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Ambivalent (In)Securities: Comparing Urban Refugee Women's Experiences of Informal and Formal Security Provision

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ABSTRACT

Using feminist theories of geolegality, geopolitics, and intersectionality, this article presents Syrian refugee women's experiences and perceptions of both formal and informal security providers in Amman and Beirut in 2016–2017. Based on qualitative data from refugee women based in these cities since the onset of the Syrian civil war, this article argues three related points regarding urban refugee women and their experiences with security providers. First, that although not gendered at the State level, refugee law is applied in gendered ways in the everyday by State and non-State security providers and that this has direct outcomes as to how refugee women perceive and access security services in their host cities. Secondly, that whilst women perceive both formal and informal security providers in ambivalent terms, they are deeply appreciative of State security presence in urban areas which seem vulnerable to tension and conflict. Lastly, in order to understand ambivalent experiences of (in)security of (in)formal security providers, we need closer examinations of the ways in which identity interacts with structures of policy, law and culture, using feminist theories of intersectionality and geolegality.

KEYWORDS: urban refugees, security, geolegality, intersectionality, Middle-East, comparative case study, gender

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban refugees living in the majority world often occupy a complex social positioning in host societies which affects their ability to manage conflict and access security services. Many lack documentation or rights to work, and therefore tend to live

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and work in the informal areas of the city. This has led to expectations that they have negative perceptions of State security providers and view these representatives as corrupt, compromised, and dangerous, as touched on in several studies on urban refugees in Africa and Southeast Asia.[1] As a result, when it comes to concerns of personal protection or conflict resolution, refugees are often presumed to use, or prefer, alternative security and justice provision, if these avenues are available to them. Most of the studies that have examined refugee experiences regarding security services have highlighted men's encounters with, and perspectives of, State security providers. Women's unique experiences and perspectives have often been invisible in urban refugee literature, and there has been little critical engagement regarding refugee women's experiences in urban contexts more widely. In particular, there is minimal data regarding women's perceptions of security services (both formal and informal), how they resolve conflict, or perceive and experience degrees of personal protection and (in)security within their host cities related to security providers.

This article provides critical and theoretical insight into some of these gaps in knowledge, by examining and comparing self-settled Syrian refugee women's experiences and perceptions of formal and informal security provision and conflict resolution in Amman, Jordan and Beirut, Lebanon. Qualitative data that foregrounds Syrian women's voices are underpinned and framed by a theoretical framework built on feminist theories of geopolitics, geolegality, and intersectionality. These theories emphasise an examination of the role and interplay of structures and scale in everyday life, providing a framework for *interrogating* the ways in which identity, refugee policies, and spatiality are relevant to lived experiences of day-to-day conflict resolution and (in)security for self-settled refugee women. By examining daily lived experiences of urban refugee women, and the spaces that they negotiate, through a lens of security provision, the gap between macro State policies related to refugees, and the micro lived realities of refugee policies in practice becomes clear. In particular, the ways in which refugee policies are often presented or stated in gender-neutral terms at the State level yet experienced and applied in gendered ways in the everyday life are evident.

Over 5.5 million Syrian refugees have been externally displaced since the onset of the Syrian civil war in 2011. By the end of 2016 (when this research took place), an estimated 630,000 refugees had settled in Jordan, with approximately 1.1 million settling in Lebanon.[2] Most of these refugees were living in urban or

1 For example, see: A.M. Nah, "Refugees and Space in Urban Areas in Malaysia", *Forced Migration Review*, 34, 2018, 29–31, available at: http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/urban-displacement/29-31.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); E.H. Campbell, "Urban Refugees in Nairobi: Problems of Protection, Mechanisms of Survival, and Possibilities for Integration", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 19(3), 2006, 396–413, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fel011 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

2 The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 3RP reports both the estimated number of Syrian refugees and the estimated number of Syrians in each nation at the end of 2016. Exact numbers of Syrian refugees in each nation is difficult to account for due to the politisation of these numbers. See: UNHCR 3RP, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016-2017 in Response to the Syria Crisis*, 2016, 8, available at: http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/3RP-Regional-Overview-2016-2017.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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peri-urban areas and just under half were women and girls.[3] Neither Jordan nor Lebanon is a signatory of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) 1951 Refugee Convention. Thus, both nations have responded to the crisis through their own policies, which have been influenced by several economic, political, social, and historic factors (discussed at length elsewhere[4]). This differentiated policy landscape, alongside each nation's particular security and governance frameworks, which are considered in more detail below, are key reasons why the experiences of refugee women in the capital cities of each State, Amman (Jordan) and Beirut (Lebanon), make for a compelling comparative study. This comparative case study approach looks for the "essence of the particular" across refugee women's experiences in these two cities, to consider some universal elements of refugee women's experiences of (in)security, security provision, and conflict resolution within their host cities.[5]

In order to provide clarity and insight into participants' experiences with (in)-formal security providers, at the outset of this article, key convergences in experiences are highlighted to guide the reader. First, in both cities women identified gendered identities as having significant outcomes on security, experiences with security providers, and on day-to-day spatial negotiations of the city. Whilst refugee policies are not gendered at the State level, they are interpreted and applied in gendered ways in the everyday life by a variety of (in)formal security providers. This has a marked effect on how women perceive, access, and engage security providers. Secondly, despite differences in legal status across the two cities, women perceived both formal and informal security providers in ambivalent terms. Whilst this is nuanced, for example women in Jordan expressed a stronger sense of security which was related to their more secure legal status, (in)formal providers were seen as a source of both security and insecurity for refugee women. This is related to the intersection of their identity with cultural, legal, and policy frameworks. Lastly, appreciation, rather than ambivalence, is clearly expressed for State security

3 UNHCR Operation Portal, *UNHCR Operation Portal Refugee Situations*, UNHCR, 2020, available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

4 The following papers provide grounding and context to each nation's policies regarding Syrian refugees: M. Janmyr, "Precarity in Exile: The Legal Status of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 35(4), 2016, 58–78, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdw016 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); M. Janmyr, "No Country of Asylum: 'Legitimizing' Lebanon's Rejection of the 1951 Refugee Convention", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 29(3), 2017, 438–465, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/eex026 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); F. Dionigi, "Statehood and Refugees: Patterns of Integration and Segregation of Refugee Populations in Lebanon from a Comparative Perspective", *Middle East Law and Governance*, 9(2), 2017, 113–146, available at: https://doi.org/10.1163/18763375-00902001 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); F. Dionigi, "The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon: State Fragility and Social Resilience", *LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series*, 15, 2016, 1–40, available at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65565/1/Dionigi_Syrian_Refugees in Lebanon_Author_2016.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); K. Lenner & S. Schmelter, "Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon: Between Refuge and Ongoing Deprivation?", *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2016*, 2016, 122–126, available at: http://opus.bath.ac.uk/52656/ (last vis ited 17 Nov. 2021); L. Turner, "Explaining the (Non-)Encampment of Syrian Refugees: Security, Class and the Labour Market in Lebanon and Jordan", *Mediterranean Politics*, 20(3), 2015, 386–404, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2015.1078125 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

5 H. Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice*, *Case Study Research in Practice*, p. 167, SAGE, London, 2014, available at: https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446268322 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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presence when it is focused on "stabilising State and local power structures"[6] rather than on individuals.

This article begins with a brief literature review on refugees and security provision and then continues to a presentation of the study's conceptual structure and methodology. This provides a guiding framework to theorise lived experiences of security in the everyday life and the ways in which this is scalar and linked to wider macro policies. This framework is employed in a comparative case study approach allowing for a richer understanding of the ways in which identity, legal and policy structures interact to shape refugee lived experiences, enabling some wider conclusions to be drawn regarding gendered experiences of refugee (in)security. The article goes on to examine participants' experiences in Beirut and then Amman, concluding by drawing together convergences and divergences in experiences as outlined above.

