

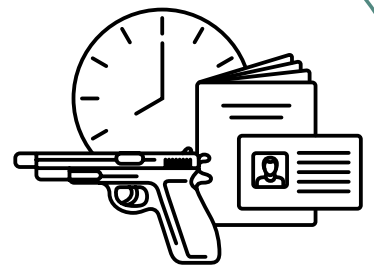
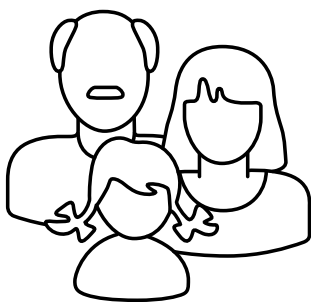
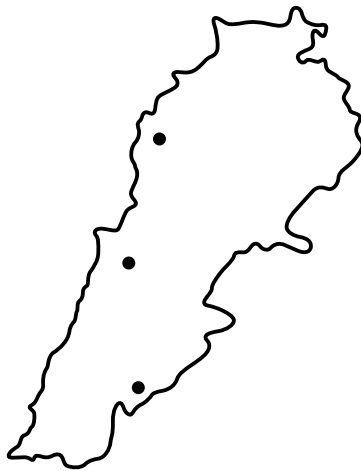
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(IN)FORMAL HYBRID SECURITY IN LEBANON

Policy brief & poster inside



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Executive summary

This report aims to analyze how formal and informal security providers implement their respective social order agendas through a security “assemblage”. It also aims to inform the debate on refugee protection and security provision in urban settings, in the context of Lebanon’s hybrid security system. The accounts collected illustrate how state security institutions tacitly accept – or even rely on – informal security actors, managing at times to achieve their political and strategic goals through decentralized and/or illegal forms of control. In this vein, local municipalities imposed curfews and street patrols, which, far from being an institutional measure, follow a flexible and unpredictable pattern.¹

Three localities have been selected for the purpose of this research - namely Aley in Mount Lebanon, Ebrine in North Lebanon, and Shebaa in South Lebanon. The choice of these localities was driven by their different political and social history, their demographic homogeneity or diversity, and their relationship with surrounding regions.

The investigation of the Syrian refugees’ access to security systems constitutes an interpretative lens through which the analysis of securitization processes in Lebanon can be undertaken. The notion of security we will discuss here is polysemantic: it does not only encompass regional or domestic conflicts, but also suggests a particular social form of waiting; a climate of fear portending the worse that is yet to come. As a matter of fact, this climate of fear encourages preemptive security measures and serves as a deterrent against violent outbursts. Therefore, manifestations of insecurity or security threats are often routinized perceptions and, as such, integrated into accounts of ordinary everyday life.

Security plays a multifaceted role in the three settings selected for thorough analysis. It builds the cohesiveness of the local communities, while fending off endemic societal fragmentation. This is mainly because local people tend to identify with a single homogenous entity that needs to protect itself against external threats, with these threats being represented nowadays by Syrian refugees, who may become “radicalized” and destabilize the “host” space. And since security goes beyond the exclusion of risk and jeopardy, the official discourse of local security providers entails the protection of refugees.

While we draw on the classic normative distinction of security providers into formal and informal, our analysis moves beyond such a rigid differentiation. The formal/

¹ | Mariane Madoré, “The Peaceful Settlement of Syrian Refugees in the Eastern Suburbs of Beirut: Understanding the Causes of Social Stability”, Civil Society Knowledge Center, March 2016, available at <http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/paper/peaceful-settlement-syrian-refugees-eastern-suburbs-beirut-understanding-causes-social> [last accessed May 31st, 2016].

² | Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, New York, The Free Press, No. 74, 1982.

³ | Thierry Balzacq, “Security, Identity, and Symbolic Interactionism”, in *International Review of Sociology*, vol. 12, No. 3, p. 469-506, 2002.

informal dichotomy fades away when security is discussed as a hybrid assemblage of unpredictable and situational forces enforced in particular circumstances.

Our findings confirm that formal security is partially implemented through informal local actors, providing a terrain of common interest in the preservation of social order. In addition, security cannot be viewed as a given “social fact”²: it is rather a contextual process embedded in multiple power relations³ that preserve social order in a given space and reinforce social status and community identification.

INTRODUCTION

The Middle East – where geopolitics often shape security discourses and praxis – is increasingly perceived as an environment riddled with conflict and even “danger”. In Lebanon, domestic security concerns, largely fomented by the massive influx of refugees as a result of the prolonged political conflict in Syria justify repressive state responses and states of emergency in an attempt to contain social mobilization, popular contestation, and political dissent.⁴ Many accounts on security *in* and *on* Lebanon tend to reproduce confessionalist and tribal-centered discourses, while misinterpreting security as a quantitatively measurable phenomenon and identifying the causes of different security threats. By considering security as a self-evident category of analysis, scholars and practitioners have paid insufficient attention to how actors themselves understand this notion and how different actors – mainly those in power – manipulate the concept of security to pursue political aims. Security is hence a fluid and contested concept that is diversely experienced and definable. Consequently, people often disagree about the types of threats (whom or what) and how society should respond to them.

Two main trends generally dominate discourses in Lebanon about security mechanisms and security providers. On the one hand, there is the culturalist trend that highlights the extraordinary role of militias as security providers. On the other hand, there is the normative trend that emphasizes the persistent and stereotyped portrayal of the Lebanese state as absent and inherently weak.⁵

For our part, we have endeavored to keep a critical distance from the predominant and anachronistic security discourses given that:

1. Militias, both former and still present, have been at the heart of state apparatuses in Lebanon since the 1989 Taef Accord;
2. The Lebanese state, far from being merely absent, is active and operates on all social, economic, and security levels. Often seen as liberal in comparison with other dictatorships in the Arab region, it remains the main architect of public policies that end up protecting the interests of private actors, who form the state apparatus itself.
3. Gender inequalities are pervasive on all levels of society and are reinforced by the state apparatus. Within this context, the actions of formal and informal security actors inevitably affect gender dynamics, which also contribute to shaping them in return.

⁴ | Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi, Myriam Catusse, Mariam Younes, “From *isqat an-nizam at-ta’ifi* to the garbage crisis movement: political identities in practice through the lens of anti-sectarian movements”, in Rosita Di Peri and Daniel Meier (ed.), *Lebanon Facing the Arab Uprising: Constraints and Adaptation*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming.

⁵ | Boaz Atzili, “State Weakness and ‘Vacuum of Power’ in Lebanon”, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 33, No. 8, 2010, p. 757-782.

⁶ | Sonja Wolf, “Formal and Informal Security Governance in the Americas”, *Latin America Research Review*, Vol. 50, No. 3, *Latin American Studies Association*, 2015, available at https://lasa.international.pitt.edu/auth/pub/Larr/CurrentIssue/50-3_275-286_Wolf.pdf [last accessed May 31st, 2016].

⁷ | Souhail Belhadj et al., “Plural Security Provision in Beirut”, *Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law*, 2015, available at <http://www.kpsrL.org/browse/download/t/plural-security-provision-in-beirut> [last accessed May 31st, 2016].

⁸ | Benoit Dupont, Peter Grabosky, Clifford Shearing and Samuel Tanner, “La gouvernance de la sécurité dans les États faibles et défaillants”, *Champ pénal/Penal field*, Vol. IV | 2007, [last accessed on 06 June 2016].

⁹ | On the United States, see Franck Vindevogel, 2002, *Sécurité publique et initiative privée: un partenariat*

pour le maintien de l’ordre à New York, *Thèse pour l’obtention du grade de docteur de l’université Paris VIII, Vincennes-Saint-Denis; On Canada see Laura Huey, Richard Ericson, Kevin Haggerty, 2005, Policing fantasy city*, in Cooley, D. (ed), *Re-imagining policing in Canada*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 140-208.

In general, security actors have been discussed through rethinking the informal *versus* the formal.⁶ However, the security provision systems, bringing together the Internal Security Forces (ISF), the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the municipal police, and local political parties, traverse conceptual boundaries between public and private provision or formal and informal actors.⁷

Globally, “policing” is no longer considered as the monopoly of central state nowadays, but rather as a function that is increasingly exerted by various institutional “arrangements” that can be public, private, community-based or hybrid.⁸ This “security governance” is formed by formal or informal, governmental or private, commercial or “volunteer” based actors. This “assemblage”, as we argue in this report, exerts functions of social control, conflict resolution, and “peace” promotion by anticipating threats – real or perceived – arising from community life. In several contexts, “communities” exerting policing functions are emerging⁹, leading to a “surveillance assemblage”¹⁰ operating in a complex mode of action and consisting of different and changing actors, social practices and institutions.

As will be evident throughout this report, this hybrid assemblage of security discourages in different ways local residents, as well as refugee and migrant communities, from accessing formal security providers and state institutions to sort out everyday security matters.

The investigation of Syrian refugees’ access to security systems constitutes an interpretative lens through which the climate of anticipation of violence and informal powers can be examined.

The selection of localities which are not necessarily the places where most insecurity episodes and outbursts of violence are reported in Lebanon illustrates how community control and refugee crisis management work at a local level.

Our main objectives are to examine how Syrian refugees have specifically fomented security concerns upon their arrival in the three localities in Lebanon 2011 onwards; how different social actors tackle these constructed “threats”; and how the overall security politics shape people’s everyday lives. In this vein, we investigate how “moral panic”¹¹, often instigated by political entrepreneurs, contributes to the construction of collective insecurity. This collective insecurity gives rise to a shared perception of risk among Lebanese and Syrians. Overall, our main focus has not been merely to

10 | Adam Crawford, Stuart Lister, Sarah Blackburn, and Jonathan Burnett, *Plural policing: the mixed economy of visible patrols in England and Wales*, Bristol, The Policy Press, 2005.

11 | “Moral panic(s)” refers to a process of collective concern and “panic” within a society, constructed by different actors (media, politicians

etc.). *The concerns or panics related to an alleged threat to society’s values and interest, coming from outside*. See Chas Critcher, “Moral Panic Analysis: Past, Present and Future”, *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 2008, p. 1127-1144, available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2008.00122.x/epdf> [last accessed May 31st, 2016].

assess who owns and who undergoes security power, but rather to show the multiple levels of coordination or competition that exist between formal and informal security providers in microcosms where power faces limitations due to the intervention of the counterparts.

