often the source of creativity for change, the problem is when it is not managed peacefully and leads to violence[9]. A more holistic understanding of security and threat perceptions can ultimately contribute to the capacity to manage and resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner, for example by informing a more appropriate security provision. The next two sections will only outline the conceptual and methodological aspects of the research, followed by an analysis of the findings.

1. Conceptual dimensions: gender and human security

1.1. Calling for a more holistic understanding of gender

While gender has long been recognised as a key factor in both violent conflict and peacebuilding, in practice it is often used narrowly in analyses to refer to 'women' only. It ignores issues of masculinities and male vulnerabilities, deals with categories of 'men' and 'women' as static and homogenous entities, and often fails to analyse gender in relation to other social, economic and political inequalities[10]. However, this narrow understanding is increasingly shifting towards more relational dimensions on the conceptual and policy levels.

This paper will employ Alert's conceptual understanding of gender, which understands gender roles and identities as constructed through power relations between men, women and sexual and gender minorities (SGM), as well as within these groups[11]. Importantly, gender identities, roles and expectations do not exist in separation from other identity markers, such as class, age, marital status, disability, sexuality and the like, but are closely tied to these[12]. Thus, a holistic and comprehensive gender analysis needs to be of relational nature to account for the wider and constantly shifting power dynamics at play in societies.

1.2. Why gender is critical to human security

As its name suggests, *human* security challenges the traditional state-centric focus and introduces a people-centred emphasis of security. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 1994 report[13] presents a milestone in the debate over human security by defining the two principle functions of human security: first, providing "safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression",

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http://www.wvi.org/europe/publication/under-pressure-impact-syrian-refugee-crisis-host-communities-lebanon; Mercy Corps (2013). Things Fall Apart: Political, Economic and Social Instability in Lebanon. Beirut, Lebanon. Available at https://www.mercycorps.org.uk/research-resources/political-economic-and-social-instability-lebanon. International Labour Organisation, Regional Office for the Arab States (2014*). Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and their Employment Profile 2013*. Beirut, Lebanon. Available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_240134.pdf

[9] H. Myrttinen, J. Naujoks and J. El-Bushra (March 2014). *Re-thinking gender in peacebuilding*. International Alert. Available at http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_RethinkingGenderPeacebuilding_EN_2014.pdf

[10] Myrttinen et al, p.7

[11] Myrttinen et al, p.8

[12] Ibid

[13] UNDP (1994) *Human development report*. New York: Oxford University Press. Available at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf

and second, offering "protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life"[14]. The Report of the Human Security Commission published in 2003 went further and defined the objective of human security as the protection of "the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment."[15]

While the study of human security has traditionally been explored in a gender-blind way and the inclusion of gender in academic and practitioners efforts on human security has often been ad hoc, there is an increasing acknowledgement and understanding of the vital role that gender plays in it[16]. Lewis argues that gender is critical for human security for two main reasons. First, gender is key to human security as it focuses on identifying and examining power relations, dissects how power comes into play along different social, cultural, political and ideological levels, and sheds lights on usually hidden and marginalised forms of power[17]. Second, the relational nature of gender focusing on intersecting identities and societal variables, including for instance socio-economic class, confessional affiliation, age, sexual orientation and urban-rural location, provides a useful framework for the analysis of the intertwined levels and forms of domination and insecurities[18].

1.3. Gender and human security in Lebanon

In Lebanon, a number of challenges to human security as defined by the 2004 UNDP Report[19] exist today. Over the past few years, a number of these have worsened and been exacerbated, not least as a result of the current Syrian refugee crisis. While international media frequently covers the securitised aspects of the refugee crisis such as armed clashes or the increase in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against Syrian refugee women and girls[20], there is disproportionately little coverage or research on what impact the refugee crisis has had on the host population.

