Survey on Perceptions of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

A study done by the political science institute at USJ with support of UNHCR and funding from RDPP

CAROLE ALSHARABATI (carole.alsharabati@usj.edu.lb)
JIHAD NAMMOUR (jihad.nammour@usj.edu.lb)

The methodology used and the results obtained are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not engage the organizations that supported this study. (V1.6)

Funded by
Syrian refugees are becoming increasingly vulnerable while worries are rising among Lebanese host communities.

Dynamics in relationships between refugees and host communities are changing as the Syrian crisis continues.

The ministry of interior implemented additional measures on Lebanon’s borders to control the movement of Syrian nationals, in efforts to manage the influx of Syrians into the country.

Growing interest among researchers, students and professors to do further research in this area.
Objectives

• Measure Syrian refugee perception on safety and security, access to services, and analyze the causes behind those perceptions.

• Measure perception of the Lebanese community with regards to Syrians, access to services, and perceived threats to local communities.

• Instant information about tension levels in the country.

• Involve students and professors to further research issues related to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

• Other projects and further research will follow.
The Political Science Institute would like to thank

• UNHCR for funding this study and providing refugee data for sampling
• USJ Ethics Committee and Research Council for their support
• ISP professors Rita Chemaly, Wissam Lahham, and Pascal Monin for their help
• NGOS Peace Initiatives and Relief and Reconciliation for their collaboration
• General Elie Darazi for helping our teams access all areas in Lebanon
Methodology

**Syrian Refugees**
- 1200 questionnaire filled in 120 villages sampled according to UNHCR data; sampling in every village according to type of Syrian residence, knocking on doors with random selection in every household

**Lebanese Community**
- 600 questionnaire filled in the same villages and same neighborhood; knocking on doors with random selection in every household
Sampling

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Total: 1208 Syrian, 608 Lebanese
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</tbody>
</table>

- Trip 1: Jounieh to Tripoli (Cazas: ½ Kesrouan, Jbeil, Batroun, Koura, Zgharta, Bcharré, Tripoli, ½ Denniye)
- Trip 2: ½ Beddaoui to Knaisse (Cazas: ½ Denniye, Akkar).
- Trip 3: Zouk to Hermel (Cazas: ½ Kesrouan, Baalbeck, Hermel)
- Trip 4: Bhamdoun to Raite (Cazas: Bhamdoun in Aley, Zahle, + Barouk in Chouf).
- Trip 5: Hosh Mandara to Saida

Beirut Baabda Aley Shouf were done in parallel with other regions
# Syrian Refugee Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender/Age/Region of origin/Occupation/etc.</td>
<td>Registration with UNHCR/General Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to threat/insult/assault/backmailing + source + response</td>
<td>Safety level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkpoints/ Curfews/ Random checks and patrols</td>
<td>Feelings towards authorities (Police, GS, Army, Municipality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject to Raid/Search/Arrest/Eviction/etc.</td>
<td>Problems accessing services (Health, Education, Electricity, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement restriction</td>
<td>Feelings towards UNHCR, NGOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling welcomed?</td>
<td>Feelings towards Lebanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities between the 2 cultures</td>
<td>Friendships in Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender/Age/Region of origin/Occupation/etc.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety level</td>
<td>Willingness to hire a Syrian refugee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to have Syrian refugees in neighborhood</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to threat/insult/assault /backmailing + source + response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checkpoints/Curfews /Random checks and patrols</td>
<td>Willingness to send kids to school with Syrian refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with Syrian refugees</td>
<td>Willingness to marry Syrian refugee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syrian impact on public services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive/Negative impact from syrian refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings towards Syrians: hatred/fear/respect/compassion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities between the 2 cultures?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Syrian friendships</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results
1-Syrian Perception
Sample Characteristics

- Relatively young sample
- Most with primary education
- Average Revenue around 350$ per month
- Coming mainly from Homs, Halab, Edleb, Damascus...

62% of Syrians surveyed are working

Average Family Revenue in Lebanon

- Beirut
- Bekaa
- Mount Lebanon
- North Lebanon
- South

Residence in Syria

- Homs
- Halab
- Edleb
- Rif Damascus
- Deraa
- Damascus
- Hama
- Rakka
- Hassake
- Deir Zor
- Koneitra
- Soueida
- Lattakie
- Tartous
When asked what are their worries in a top of mind question, Syrian refugees listed security most. Then came the economy, legal papers, alienation, lodging...
Friends and Paperwork

Did you have friends in Lebanon?
- No: 65.77%
- Yes: 34.23%

Legal Status in Lebanon?
- Have Residence Papers: 30.05%
- No Residence Papers: 69.95%

Registered with UNHCR?
- No: 21.12%
- Yes: 78.88%

66% didn’t have friends in Lebanon before they arrived, 70% don’t have residence, 79% are registered with UNHCR*

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

2 Main Reasons mentioned: Requirement for Kafil, and high cost

Friends and Paperwork

66% didn’t have friends in Lebanon before they arrived, 70% don’t have residence, 79% are registered with UNHCR*

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

2 Main Reasons mentioned: Requirement for Kafil, and high cost
Do you feel safe in Lebanon?

- In Beirut, 34% feel unsafe.
- In North Lebanon, 30% feel unsafe.
- In Bekaa, 27% feel unsafe.
- In Mount Lebanon, 18% feel unsafe.
- In South, 13% feel unsafe.