2. URBAN REFUGEES, SECURITY, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, AND ACCESS TO SECURITY AND JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS

This article is concerned with security as a lived experience and the ways in which an individual responds to a "set of constructed, contested and negotiated threats".[7] "Security" is a complex experience for refugees, as they are often framed as the "source" of security issues for host communities and thus become the object of the security gaze.[8] This characterisation is difficult for refugees to shift, and those that self-settle can find themselves at the mercy of a host population that may consider them inherently criminal or undesirable: arguing that they steal local jobs, strain resources, and increase criminality, political instability and people smuggling.[9] Therefore, many urban refugees experience a deep human insecurity in their everyday lives in their host cities, from lacking legal protection, shelter, and livelihoods and being at significant risk of exploitation, abuse, and violence. However, whilst human security concerns of shelter and livelihoods are often (rightly) addressed in academic literature, self-settled refugee's very real encounters and negotiations with security providers, and the ways in which refugees manage threat, address conflict, and manage personal safety are often overlooked, or discussed in brief terms.

6 N. Bagayoko, E. Hutchful & R. Luckham, "Hybrid Security Governance in Africa: Rethinking the Foundations of Security, Justice and Legitimate Public Authority", *Conflict, Security & Development*, 16(1), 2016, 1–32, 7.

7 M. Fawaz & H.B. Akar, "Practising (in)Security in the city", *City & Society*, 22(24), 2012, 105–109, 107.

8 B.S. Chimni, "The Geopolitics of Refugee Studies: A View from the South", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 11(4), 1998, 350–374, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/11.4.350-a (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); S. Pasquetti, N. Casati & R. Sanyal, "Law and Refugee Crises", *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 15, 2019, 289–310, available at: https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-101518-042609 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

9 See the following works for examples of this: A. Fábos & G. Kibreab, "Urban Refugees: Introduction", *Refuge*, 24(1), 2007, 3–10; K. Jacobsen, M. Ayoub & A. Johnson, "Sudanese Refugees in Cairo: Remittances and Livelihoods", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 27(1), 2014, 146–159, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fet029 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); V. Kelberer, *The Work Permit Initiative for Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Implications for Policy and Practice, Boston Consortium for Arab Region Studies*, Boston, 2017; L.B. Landau, "Protection and Dignity in Johannesburg: Shortcomings of South Africa's Urban Refugee Policy", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 19(3), 2006, 308–327, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fel012 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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In several research papers, Lyytinen has explored the ways in which security and insecurity are intertwined experiences for refugees. She highlights how individuals, institutions, and experiences can simultaneously act as a source of both security and insecurity for refugees in urban settings and that this is often inconsistent and fluctuating.[10] Building on this platform of security as something which is embodied and inconsistent, this article considers refugee's individualised experiences of (in)security and theorises the role of identities interacting with wider social, legal, and political structures in shaping these ambivalent experiences of security and security provision amongst refugee women.

State security and justice institutions are an important aspect of maintaining order within a society. These institutions are charged with providing protection from harm, a means to resolve conflict and mechanisms of punishment to maintain law and order.[11] Typically, formal State institutions and procedures (inscribed in law) such as police, prosecution, courts, and custodial measures, would be expected to act as a means of securing an individual's safety, protection, and their avenues to justice and dispute resolution. This assumes, however, that the State holds a monopoly on authority, and on such services. In contrast to this perspective, within some States, particularly those that are post-colonial, post-conflict or more fragile, there can exist a system of hybrid security governance.[12] This is where the State shares authority and power with an array of non-State actors who provide alternative security, justice, and governance provision to the State. Additionally, in other contexts, the State does not exert a full monopoly on security as policing and security are outsourced to private firms.[13] Therefore, security and justice management cannot be assumed to be in full control and oversight of the State.

In many contexts, individuals and groups may find State security services to be inaccessible or threatening. For example, those living on the urban margins, those living in post-conflict or other unstable environments, and those that do have full rights, protection, or legal status (such as refugees).[14] Individuals experiencing the

10 E. Lyytinen, "Refugees' Conceptualizations of 'Protection Space': Geographical Scales of Urban Protection and Host-Refugee Relations", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 34(2), 2015, 45–77, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdv001 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); E. Lyytinen, "Congolese Refugees' 'Right to the City' and Urban (in)Security in Kampala, Uganda", *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 9(4), 2015, 593–611, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2015.1116142 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); E. Lyytinen, "Informal Places of Protection: Congolese Refugees' 'Communities of Trust' in Kampala, Uganda", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(6), 2017, 991–1008, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1207506 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

11 C. Shearing & L. Johnston, *Governing Security: Explorations of Policing and Justice*, London, New York, Routledge, 2003.

12 Bagayoko et al., "Hybrid Security Governance in Africa"; S. Fregonese, "Beyond the 'Weak State': Hybrid Sovereignties in Beirut", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30(4), 2012, 655–674.

13 K. Stedem, *Political Parties and the Provision of Non-State Security in Lebanon*, MEI, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Centre, Cambridge, Mass., available here: Working_Paper_Cover_Stedem.pdf (belfercenter.org) (last visited 15 Feb. 2022).

14 Campbell, "Urban Refugees in Nairobi"; J. Crisp, T. Morris & H. Refstie, "Displacement in Urban Areas: New Challenges, New Partnerships", *Disasters*, 36(Suppl.1), 2012, available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7717.2012.01284.x (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); M. O. Driscoll, *Bangladesh Rohingya Crisis—Managing Risks in Securitisation of Refugees*, Brighton, UK, 2017, available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/224-Managing-risks-in-securitisation-of-refugees.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); P.a. Palmgren, "Irregular Networks: Bangkok Refugees in the City and Region", *Journal of Refugee*

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contexts described may actively avoid State security provision, using evasion and anonymity, and may prefer to approach other non-State security providers, particularly if there is a thriving hybrid security governance system in place.[15] Non-State providers can also be perceived as more approachable as they are often embedded into communities and have greater proximity and visibility to those living on the urban margins.[16]

Examples of such providers include informal court and policing systems, customary courts, gangs, local mayors, esteemed cultural leaders or political parties and militias. These alternative providers may be used to avoid the gaze of the State, or indeed, to enhance capacity to negotiate with the State.[17] Particularly, in refugee camp contexts, informal security provision can be facilitated and encouraged by host States, who anticipate refugee suspicion of their own security services.[18]

These alternative providers can work both in tandem and in competition with the State[19] and can serve an important purpose in ensuring marginalised groups can access justice provision. Whilst alternative avenues to State security provision can act as "quick, relatively inexpensive, and culturally relevant remedies", there can often be challenges related to using these.[20] For example, issues can arise over representation, force, and validity, resulting in uneven and inequitable security provision.[21] Some alternative security providers, such as gangs, can be deeply violent and problematic.[22] Informal justice provision often draws on the normative structures of the community in which it operates, accentuating existing gender hierarchies and showing preferences to the norms of the community over the rights of the individual.[23] Furthermore,

Studies, 27(1), 2014, 21–41, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fet004 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); S. Pavenello, S. Elhawary & S. Pantuliano, *Hidden and Exposed: Urban Refugees in Nairobi, Kenya*, London, 2010, available at: https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/5858.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

15 Several studies have demonstrated that refugees – both those with protective or legal status and those without – are often exploited and harmed by State security services or even the institutions tasked with assisting them. E.g. T. Morris, "Urban Somali Refugees in Yemen", *Forced Migration Review*, 34, 2010, 36–38.

16 E. Wojkowska, *Doing Justice: How Informal Justice Systems Can Contribute*, UNDP, Oslo Governance Centre, 2006, 1-60, available at: http://www.albacharia.ma/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/30535/0280Doing_Justice__How_informal_justice_systems_can_contribute_(2007)7.pdf?sequence=1> (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

17 R. Abel, "Introduction", in R. Abel (ed.), *The Politics of Informal Justice:* vol. 2*: Comparative Studies*, New York, Academic Press Inc., 1982, 1–16.