This paper thus attempts to address several knowledge gaps in the literature. First, given that the Syrian refugee crisis is a fairly recent issue that has been mostly tackled by primary sources such as newspapers, NGO reports and increasingly grey literature so far, this paper attempts to contribute to a growing literature on and an increased understanding of the effects and dynamics the crisis is having on host communities' security concerns. Second, by adopting a more holistic conceptualisation of gender, taking into account men, boys, women, girls and SGM as well as various other identity markers, the paper endeavours to contribute to the growing literature on gender in the Middle East that goes beyond narrow understandings and binary distinctions. Last but not least, this paper will attempt to link together a number of human security concerns in Lebanon, that have previously been tackled separately

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[14] Professor M. Kerr (2014) 'Human Security', King's College London. Paper commissioned by International Alert.
[15] Commission on Human Security (2003). 'Human security now', New York. Available at
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/91BAEEDBA50C6907C1256D19006A9353-chs-security-may03.pdf
[16] D. Lewis (April 2006). 'Rethinking Human Security: The Implications of Gender Mainstreaming' in Cheryl Hendricks (Ed.). *From State Security to Human Security in Southern Africa: Policy Research and capacity Building Challenges*. Institute for Security Studies Monograph Series No 122.

[17] Ibid
[18] Ibid
[19] Kerr (2014)
[20] SGBV against men and boys as well as SGM also occurs. While it is reported by NGOs, the media does not cover it.

in the literature[21], not least through using a gender analysis which examines power relations and stresses intersecting identities.

2. Methodology

This paper's findings will draw on the research resulting from the three-year project carried out by Alert and LCPS to promote a better understanding of what is meant by public security and security sector reform (SSR) amongst stakeholders in Lebanon. A detailed assessment of security perceptions among citizens was conducted first through a nation-wide survey, followed by further in-depth research on specific topics which culminated in the publication of a number of reports[22] including on gender, security and SSR[23].

The nation-wide survey was conducted among 2,400 people and was representative of Lebanese society by taking into account gender, age, geographical location, confessional affiliation and different income levels[24]. It was conducted from May to June 2013, preceded by extensive desk research and focus groups in addition to a series of meetings with representatives of state security institutions in order to lay the ground for the survey.[25] Moreover, this paper will draw on the qualitative follow-up study looking more in depth at Lebanese security perception concerns emerging from the Syrian refugee presence in the country.

The latter study combined four methods. First, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key national- and local-level security officials, national and local opinion makers. Second, a series of five focus groups in different parts of the country with a high concentration of refugee populations were conducted. Third, an indicative survey was carried out in 13 different areas[26] in Lebanon using a cluster analysis approach, thus assessing individual responses as well as collective local attitudes. This individual survey could not cover a full statistically representative sample, but was instead carefully designed to cover a few clusters in more depth and incorporated a total of 260 respondents. Finally, a general survey of the main coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis in the mainstream Lebanese press was also carried out.

It is important to note that the material this paper is drawing on was gender-sensitive in the sense that data was sex-disaggregated and important gender dynamics were highlighted whenever relevant, but no broader gendered approach was adopted. Thus, this paper attempts to tease out the gender-relational aspects where possible and analyse them where appropriate. Given the relative novelty of the Syrian refugee crisis and the difficulties of studying the full impact it is having on Lebanese society as a whole, this paper will raise more questions in highlighting gendered aspects that require further investigation rather than propose definitive answers.

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[21] J. Habal (2014) 'Human Security Lebanon', Beirut, Lebanon. Paper commissioned by International Alert.
[22] See footnote number 6
[23] L. Khattab and H. Myrttinen (November 2014) 'Gender, Security and SSR in Lebanon'. *International Alert*. Available at http://www.international-alert.org/resources/publications/gender-security-and-ssr-lebanon
[24] The Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies (LCPS) (4 October 2013). *Peoples' Perception of Security in Lebanon: Developing National Capability for Security and Stabilisation.* Beirut, Lebanon. Report commissioned by International Alert.
[25] H. Wannis (November 2014). 'Security Threat Perceptions in Lebanon'. International Alert. Available at http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_SSRSecurityThreatPerceptions_EN_2014.pdf
[26] The 13 different chosen clusters were: Wadi Khaled, al-Abda, Tripoli, Metn, Sin el-Fil, Sabra and Shatila, Saida, Tyre, Arsal, Hermel, Majdal Anjar, Zahle, Balbek

International Alert.