Legend:
- Red: Unsafe
- Orange: Relatively Unsafe
- Green: Relatively Safe
- Black: Safe
Highest safety in South
Lowest in Ersal, Tripoli and Beirut

http://www.easymapmaker.com/map/6299405402aaba567bff4f1560728f82
What time do you feel safe to move?

Beirut: 20% feel safe day and night
North Lebanon: 28%
Bekaa: 22%
Mount Lebanon: 33%
South: 41%

There are also those who feel safe moving at night only! (2.23% of total)
Do you think having residency enhances your safety?

- Beirut: 87.26%
- North Lebanon: 87.63%
- Bekaa: 88.22%
- Mount Lebanon: 90.96%
- South: 87.10%

87 to 91% believe that residency impacts safety. Those in the south, who feel safer, are more likely to have legal papers.
Perception of Authorities

- Highest disapproval towards General Security
- About 75% approval towards Army and Police
Syrian refugees in the south are consistently more positive

Perception of Authorities

GS

Police

Army

Lebanese

- Very Negative
- Negative
- Positive
- Very Positive
Assault

- 293 personal assaults reported out of 1200 respondents
- 86% of these cases where explicitly blamed on Lebanese offenders

### Number of Respondents Assaulted out of 1200

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondants Assaulted</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beirut</td>
<td>33.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lebanon</td>
<td>29.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekaa</td>
<td>27.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Lebanon</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>20.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bar Chart

- Me/My Family Insulted: 126
- Me/My Family Extorted: 41
- Me/My Family Beaten: 55
- Me/My Family Threatened verbally: 71
Raids, harassment, insults...

46% of Syrian Refugees have been in trouble while in Lebanon. 69% did nothing about it.

Percent of Respondents subject to... 

- Eviction: 0%
- Arrests: 5%
- Beaten: 10%
- Extortion: 15%
- Raided/Searched: 20%
- Harrassed: 25%
- Insults: 30%
- Total Assaulted: 45%

What did you do?

- Changed my residence: 7%
- Notified: 13%
- Confronted offender: 4%
- Minimised my movement: 4%
- Changed my routine: 3%

Nothing: 69%
Highest percentages of assaults reported in Beirut, Tripoli, Ersal, Laboue, Baalbek...

http://www.easymapmaker.com/map/30ad30a240338ab143f13cc642f41c4
37% had problems with checkpoints:
Mount Lebanon: 16%
South: 32%
Beirut: 34%
Bekaa: 41%
North: 50%

71% of respondents said that checkpoints are important to them, and 46% of them said the main reason is to go to work, while 9% mentioned access to services.
Access to services

- 28% don’t have access to services and 27% have access “sometimes” (especially Health)
- 37% say they are treated worse than others when accessing services

Do you have access to services

- Never: 28%
- Most of the time: 23%
- Always: 22%
- Sometimes: 27%

How are you treated when you seek access to services

- Same as foreigners: 26%
- Same as Lebanese: 24%
- Worse than others: 37%
- No access to services: 13%
Do you feel welcome in Lebanon?

- In Beirut, more than 75% don’t feel welcome in Lebanon
- In North Lebanon and Bekaa more than 60%
- In Mount Lebanon and South about 50%
- Almost 50% say situation is getting worse
Refugees are unable to renew their papers over time, but they manage to register in UNHCR.

- Level of safety drops over time
- Quality of relations with authorities drop over time
Gender

- Men are less likely to be registered with GS, Women are more likely to be registered with UNHCR
- Women have less problems on checkpoints
- Women feel safer
- Men have more friends
- Men have better relations with Lebanese neighbors
Most Refugees live in apartments, Almost no homeless refugees

Refugees in camps feel less safe
2-Lebanese Perception
Lebanese Perception

- In most regions around 50% of Lebanese do not feel safe.
- Lebanese perception is highly correlated with Syrian views in terms of regional distribution.

How Safe do you feel?

- Not Safe
- Relatively Not Safe
- Relatively Safe
- Safe

Have you heard stories that make you feel threatened?

- A Lot
- Some
- No
Assaults reported by 13% of the Lebanese, with a lot of people saying they “heard stories”.