18 See G. Riach & Z. James, "Strengthening the Rule of Law on the Margins: Experiences from Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan", *International Journal of Human Rights*, 20(4), 2016, 549–566, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2015.1128144 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); D. Sullivan & S. Tobin, "Security and Resilience Among Syrian Refugees in Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan", MERIP, 2014, available at: https://www.merip.org/mero/mero101414 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

19 Bagayoko et al., "Hybrid Security Governance in Africa".

20 F. Kerrignan et al., *Informal Justice Systems Charting a Course for Human Rights-Based Engagement*, Danish Institute for Human Rights, New York, 2009, 1–396, available at: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic Governance/Access to Justice and Rule of Law/Informal-Justice-Systems-Charting-a-Course-for-Human-Rights-Based-Engagement.pdf. (last visited 17 Nov. 2021)

21 T.F. Paasche & J.D. Sidaway, "Transecting Security and Space in Maputo", *Environment and Planning A*, 42(7), 2010, 1555–1576, available at: https://doi.org/10.1068/a43122 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

22 P. Mutahi, "Between Formality and Informality: (In)Security, Crime and Gangs in Nairobi Informal Settlements", *South African Crime Quarterly*, 37, 2011, 11–18.

23 Kerrignan et al., *Informal Justice Systems Charting*, 2009.

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these institutions can often work against the favour of women and societal minorities. Regarding women's experiences, informal justice mechanisms tend to reflect societal, patriarchal norms. This can lead to oppressive and negative consequences for women in these settings, particularly as they are often spoken for and represented by male elites.[24] Therefore, alternative security and justice provision can possibly disadvantage and endanger, rather than protect and support, marginalised women.

It is important to note that alongside these "push" factors that may see refugees (and other marginalised groups) seeking out alternative security provision, there are also socio-culture norms that encourage an individual to seek assistance at a mediatory, grassroots level with an informal security or justice provider. This is typically to protect an individual's reputation and standing within a community. For example, in the Middle East (particularly in rural areas) intermediaries are often sought to mediate a dispute or conflict. Police involvement can be perceived as an escalation of a community conflict and their involvement can result in loss of reputation and face and engaging local mediators are a means of avoiding this.[25] Therefore, there can be a preference for smaller day-to-day disputes addressed within a community setting rather than involving formal intermediaries. However, the extent to which these informal channels might reproduce patriarchal norms to the determent of assisting women is unclear. It is also unclear whether community-based mediation would continue to thrive amongst self-settle refugee communities, as many of their societal and kinship relationships would be disrupted and dispersed from their movement.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMING AND METHODOLOGY

This article is underpinned by theories of feminist geolegality, geopolitics, and intersectionality. These theories emphasise the relationship between scalar structures and operations of security provision, legal structures of law and policy, social structures of patriarchy and identities of class, race, and gender in shaping experiences with security providers and the spatial nature of these experiences. By examining refugee women's spatial experiences and access to security providers, the article provides insight into how (in)security for refugee women is spatialised, scalar, lived, and relational.[26]

24 L.L. Manganaro & A.L. Poland, "For Better or Worse? Gender and Perceptions of Formal and Informal Justice Systems in Afghanistan", *Women and Criminal Justice*, 22(1), 2012, 2–29, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2012.636287 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); D. Sullivan & S. Tobin, "Security and Resilience Among Syrian Refugees in Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan", MERIP, 2014, available at: https://www.merip.org/mero/mero101414 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

25 S. Özçelik, "Islamic/Middle Eastern Conflict Resolution for Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflicts: Wisata, Sulha and Third-Party", *Uluslararasi Iliskiler*, 3(12), 2006, 3–18, available at: https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/539720 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); N. Johnstone, *Tribal Dispute Resolution and Womens Access to Justice in Jordan*, Amman, 2015, available at: http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/Tribal Dispute Resolution and Women's Access to Justice in Jordan.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

26 J. Hyndman, "Mind the Gap: Bridging Feminist and Political Geography through Geopolitics", *Political Geography*, 23(3), 2004, 307–322, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2003.12.014 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); J. Hyndman, "Introduction: The Feminist Politics of Refugee Migration", *Gender, Place and Culture*, 17(4), 2010, 453–459, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2010.485835 (last vis ited 17 Nov. 2021); J. Williams & V. Massaro, "Feminist Geopolitics: Unpacking (In)Security, Animating Social Change", *Geopolitics*, 18(4), 2013, 751–758, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2013.

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3.1. Conceptual framework

Feminist geopolitical approaches encourage a dislodging of the concept of "security" from State concerns with borders, terrorism, and sovereignty. It re-focuses security on the lived experience and protection of the individual, whilst exploring the ways in which various scales of security interact and relate to affect quotidian, intimate realities and have gendered outcomes.[27] This enables a consideration of the ways in which refugee women experience and live "security" in the everyday life, but also emphasises how security provision is linked to (local, national, and global) scales of control, governance, territorialisation, and legislation and is incrementally and inconsistently applied.[28]

One aspect of this is how refugee law may have spatialised, gendered consequences, or be applied in gendered ways. Women and men experience "refugee-ness" in differing ways.[29] However, the extent to which the law shapes this, particularly in the lived every day, has not been of particular focus to scholars.[30] This is a central concern of feminist geolegality which has emphasised the benefit of its approach to refugee studies.[31]

Building on, and drawing from, feminist geopolitics and legal geography, feminist geolegality considers the specific ways in which structures of law play into experiences of belonging, security, and protection, examining how law and policies have spatial, scalar, and gendered repercussions.[32] Legal geography emphasises how bodies are imbued with legal value; that is, how different bodies have privilege and power or suffer from discipline and marginalisation.[33] This is relevant for refugee communities, as laws are territorial tools that define belonging. Furthermore, as examined above, refugees are often forced to negotiate oppressive and challenging conditions and spatialities that are shaped, and condoned, by State laws and policies.[34] Consequently, these laws influence encounters and interactions with both State and non-State security providers, as they are "enactors" and enforcers of State law and order. In conceptualising the law, geolegality emphasises how it is not limited to formal, State policies and legislature, but includes informal or cultural aspects of law, which also

816842 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); K. Brickell & D. Cuomo, "Feminist Geolegality", *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(1), 2019, 1–19, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517735706 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

27 J.L. Fluri, "Geopolitics of Gender and Violence 'from Below'", *Political Geography*, 28 (4), 2009, 259–265 available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2009.07.004 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

28 Pasquetti et al., "Law and Refugee Crises".

29 J. Freedman, *Gendering the International Asylum and Refugee Debate*, 2nd edn., New York, Springer, 2015, available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-45623-6 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

30 An exception is the work of N. Canefe, "Invisible Lives: Gender, Dispossession, and Precarity amongst Syrian Refugee Women in the Middle East", *Refuge*, 34(1), 2018, 38–49.

31 C.S. Gorman, "Feminist Legal Archeology, Domestic Violence and the Raced-Gendered Juridical Boundaries of U.S. Asylum Law", *Environment and Planning A*, 51(5), 2019, 1050–1067, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X18757507 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

32 Brickell and Cuomo, "Feminist Geolegality", 2019.

33 A. Jeffrey, "Legal Geography II: Bodies and Law", *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(5), 2020, 1004–1016, 1006, available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519888681 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

34 P. Gupta, B. Gökarıksel & S. Smith, "The Politics of Saving Muslim Women in India: Gendered Geolegality, Security, and Territorialization", *Political Geography*, 83, (102257), 2020, 1–10, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102257 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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affect lived experiences.[35] In doing so, it encourages a spatial examination of different formal and informal laws, policies, and practices. In the case of this study, both refugee policies and the practices of security providers, who act as an extension or "dispenser" of the law, are considered under this wider umbrella of the "law".