3. Gender dimensions of Syrian refugee crisis' impact on Lebanese security perceptions: Analysis and findings

In order to first place the analysis of the gender dimensions into context, the next paragraphs will highlight a number of key findings from the survey and research. 74% of wider Alert and LCPS survey respondents indicated that they perceived Lebanon to be less safe than it was three years ago[27], with specifically higher rates in Mount Lebanon and the North[28]. Respondents rank political instability, physical insecurity and the war in Syria as the three main national security challenges[29]. Lebanese perceive security threats as more acute on the national level compared to the local level. People's perception that the rest of the country is more dangerous than their relatively safe communities could potentially lead them to support more drastic security measures for the country, which could bring about more insecurities. While 91% of respondents claim that the threat of Syrian refugees is a major concern of insecurity nationally, concerns over the Syrian refugee crisis at the level of locality dropped down to 75%. Although the rate is lower at the level of locality, this finding does suggest that a majority of the Lebanese population are feeling the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis[30].

Looking at gender dimensions of perceptions of insecurity related to specific crimes across the country, women tended to feel slightly more insecure than men, with the main variable being the geographical location. Significant gendered differences seem to be specific to certain locations rather than the same across the country. While women rated the seriousness of SGBV and sexual violence higher than men across the country, the latter expressed higher security threat perceptions than women in other aspects[31]. The survey results also reveal that large segments of Lebanese society show very low levels of trust towards Syrians: only 5% of respondents "trust" Syrians while 80% "distrust" them[32].

Overall, gendered threat perceptions stemming from the Syrian refugee presence strongly interlink with socio-economic variables and geographical location. The next following sections groups the gender dimensions under two broad themes, namely (1) morality and social cohesion and (2) economic and livelihood risks. Importantly, gender identities do not exist in a vacuum but are shaped by, and in turn also influence, other important identity markers.

3.1. Gendered threat perceptions of morality and social cohesion

The research highlighted Lebanese citizens' fear that rising poverty among Lebanese and Syrians would result in an upsurge in crime rates and what was identified as 'immoral' acts[33]. The presence of Syrian refugees was perceived as a significant threat to the moral values of the community, with "local culture" expected to be negatively affected in the Beqaa, notably in Zahle (95%), Majdel Anjar (80%) and Arsal (70%). This stands in contrast to the North where Syrian refugees are perceived to have similar morals

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[27] Bearing in mind that the survey was conducted in 2013, respondents were referring to the year 2010.

[28] Wannis (2014) 'Security Threat Perceptions in Lebanon'. International Alert. p.4

[29] Ibid. p. 5

[30] Ibid

[31] "Men in Zgharta, a district bordering Tripoli, felt considerably less safe travelling at night than women; this could be explained by the highly militarised and intensified security situation in the area due to the large influx of Syrian refugees, tensions between pro- and anti-Assad groups, as well as the Lebanese military involvement in Tripoli." Khattab and Myrttinen (November 2014) 'Gender, Security and SSR in Lebanon'. *International Alert*. P.4

[32] Wannis (2014) 'Security Threat Perceptions in Lebanon'. International Alert. p.9

[33] In this context, 'immoral' acts are loosely defined as acts that would disturb gendered societal norms and expectations. BRIC (February 2015). *Citizens' perceptions of security threats stemming from the Syrian refugee presence in Lebanon*. International Alert, P.6. Available at http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_SSRSyrianRefugees_EN_2015.pdf

and local culture is not perceived to be negatively affected by their presence, notably in Tripoli and Wadi Khaled (100%)[34]. Women worried slightly more than men in this regard (50% compared to 41%). Similarly, younger respondents seemed more concerned than older respondents (48% compared to 42%). Furthermore, more regular voters registered the highest aversion to Syrian moral values at 65%, while families with kinship and marital ties with Syrians indicated a 90% compatibility[35].