METHODOLOGY

Fieldwork was conducted in three selected localities between February and April 2016. The three localities – namely Ebrine in North Lebanon, Shebaa in South Lebanon, and Aley in Mount Lebanon – were selected due to their different political history, as well as socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Different formal and informal approaches to security-related incidents were undertaken in these three settings, as reported in media outlets and research material over the last couple of years.

30 in-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted with male and female local residents above 18 years-old, Syrian refugees, long-term migrant workers, local *makhatir* – formal government intermediaries in charge of local administrative affairs – municipalities, municipal police, local branches of political parties, as well as local or international NGOs operating in the three localities.

Through a conversation between different disciplinary approaches, such as anthropology, sociology, and political science, the researchers have sought to develop a critique of hybrid security mechanisms and their social understandings in Lebanon. An interactionist approach focusing on the relational and processual forms of security was adopted. We hence aim to investigate how social actors negotiate security mechanisms on a daily basis and to create an evidence base for the impact of these formal and informal security arrangements on the protection of refugees in Lebanon.

In regards to methodology, the case of Ebrine is noteworthy. The people of this locality are aware of the fact that their town has risen to prominence in 2013, when media outlets and bloggers brought to attention the illegal security measures imposed on Syrian refugees. In the same vein, curfews illegally enforced by local municipalities in Lebanon – as their enforcement does not fall under the municipality's jurisdiction – drew the unprecedented attention of researchers to non-traditional implementations of local security. The local residents of Ebrine therefore perceived our research project

as primarily biased: a mere way of privileging some local voices over others (Syrians *versus* Lebanese). While it should not be taken for granted that Lebanese residents are more secure or feel more protected than Syrian refugees, they remained our main knowledge gatekeepers in the field sites. Apart from the case of Aley, a relatively large city where it is easy to meet and interact with Syrian refugees independently from local residents, both Syrian refugee women and men were often inaccessible to outsiders, except in the cases in which NGOs, local residents, and providers served as intermediaries.

After providing a socio-historical background of the three research settings, we will discuss the formal and informal security actors on the ground. We will subsequently highlight how security is locally understood and implemented: as a social status, a booster of community identity, a necessary measure to tackle actual risks, or, in other cases, a way to face social unease or chronic discomfort. Typical mistrust in these Lebanese settings towards newcomers and awareness of the “unwilling hospitality”¹² of Lebanese inhabitants underlie the nuanced perception of insecurity and their complex relation with actual risk.

01

Background on the Three Localities

Three case studies have been selected.

The Mount Lebanon town of Aley is a demographically hybrid, predominantly Druze urban setting, largely seen as the cradle of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) of the Jumblatt family. Known as a safe and touristic area, in spite of the clashes that had pitted the Druze against the Maronite Christians on several occasions in Lebanon's history, it was one of the first municipalities to impose curfews on Syrian refugees in April 2013.

The Batroun village of Ebrine is also known to be safe. It is a demographically homogenous setting with a predominantly Maronite Christian community that mostly supports the "Phalangist" Party. Ebrine too enacted curfews in spring 2013, following in the footsteps of other localities in Lebanon.

The southern Lebanese Sunni village of Shebaa, which enacted a curfew in 2014, has been chosen for its similar demographic homogeneity and also for being politically at odds – unlike Aley and Ebrine – with its neighborhood. Of the three case studies, Shebaa best reflects the events in Syria due to its border-crossing location and its political pattern.

The purpose of this report is therefore to analyze securitization processes, notably curfews, in contexts characterized by different political and social genealogies of security. For this reason, higher rates of clashes or other security issues have not been considered as determining factors taken into account in the selection of localities.

Refugees in the three selected field sites do not live in informal tented settlements – which are prioritized in aid distribution – but in rented accommodations. While this is not in the least meant to advance the argument that informal camp-dwellers are less exposed to discrimination and resentment, it aims to show that politico-legal exclusionary policies have a more direct impact on refugees living amongst local communities. Tensions are *de facto* expressed through the adoption of curfews and street patrols, as well as other coercive measures, such as detention and seizure of identity documents, which is also a key concern in informal tented settlements. These forms of tension are not new to Lebanon, in that they used to impinge on the everyday civic rights of Palestinian refugees, who have been legally prevented from owning properties or working in highly professional sectors since the late 1940s onwards.¹³

¹³ | Sherifa Shafie, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", Forced Migration Review, Oxford, Oxford University Press, July 2007, available at <http://www.forcedmigration.org/research-resources/expert-guides/palestinian-refugees-in-lebanon/fmo018.pdf>.

¹⁴ | Interview conducted with a PSP member in March 2016, Aley.

¹⁵ | Interestingly, official statistics are not reliable. Most political parties refer to the presence of around 5,000 Syrian refugees, whilst the head of the municipal police puts the number at 15,000.

¹⁶ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Aley.

ALEY

Located in the Mount Lebanon Governorate, the district of Aley has an estimated, predominantly Druze, population of around 100,000 people. But it also has the highest number of non-Lebanese inhabitants, representing more than 5 per cent of its overall population.¹⁴

As an urban town composed of 20 districts, Aley is home to around 35,000-40,000 inhabitants and to almost 3,500 refugee families.¹⁵ It is widely known in Lebanon and in the Arab Gulf as a tourist destination. As one of the 12 municipal clusters in the country, it receives funding from the European Union, mostly for urban planning and solid waste management. Aley now hosts an unprecedented number of refugees. While Syrian refugees mainly reside in apartments, they have no access to public social services, with the only limited welfare provided to them being through non-governmental organizations¹⁶, as members of the municipal council put it. However, the number of Syrians is consistently decreasing due to their often illegal migration to third countries or, in few cases, resettlement programs outside Lebanon.

When asked, Syrian refugees said they settled here because Aley felt safer than Beirut, which they feared was more “mixed” and more likely to be the scene of political and social tension. Most of the interviewees originally come from Sweida (Southern Syria) and Salamiyye (Central Syria). Some are not newcomers: they either have relatives or have previously been here for work. Apart from the hospitality of the people of Aley, the residents also mentioned the town’s ideal location on the main road connecting Damascus to Beirut as a factor encouraging refugee relocation nowadays.

With ten *makhatir* (government intermediaries in charge of local administrative affairs), Aley is a base for several political parties. The Walid Jumblatt-led Progressive Socialist Party, a supporter of the Syrian opposition, holds greater sway locally. The Lebanese Forces (LF) and the Phalangist Party (*Kata’eb*) – both opponents of the Assad regime in Syria – also have a presence in the town. At the other end of the spectrum, the Druze Lebanese Democratic Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), and the Tawhid Movement are the parties that are rather supportive of the Syrian regime in Aley.

The town is often discussed in fieldwork accounts as a region that is dying out economically due to the crumbling touristic sector. A local resident specified:



Arab Gulf people own lots of houses here but they're not coming that much lately. They fear violence escalation and instability as a spillover from Syria [and of course the latest designation of Hezbollah by the Arab Gulf as a terrorist party will not help Gulf citizens to travel to Lebanon].¹⁷

The increasing poverty of the Aley region is highlighted in all interviews conducted with local residents. In addition, the scarce presence of international aid providers, in comparison with other regions in Lebanon, like the North and the Bekaa Valley, triggers some form of resentment among political parties and municipal actors, who feel left on their own to cope with the refugee crisis amid insufficient support.

Lastly and notably, Aley was, as the head of its municipal police¹⁸ maintained, one of the first municipalities to have enacted the curfew.

EBRINE

Ebrine is a small northern village located in the Batroun Governorate. It has a predominantly Christian Maronite population of around 3,000 people. UNHCR estimates the current number of Syrian refugees at around 600.¹⁹ Most refugees had relatives in the village prior to the outbreak of the conflict in Syria. They were mainly employed in construction, agriculture, and gardening. After the 2011 Syrian conflict, many of those male workers brought their nuclear or even extended families to the village. The center of Ebrine is limited to a small street, where most shops and branches of the main political parties are located (Kata'eb, FPM, and LF). These three parties define themselves as an integral part of the same "community", standing in opposition to the Sleiman Frangieh-founded Marada Movement.

While the last municipal elections took place in 2010, the local municipal council resigned in 2013, leaving behind a power vacuum.²⁰ The council collapsed, when the three political parties failed to agree on their share of seats in the municipal council. Ebrine is currently run by an administrative body located in the Batroun Governorate (*qada'*) and led by the Ottoman-born figure of the *Qaimaqam*. However, no entity was evidently seen administering the area during our several trips to the village.

As fieldwork accounts highlight, refugees do not socialize with local residents, which may be due, in part, to the fact that most services they can access are located outside

¹⁷ | Interview conducted in April 2016, Aley.

¹⁸ | Interview conducted in April 2016, Ebrine.

¹⁹ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Tripoli.

²⁰ | Interview with local residents in February 2016, Ebrine.

²¹ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Batroun.

²² | Interview conducted in February 2016, Ebrine.

²³ | Maya El Helou, "Refugees under curfew: the war of Lebanese municipalities against the poor", *Legal Agenda*, 22 December 2014, available at [http://english.legal-](http://english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=674&folder=articles&lang=en)

[agenda.com/article.php?id=674&folder=articles&lang=en](http://english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=674&folder=articles&lang=en) [last accessed May 31st, 2016]; "Near Batroun, fear of Syrians prompts patrols", *The Daily Star*, December 19th 2014, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Sep-19/271186-near-batroun-fear-of-syrians-prompts-patrols.ashx> [last accessed May 27th, 2016]; Joachim Saxtorph-Poulsen, "Asad

should burn you alive", *NOW*, 22 December 2014, available at <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/reports/features/564578-Asad-should-burn-you-alive> [last accessed May 27th, 2016]; "Racism, Bigotry and Anarchy: How My Hometown Is Breeding ISIS", *A Separate State of Mind*, 19 October 2014, available at <https://stateofmind13.com/2014/10/19/racism-bigotry->

[and-anarchy-how-my-hometown-is-breeding-isis/](https://stateofmind13.com/2014/10/19/racism-bigotry-and-anarchy-how-my-hometown-is-breeding-isis/) [last accessed May 27th, 2016].

²⁴ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Ebrine.

²⁵ | John Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage: Syrian Migrant Workers in Lebanon*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2009.