Alongside feminist theories of geolegality and geopolitics, this article responds to the call of Carastathis et al. who express concern at the lack of intersectional approaches to ongoing refugee crises and encourage an engagement with these theories in order to explore the differentiated landscape of identity on refugee-ness.[36] Intersectionality, which emerged from the work of Kimberly Crenshaw, emphasises how various identity categories (such as race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, disability, and so on) interact to create particular social locations of marginalisation, disadvantage, or privilege.[37] This approach has been critiqued for overemphasising categorisation and individualised accounts of disadvantage. However, Nasser Eddin and Abu-Assad argue that intersectional approaches to refugee and migrant studies should reflect on the broad structures of oppression that shape migrant and refugee lives across a multitude of spatialities.[38] Thus, using intersectional approaches allows for both an analysis of identity categories, and how these categories interact, alongside analysing wider structures of oppression (such as refugee laws), and examining the relationship between these and how they then affect everyday experiences.

Intersectionality has not been used significantly within refugee studies.[39] However, exceptions have demonstrated the importance of using this approach to understand differentiated experiences of refugee-ness and the wider role of structural oppressions in shaping quotidian experiences.[40] For example, Ayoub (2017) argues that gender is often used as a single category in which to analyse refugee women's experiences, overlooking the ways in which other identities, such as those of social class, shape experiences of displacement.[41] Ayoub contends that whilst "refugee

35 F. Von Benda-Beckmann & K. Von Benda-Beckmann, "Spaces That Come and Go: A Legal Anthropological Perspective on the Temporalities of Space in Plural Legal Orders", in I. Braverman et al. (eds), *The Expanding Spaces of Law: A Timely Legal Geography*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2014, 30–52.

36 A. Carastathis et al., "Introduction: Intersectional Feminist Interventions in the 'Refugee Crisis'", *Refuge*, 34(1), 2018, 3–15.

37 K. Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989, 139–167, available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/0011-9164(90)80039-E (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); K. Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color", *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1991, 1241–1299, available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

38 N. Nasser-Eddin & N. Abu-Assab, "Decolonial Approaches to Refugee Migration", *Migration and Society*, 3(1), 2020, 190–202, available at: https://doi.org/10.3167/arms.2020.030115 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

39 See, Carastathis et al., "Introduction: Intersectional Feminist Interventions".

40 See, K.K. Eghdamian, "Religious Identity and Experiences of Displacement: An Examination into the Discursive Representations of Syrian Refugees and Their Effects on Religious Minorities Living in Jordan", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 30(3), 2017, 447–467, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/few030 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); U. Ozkaleli, "Agency in Multiple Temporalities: Being Syrian Women, Becoming Widows and Refugees, Remaining Pious", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 89(102538) 2021, 1–9 available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2021.102538 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

41 M. Ayoub, "Gender, Social Class and Exile: The Case of Syrian Women in Cairo", in J. Freedman, Z. Kivilcim & N. Özgür Baklacıoğlu (eds.), *A Gendered Approach to the Syrian Refugee Crisis*J. Freedman, Z. Kivilcim, and N. Özgür Baklacıoğlu, Abingdon, New York, Taylor & Francis, 2017, 77–104.

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identity" is often foregrounded, other identities, such as social class, can "overshadow" this identity and thus have a strong effect on experiences of exile. Whilst this article predominantly focuses on the interaction of identities of gender and nationality, other identities such as class or ethnicity undoubtedly emerge as shaping refugee experiences in host cities. Intersectionality offers a means of examining the complexity of experience as lived at the intersection of various identities. It also allows for a richer insight into the heterogeneous ways in which conflict, flight, refuge, and asylum are experienced.

Together, the theories explored above are drawn together to underpin and guide the empirical findings presented in the second half of this article. They allow for a theoretical understanding of how structures of policy and law interact with categories of identity to influence and shape ambivalent experiences of (in)security and formal and informal security provision in refugee host cities. They also allow for a means of critically assessing the ways in which "security" is scalar and related to the intimate and the global. Lastly, intersectionality emphasises a focus on the complexity of lived experience of (in)security by examining the ways in which (in)security is lived and experienced at the intersectional of multiple identities – not just that of the refugee "label".

3.2. Methodology

Whilst comparative qualitative studies are fairly uncommon in Refugee Studies,[42] there have been calls for more South–South, comparative research of those living on the urban margins.[43] Much can be gained from examining and comparing the lived experiences of refugee urban dwellers across different contexts. It allows for a deeper understanding of the consistencies and fluctuations of (in)security and space, and for an analysis of the influence of wider political, legal, and social structures in shaping refugees quotidian experiences and their capacities and response to such environments.[44]

This article is based on qualitative research conducted in 2016–2017 in several refugee-receiving neighbourhoods of Amman and Beirut.[45] My decision to focus on specific areas of the city was shaped by several factors. This included desk research to determine where refugees were settling, a pilot field visit, and the willingness of community contacts or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in these neighbourhoods to work with me.

In Amman, the research focused on two districts within the city: Basman and Al Yarmouk, and within these districts the neighbourhoods of Hashmi Shamali and Mahata (Basman) and Al Ashrafyeh (Al Yarmouk). These neighbourhoods are all located in the South/South-East of the old city of Amman. They are low-income,

42 D. Chatty, "Researching Refugee Youth in the Middle East: Reflections on the Importance of Comp Arative Research", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), 2007, 265–280, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fem005 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

43 R. Sanyal, "Urbanizing Refuge: Interrogating Spaces of Displacement", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(2), 2014, 558–572, available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12020 (last vis ited 17 Nov. 2021).

44 K. Gough, "Reflections on Conducting Urban Comparison", *Urban Geography*, 33(6), 2012, 866–878, available at https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.33.6.866 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

45 This research was reviewed and passed by the University of Sheffield's University Research Ethics Committee in 2016.

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high-density areas of the city which have a long history of playing host to Palestinian refugees and migrant workers. In Beirut, I worked in the districts of Mazra'a and Bourj Hammoud. In Mazra'a, my participants were living across a number of small, heterogeneous quarters that make up the district. This includes Malaab, Tareek El Jdeede, and the Palestinian refugee camp, Shatila. Several political parties operate in this area. The most significant is the Future movement (a Sunni party) and the Amal Movement (a leftist, Shi'a party). Whilst Bourj Hammoud is broadly considered a Christian, Armenian area of the city, a majority of my participants were living in the neighbourhood of Na'ba, a high-density migrant and refugee hosting neighbourhood within Bourj Hammoud, under the control of the Shi'a party Hezbollah.

This research is underpinned by a feminist epistemology which sees research participants as co-producers of knowledge and sought to foreground the experiences and voices of refugee women.[46] Qualitative methods, which enable participants time and space to share their experiences and insights, were employed. This included solicited diaries, interviews, and focus groups. In Beirut, I conducted 8 focus groups with 40 participants and semi-structured interviews with 22 participants. Five women wrote solicited diaries for the project. In Amman, I conducted 4 focus groups with 20 participants and held semi-structured interviews with 25 participants. Four women wrote solicited diaries for the project. In Amman, I benefitted from longer time with participants but that was less structured by gatekeepers allowing for more detailed interviews. These methods were complemented by additional key stakeholder interviews with police, political parties, *Mukhtars* (local mayors), community workers, social workers, and humanitarian agency representatives. Refugee participants were contacted through community contacts, social workers, or humanitarian agencies and asked if they wanted to participate in the study. All focus groups took place at NGO centres or at local cafes within the neighbourhoods in which women lived. Interviews were conducted either in participants' homes or at NGO centres. Depending on the context, most participants were given a meal or a sanitary pack to thank them for their participation. Women that kept solicited diaries were paid for their contribution as it required greater commitment and time. Focus groups and interviews in both cities were conducted in Arabic with a local (female) translator and re-translated and transcribed into English later, before being analysed and thematically coded both manually and with NVivo software.