A threat to moral values in the North that was raised mostly by women but also by men in the focus groups, as well as by public figures, was prostitution. It was attributed to impoverished Syrian families accepting to have their daughters work in that occupation, and was perceived of utmost impact on the morals of youths and a main motive for potential deviant behaviour and delinquent action. While the economic dilemma, often forcing Syrians to engage in these activities, is widely understood, respondents vehemently denied that the linkage to innate problems in their own communities and attributed the issue fully on Syrian refugees[36]. Ultimately, the results from the survey which had presented full cultural compatibility and no security threats emanating from the Syrian refugee presence in the North of Lebanon are complicated in the focus groups once more complex gendered dimensions are discussed such as social cohesion and morality.

The real and perceived increase in polygamy and early marriage was also noted as a threat to social cohesion and societal values in the North mostly by Lebanese women, but also by some men as well as local opinion makers. Polygamy is perceived to be more widely practiced in Syria where it is more religiously and culturally acceptable depending on socio-economic status and geographical location, thus Syrians are perceived as being more accepting for their girls to marry an already married Lebanese[37]. Early marriage and polygamy are indeed increasingly common among Syrian refugee women and girls, as they are perceived as strategies for a way out of acute poverty and the perils of sexual exploitation[38]. While stressing the risks facing child brides, respondents focused on the threats facing Lebanese first wives and their families and highlighted the social, economic and cultural impact of men increasingly marrying second wives. Paradoxically, as many Lebanese respondents see the increase of early marriage of Syrian girls as a security threat, a main motive for the latter phenomenon is linked to a perception of increasing the security of Syrian girls. As Syrian refugees are increasingly resorting to early marriage as a coping mechanism to 'protect' their daughters and female relatives, in reality it increases vulnerability and insecurity[39]. Moreover, a real and perceived increase in divorce rates was attributed to this phenomenon. Given the overall wide tendency to inflate security risks on a wider regional and national scale, the increase in divorce rate is likely to be an exaggerated security threat.

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[34] BRIC (17 March 2014). *Survey of Perceptions of Security Threats Stemming from the Syrian Refugee Presence in Lebanon*. Beirut, Lebanon. Report commissioned by International Alert

[35] Ibid

[36] BRIC (17 March 2014). *Survey of Perceptions of Security Threats Stemming from the Syrian Refugee Presence in Lebanon*.

[37] ibid

[38] Ibid, p. 72. See also S. Judson (August 9, 2014). 'Combatting Gender-Based Violence against Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon', *Daily Sabah*, Available at: http://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/2014/08/09/combatting-genderbased-violence-against-syrian-refugees-in-jordan-and-lebanon, R. El-Masri, C. Harvey and R. Garwood (September 2013). 'Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon', *ABAAD- Resource Center for Gender Equality and OXFAM*. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/Oxfam-ABAAD-ShiftingSands-2013.

[39] R. El-Masri, C. Harvey and R. Garwood (September 2013). 'Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon', *ABAAD- Resource Center for Gender Equality and OXFAM*, p.4 and 19

3.2. Economic and livelihood risks

3.2.1.   Perceived threats to job security

While there are nuances in different areas of the country, there is a widespread perception that the presence of Syrians represents a major risk for job security. As with other findings, there are big discrepancies between perceptions of the impact on national and local levels. While 68% of women and 78% of men thought that other Lebanese will face competition for work as a result of the Syrian refugee presence in their area, a considerable majority of 70% of women and 64% of men claim to not be personally affected[40]. 19% of women responded to be facing competition for work as a result of the Syrian refugee presence in their area, in comparison to 25% of men. These findings point towards an inflated threat perceptions potentially due to hearsay[41]. The findings also show that women seemed slightly less concerned than men, potentially due to the societal expectations placed on men as traditionally being the breadwinner for the family.