Ebrine. Syrians appear to be mostly leading their social life in a refugee center located in Batroun (7 km away) and coordinated by an International Non-Governmental Organization, and also at the Batroun mosque, where they register for assistance. Refugees do not send their kids to local primary schools and high schools, preferring a Syrian school in a neighboring village.

Both the *Qaimaqam* and the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) interviewed expressed the need for Lebanese to deal with the permanent presence of Syrian refugees. “They will not leave this time”, a social worker stressed.²¹ The acknowledgment of their permanent presence is observable in the long-term nature of some development programs addressing Syrian refugees and the local community, in an effort to make the latter cope with refugees on a sustainable basis. Likewise, a local resident specified²²:



There is still a difference between the Syrians who used to come and work here and the new refugees. They used to come and go back to Syria. Now they are here to stay. I must say that there was more chaos a few years ago... People were moving all the time.

When Syrian refugees started flowing to Ebrine, local residents hung up banners announcing night curfew measures and warned other residents against employing Syrians or renting houses²³ to them in a bid to reduce their numbers. However, all Syrian refugees do rent houses in the village. Whilst some local residents describe the curfew as a necessary preventive measure, Syrian refugees interpret it as the tipping point of a broader social discrimination process.

A local resident²⁴ explained the generalized rejection of setting up camps, saying, “We don’t want camps. If this happens, we will end up calling them ‘displaced’ (*nazihun*), not ‘refugees’ (*laji’un*).” No signs of “refugeehood” are to be seen in everyday life. In this sense, local people prove to fear the so-called ‘Palestinization’ of the Syrian issue and support local security measures as the only possible form of control on the newcomers. Among the main causes behind the enactment of curfews is that the Syrian regime’s cruelty and the sight of Palestinians arriving in Lebanon back in the 1940s remain etched in collective memory. One Lebanese saying, “*as-suriyyun halaqu al-ard*” (“the Syrians exhausted the whole land”), embodies such local feelings.

Syrians present in Lebanon are apparently recognized as a cheaper workforce in the national economy. Syrian migrants have long been mainly employed in agriculture, construction, cleaning, and gardening even prior to the crisis.²⁵

SHEBAA

The village of Shebaa is located in the Governorate of Nabatieh in southern Lebanon, bordering Syria and the Golan Heights in northern Israel and neighboring the so-called Shebaa Farms, a strip of land that the Israeli Army occupied in 1981.

Shebaa has a predominantly Sunni local population of approximately 8,000 residents. Many of its residents only live in the town in summer, while they live and work in Beirut or in neighboring cities, like Sidon, for the rest of the year. This is why the local population drops to around 4,000 in winter. 5,000 to 7,000 Syrian refugees have been counted in the village since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria. Most of them are from the neighboring Syrian village of Bayt Jinn. Many refugees have lately returned to Bayt Jinn in Syria, with around 3,000 only choosing to stay in Shebaa. Before the crisis broke out, the two villages had a long history of trade and smuggling, mainly owing to their geographical proximity. Many refugees, especially males, used to commute between Shebaa and Bayt Jinn prior to and during the conflict. For many of them, however, this ceased to be possible after the Lebanese Government announced new residency regulations for Syrians in Lebanon that were implemented by General Security from January 2015 onwards. Most of our interlocutors were without legal papers at the time of fieldwork.²⁶

Due to its geographical proximity to the Shebaa farms and the Golan Heights, as well as the longstanding Israeli occupation, the village has long been exposed to conflicts and security risks. This perception has intensified since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict. Shebaa is now “the town caught in the middle”, “affected by wars on two fronts”²⁷, and therefore in constant risk of “spillovers” from the armed conflict. This is also reinforced by the multifold isolation of Shebaa, situated as it is in a valley surrounded by hills, and also by the fact that it is confessionally and ideologically at odds with its surroundings, which are mostly marked by the support to the Syrian regime. Suspicions also surrounded the local population’s possible involvement in the Syrian conflict, given its close ties with Bayt Jinn, a stronghold of the Free Syrian Army, which triggered fears that Shebaa might turn into a ‘Arsal-like’²⁸ scenario. Shebaa’s local residents as well as Syrian refugees feel that such a geographic and political isolation is tangible and often lament the neglect of political actors, the Lebanese Government, and international non-governmental organizations. In many of the interviews, the challenges of commuting were marked as one of the main factors behind the village’s isolation owing to limited infrastructure, social support, and

²⁶ | See also *Lebanon Support*, Formal informality, brokering mechanisms, and illegality: the impact of Lebanese state’s policies targeting Syrians on everyday life, *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, forthcoming.

²⁷ | “Shebaa, the town caught in the middle”, *The Daily Star*, 27 December 2015, available at

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2015/February-27/288953-shebaa-the-town-caught-in-the-middle.ashx> [last accessed May 27th, 2016].

²⁸ | Claire Shukr, “Hal takun Shebaa ‘Arsal 2?”, *Now*, 10 September 2014, available at [https://now.mmedia.me/lb/ar/analysisar/563057-%D9%](https://now.mmedia.me/lb/ar/analysisar/563057-%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84-2)

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For the sake of clarity, ‘Arsal is a village in Eastern Bekaa neighboring Syria and known to be the main Lebanese hotbed for the Syrian armed opposition groups, including the “Islamic State” and Nusra Front.

²⁹ | Interviews conducted with local residents in February 2016, Shebaa.

scant work facilities. Many of the Shebaa residents depend on multifold support from relatives, who have left the village for Beirut or a foreign country.

Given its direct proximity to different breeding grounds of conflict, Shebaa is surrounded by checkpoints of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) as well as UNIFIL bases. The LAF Intelligence services are also active in the area, as different local interlocutors confirmed.²⁹ Nevertheless, while the LAF and UNIFIL personnel hardly enter the village and generally do not meddle in its domestic affairs, the LAF Intelligence is said to conduct regular raids targeting houses of Syrian refugees.

The Shebaa Municipality brings together a coalition of members from the Saad Hariri-led Future Movement and the Muslim Brotherhood-aligned Islamic League. The last elections held on May 22nd, 2016 witnessed renewed competition between Islamic League and the Future Movement that were represented by two competing lists. The clear victory of the Future Movement's list headed by current Mayor Mohammad Saab confirmed the Islamic League's failure to establish itself as a local political power. The local interviewees generally expressed their support for the Future Movement, but admitted that they felt neglected by the party. While Islamic League and some Salafist groups have gained some ground in the village since the arrival of Syrian refugees, Salafists have thus far not managed to clinch municipal representation.

While Hezbollah's presence and control over the southern region dominates the literature on security in Lebanon, the party has little visibility and grassroots support in Shebaa. Nowadays, Hezbollah occasionally interferes in the affairs of the village and in municipal politics.

02

Local Genealogies of (In)Security in the Three Localities

The enforcement of security measures, including curfews, often appears to be motivated by past bouts of violence, outbursts of public fear, and repercussions of regional political tension, hence the need to grasp the locally encrypted genealogies of securitization. A large segment of the media tends to undercut the mundane dimension of violence in complete disregard of the fact that it has been present and implicated for decades in ordinary life and political circumstances. How insecurity is tackled can be thought of as a recollection of past violence and anticipation of future violence.³⁰ This report thus engages with the societal meanings that such anticipated forms of violence are presently being addressed and how such meanings change in different social relations and political histories.

Also, informal security mechanisms are strengthened by the implicitly complementary action (or inaction) of formal mechanisms. While the LAF has long been depicted as unable to protect the Lebanese territory, especially during the Israeli aggressions (of 1978, 1982, 1996), the domestic military “weakness” is often depicted in contrast with the “strength” of Lebanese political parties. Indeed, the latter often rely on community militias and tend to strengthen their political constituencies, who are expected to comply with their ethical and political code in the public space. In general, these mutual allegiances between constituencies and political parties are tacitly established in return for basic services and social assistance that the central Government is unable to provide. In the wake of the Syrian conflict and the consequent massive influx of Syrian refugees, the historically grown hybrid security sector received increased international and domestic attention and was, as such, expected to cope with new challenges and with the “spillover” of violence. In response, the Lebanese state intensified local securitization, in parallel with informal mechanisms of security provision.

These securitization mechanisms have to be looked at in light of a Syrian-Lebanese interrelated history³¹ of mutual mistrust, which contributes to explaining the adoption of different security measures. Unlike Shebaa, neither Aley nor Ebrine particularly suffer from deprivation of services or high local unemployment rates when compared to other Lebanese regions (such as the Tripoli Governorate or the northern region of Akkar). However, all three localities have enacted security measures against Syrian refugees. In justification of these measures, most residents said they were

30 | Sami Hermez, “The War is Going to Ignite: Anticipation of Violence in Lebanon”, *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2012, p. 327-344, available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1555-2934.2012.01206.x/pdf> [last accessed May 27, 2016].

31 | See: Elizabeth Picard, *Liban-Syrie, Intimes étrangers. Un siècle d'interrogations sociopolitiques*, Paris, Actes Sud, 2016.

32 | For instance, after the February 14, 2005 killing of the erstwhile Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, which was followed by a series of assassinations targeting Lebanese opponents of the Syrian regime, the Assad regime was

accused of having a hand in Lebanon's instability. Also read: Vincent Geisser, “La question des réfugiés syriens au Liban: le réveil des fantômes du passé”, in *Confluences Méditerranée*, 2013.

33 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

34 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

35 | Interview conducted in February 2016, Aley.

36 | Interview conducted in February 2016, Aley.

37 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

not only due to the larger number of Syrians compared to Iraqi or Sudanese refugees across Lebanon, but also to the specificities of their ambivalent relationship with the Syrian neighbor.³²

Aley is the only field site among the three localities, where curfews had been enacted in the past. Local residents recall the curfew imposed during the Israeli invasion of 1982 (apparently from 6 pm, although it remains undocumented) and during the War of the Mountain (*harb al-jabal*, 1982-1984). A member of the Kata'eb Party³³ in Aley recalled the time when the Israeli Army sanctioned security measures in the city by dividing it along confessional lines, saying:



When the Israelis were here, there was not a real curfew. They simply divided the Western district of Aley into two parts and forbade Christians residing in the lower district [that still houses churches] from going to the upper district [named Khalle, where killings occurred]. An Israeli commander shot me once, as we used to go illegally to the upper district.