This research study required careful attention and considered ethical reflection on positionality, particularly regarding privilege, bias and access, and the ways in which social positioning affected methods, relationships with participants and gatekeepers.[47] I engaged in reflexive practise during fieldwork and was conscious that my identity as a white, western woman at times provided unique opportunities and access to individuals and organisations, but at other times, closed avenues of

46 L. McDowell, "Doing Gender: Feminism, Feminists and Research Methods in Human Geography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17(4), 1992, 399, available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/622707 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

47 G. Rose, "Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics", *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3), 1997, 305–320.

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discussion.[48] My positionality also affected relationships with participants, who could conflate my identity with that of someone who had direct power and position to assist them. Throughout the project I not only needed to consider my own positionality, but that of my interpreters. This emerged particularly in Beirut where ethnicity, sect, and religion are socially embedded into everyday life.[49] These concerns required me to be continually cautious, considerate, and communicative with participants to ensure they fully understood the research project, their role within it, and the limitations of the research.

4. LEBANON: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY AND THE STATE'S APPROACH TO SYRIAN REFUGEES

Lebanon's own complex political legacy, including its long civil war (1975–1990), confessional government system, hosting of thousands of Palestinian refugees, and its strong economic and political ties to Syria, has largely shaped its response to the Syrian refugee crisis.[50] The State is broadly considered "weak", whereby it struggles to maintain control over its sovereignty and borders.[51] Whilst governance is confessional, it is also divided into two political blocs (the March 8th alliance and March 14th alliance) which emerged during the 2005 Cedar revolution and continue to dominate political discourse in the nation.[52] Security and governance is described as "plural", whereby power and security is shared amongst the State and other stakeholders (primarily political parties), creating a hybrid framework where formal and informal institutions are interrelated.[53]

UNHCR operates in Lebanon under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and registered all Syrians arriving in Lebanon until the end of 2014, when the State suspended this programme and requested that new arrivals only be recorded. A free-of-charge entry permit was issued to those Syrians who arrived at a legal border crossing and held identification papers and allowed for them to remain in the country for 12 months. This permit also provided individuals the right to seek work (through sponsorship with a *kafala*, a citizen who acts as a sponsor). However, the permit required annual renewal at US$200 for every Syrian over the age of 15 years

48 C. Faria & S. Mollett, "Critical Feminist Reflexivity and the Politics of Whiteness in the 'Field'", *Gender, Place and Culture*, 23(1), 2016, 79–93.

49 For a more detailed analysis on the research study's methodology, ethics, work with interpreters and gatekeepers, see, S. Linn, *Intersectional Identities, Space and Security: Syrian Refugee Women in Amman & Beirut*, 2020, University of Sheffield.

50 See, A. Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap: The 'Politics of Citizenship' for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 1948-2008", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22(1), 2009, 51–73, available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen047 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); Turner, "Explaining the (Non-)Encampment of Syrian Refugees"; M. Janmyr, "No Country of Asylum".

51 W. Pearlman, "Competing for Lebanon's Diaspora: Transnationalism and Domestic Struggles in a Weak State", *International Migration Review*, 48(1), 2014, 34–75 available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12070 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

52 Since this fieldwork was conducted, Lebanon has seen significant, interrelated political, social, and economic upheaval – however, these core political blocs remain, despite tensions. Alongside these major and ongoing changes, the huge explosion in Beirut in 2020 has also had a catastrophic effect on the city.

53 J. Lind & R. Luckham, "Introduction: Security in the Vernacular and Peacebuilding at the Margins; Rethinking Violence Reduction", *Peacebuilding*, 5(2), 2017, 89–98.

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old.[54] For most marginalised families, the price of the permit renewal was untenable and almost all participants in this study had lapsed "authorisation" to remain in Lebanon. Many saw their status within the country as "floating" and temporary, expressing a deep fear related to their lack of legal papers. The inability of many refugees to pay for the reissue of their permit has led to a direct exploitation of Syrian workers in the Lebanese economy, who are overworked, underpaid, and deeply insecure.[55]

Almost all participants in Beirut did not have regularised papers and legality to remain in Lebanon. Some women were smuggled into the country, as they did not have any identification papers whatsoever. Around half of the participants were from impoverished, rural backgrounds and were illiterate, having left school, and married at a young age (this was a majority of participants from Na'ba). These women were mostly Arab, Sunni Muslims, although there were a few Kurdish participants. There were also several lower-middle class Sunni women who partook in the research, who although did not have regularised status, were somewhat more secure. Lastly, there was a handful of participants who were Christian, had Lebanese relatives, and whose circumstances were far more "stable" in the city. However, most women were living in compromised conditions, and their families were paying very high rents for poor quality housing and facilities. Almost all families were in significant amounts of debt and expressed high levels of anxiety and distress regarding their living situations.

4.1. Negotiating public space, hawajaz, and State security services

Lebanon's complex political State structure and its various civil and international conflicts have left a legacy on the spatial character and security of Beirut. Alongside the presence of the Internal Security Forces (ISF; police) and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF; army), political parties and their militias have influence and power over specific neighbourhoods in the city, providing informal aspects of security and conflict resolution to residents. State security providers within Lebanon, including the LAF and the ISF are responsible for law and order. They both suffer from poor reputations and accusations of partisanship and corruption (the ISF more so).[56] Whilst the ISF are responsible for monitoring internal security and are present in day-to-day policing in the city, the LAF have increasingly taken a role in internal security concerns, particularly since the onset of the Syrian civil war.

Encounters with State security services were predominantly described by women as encounters with the ISF or LAF. As both are armed and wear camouflage uniform, there could be confusion amongst participants as to which institution was

54 IHRC/NRC, *Securing Status: Syrian Refugees and the Documentation of Legal Status, Identity, and Family Relationships in Jordan*, 2016, available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/52314 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021); NRC, *The Consequences of Limited Legal Status for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. Part 2*, Beirut, 2014, available at: https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/the-consequences-of-limited-legal-status-for-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

55 ILO, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile* (Beirut, 2014), available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_240134.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

56 See C. Geha, *Citizens Perceptions of Security Institutions in Lebanon*, *International Alert*, London, Beirut, 2015.

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monitoring or active in an area at any time. Both of these institutions were feared by women. A separate department, the General Security Directorate (GSD) is tasked with national security, including migration and the issuing of visas and permits. This department was described in dismissive terms by participants who felt the GSD was difficult to negotiate and impatient and indifferent towards refugees without status. Whilst municipal police are present in these neighbourhoods, they had few interactions with refugee women, as they are predominantly responsible for daily concerns such as traffic.

Public space within the city is highly securitised by *hawajaz* (barriers).[57] These are operated by both State and non-State security providers and are fixated on identity and an individual's right to "belong" or be present in a particular place at a particular time. This is a deeply complex environment for refugees to negotiate, as there are various, overlapping stakeholders and authorities that monitor and control space in the city.

Hawajaz brought Syrians into direct contact with (in)formal security provision in Beirut. Negotiating the city and encountering these checkpoints brought issues of legality, authorisation, and identity to the fore. Those that did have papers from UNHCR were often caustic about the legality and power of their registration or "recording" with the organisation. Many realised that these papers did not have any effect on their legality and right to be present in Lebanon. As such, they had little effect on refugees' wider sense of security.