Correlations with other societal markers were found, for instance respondents under 30 years of age were more worried than older generations, and relatively newly employed and unemployed respondents felt more affected by Syrian competition in the labour market than those with more secure employment[42]. Demographically, those who perceived socio-economic threats as most acute were from the North, Bekaa and Nabatieh areas[43]. The presence of Syrian workers providing cheap labour is viewed in negative terms with the impression being that Syrians are replacing Lebanese and Palestinians on the lower end of the job market.[44] According to the ILO, Syrian men earn 40 per cent less than Lebanon's minimum wage ($448 per month) and Syrian women earn significantly less than their male counterparts. While Syrian refugee women are particularly vulnerable to unemployment, in many cases they have become the household's main breadwinners.[45]

The potential job loss of a low-paid Lebanese worker to a Syrian worker, who would be cheaper to employ, carries with it the potential of stirring up sectarian, economic and nationalistic tensions. Since there are a very limited number of jobs in the formal sector for Syrian men, Syrian women and children are pushed to work in the informal sector[46]. Moreover, refugees face a precarious legal status in Lebanon making it difficult to register with local authorities and accessing basic services. Consequently, these developments are causing a shift in gender roles while gender norms and expectations are staying the same, causing a rise in SGBV, domestic violence and negative coping mechanisms among men. It is worth noting however that increases in violence, in contrast to the rises in reporting or perceptions of increased violence, are difficult to quantify or prove given the paucity of data[47]. An dynamic worth highlighting is that women are almost exclusively blamed for polygamy and perceived promiscuous' activities such as prostitution, which misleadingly side-lines the lack of agency or decision-making Syrian

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[40] Ibid, p.22.

[41] BRIC (February 2015). *Citizens' perceptions of security threats stemming from the Syrian refugee presence in Lebanon*. International Alert. P.5

[42] Ibid

[43] E. Gordon (January 2014). *Perceptions of security and insecurity in Lebanon*. International Alert and LCPS. Draft report. p.17

[44] BRIC (17 March 2014). *Survey of Perceptions of Security Threats Stemming from the Syrian Refugee Presence in Lebanon*. P. 21-22

[45] V. Kauri. 'Syrian women vie for few jobs in Lebanon', *Aljazeera English*, 4 July 2014. Available at: http://m.aljazeera.com/story/2014628103045288646

[46] R. El Masri, C. Harvey and R. Garwood (September 2013). 'Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon', *ABAAD- Resource Center for Gender Equality and OXFAM*, Available at: http://tinyurl.com/Oxfam-ABAAD-ShiftingSands-2013. This includes men and women working in the sex industry or in jobs that maybe linked to the sex industry (e.g. hamam attendants), which increases their vulnerability.

[47] Ibid

girls in reality have, as well as the difficult contextual implications such as economic hardship and societal expectations of *sutra*[48], that would often lead them to engage in polygamy.

3.2.2. Gendered concerns over service provisions and public health

While the lack of existing services for Syrian refugees is more frequently highlighted in policy and practitioners' circles as it represent an acute concern that requires urgent attention, the concerns faced by vulnerable Lebanese host communities have tended to be rather side-lined. An increased demand on utilities due to the refugee influx coupled with limited national capacities to deal with these demands is contributing to a number of gendered security concerns over service provisions and public health. As part of the focus groups conducted as part of the in-depth research into impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis, it was evident that women tended to be the ones highlighting these concerns.

Women in North Lebanon stressed the heightened threats to the environment resulting from sewers over spilling. The increased strain placed on public services was mentioned as an important matter of concern, and included the increased scarcity of water, shortages in electricity and telecommunications[49]. Increased demand on public services, mainly hospitals and schools, was also pointed out. Perceptions of shortages in utilities or services differ from one region to the next. In Arsal for instance, a town located in the Beqaa with a high proportion of Syrian refugees and which has been subjected to armed clashes between different factions of armed groups such as Nusra, the so-called 'Islamic State' and the Lebanese army in 2015[50], an acute problem of water and electricity shortages was noted by respondents. While this is also of importance in Tripoli in the North and in the rest of the Bekaa, concerns over schooling and health feature there too[51].

The fact that women raised these security concerns which are affecting their daily lives and the lives of their families points towards women's responsibility in dealing with matters of education, healthcare and domestic chores for themselves and their families. As traditional gender norms place these responsibilities on women, their increased difficulty and potential inability to fulfil them as a result of the Syrian crisis can also lead to negative coping mechanisms from their part, as well as potential conflict with their husbands and families. While humanitarian aid had for a while only been targeting Syrian refugees, there is an increasing consensus that aid needs to reach both vulnerable Syrians, Lebanese as well as other groups including Palestinians, who had already been struggling before the recent refugee crisis. In these situations, SGM are especially vulnerable since they tend to fall through the cracks of humanitarian aid criteria, which often only distinguishes between female and male, and in many cases require a male head of household. Moreover, other societal markers play a critical role: while those SGM with higher social standing can find it easier to avoid retribution, more vulnerable refugees with no income, legal aid or support network will find it more difficult.