Likewise, locals remember curfews imposed by the Syrian Army during the years of the “Syrian tutelage” of Lebanon (*al-wikala as-suriyya*). “They were even stricter and manned checkpoints too”, remembers a member of a political party in Aley.³⁴

When refugees started arriving from Syria, as some interviewees recalled, a group of men set fire to shops owned by Syrians in a show of revenge against the Syrian regime. “Even if Jumblatt [a very influential political figure in Aley as leader of the PSP] is with the Syrian Revolution, he’s not with the Syrian people”, argued a Syrian refugee.³⁵ In this sense, the security perceptions of refugees are generated by their feeling of being politically marked as with or against their regime.

The last episodes of violence remembered by local inhabitants are the May 2008 clashes between the two main political alliances in Lebanon [March 14, led by the Future Movement of Saad Hariri and the Hezbollah-led March 8 coalition]. As far as the local population remembers, the clashes left 16 Hezbollah members dead. In spite of this, a local resident specified, “There is nothing I do to feel safer. When I see the state, the LAF, and the ISF, I’m relaxed”.³⁶

Today, refugees are not perceived as the cause of specific security problems. Two municipal policemen³⁷ argued that security and refugee protection should be seen as two faces of the same coin. They identified personal or political conflicts between or within local and refugee communities as the source of sporadic instability.

Although there seems to be no security issues strictly connected to the Syrian refugee presence in Aley, some segments of the local population tend to remain highly suspicious. For example, one local³⁸ contended that “Syrians are not used to certain things [the way women dress there]... as events in Germany unfolded”.³⁹ Syrians are indeed depicted as more conservative in customs and social practices. Consequently, Syrian men are particularly portrayed as a source of insecurity for Lebanese women, due to fear of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Furthermore, the Syrian refugees’ perception of being identified with the regime’s occupation of Lebanon until April 2005 is also confirmed by the following words of a Syrian refugee: “Whenever something bad happens, Syrians are blamed. But it also depends on our confessional belonging, which changes people’s perceptions. I believe there’s little integration even within local communities here”⁴⁰.

The account of a local woman reflects the refugees’ perception of being unwelcome and scapegoated.



*Syrians are dirty and breed a lot... 50% of them have left via trafficking and migration to Europe because of the laws here. But this is generally a safe area: as long as we have national and municipal police, we have immediate help. But I think the municipality hides things from us to make us feel safe. I'm sure it does.*⁴¹

Similarly, Ebrine’s residents do remember the checkpoints that the Assad regime had established (1976-2005) to monitor their territory while enjoying the support of the neighboring Shiite village of Rashkida. Residents also recall how Assad’s army used to arbitrarily stop local residents. “I think people now want to take revenge, and they use the refugees to do it. Those soldiers were Syrian, and we still feel wounded”, said one of them.⁴² Because of its hegemony over Lebanon, the Syrian army was never held accountable for the crimes it perpetrated, including the harassment of Lebanese citizens.

Unlike Aley, as far as the local residents of Ebrine remember, there are no other historical examples of curfews in the village. Indeed, local people define the history of their village as quite linear and homogenous: the only meaningful historical watershed is said to be the Syrian refugee crisis, impacting Ebrine’s daily life in new ways.

Historical memories are mainly characterized by the rivalry between Ebrine and the neighboring village of Rashkida, where Hezbollah, the main Shia party and staunch ally of the Assad regime, has a presence. Syrians are now referred to as “bringing in” insecurity to the village: while men are seen as potential sexual harassers, women tend to be considered mainly as childbearers and therefore a factor of demographic “threat”.

³⁸ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

³⁹ | “Germany Shocked by Cologne New Year Assaults on Women”, BBC News, available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35231046> [last accessed May 31st, 2016].

⁴⁰ | Interview conducted with a Syrian refugee man in February 2016, Aley.

⁴¹ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

⁴² | Conversation held in March 2016, Ebrine.

⁴³ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Ebrine.

⁴⁴ | Interview conducted with UNHCR representative, March 2016, Tripoli.

Overall, most local residents associate the present Syrian refugees with the Baath regime although most refugees are politically against the Syrian Government.

The recounting of the social genealogy of local security shows that Ebrine had become a main destination for families fleeing Beirut during the civil war when the town was perceived as safer than the Lebanese capital. Most of these families remained in the village when the war was over. In this regard, a resident said⁴³



I came back to the village in 1976, when the civil war broke out, since Beirut was no longer safe. It is true that we kept our land in Clemenceau (a Western Beirut district), but we never felt like going back in the 1990s. We felt like we were home again here in Ebrine, where we were born.

Similarly, the local community continues to describe Ebrine as a safe village even in the wake of the influx of Syrian refugees. Restrictions of movement and expression on displaced communities are very frequent. Nevertheless, the social frictions reported in the Batroun area are mostly instigated by competition over jobs, in villages where refugees outnumber the local population.⁴⁴

In Shebaa, the memory of Israeli occupation influences responses to questions on security in the region although many interlocutors tend to downplay the importance of the occupation, emphasizing that new times had begun. The Israeli army had its main base on top of one of the surrounding mountains using from there a big spotlight to monitor the area at night. Residents recall that they did not go out at night and were not able to sleep due to the spotlight screening around the village.

In general, our interlocutors are aware of how their village is perceived: unsafe and at risk of violent conflicts because of its delicate geographical location and the contested status of the Shebaa farms. Reflecting this perception is the constant emphasis on the village's inner uniformity and stability; one that is counteracted, however, by an outer social, political and economic exclusion and insecurity, a Sunni village surrounded by a Hezbollah and Amal-dominated region and flanked by two hostile political regimes: the Israeli and the Syrian. This state of affairs is often exemplified by the story of the Shebaa hospital, a new and large complex that was built on the outskirts of the village thanks to Kuwaiti funding, but is yet to be inaugurated, as recounted.



The hospital has by far better equipment than the American University Hospital. The hospital is completed. You can see it, but we are not allowed to open it. Can you imagine who the vetoing party is? There is a hospital in Nabatiyeh; they don't need competition.



*That said, we have to go to Marjeyoun or Nabatiyeh to receive medical care in the event of emergencies. People die on the road because they cannot reach the hospital in due time.*⁴⁵

A similar perception is shared by the Syrian refugees, who have settled in Shebaa due to the long history of interactions with the local population, as well as the social and geographical similarities to Bayt Jinn. Reluctant as they are to leave the village for work in other regions, they continue to complain about the economic isolation of the village. “Shebaa is perfect, and its population is great. We have everything we could wish for, save work for our young men and support from organizations. We don’t know how long we can stay here.”⁴⁶

For many of our Lebanese interlocutors, staying in the village is seen as a political act. As a young man reassured us, “I studied in Beirut and came back to Shebaa. I will stay here although it is difficult. Staying here is an act of resistance for me.”⁴⁷

The significant Syrian refugee presence in Shebaa did not seem to be a cause of tension here. Most interlocutors underlined the peaceful interaction between the Lebanese and Syrian communities in the village, attributing it to the fact that “they all know each other”. This factor seemingly refers to a certain moral and behavioral code that both Lebanese and Syrian refugees know and uphold: “The stranger has to obey morals.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

⁴⁶ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

⁴⁷ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

⁴⁸ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

⁴⁹ | Lebanon Support, “Formal informality, brokering mechanisms, and illegality. The impact of Lebanese state’s policies on Syrians’ everyday life”, The Civil Society Knowledge Center, *forthcoming*.

⁵⁰ | Estella Carpi, Adhocratic Humanitarianism and Ageing Emergencies in Lebanon. From the July 2006 War in Beirut’s

Southern Suburbs to the Syrian Refugee Influx in the Akkar Villages, *PhD Thesis, University of Sydney, July 2015*.

⁵¹ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.



THE BLURRED LINES BETWEEN HUMAN SECURITY AND LEGAL PROTECTION

The lack of legal protection for Syrian refugees in Lebanon underlies the very reasons behind the inability of refugees to access security systems regardless of their social status in host communities.

When interviewed and asked about their perceptions of security in the three localities, many Syrian refugees listed challenges related to their legal documentation and status, in addition to unclear bureaucratic regulations regarding registration (with the UNHCR) and access to aid (food baskets and vouchers from the World Food Programme for instance). Relocation to another locality in Lebanon, mostly in search of cheaper rents and work, was quite frequent, but is currently on the decline due to insecurity perceptions – a feeling aggravated in the absence of legal residency papers.⁴⁹

In this vein, in an interview conducted in October 2013 in a southern suburb of Beirut⁵⁰, Alia, an Iraqi refugee from Basra, said she had moved from Ain Remmaneh to Shiyyah because she did not feel safe, having been harassed three times and subjected to verbal slurs, as she walked down the street. For her too, the lack of legal papers was a main source of insecurity, one that rendered her unable to access any formal assistance when threatened, harassed, or attacked.

As the findings show, UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees in Ebrine and Aley seem to access *de facto* Lebanese security provision systems, such as the municipal police that represent the only source of local protection and security.

The interviewed Syrian refugees admitted to having called the police when seeking protection, only to be referred to the municipal police. The latter is a formal actor, affiliated with the ISF, but is equally informal in terms of enforcing security measures, which do not fall under its jurisdiction. Refugee accounts therefore point out not only to the lack of trust in the Lebanese state, but also to the tacit coordination mechanism between formal and informal actors involved in security provision.

In Aley, the Syrian refugees interviewed did not feel protected, but recognized that Aley was a safe area in Lebanon. As a further exemplification of such hopelessness and lack of accountability of formal institutions where refugees live, a Syrian woman said⁵¹: “We are asked to be *multazimun*, “committed”. We pay taxes. We pay for rent and water. But we have no rights”.

Syrian refugees, especially males, in Aley and Ebrine seem hence capable of accessing security through informal channels by relying most often on local authorities such as *makhatar*, local notables (*a'yan*) or the nearest local mosque, and seldom on formal security entities. In Shebaa, Syrian refugees are mostly without legal papers and seldom leave the village. For security matters, they mainly count on the most influential families, while regarding formal security providers with suspicion and mistrust *tout court*.