As most Syrians did not possess the legality to reside in Lebanon, checkpoints were a source of fear and acted to control refugees' access and negotiation of Beirut. Participants were concerned that their papers were not "authorised" and that they faced potential arrest or deportation. Many discussed how they would spatially renegotiate their mobility in Beirut, changing routes and returning to their homes if encountering *hawajaz*. If this was not possible, many discussed paying bribes or engaging in verbal negotiations with security providers:

> [I] don't have the legal papers [. . .]. I would pay a bribe or a fee or something. Once they caught one of my sons at the checkpoints. And I explained their situation and what they are going through and then they let him go [. . .]. [If I see a checkpoint] I feel scared. Maybe they would catch my son. And we don't have money to release him, and maybe they deport him back to Syria.[58]

For many, their expired papers at least indicated that they had previously possessed a legal residency permit and allowed for some degree of negotiation at a checkpoint. For example, participants could emphasise their poverty, or explain that the family was in the process of renewing residency or acquiring a *kafala*. For others who had not entered Lebanon legally, usually because they were from more

57 M. Fawaz et al., "Living Beirut's Security Zones: An Investigation of the Modalities and Practice of Urban Security", *City and Society*, 24(2), 2012, 173–195, available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2012.01074.x (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

58 Interview, Zulima, Na'ba, Beirut. All interviewees' names have been changed to protect their identities.

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precarious, working-class backgrounds, and did not possess identity documentation, the vulnerability and fear was even more acute:

> People who don't have legal papers would avoid [the checkpoints and the police] and would stay at home. We came into this country legally, but our papers expired. But for people who were *taghrib* [smuggled] [. . .] it is always [vulnerable for them].[59]

Although Syrian refugees without papers are routinely arrested, at the time of this research the Lebanese Government had generally avoided large-scale deportations.[60] Instead, detention and arrest at *hawajaz* were intended to induce refugees to "legalise" their status. However, as detailed above, refugees simply could not afford this process, and arrests and detention did little to transform this experience, save to heighten fear and insecurity.

Identities of class and gender were both valuable resources in assisting the negotiating of checkpoints and security providers. When discussing *hawajaz*, many participants spoke of using aspects of their feminine identity to negotiate the barriers, using kinship and gendered idioms and appealing for a compassionate response to their ongoing circumstances.[61] Participants emphasised that their identity as women meant their presence was often interpreted as innocent or domestic and therefore even if their papers were no longer valid, police would express pity for their situation and let them continue on their way. Participants who were more middle-class or educated also expressed a greater sense of confidence in negotiating the checkpoints or justifying their presence on the street to security officials, particularly if they had legal authorisation through appropriate documentation. Women often contrasted their experiences with Syrian men, acknowledging that men were of keen interest to security providers and that men's papers were always checked as they were "more likely to make problems and be dangerous".[62]

Some participants shared incidences of being detained or questioned at length and did emphasise that women "could" be arrested. However, this coupled with a wider impression that women were not at risk of long-term incarceration or deportation and that they were not of particular interest for State security services. Despite this, women were deeply concerned at the prospect of their male relatives being deported, particularly as many were the primary breadwinner for households.

The expressed desire to avoid *hawajaz* and any contact with State security providers extended into conflict resolution and security issues in the everyday life. Most

59 Interview Zada, Na'ba, Beirut.

60 Fieldnotes, interview with NGO Representative, Amman, Feb. 2016. There were some exceptions to this in the early days of the crisis, see Dionghi 'The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon: State Fragility and Social Resilience'.

61 S. Joseph, *Intimate Selving in Arab Families: Gender, Self, and Identity*, Syracuse, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1999.

62 FGD 4, Bourj Hammoud, Beirut. See also E. Carpi et al., *Crisis and Control: (In)Formal Hybrid Security in Lebanon*, Beirut, Lebanon, 2016, available at: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/resources/crisiscontrol-informalhybridsecuritylebanon-report.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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participants held negative perceptions of State security services and insisted that they would not use these providers:

> I feel fear when I see [State] security [. . .]. We wouldn't dare go to General Security [if we had a problem] we would get beaten up and shut up [. . .] no one helps us.[63]

Women emphasised their identity as refugees, alongside their lack of power, status, and legality, stating they would rarely, if ever, approach State security premises (such as a police station) to resolve a problem or crime:

> You are a Syrian, you are a foreigner, you would have to give up your rights if a problem happened [. . .] you would have to shut up and stay quiet [. . .] if there was a big problem you would have to move to another area.[64]

Whilst some women hypothesised that they "might" approach the police, those that had been subjected to actual fraud, theft, sexual harassment, and violence all spoke of avoiding conflict and maintaining "silence". For example, Zada and her husband worked together in a small tailoring shop in the centre of Na'ba. Amongst several personal stories of theft and exploitation in the neighbourhood they explained their reticence to involve the police:

> We didn't ask for help. We didn't want anyone to know. We accepted what happened and moved on. We are new people here and we don't want trouble. We came from a place with trouble. All we want is our safety, and for our children to go to school. We have suffered. If a man came to the shop and started causing trouble, we would just say: "it's fine". We avoid conflict [. . .] we avoid trouble.[65]

Zada and her husband expressed fear in approaching either formal or informal security providers to ask for assistance, due to concerns that reporting crime would result in such people returning "with thugs". This fear of reprisals had kept them aloof from "Lebanese people" and nervous of whom they worked with. They did not want others to know of their exploitation in case it made them a "target" for other opportunists and criminals. The couple felt that Syrians had very little recourse to justice in the neighbourhood and that no one would represent them.[66]

In contrast, Deema, a wealthier participant with authorisation to remain in Lebanon, emphasised that her family would always try to resolve difficulties in a mediatory fashion. However, she went on to add that her family would not hesitate to involve the assistance of General Security: "If the problem is big, if it was maybe

63 FGD 8, Mazra'a, Beirut.

64 Interview, Khalila, Mazra'a, Beirut.

65 Interview, Zada, Na'ba, Beirut.

66 Their experience echoes that of urban refugees in Malaysia, who frequently find that they are subject to victimisation because they are unlikely to approach security services or report incidents. See: Nah 'Refugees and Space in Urban Areas in Malaysia'

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physical violence, that necessitates the presence of the army or the security forces, we would have to go to them."[67]

Deema's social positioning and legal status resulted in a stronger sense of security and an ability to be able to approach police and security services, even though she expressed a distaste and nervousness regarding the heavy securitisation of public space in Beirut. The interaction of her intersecting identities aided her wider sense of belonging and security. This contrasted with other participants whose lower socio-economic status and marginality meant that they could not establish their legitimacy in the city. This resulted in them feeling unable to access State security institutions for help and assistance, whilst checkpoints throughout the city enhanced their wider sense of unease.

4.2. Ambivalence and appreciation for State security

Despite a general sense that police were inaccessible, with most participants insisting they would avoid them or seek alternative means of resolving conflicts, the wider presence of police promoting security within the neighbourhoods were often appreciated. With the spill-over of the Syrian conflict into Lebanon resulting in heightened periods of tension, security personnel circulated the neighbourhood to conduct house to house searches. On these occasions, many participants, including those who were lower class and without legal papers, expressed relief and gratitude for the presence of armed police:

> Of course, when the army[68] comes I would feel safe. Because when there is conflict [. . .] [they] control the situation [. . .]. If the army doesn't come, the conflict would perhaps escalate and there would be more consequences.[69]

> We try to avoid the checkpoints if we can [as they imprison men]. With the presence of the army, we all feel safer. We prefer the army to be in control.[70]

Women expressed fears that what had happened in Syria could extend into Lebanon, embroiling refugees in further conflict. Therefore, the presence of General Security on the streets, or through house searches, which were frequently described as respectful, was appreciated by women.

These opinions, which expressed an appreciation for the presence of State security, contrasted with broader narratives from participants that State security services were to be avoided and posed a threat to refugees. They demonstrate women refugees' ambivalent and scalar experiences of (in)security, whereby women are both

67 Interview, Deema, Mazra'a, Beirut.

68 Both the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) wear combat uniform in their policing of the city. Additionally, since 2011 the LAF has also become increasingly involved in day-to-day policing in Lebanon. As a result, participants frequently interchanged the ISF and the LAF and referred to them both as "the army" even when asked specifically about day-to-day policing. See: S. Tholens,Border management in an era of 'statebuilding lite': Security assistance and Lebanon's hybrid sovereignty. *International Affairs*, 93(4), 2017, 865–882.

69 Interview, Shula, Na'ba, Beirut

70 Interview, Za'da, Na'ba, Beirut.

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nervous and distrustful of security services yet approving of their ongoing presence and the role that they play in wider spatialised control and "order" within the city.