An increasing number of initiatives is attempting to address the numerous challenges by bringing together Syrian refugees and host communities. An analysis of the shifting gender roles among Syrian refugee communities shows that while many Syrian refugee women traditionally did not leave their

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[48] Protection of honour. It is often a main motive for early marriage of Syrian refugee girls. See for example: A. Zarzar. 'Syrian Refugees: Forced into Marrying off Their Daughters'. Al-Akhbar English, 11 September 2012. Available at http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/11993

[49] Alert commissioned report, Beirut Research and Innovation Centre (March 17, 2014) 'Survey of Perceptions of Security Threats stemming from the Syrian Refugee Presence in Lebanon' p. 23

[50] 'Arsal official denies Nusra calling on refugees to join Qalamoun battle', *The Daily Star*, 8th May 2015. Available at http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/May-08/297227-arsal-official-denies-nusra-calls-to-join-qalamoun-battle.ashx

[51] BRIC (17 March 2014). *Survey of Perceptions of Security Threats Stemming from the Syrian Refugee Presence in Lebanon*.

homes in Syria, they are now taking on a large amount of responsibilities in the public sphere[52]. As Syrian and Lebanese women seem to be facing challenges of similar scope and nature, meaningfully addressing these challenges would require reaching out to both communities. Syrian men on the other hand face a different situation, as they find themselves increasingly unable to provide for their families and consequently distance themselves from the public sphere[53].

As gender roles shift with displacement, men are not able to fulfil traditional gender norms including providing for and 'protecting' their families. Arguably, the inability of Syrian refugee men to live up to these norms and the resulting insecurities that follow from frustration and trauma as a result of conflict for them and their families, is causing an increase in Lebanese perceptions of insecurity. As many more power dynamics are at play and the scope of this paper is limited, questioning the role masculinities play in security perceptions is vital and requires further research.

Conclusion

This paper has examined some of the gendered dimensions of Lebanese security perceptions that came out of Alert's and LCPS' research project. It has argued that an understanding of the perceived and real gender dimensions of security risks facing vulnerable Lebanese communities as a result of the Syrian refugee crisis is of vital importance in order to successfully address concerns. Rather than examining gender in a narrow scope, this paper has adopted a broader approach that highlights the intersections of gender with various other social identity markers. As the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Lebanon is still unfolding and will do so in the future, it is crucial to reflect on what this means for Lebanese as well as Syrian femininities, masculinities and other gender identities. A close analysis of the shifting dynamics becomes paramount to understand broader dimensions of power in society.

Given the small scope of this paper, the findings presented are aimed to raise more questions rather than constitute definitive answers. Further inquiry is needed to address the numerous knowledge gaps in this subject matter, including into how gender is influencing and shaping Lebanese and Syrians' social interactions and dealings, but also identifying where opportunities lie for peacebuilding and improving social cohesion. Moreover, looking into capacities and responses to addressing these security concerns in a way that does not exacerbate them is vital at this stage. More in depth understanding into the gender dimensions of Lebanese security sector[54] and other key security actors is needed to place security perceptions and concerns within a broader context and to address them in a holistic manner.

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[52] Interview, Syrian women's rights activist, Beirut, November 2014

[53] Interview, Syrian women's rights activist, Beirut, November 2014. Living for the most part in informal Syrian refugee camps, men struggle to find paid jobs to sustain their families and face a number of challenges including heightened security risks. Their frustrations and trauma coupled with lack of opportunities has lead them to stay behind and simply "do nothing", increasing the burden on Syrian refugee women but also exposing a range of vulnerabilities that are rarely noted or addressed.

[54] See for example Khattab and Myrttinen (November 2014) 'Gender, Security and SSR in Lebanon'. *International Alert*.