03

Deconstructing the “Weak State - Powerful Informal Mechanisms” Dichotomy

Local manifestations of security are often described as responses of State apparatuses or via the orientalist *cliché* of the urban “*qabaday*”, or local leader who is himself at the service of a *za’im*, a village or town leader. This *za’im* is notably a functional figure of the sectarian and clientelistic system.⁵² This report attempts to go beyond this schematic dichotomy to analyze how security is practiced and lived empirically. Hence, special attention is granted to institutions or individuals engaging in state-like performances and exercising public authority. These institutions may challenge the state and often rely on its procedural and symbolic forms of legitimacy to enhance or assert their own power. In this vein, security hybridity cannot be defined as neither a fragmentation of security apparatuses, actors and mechanisms, nor as a “division of labor” between state and non-state actors. It rather emphasizes the processes in which diverse actors co-exist, negotiate, intertwine, compete and quite often complement each other and collaborate.

STATE POLICING AND FORMAL POLITICS OF SECURITY

Most of the literature generally focuses on security forces as an opportunity for the Lebanese to have inter-confessional foundations for a nation-state. The importance of confessional representation in the Lebanese Armed Forces can be traced back to the mandate period (1920-1946). Between 1958 and 1970, the LAF’s role was increasingly politicized. And since the country’s independence in 1943, the LAF has remained under political governance, without attempting any *coup d’état*. The Lebanese system of governance can be described as civil (albeit with a few exceptions), but with a long history of security-focused approaches. In more specific terms, the mandate of General Fouad Chehab (1958-1964) has largely consecrated the army’s predominant role. After the Syrian pull-out from Lebanon in 2005, Emile Lahoud (1990-1998) and Michel Sleiman (1998-2008), both army generals nurtured by Chehabism, accessed the Presidency of the Republic. The memory of Chehabism as a patriotic and development-oriented doctrine helps explain

52 | Michael Johnson, All Honorable Men: the Social Origins of War in Lebanon, London, Centre for Lebanese Studies / I. B. Tauris, 2001.

53 | Vincent Geisser, “Faire Corps, Faire Peuple: l’armée libanaise, un leader d’opinion?”, *Dynamiques Internationales*, No. 11, December 2015, available at [http://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon_SSRSecurityInstitutions_EN_2015.pdf](http://dynamiques-internationales.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Geisser-DI-11.pdf) [last accessed on May 23rd, 2016].

54 | Elizabeth Picard, “Lebanon in Search of Sovereignty: Post 2005 Security Dilemmas”, in Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr (ed.), *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution*, London, Hurst Publishers, 2012, p. 156-183.

55 | Oren Barak, *The Lebanese Army: a National Institution in a Divided Society*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2009.

56 | Taef Agreement, section 2.

57 | It also corresponds to a global debate, see: Tomáš Weiss, “The Blurring Border between the Police and the Military: A Debate without Foundations”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 46, No.3, 2011.

58 | *The blurred boundaries between the different security*

apparatuses are neither new nor exceptional. Elizabeth Picard explains the selective demobilization processes among former militias. Elizabeth Picard, “The Demobilization of the Lebanese Militias”, Oxford, Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1999, available at <http://lebanesestudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/c368be59>. -The-

why the LAF is still considered a trustworthy institution in Lebanon. However, the popularity depicted by observers⁵³ seems to be inversely proportional to the actual means of the military establishment. While Syria “worked to domesticate the Lebanese Armed Forces”⁵⁴ during the Syrian occupation, security apparatuses ended up being portrayed as the new spearheads of a patriotic ethos after the civil war and the 2005 withdrawal of the Syrian Army, and in the wake of recent military conflicts with Islamic State militants on the Lebanese-Syrian border.

Despite this constructed reputation of being the pillar of the new “imagined” Lebanese patriotism, the majority of social scientists and experts emphasize the blurring boundaries between the different security bodies within the Lebanese state and the subsequent increasing phenomena of security informalization and privatization. Laws and regulations reinforce this trend, granting the military police equal power as other security forces. Since the first years of independence, the LAF has been expected to act as mediator and arbiter in major political and social conflicts plaguing the country.⁵⁵ After the civil war, the Taef Accord (1989-1990) confirmed and even strengthened this mediation role.⁵⁶ In this sense, the army’s policing role is not exceptional⁵⁷: it is one of the major tasks entrusted to the LAF, competing with or complementing other security forces.⁵⁸ This multiplication of roles adds to the confusion surrounding the respective missions of each security apparatus, in a context where the priority is for the mere “protection of the regime” *per se*.⁵⁹

Security-centered policies have recently intensified in the wake of the Syrian conflict and subsequent influx of refugees. While the adopted security measures are often multifold, they have mainly targeted the Syrian refugee presence, as part of attempts to control, monitor, and formalize it, while preventing alleged security threats deriving from such pressures. Different state actors have been involved in the design and implementation of these measures. These state reactions are mainly observable in the physical presence of checkpoints, enhanced presence of the LAF as well as the ISF, and regulating policy measures concerning Syrian residence and work facilities in Lebanon (the so-called 2014 October regulations). Despite their intention to formalize and control the Syrian refugee presence, security measures have mostly backfired, increasing illegality, informality, and insecurity.⁶⁰

While the LAF seems to intervene in case of bigger crimes and security issues, the municipality police, often unarmed, is represented as practically the weakest formal security institution, but at the same time, as part of the local community. Whenever

demobilisation-of-the-Lebanese-Militias-Elizabeth-Picard.pdf [last accessed May 27th, 2016].

⁵⁹ | Elizabeth Picard, “Armée et sécurité au cœur de l’autoritarisme”, in Oliver Dabène, Vincent Geisser, Gilles Massardier (ed.), *Démocraties autoritaires, autoritarismes démocratiques au XXIe siècle: convergences Nord/*

Sud, Paris, La Découverte, 2008, p. 303-329.

⁶⁰ | Lebanon Support, “Formal informality, brokering mechanisms, and illegality. The impact of Lebanese state’s policies on Syrians’ everyday life”, The Civil Society Knowledge Center, *forthcoming*.

a security issue emerges, the ISF is deemed to be the strongest actor, although field-work findings in the three localities show that they are totally disconnected from the local community, its affection, and care for its territory.

Since the *Darak* (ISF) and the municipal police are under the tutelage of the Ministry of Interior, unlike the LAF that is affiliated with the Ministry of Defense, these three providers can be named and considered as normatively “formal”. In practice, every individual arrested by the municipal police is eventually handed over to either the ISF or the LAF. When the LAF carries out the arrest, the concerned individual either remains in the army’s custody or is handed over to the ISF. This coordination pattern has been identifiable in all three localities. While the ISF, representing the strongest formal security in Lebanon, is spoken of as absent – “when I call them, they never answer”⁶¹ – and as embodying the Lebanese state’s laxity, it is also seen as the only security body that can be assertive enough to effect true change on the ground.

As a political party member in Aley⁶² put it, “when problems arise, state institutions have the priority to take action (*Darak* and the army). We are ready to offer help if need be. We respect the role of the state, unlike Hezbollah in the southern suburbs of Beirut”. Likewise, another party member⁶³ said:



We, as PSP, expect the state and the LAF to be the highest authority although we privately possess all kinds of weapons at home. This doesn’t mean we don’t trust the state. But we have kept our weapons since the days of the civil war. I would never think of using them. I wouldn’t know how to do it either.

A Syrian refugee⁶⁴, who has been living in Aley for four years, did not speak of her compatriots fleeing Syria as mere victims.



The Lebanese state is lax and troublesome for the Lebanese themselves, and secondly for Syrians... We all hear more about the latter because we’re talking of refugees: everywhere displacement is disempowerment, it’s the litmus paper of any pre-existing social issue.

In contrast, the dominant narrative among the Lebanese residents of Aley embraces the importance of an assertive statehood and the prevalent local affection towards the LAF as an embodiment of state security: “We all voice more support for the Lebanese army: it’s important they keep protecting the borders, and for the unity of the country”.⁶⁵ For local residents, measures enacted by formal security providers (the LAF, the ISF, and the municipal police) are necessary to prevent the area from

61 | Interview with a local resident, February 2016, Ebrine.

62 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

63 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

64 | Interview conducted in February 2016, Aley.

65 | Interview conducted in April 2016, Aley.

66 | Interview conducted in April 2016, Aley.

67 | Interview conducted in April 2016, Aley.

68 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

69 | Michel Seurat, *Syrie, l'état de Barbarie*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2012.

70 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

71 | “Into the twenty-first century: The development of social security: a report to the Director-General of the International Labor Office on

the response of the social security system in industrialized countries to economic and social change”, International Labor Office, Geneva, *Printworld Services*, 1987.

plunging into the abyss of violence. More importantly, one resident pointed out⁶⁶ to how violence anticipation as such is not limited to a tangible measure, but rather intends to make the common citizen feel safe. “The police, the ISF, and the LAF do not show their weapons. You don’t feel as if you are in a military environment (*mish manzar ‘askari*), but you are protected.”

Central state authority is also represented by the intermediary role of the local *mukhtar*, who is often described as “the eye of the state” (*‘ayn ad-dawle*).⁶⁷ In this sense, Aley’s interviewees describe their support for the central government and their desire to see it grow stronger, and, in so doing, extend their support to the greater state.

In Ebrine, as in Shebaa, the ISF and the LAF play a modest role on the ground. Community membership is therefore the primary criterion for local citizens to take part in the informal security apparatus.

However, while informal security apparently predominates in Ebrine, some representatives of political parties⁶⁸ maintain that the curfew in Ebrine was enforced based on a decision of the LAF, which acts through local municipalities in the vicinity of Tripoli. The LAF’s purpose was to guarantee the security of local host communities, in the immediate aftermath of its decision to end bouts of violence between the Sunni Lebanese of Bab Tabbaneh, who greatly resent the Assad regime that destroyed their district in 1985⁶⁹, and the Alawite residents of Jabal Mohsen, who support the regime. A political party representative in Ebrine said:



In every municipality, the LAF intelligence services influence municipal decisions, so don’t think that the lines between institutional and non-institutional decisions are very clear-cut.