These examples demonstrate the ways in which security and insecurity are intertwined and relational experiences for urban refugees, dictated by the foregrounding of different identities, such as gender and class, encountering various socio-legal and political structures at work within their host environments.

4.3. Alternative security provision in Beirut: political parties

Political parties frequently act as alternative security providers, mediators, and conflict resolvers for Lebanese citizens. This is because political parties are embedded into civil society in the country through kinship, tribal, and ethnic linkages, and their proximity to the everyday citizen.[71] This assistance can extend to migrants and refugees, allowing for a grassroots resolution of issues at the neighbourhood level. Other alternative providers of conflict resolution and justice emerged during interviews. This included local majors (*Mukhtars*) and occasionally religious leaders. However, political parties dominated conversations of alternative security provision and conflict management. Some women expressed gratitude for the presence of political parties which often acted as mediators between refugees and State security, particularly regarding *hawajaz*:

> [My husband] was stopped at an army checkpoint for like 2 -3 hours [. . .]. Then he talked to someone from Hezbollah that he knows, and he fixed it for him.[72]

Several women, notably from Sunni, female-headed families, highlighted the protection offered to women by the Shi'a political party Hezbollah. Participants recalled being encouraged to speak with Hezbollah party representatives if conflict or negative encounters in the neighbourhood re-occurred (for example frequent catcalling, harassment, or propositioning). These participants highlighted the intermediary role of political parties between different individuals and groups in conflict resolution at the neighbourhood level, and their ability to secure an element of safety for women's mobility in public space:

> I would feel safe because of Hezbollah [. . .] because of the political parties [. . .] they would make me feel secure because they would protect women.[73]

> [Hezbollah] enforce security, they provide security for both Syrian and Lebanese people.[74]

71 V. Boege, A. Brown & K. Clements, *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of 'Fragility'*, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2008, available at: http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2011/2595/ (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

72 Interview, Shahar, Na'ba, Beirut.

73 Interview, Yaminah, Na'ba, Beirut.

74 Interview, Wajida, Na'ba, Beirut.

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Hezbollah operatives noted how Syrian refugees would often prefer to seek assistance from their party, situated outside official State structures of security and justice provision:

> They would prefer to go to [us] rather than to the army or police station because for most of them their papers have expired. A lot of the [police] officers, would tell the Syrians just to leave, it might take a lot of time to [file a lawsuit] take action, so justice is more swift with the Party.[75]

Most of this conflict resolution appeared to be low-level mediation between different groups. The representative did not mention "punishing" individuals for particular crimes and emphasised that where serious crime had been committed that the ISF and LAF would always be contacted, and the party would not address these issues themselves (although they may play a role in detaining an individual). Other political parties also emphasised their role as mediators, arguing that in incidents of crime, particularly sexual harassment, they would be quick to intervene and protect the victim regardless of their background:

> We would fight with [a harasser] [. . .] whoever he was we would be very firm with him. We wouldn't look at it as "Syrian" or "Lebanese", no one would support someone who was aggressive or inappropriate towards a woman.[76]

Most political party representatives were quick to emphasise that they would always assist in keeping tensions and crime at the neighbourhood level to a minimum, but also emphasised the strain that these neighbourhoods were under following the arrival of Syrian refugees.

Whilst political parties framed themselves as grassroot alternatives to State security services, and some participants were clearly positive about their support, others were divided and ambivalent on both the presence of political parties and their capacity to assist refugee communities. Many perceived political parties in Beirut to be operating only on a clientelist basis and questioned the extent to which they could assist refugees in conflict management and security within Beirut.[77] Some participants insisted that the only means of protection was to maintain silence in the face of crime and harassment. Kurdish participants, in particular, emphasised their past political involvement in Syria and contrasted it with their desire to be as anonymous

75 Interview with Hezbollah Official, Na'ba, Beirut. Whilst Hezbollah's party line is to welcome and care for Syrian refugees regardless of their political or religious background (a majority of displaced Syrians are Sunni Muslims), their longer-term interests are still focused on discouraging Syrians' long-term integration into Lebanon as this affects the confessional balance of Lebanon. Hezbollah's actions are focused on the short to medium term, with conflict resolution commonly attainable in this timeframe. See, Dionigi "The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon"; Cameron Thibos 'One million Syrians in Lebanon: A milestone quickly passed', Migration Policy Centre, EUI, Florence (2014) available at: EMPC_THIBOS_2014_.pdf (eui.eu).

76 Interview with Lebanese Forces (LF) representative, Na'ba, Beirut. The LF is a political party that is predominantly Maronite Christian and aligned to the March 14th political alliance.

77 Stedem, *Political Parties and the Provision*.

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as possible in Beirut due to fears of being sent back to either fight for the Free Syrian Army, the YPG,[78] or regime forces.

Whilst some participants were positive regarding assistance from Hezbollah, others pointed to the close links between the party and the Syrian regime. They explained that Hezbollah involvement in the Syrian civil war on occasion led to rising tensions in refugee-hosting neighbourhoods in Beirut.[79] The armed involvement of groups, such as Hezbollah, in the civil war, brought issues of security, and memories of war, to the forefront of the everyday and left many participants uneasy.

Women also expressed a nervousness and discomfort over the intense presence and posing of political parties at the neighbourhood level and how these permeated experiences of public space. Women were aware of the heavy political undertones present in each neighbourhood (through visible political party paraphernalia such as flags and posters) but often expressed confusion over which party exerted control and power over specific neighbourhoods. However, they were conscious of the linkages between the parties, power hierarchies, and wider security in the city. This often resulted in participants feeling insecure and conscious of their behaviour on the street when representatives of political parties were present:

> Security is linked to the political parties. [We feel] that certain sides are connected to other sides, even on the streets we are scared to say something [. . .]. The Lebanese have so many political parties [and] they are not all on the same page. [If we asked for assistance] would they approve of us? Would they help us?.[80]

> In Lebanon [. . .] every area is affiliated with some specific political movements[. . .] [. . .] because we [Syrians] are both strangers and foreigners, we would feel this threat [from political parties] [. . .] ten times more.[81]

Participants described security providers as male, exhibiting highly masculinised behaviours to assert their dominance and strength to create a security "presence". As such, masculinised security provision intersects with cultural and societal norms of public spaces as masculine to create a hegemonic sense of ownership and dominance of public space by male citizens.[82] The heavily gendered provision of security can make women feel insecure and concerned about navigating public space due to both their gender and their status as outsiders.

Other participants expressed a concern regarding political parties, their authority, and the potential for wider criminal activity. Ayesha and her husband talked of how

78 The Peoples Protection Units (YPG) is a Kurdish defence force based in Kurdish majority areas of Syria. Kurdish participants explained that they would be under significant pressure to fight in the YPG if they continued to stay in Syria.

79 FGD 2, Na'ba, Beirut.

80 FGD 5, Bourj Hammoud, Beirut.

81 Interview, Fathima, Mazra'a, Beirut.

82 T. Fenster, "The Right to the Gendered City: Different Formations of Belonging in Everyday Life", *Journal of Gender Studies*, 14(3), 2005, 217–231, available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09589230500264109 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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security networks created layers of confusion regarding power and legitimacy in the city and created opportunities for criminal behaviour:

> Regular people would demand to see [our papers]. Not ISF or police, just regular people, who then try to steal your papers [...] sometimes [they are] on motorbikes. They will say: "we're from a political party", and if you demand ID [from the person], you might be hurt.[83]

Whilst some refugee women engaged with, and expressed gratitude for, the alternative security provision present in Beirut, most women spoke of a broad dislike and concern for the plural governance and security system at work. Many expressed a sense of fear about negotiating informal *hawajaz* operated by political parties, or at negotiating wider mobility in the city bringing further encounters with security providers who held power and authority. Overall, women felt that they (and their families) did not possess legality to be present in Lebanon, nor to work, and thus were always vulnerable to the whims of both formal and informal security providers.