Rate your relation with Syrian Refugees

Heard Stories

Assault

Lebanese Perception

Rate your relation with Syrian Refugees

Heard Stories

Assault

Lebanese Perception

Rate your relation with Syrian Refugees

Heard Stories

Assault

Lebanese Perception

Rate your relation with Syrian Refugees

Heard Stories

Assault

Lebanese Perception

Rate your relation with Syrian Refugees

Heard Stories

Assault

Lebanese Perception

Rate your relation with Syrian Refugees

Heard Stories

Assault
Comparison

Lebanese
9% reported Assaults (self and family)
54% don’t feel safe

Syrians
24% reported Assaults (self and family)
26% don’t feel safe

Lebanese report less assault and feel more unsafe
3-Causal Analysis
The vicious refugee cycle

Entry → Papers

$200 Min for 6 month
Kafil
Need Rent contract
Commitment not to work

Need for income

No Paper

Reduction of aid to $13.5/month!

Work

Need for transportation

Difficulties access to services

Checkpoints problems Limited mobility

Lebanese hostility

Assault

Lack of Safety
To test the proposed model, all key variables were entered in a stepwise regression against the variable of Safety: Gender, Age, Family Size, Head of Household, Type of Accommodation, Legal Papers, UNHCR Registration, Friends in Lebanon, Relation with local Authorities, Checkpoint Problems, Mobility Limitation, Difficulties of Access to Services, and Assault. These variables were captured by various questions in the questionnaire. They were either coded on a 4 or 5 points scale (depending on the number of answers), or coded as binary dummy variables.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY OUTPUT</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>t Stat</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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</table>
Finally, in an attempt to test the impact of Legal Papers on Checkpoint Problems, we ran another regression with Legal Papers and Gender as predictors and Checkpoint Problems as dependent variable. Impact is significant and coefficients are in the expected sign. Those who have legal paper are less likely the have checkpoint problems and men are more likely to have checkpoint problems.

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<td>Papers</td>
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The vicious refugee cycle

Entry → Papers

$200 Min for 6 month
Kafil
Need Rent contract
Commitment not to work

Need for income

No Paper

Validated: Regression 2

Validated: Regression 1

$13.5/month!

Validated: Direct mention by respondents

Checkpoints problems Limited mobility

Difficulties access to services

Validated: Regression 1

Validated: Regression 1

Lebanese hostility

Assault

Validated: Regression 1

Validated: Direct mention by respondents

Need for transportation

Work

Validated: Direct mention by respondents

Lack of Safety
Summary and Recommendations
• 62% of Syrians work with an average salary of $393
• Syrian refugees are most worried about security, then comes the economy and then legal papers
• 70% of Syrian respondents don’t have legal papers in Lebanon while 79% are registered with UNHCR
• The main cause for not having papers being the need for a Lebanese sponsor and high cost
• 34% of Syrians in Beirut do not feel safe, while 30% in the North don’t feel safe, 27% in Bekka, 18% in Mount Lebanon, and 13% in the South
• 87 to 91% believe that legal papers impacts their safety
• 293 personal/family assaults were reported out of 1200 respondents. 86% of these cases where explicitly blamed on Lebanese offenders. 43% offenses were verbal insults.
• 46% of Syrian Refugees have reported to have been in trouble in Lebanon, and 69% did nothing about it.
• 37% of Syrians had problems with checkpoints, with regional variation between 50% in North Lebanon and 16% in Mount Lebanon. Main cause is non-renewal of legal papers.
• 71% of respondents said that checkpoints are important to them, and 46% of them said the main reason is to go to work, while 9% mentioned access to services.
Summary

• 28% don’t have access to services and 27% have access “sometimes”.
• 37% say they are treated worse than others when accessing services.
• 75% of Syrians in Beirut don’t feel welcome in Lebanon. In North Lebanon and Bekaa more than 60%. In Mount Lebanon and South about 50%.
• Almost 50% say that situation is getting worse.
• Relations with authorities and Level of safety are getting worse over time.
• Women feel slightly safer than man (31% for men VS 36% for women), are less likely to have legal papers (35% for men VS 24% for women)
• Women have less problems on checkpoints than men.
• More than half of the Syrians live in apartments. Safety is highest among those who live in apartments and lowest among those who live in camps.
• Around 50% of Lebanese don’t feel safe in most regions. Assaults reported by 13% of the Lebanese, with a lot of people saying they “heard stories”.
Policy Recommendations

Legal papers
Loosen conditions for issuance of Syrian Refugee legal papers and renewal. Cancel sponsorship, and lower costs.
Papers will solve checkpoint problems; they will make Syrians less vulnerable and will encourage them to file complaints to the police or any other authority in case of offenses which they currently don’t do out of fear of being arrested. Papers will also facilitate mobility and access to services.

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

Expand Job market

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

Security/Municipal Role

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

Create a transparent complaint mechanism allowing to keep the finger on the pulse.
Syrian refugees should have a complaint mechanism that has a human face, is close to them, and represents the state at the same time.
Special attention to collective shelters and Camps
Addressing vulnerability of Syrians shelters, camps and places of residence that are below standards.

Community-level Projects
Reinforce projects between refugees and host communities. Projects that engage both parts, involve skills and talents from both sides. Create youth clubs, diversify opportunities for socialization (especially women and youth).

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

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