In his view, the local security re-established by the LAF should be seen as the outcome of the end brought to the longstanding clashes in Tripoli,⁷⁰ not as endemic racism towards refugees, as widely believed in Lebanon. This significantly blurs the distinction of formal and informal security provision and weakens its significance. Moreover, *de facto* security matters more than the (in)formal mechanisms employed to uphold security.⁷¹

In Shebaa, local interlocutors stress the little means of leverage formal security providers have in the village, especially the municipal police, who are described as weak and few in numbers. Villagers proudly narrate to us that their village is immune to interference by the LAF and the ISF. Still, with the influx of Syrian refugees, the



Shebaa Municipality has taken a number of formal measures in cooperation with the LAF Intelligence Branch to establish a regular (monthly or every two months) “security day” on which the LAF raids houses inhabited by Syrians. If weapons are found, the Lebanese landlord is deemed legally responsible, therefore encouraging the Lebanese residents “to be careful and monitor the Syrians” so that the “benefit of all village residents is secured”⁷². While local Lebanese interlocutors play down the role of the LAF and its Intelligence, Syrian refugees residing in Shebaa have confirmed these raids, with LAF officials reassuring citizens that the raids were only intended to target young men suspected of affiliation with the Islamic State or Nusra Front. This gender profiling of young men being suspected of affiliation with Islamist movements was often described to us as affecting their daily lives, freedom of movement and work opportunities. In contrast, Syrian refugee women are excluded from this pre-assumed suspicion.

Hence, and as shown in the three localities, the multiplication of actors and security forces, as well as their blurred roles, has contributed to a haphazard remilitarization of society, one that manifests itself in a wide array of re-emerging actors (local *zu'ama'*⁷³, notables, former militiamen, or leaders of political parties), new actors (such as private security companies⁷⁴), and multifold individual and collective securitization practices.

HYBRID SECURITIZATION: SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS AND PRACTICES

Since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, Lebanese political parties and political entrepreneurs have instrumentalized both the conflict and the consequent refugee influx in their agendas.⁷⁵ This ranges from the “spillover” fear to the scapegoating⁷⁶ of Syrian refugees in political discourses as well as media outlets, thus constructing public panic in a context already strained by political tension and structural economic fatigue. Against this backdrop, informal security providers have increasingly deployed measures to deal with the routinized anticipation of violence.⁷⁷ While other studies have highlighted haphazard mechanisms of self-started policing adopted by some Syrian refugees (for instance by using the Lebanese dialect in their daily interactions or avoiding to go out of the house after sunset)⁷⁸, fieldwork accounts also show other implicit or more patent mechanisms of securitization.

⁷² | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

⁷³ | Plural of *za'im*. “Once the Syrian lid lifted, every sectarian and political group scrambled to rearm and train their militants. Private security companies, and even foreign operators, offered their services to every local *za'im*”. Elizabeth Picard, op.cit., 2012.

⁷⁴ | Such private security companies are registered at the Ministry of Interior.

⁷⁵ | Vincent Geisser, “Le Liban au coeur de la crise syrienne, en marge des révolutions arabes” in François Burgat and Bruno Paoli (ed.), *Pas de Printemps pour la Syrie? Acteurs et défis de la crise 2011-2013*, Paris, La Découverte, 2013.

⁷⁶ | Bassem Chit and Mohamad Ali Nayel, “Understanding racism against Syrian refugees in Lebanon”, Civil Society Knowledge Center, 28 October 2013, available at <http://csc.k.daleel-madani.org/paper/understanding-racism-against-syrian-refugees-lebanon> [last accessed on 5 May 2016].

⁷⁷ | Hermez, 2012, op.cit., p. 327-344.

⁷⁸ | See: Lebanon Support “The conflict context in Beirut; the social question, mobilisation cycles, and the city’s securitisation”, Civil Society Knowledge Center, November 2015, available at [csc.k.daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/resources/lc-car-nov2015-](http://csc.k.daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/resources/lc-car-nov2015-beirut_0.pdf)

[beirut_0.pdf](http://csc.k.daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/resources/lc-car-nov2015-beirut_0.pdf) [last accessed May 27, 2016].

⁷⁹ | A Syrian refugee explained, “Ordinary people are somehow better than those from formal institutions... But no one does anything to help the Syrians here. We protect ourselves by avoiding problems, staying home mainly, and avoiding unnecessary contact with the Lebanese. In the

Beyond mere security issues, it is noteworthy that fieldwork accounts narrate various episodes of symbolic violence against the newcomers: ranging from frictions among children and teenagers to accounts of arbitrary violence and a perceived feeling of systematic exclusion from basic rights.⁷⁹

Curfews as an empirical example of the intertwining between formal and non-formal measures

Refugees rarely mention curfews as the only and primary instrument of social unease and intimidation. As such, curfews constitute an emblematic case of the broader climate of fear, social discrimination, and mutual mistrust in the three localities. Indeed, an NGO worker in the Batroun Governorate argued⁸⁰,



The curfew is a way to pressure people: the municipal police cannot arrest people for long periods, usually it's for a few days or hours. The violation doesn't impact people that much if compared to the violence refugees have grown used to after fleeing Syria. I'm not arguing that it's not an aggressive measure, but I see it as less relevant than how it has been portrayed in the media.

Findings confirm the hybrid nature of the implementation of curfews. These are enforced by different formal (state-related and legally in charge of security measures) and informal security providers (who illegally implement such measures on the ground), who move on blurred legal grounds in all of the three settings. A Syrian woman in Aley argued⁸¹ that “the curfew is not applied. It's more a political issue”. When asked if she remembered such a specific case, she said that the municipal police once arrested two Syrian men during the curfew without any act of violence and that they were only detained for two hours.

In addition, Syrians seeking help usually tend to resort to their connections – *wasta* – rather than formal security providers or lawyers. Some Syrian interviewees recounted⁸² that the municipal police checks the papers of any Syrian, who breaches the curfew. But the next day, the Syrian should go to the municipal police station to sign a paper, thereby pledging not to move around after 7 pm. While some of them contended that they did not fear the municipal security and did not abide by the curfew, others felt they were discriminated against and mistreated and thus preferred to lead an indoor life to avoid risks. Others mentioned that driving motorbikes or carrying big bags were the only elements likely to make the local police suspicious and push them to stop Syrians.

event of problems, we refer to other Syrians, not to formal security corps... They are going to do nothing for us”. Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

⁸⁰ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

⁸¹ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

⁸² | Interview conducted in February 2016, Aley.

In this vein, security is a practical measure taken to keep the documents of refugees under check. For example, a Lebanese resident⁸³ specified that he would have a problem with “Syrians around at night if they were all registered at the municipality... because [then the government would] know who they are and if they are connected to armed groups in Syria”.

Other Syrian interviewees argued that the curfew was actually applied only in the first two months after the ban was announced and hung in public spaces.

In Ebrine, as a local interlocutor said, the Lebanese adopt repressive measures facing the refugee crisis because of the 1976-2005 Syrian occupation of Lebanon, and due to the general mistrust towards foreigners of different cultural and religious backgrounds. Islamophobia was said to be linked to the widespread idea that refugees import Islamic customs along with social troubles. From the perspective of another local resident, unemployment and marginalization were not the factors that trigger the “fear of the Syrians”.

Another local resident specified how there had never been episodes of violence in the village, but that these measures were still required as “necessary” and “preventive”. For him, theft and harassment were among the highest risks in the village. Anticipation of violence is therefore used as a guarantee for local security.

Contrarily, a *Sheikh* in the Batroun Governorate defended the measures taken by local municipalities, saying they were normally the result of problems caused by Syrian refugees and the local population. Therefore, the ban on motorbikes for Syrians was defined as “a consequence of thefts, robberies, and sexual harassment in the street. These petty crimes are generally committed on motorbikes, since their perpetrators can easily speed away”.⁸⁴ Syrian employees in the mosque’s provision of aid seemed to agree with this policy and ideology of security in compliance with the logic of anticipation of violence.

The *Qaimaqam* of the Batroun Governorate, who is administratively responsible for Ebrine, meaningfully referred to the curfews as a “security and protection decision” (*qarar amni w himeiyeh*). He highlighted how these measures were meant to target both Syrian and Lebanese groups “for the sake of the security of both”, while stressing that there were no security concerns in the village. In addition, the *Qaimaqam* contended that the relatively smaller demographic density characterizing the village⁸⁵ was a key factor to avoiding friction and social tension.

83 | Interview conducted in April 2016, Aley.

84 | Interview conducted in February 2016, Batroun.

85 | Interview conducted in February 2016,

86 | Interview conducted in February 2016, Ebrine. Batroun.

87 | Interview conducted in April 2016, Ebrine.

88 | Interview conducted in April 2016, Batroun.

89 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Tripoli.

In practice, the curfew enactment consists of a written announcement hung on street walls, prohibiting Syrians from leaving the house after 8 pm in summer and 7 pm in winter. The curfew was first enacted in Ebrine in 2014. Nevertheless, in practice, such measures are not easily discernable: both refugees and local people prove not to be fully aware of whether the curfews are still enacted and, if so, at what time of the day, whether such measures are institutional or illegal, and if they're enacted by the LAF, the ISF, political parties, or municipal police. While the *Sheikh* of the Batroun mosque contended that the measure was only meant to prevent motorbike use, others were aware of the prohibition of leaving the house *tout court*. Likewise, some interviewees believed the curfew applied to both Syrians and Lebanese, whereas others considered that Syrian men were the only target. The most vocal residents stressed that “if Syrians break the curfew, they get beaten and the police check their documents”, despite the lack of cases reported. In these cases, curfews were defined as “a pretext of repression”⁸⁶.

In the viewpoint of a local political party member⁸⁷, “the Lebanese state also enacts curfews when protests or clashes erupt. With the refugee crisis, this is an *ordinary* measure exclusively meant to maintain general security”. In his opinion, local troubles do not lie much in curfews and security measures *per se*, but rather in supporting the agricultural sector in Ebrine, especially that most residents work outside the village and no longer focus on enhancing local resources. “If we were able to become self-sustained, security in our village would then become more sustainable”, he added.

As a local NGO⁸⁸ stressed, non-state actors cannot easily intervene in such security restrictions, as their programs normally require the approval of municipalities, those very institutions that are illegally enacting curfews. In the absence of a functioning municipality in Ebrine, there is small leverage for security prevention measures. Moreover, the relationship between NGOs and the local community is increasingly indirect due to the intermediary role of the so-called *Shawish*, a Syrian refugee representative (also present within the Palestinian refugee communities) acting as an intermediary between NGOs, refugees, and security services when any security matter arises. In the three field sites, however, the *Shawish* does not play any relevant role to sort out security issues from the perspective of Syrian refugee interviewees. Non-governmental organizations do not play any important role in the provision of local security, often remaining intentionally detached from security issues. Nonetheless, refugees living in the Batroun Governorate report to the UN the enactment of curfews or misdeeds they are accused of. As a UNHCR representative argued⁸⁹: “this also happens in Sunni areas hosting refugees. Contrary to common belief, social frictions are not necessarily linked to shared or different religious beliefs.”

Interestingly, neither the Lebanese nor the Syrian sample referred to domestic lack of safety as the very cause behind curfews. A local resident pointed out to one robbery incident that followed the arrival of Syrian refugees to Ebrine and which was perpetrated by a Lebanese culprit, as the municipal police eventually found out.⁹⁰ “Before the curfew, no fights or social problems were reported. Tension was partly triggered only after these prevention measures were put in place”, he significantly added.⁹¹ In the same vein, a local political party member⁹² highlighted that refugees did not cause any relevant security problem.

Therefore, security enforcement through curfews is a means for local residents to assert their territorial ownership and social status, with both providing an enhanced feeling of empowerment. Curfews thus acquire more of a symbolic value: they are enacted even if refugees do not usually leave the house in the evening, and even when no petty crimes are reported. As proof of this, a Syrian refugee⁹³ from Jisr Shughur said,



I'm not sure about the curfew... if it's institutional or not, and if it's still on. My family and I don't get out of the house in any case. I was just told 'if you need anything after 7 pm call the municipality. You can't get out of the house'. That's fine. We don't want to run any risks, so the best option is to stay at home.

In a nutshell, curfews are practically a tacit security measure, which is commonly accepted and morally recognized in the public space of the village.

In Shebaa, the municipality announced a curfew in 2014 alongside other “security measures” targeting refugee presence, including the requirement for Syrian refugees to register their names at the municipality and the aforementioned “security day”. The municipality attributes these measures to the need to “keep Syrians under constant watch”⁹⁴, without them in the least being a reaction to any kind of security incidents, similarly to the other two localities. Formal security providers refer instead to the alleged fear of ISIS or Nusra-affiliated Syrians and the anticipated trouble this might cause in the village. Strikingly, while Lebanese and Syrian interlocutors confirmed the “security day” (conducted by the LAF Intelligence) and the constant monitoring (conducted by villagers), they did not seem to take note of the imposed curfew and, when asked about it, feigned indifference and ignorance.

⁹⁰ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

⁹¹ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

⁹² | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

⁹³ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

⁹⁴ | Interview conducted with a member of the Shebaa Municipality, February 2016, Shebaa.

⁹⁵ | Craig Calhoun, “A World of Emergencies: Fear, Intervention and the Limits of Cosmopolitan Order”, in Social Science Research Council, 35th Annual Sorokin Lecture presented at the University of Saskatchewan, 2004, p. 373-395.

⁹⁶ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

The reproduction of community identity

While the enforcement of curfews in several Lebanese municipalities has been primarily defined as a politically and legally contested issue, it still produces community meanings and new ways of managing social life. Prior to the Syrian political crisis and the refugee influx into Lebanon, some of the thousands of Syrian migrant workers lived and worked in the same localities where they are now. No curfews were enforced at that time. The curfew enforcement thus followed the international acknowledgment of an emergency state in neighboring Syria, pushing local communities in Lebanon to respond to the neighboring crisis and adopt such security measures. Curfews are therefore part of the anticipation of violence phenomenon at a practical and discursive level, permitting to deal with a predictable outcome of political crises⁹⁵ and repression as a sudden emergency that needs to be prioritized over pre-existing longstanding needs.

TRADITIONAL REFERENTS AS MECHANISMS OF CONTROL AND COHESION

Moral values (*qiyam*) and traditions (*taqalid*) guided behavior appear to play a central role in security and protection bargaining as well as *status quo* reproduction processes. These norm preservation dynamics hence contribute to a certain cohesive feeling among social groups. Normative referents also seem to nourish mutual vigilance dynamics. Many of our interlocutors (Lebanese and Syrian) told us they felt safe because they were familiar with the village and its people and knew how to behave. “We know everyone in the village. And people are good to us. If you know how to behave, you will not have any problems”⁹⁶, a Syrian interlocutor in Shebaa told us.

These normative referents are transferred to newcomers through verbally transmitted knowledge. The choice of location also appears to be based on perceived social and geographical similarities with the place of origin. Once resettled, interviewed Syrian refugees in the three localities do not seem to resort to formal protection and security measures, mainly because of their lack of legal status, as mentioned earlier. Instead, they tend to refer to informal security actors when seeking protection, complying, in so doing, with the way that is already encoded in the local space where they reside. In many cases, Syrian refugees rely on Syrian migrants, who have been in the country longer than them or who maintain a good relationship with locals, to intercede and choose the security system for them. Seeking security, as many Syrian interlocutors told us, was largely the outcome of following a certain behavioral code so as not to attract attention and face the dilemma of looking for a security provider.

In Aley, most of the Syrian interviewees said they felt protected in the city because they shared the same confessional beliefs as the Druze local community of the region. However, the political stance on the Syrian crisis seems to prevail over community belonging, triggering social (un)ease⁹⁷: “Suweida in south Syria is a pro-regime region, so people here don’t treat us really well”, said one Syrian, referring to the anti-Asad regime mainstream ideology of the PSP in Aley.

Curfews and the material act of patrolling the streets are recounted as one of the ways meant to preserve one’s own identity, claim the territory as one’s own, and check people, who are likely to be undocumented on a regular basis. Therefore, security is also definable as a way of preserving certain community identification. Community-based security provision is supported by the idea that it is able to build a “bonding social capital”⁹⁸.

As memory is simply one of the forms in which residents socialize, anticipated forms of violence, mostly perceived as threats coming from males, find their room to uphold hopefulness for a better local world as much as to remember that war and violence may occur again and do need to be tackled. Security, in this sense, is associated with community culture, in that it enables the preservation of a given cultural pattern, as deployed in the public space. “If culture is about the past, finite and enduring, then security is future oriented, meant to guard against disruptions to culture’s steady state”⁹⁹, or “a way of understanding and intervening in a potentially catastrophic future”¹⁰⁰.

A MULTIPLICITY OF ACTORS

The disruptions of the current social order in the three localities is therefore anticipated and dealt with through ordinary mechanisms of everyday surveillance and control as well as extraordinary security measures, illegally established and implemented on a regular basis. In light of these considerations, a culture of prevention prevails in the three Lebanese localities analyzed and examined in the present study.

While these prevention processes lead most of the time to a rather frictionless coexistence, they also allow a multiplicity of actors to intervene on the spot in case of “norm infringement”.

As formal security actors further the narrative of guaranteeing fully-fledged protection and maintaining presence on the ground, they do not seem to clash with the main local parties’ security actions, who are able to maintain actual protection in the three settings (i.e. through municipal policemen, ordinary citizens, or other influential local figures).

97 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

98 | Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000.

99 | Daniel Goldstein, “Security and the Culture Expert: Dilemmas of an Engaged Anthropology”, *Political*

and Legal Anthropology Review, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2010, p. 130.

100 | Andrew Lakoff and Stephen Collier (eds.), *Biosecurity Interventions: Global Health and Security in Question*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2008, p. 248.

101 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

102 | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

103 | Interviews conducted with the PSP and the Kata’eb in March 2016, Aley.

104 | Interview conducted in April 2016, Aley.

Fieldwork shows that local parties are to a large extent one of the main security providers in our three localities, notably in Aley and Ebrine. Nonetheless, ordinary people, who can be members of local political parties but also politically independent, carry out security monitoring as a “part-time job” although they are rarely present in the village during weekdays. As a representative of a political party stated¹⁰¹, the act of patrolling the streets during the night is in itself informal: “Sometimes the policeman of our municipality calls us to ask: why don’t you come over to take care of this building with me tonight? This is how it practically works...”

In turn, party politics in the three localities appear to be trumped by family ties and family-shaped motivations. In other words, nepotism and kinship ties prevail over any political sides and party politics. People, in practice, refer to the municipal police and employees insofar as they represent their own societal ethics and political concerns, independently from party politics. Local politics, hence, are discussed as not engendering divisions like elsewhere: kinship ties and the need for solidarity and cohesion to face external threats prevail. “There is no politics in the municipality; the council is not based on political parties... We decide among each other on who is going to be part of it”¹⁰², a municipal member argued.

In Aley, the mainstream PSP is not officially involved in security matters. On the whole, the local community identifies the most with the municipal police that they feel represents them. However, all parties seek to ensure that the ongoing social order complies as much as possible with their own political agendas. For instance, the municipal council and the police consist mostly of PSP members, who are actively involved in urban security. Nonetheless, at an official level,¹⁰³ political parties denied military roles, saying their involvement was confined to holding political (elections) and ensuring civil responsibility (i.e. garbage). The lines between ordinary young men monitoring the territory, while being official members of political parties, are as blurred as the lines between the parties and municipal members and decisions.

Many of our interlocutors see in the PSP their only possibility to feel safe. For instance, a young female resident¹⁰⁴ of Aley stated:



There are many institutions protecting the area. But most of the people would call political parties (ahl al-ahzeb) for protection... I would personally trust the police too, but I don't know them personally. That makes the difference. In addition, their main task is to monitor street traffic: if somebody parks the car in the middle of the street and he is not a

personal friend of theirs, they would be more inclined to take action. As you see, personal connections are the safest option.

In Ebrine, all local interviewees underlined the presence of members from the same family in different political parties. More importantly, most interviewed local residents contended¹⁰⁵ that “differences between the three main parties in the village are flattened out when it comes to the Syrian refugee influx... All people rally against the presence of refugees, as they used to do against their regime”. Common religious beliefs and the overall anti-Syrian regime political history of the village are determining factors behind the strong relationships built. The representative of another political party in Ebrine gave the example of last New Year’s Eve celebrations, where all parties gathered and organized a collective dinner in the village. Furthermore, the number of partisan card memberships does not mark the *de facto* dominance of either party in Ebrine. “The village is historically a cradle of Kata’eb politics, but now I cannot say there’s a party that is more influential than the other”, stated a representative¹⁰⁶. This is also explained by the fact that it was forbidden to create branches of political parties until the pullout of Syrian troops in April 2005, as a local resident of Ebrine specified¹⁰⁷.

In Ebrine the so-called anticipation of violence can be viewed as an intersubjective social moment for local residents with any political stance: local people evidently relate to themselves, to others, and to local institutions through their support of informal security measures. Likewise, hope underlies this intersubjective moment against the expectation of violence and that what is anticipated will eventually not be realized.¹⁰⁸

In addition to political parties, the LAF Intelligence (*mukhabarat al-jeiysh*) stood out as a main resort for many of our interlocutors in the event of a security problem. Others, however, felt more comfortable reporting the incident to the only *mukhtar* in the village. Although the *mukhtar* has no role in security issues, he is usually required to witness the arrest of any person in the village by the ISF and the LAF, thus serving as the community’s local gatekeeper. This generally happens across Lebanon, proving the peculiar relation between formal and informal provision of security as well as the practical enforcement of regulations through informal ways, which make the physical presence of formal providers on the ground ancillary, and often even redundant.

Another resident specified that ordinary people do not refer incidents that happen on the spot to political parties, on the basis that the latter do not directly intervene. “On the spur of the moment, it is still the police that intervenes. Parties intervene in

¹⁰⁵ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

¹⁰⁶ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

¹⁰⁷ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

¹⁰⁸ | Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, Berkeley, University of

California Press, 2007, p. 101.

¹⁰⁹ | Interview conducted in April 2016, Aley.

¹¹⁰ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Aley.

¹¹¹ | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

¹¹² | Interview conducted in March 2016, Ebrine.

¹¹³ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

the long-term”,¹⁰⁹ he said. In the interview conducted with the head of the Municipal Police, he admitted that the municipal police was the first formal institution that ordinary people deal with. “In case people cause insecurity and do not understand how to behave, the police calls the ISF. But we are the main point of reference for local people. They all speak to us”, stated the interviewee.¹¹⁰

Political parties in Ebrine and Aley enjoy social legitimacy enabling them to grant local people a sense of protection, which conquers people’s affection. They enjoy such legitimacy in their capacity as security providers, not as political actors. Nevertheless, political parties only have a direct involvement in security provision in the village of Ebrine through the members of the three main political parties (LF, FPM, and Kata’eb). The informal guards of Ebrine serve as *ad hoc* sporadic aid for the municipal police. Such “community protectors”, as a member of a local political party called them,¹¹¹ belong to different parties. “Patrolling is not a political thing. It means security for the whole village”, a representative argued.¹¹²

In Shebaa, political parties seem to play no role in security matters given their poor social legitimacy. The general perception of being neglected by formal political actors leads to the general weakness of political parties. As one interlocutor put it, “in Shebaa, it is difficult for any party to survive. Shebaa is the graveyard of political parties.”¹¹³ Although all members of the municipality were elected on a joint list between the Future Movement and the Islamic League, the Future Movement has no street presence. For its part, the Islamic League has developed some form of street presence with the arrival of Syrian refugees. But, again, it does not enjoy much legitimacy and therefore plays no role in security provision. Young men, taking up the task of securing the streets and intervening in case of security incidents, have therefore no party affiliation, but are rather called *shabab al-‘iyal* (“families’ young men”). One of our interlocutors described how these mechanisms were enforced after the arrival of Syrian refugees:



When the first batch of refugees arrived, we first adopted a wait-and-see attitude and closely observed the situation in anticipation of problems that might occur. Shortly then, a minor incident occurred: a Syrian man harassed a girl from our village on the street. At that point, we decided to intervene. We gathered all the refugees at the mosque, where a committee spoke to them. We explained the situation and were clear that we would not tolerate any problem. It was a warning. ‘You are welcome when you follow the rules. If not, we have our own way to deal with it’, so we told them. Things are fine since then.

*But whenever something happens, the young guys from the neighborhoods are ready to intervene. You have to know: we are all armed, everyone has weapons, legally and illegally, we don't care.*¹¹⁴

Furthermore, our interlocutors in Shebaa expressed aversion towards the power of political parties in local security matters. As mentioned earlier, many interviewees conceded that a small group of Hezbollah supporters is supposed to monitor the security of the village. Nevertheless, this group is so unpopular that its members do not even seek to gain visibility in the village. “Hezbollah’s presence in Shebaa is limited. Their number amounts to about 20 persons or a bit more. They earn 150 USD a month. They are those people who change their affiliations with the wind just to earn some money.”¹¹⁵

Among other informal security providers registered with the Ministry of Interior, there are private security companies that only operate in urban settings (Aley). Their main role is to protect villas, private parties and buildings, or banks. Notables who visit the area are also said to occasionally rely on private companies to enhance their personal security. For example, the Emir of Qatar bought a large piece of land in Aley. The municipality provided him with a street monitor.¹¹⁶

UN agencies and NGOs¹¹⁷ are scarcely involved in the implementation of local security. In the interviews conducted, they argued that they usually attempt to support refugees in legal matters. Nevertheless, refugees often withdraw their requests as they fear public action against the Lebanese residents of the village where they live, therefore inhibiting the advocacy potential of UN agencies and NGOs. As proof of the NGOs’ inability to informally advocate for refugee protection, the Ebrine Municipal Police prohibited Syrian children from entering a playground. While many local residents confirmed the legitimacy of this measure, the actions of NGOs and UN agencies to face this matter were not considered effective enough to change local behaviors and end (illegal) community-started regulations. Many Syrian interlocutors in the three localities concede that they do not only feel forgotten by NGOs in regards to service provision, but also in regards to protection measures.

While the belonging of formal or informal providers to the community is the first criteria of trust for local residents, international non-governmental organizations and UN agencies – representing the international community – are the primary entities that Syrian refugees expect to provide them with legal protection and access to security and justice organisms.

¹¹⁴ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

¹¹⁵ | Interview conducted in February 2016, Shebaa.

¹¹⁶ | Interview with a local resident in April 2016, Aley.

¹¹⁷ | Interview conducted with a representative of an international NGO in March 2016, Batroun.

The challenges that NGOs face in providing protection to refugees is partially due to their informal mandate in pursuing these aims – with the exception of UNHCR’s mandate – and to NGOs’ regulations that proscribe addressing political or religious issues in the social spaces allocated to refugees. Refugees are thus prevented from freely and comfortably looking for ways that would facilitate their access to justice mechanisms and self-protection. The bureaucratization of UNHCR’s work and the difficulty for refugees to interact with UN agencies in general further inhibit their search for security and protection.

According to fieldwork findings, while NGOs do not seem to provide security on the ground, they produce a discourse on security that focuses on highlighting security threats in different regions or “hot spots”, in the objective of translating (in)security perceptions into policies of stability.

Conclusion

This report has analyzed multifold security mechanisms, actors, and meanings in three Lebanese localities currently hosting Syrian refugees. It has examined how the concept of security is continuously renegotiated, notably since the arrival of Syrian refugees. It also shows how different protection and prevention mechanisms have been adopted under the pretext of preserving the social order. Hybridity has proved to be a heuristic definition, in that it informs how different actors adopt, negotiate, and reproduce security meanings in context. Therefore, hybrid security neither refers to a weak Lebanese state, nor to a division of labor between formal state security actors and informal local actors, but rather to a complex interplay between formal state security actors and informal security providers, who tend to complement each other.

Generally associated with Hezbollah-dominated areas, self-protection mechanisms (*amn dhati*) are in fact widespread across all of Lebanon. Understandings and practices of (in) security are diversely rooted in the local history of the country. While these understandings and practices contribute to the construction of cohesive community identification, they entail exclusionary mechanisms that aggravate the status of Syrian refugees. Analyzing security provisions as a factor in community belonging and social status allowed for an inquiry of the strength of community cohesion despite endemic political differences. Therefore, security is officially framed as a societal project, which marginalizes refugee communities from local patterns, and undermines possibilities for integration with the newcomers, discouraged by governmental politics in Lebanon. Thus, security ends up being an ambivalent instrument of social cohesion *and* social fragmentation in times of regional crisis. In other words, public discourses on security and the presentation of Syrian refugees as a threat reinforce social fragmentation and undermine efforts to strengthen long-term social stability. Curfews are thus part of a far broader preventive response to perceived risk.

Despite our reluctance to classify narratives through the binaries of “Lebanese” and “Syrian” or “local” and “refugees”, refugees often provide different accounts than those of local citizens on security. Refugees feel *de facto* insecure due to such anticipation of violent measures, and in spite of the relatively low rate of violence incidences in the three selected localities. This is motivated by the general social unease and climate of fear in which they lead their everyday lives.

In the same vein, their inability to protect themselves against those measures is often linked to their illegal status. Therefore, refugees understand legality as the means

leading to “security”. By thinking so, they tend to associate the achievement of physical safety and urban security with their (il)legal status.

In addition to the need for legal protection, which would allow security access for refugees, this report has aimed to emphasize the importance of redesigning forms of protection that are not only meant to tackle actual risk, but are also centered on the informal preventive measures aimed at anticipating violence. Policies emerging from coordination efforts between UN agencies, NGOs, and the local government seem to converge on reproducing the *status quo*. Rather than merely aiming to strengthen formal actors – which are in fact currently supported by a European Union program providing technical assistance to the Security Sector Reform¹¹⁸ – these policies ought to take into greater account informal security providers and blurred forms of security provision, such as the coordinated efforts of the municipal police and local community polities.

Of the three, the relatively safer localities for Syrian refugees are Aley and Ebrine. Here, the dominant political tendencies are in line with the national interest of preserving social stability and political order. However, physical safety is obtained at the price of an overall climate of fear and intimidation, where refugees feel weak and their freedoms limited. In Shebaa, on the other hand, Syrian refugees are seen as part of the local community due to historical ties between the village population and the Syrian village of origin. Still, anticipation of violence is part of a climate of mutual mistrust, where politics is family-oriented. A hotbed for armed Syrian opposition groups, Shebaa is home to some likely destabilizing factors in Lebanon, and Syrian refugees, subjected to raids by formal security actors, consequently feel more unsafe than in Aley and Ebrine. Nevertheless, as already discussed, some Syrian refugees found in Shebaa the reproduction of their social space and ethos.

In the three cases, refugee protection is at the mercy of local politics and a mere reflection of a common desire for domestic order.

To conclude, informal security measures are effective in preserving local social order despite their flexible pattern. Nevertheless, when severe security issues occur, formal actors still play a larger role in re-establishing order.

Interestingly, considering the interviews conducted with the Lebanese communities in the three localities, the most trusted actors – municipal police, local influential families or leaders, and local people affiliated with political parties – are described as the weakest actors, unlike the LAF and the ISF.

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