5. JORDAN: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY AND APPROACH TOWARDS SYRIAN REFUGEES

The structure of the Jordanian State and its regulatory approach to managing incoming Syrian refugees resulted in contrasting experiences and perceptions of security, space, and conflict management for Syrian refugee women. Jordan is a constitutional monarchy, with a centralised and powerful State structure run under King Abdullah II. The State is broadly considered strong and stable, albeit authoritarian. Although its centralised governance system is in contrast to Lebanon's plural governance and security network, Ali has noted that there has been a disaggregated response to the refugee crisis with different government departments, municipalities, and institutions responding to the crisis in varied ways.[84] The State's main security provision runs under the Ministry of Interior as the Public Security Directorate which has strong organisational and structural links to the military. Day-to-day policing is overseen by the Public Security Force, whilst counter terrorism is dealt with by the Special Police Force and intelligence by the General Intelligence Department, also known as the *Mukhabarat* (the secret police). A separate department, the *Wafedein*, oversee work permits on "foreign workers".[85] As presented below, women held broadly positive opinions on the Public Security Force (police) operating within Amman, seeing this organisation largely as supportive and accessible to refugees, as women had legal status. This contrasted with encounters with the *Wafedin* and the *Mukhabarat*. The former searched informal neighbourhoods looking for workers operating without legal

83 Interview, Ayesha, Mazra'a, Beirut.

84 A. Ali, "Disaggregating Jordan's Syrian Refugee Response: The 'Many Hands' of the Jordanian State", *Mediterranean Politics*, 2021 (online), available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2021.1922969 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

85 B. Salloukh, "State Strength, Permeability, and Foreign Policy Behavior: Jordan in Theoretical Perspective", *Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ)*, 18(2), 1996, 39–65; C.R. Ryan, "The Armed Forces and the Arab Uprisings: The Case of Jordan", *Middle East Law and Governance*, 4(1), 2012, 153–167, available at: https://doi.org/10.1163/187633712X626062 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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permits. The later had an "unknown" quality of power and secrecy and a formidable reputation. Both held power to detain and deport perspectives of these institutions ranged from frustration to fear.

Akin to Lebanon, Jordan is not a signatory of the 1951 UNHCR Convention, and UNHCR operates within its borders under an MoU signed in 1998. However, in contrast to Lebanon's policy of "no policy", over the past decade, it has created an administrative and regulatory "machinery" that provides a framework of protection for Syrian refugees within its borders.[86] In Jordan, Syrian refugees typically arrived and registered at border camps before making their way to the city. Those that left the camps before 2014–2015 (when restrictions were tightened) were either smuggled out of the camp or "bailed out"; a process whereby a Jordanian citizen sponsored a Syrian for a fee.[87] In 2015 the Urban Verification Exercise (UVE) provided an amnesty to any Syrian living outside of the camp without legal documentation. This provided an opportunity for those who had been smuggled from the camps to legalise their status in Jordan. Therefore, most urban refugees in Jordan possessed legal status to be present and remain in the country. However, if Syrian refugees wanted to engage in formal work, they were required to have a worker's permit which is based on an official contract, employee sponsorship (*kafala*), and a permit fee. As most were unable to obtain this, work in the informal sector was typical.[88] Most Syrian refugees that arrived in Amman, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, or those whose finances had been depleted from fleeing the civil conflict, gravitated towards East and South-East Amman. This is the traditional "heart" of the city. The area is demographically dense and features informal and incremental planning. A number of Amman's Palestinian refugee camps are situated in these parts of the city (e.g. Al Wihdat camp on the fringes of Ashrafyeh). This side of the city sits in contrast to the fast-developing Western part of Amman, which has received significant injections of private development funding and is rapidly developing an exclusive and wealthy character. With no sign of peace developing in Syria, in 2016, the Jordan Compact was agreed between Jordan, the World Bank, and European powers to address the development needs of both Syrians and Jordanians. An aspect of the Compact was designed to create additional avenues of legal employment for Syrian refugees.[89] However, the effects of this were still taking shape when this field research took place. Most participants were suspicious of this new programme introduced through the Compact, insisting that they needed to have a sponsor to secure work legally and sensing that encouragement to be registered for work was a trap to deport Syrians.

86 M. Clutterbuck et al., "Alternative Protection in Jordan and Lebanon: The Role of Legal Aid", *FMR*, 67, 2021, 52–56.

87 L. Achilli, *Syrian Refugees in Jordan: A Reality Check*, Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute, 2 Feb. 2015, 1–12, available at: https://doi.org/10.2870/821248 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

88 ILO, *Access to Work for Syrian Refugees in Jordan: A Discussion Paper on Labour and Refugee Laws and Policies*, Beirut, 2015, available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/–-arabstates/–-ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_357950.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

89 V. Barbalet et al., *The Jordan Compact Lessons Learnt and Implications for Future Refugee Compacts*, ODI, London, 2018, available at: https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12058.pdf (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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Almost all participants in Amman were Sunni women, from lower and middle class backgrounds and there was a far higher rate of literacy amongst participants. Whilst women also discussed debt and precarity, their circumstances were far more stable than participants in Beirut. Some were making efforts to "plan ahead", looking for ways to achieve asylum for their families in Europe. This differed from most participants in Beirut who were unable to look to the future and spoke more of a day-to-day survival.

Policies, including the UVE, which provided refugees with identity documents and status through the Ministry of Interior, meant that most women expressed a sense of reassurance that they were "permitted" to be in Jordan, and therefore felt that they possessed some protection and rights.[90] Refugees would typically have at least one interaction with public security force as all had been to a police station to organise their identity documents as part of the UVE.[91] Most were unflustered with the necessity to attend a station, seeing it as positive and explaining that it was "just an ID, so there is nothing to be afraid of". Speaking informally with Jordanian police about their attitudes towards Syrian refugees, they emphasised that from their perspective, they treated Syrians fairly and considerately, stating: "they are our brothers."

When asked about whether they would feel confident about speaking with the police or requesting their assistance, women's responses were often in marked contrast to those in Beirut and most participants, regardless of their class or age were bewildered by this question. Most were open to the idea of approaching the police and insisted that they possessed legal documentation and therefore held rights in their host country:

> We didn't do anything wrong, so why would we be scared?.[92]
> We are legal, and we don't have anything to worry about.[93]

"We would go to the police immediately if there was [a big issue]. Our relatives would do the same, it goes without saying."[94] The identity card provided through the MOI for Syrian refugees was a key component of security for refugee women. Legitimising their papers resulted in increased feelings of belonging and validity, and police were described by participants as compassionate and patient through this process.[95] Appropriate documentation was critical to enhancing refugees' sense of legitimacy and their "right" to seek assistance from State security services. Women who had initially been smuggled from the camps or did not have authorised paperwork explained how they had secluded themselves to home and felt deeply fearful when in public space, particularly encountering police, until they gained legal status through

90 Chatty also has argued that there are closer kinship ties between Jordanians and Syrians which has led to a more hospital environment for Syrian refugees in places such as Amman. See, D. Chatty, *Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refuge State*, Oxford, New York, Oxford Univeristy Press, 2018, 240.

91 Achilli, "Syrian Refugees in Jordan".

92 FGD 2, Ashrafyeh, Amman.

93 Interview, Fariha, Mahatta, Amman.

94 Interview, Jasura, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.

95 Interview, Hanna, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.

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an amnesty process. Discussing a house burglary that took place shortly after their arrival in Amman, a focus group participant noted: "The [theft] happened when we first got here, and we didn't have legal documents. We felt we didn't have the right [to go to the police]."[96]

Providing documentation and negotiating security checkpoints was a far less common part of daily life in Amman compared with Beirut. The ultra-heightened sense of security and complex security apparatus operating in Beirut contrasted with the relatively unmonitored streets of Amman. Some women emphasised that they had been significantly affected by the security complexities of the Syrian civil war, and that initially they had been extremely fearful of anything that represented organised security or authority (e.g. running for cover when they heard an aeroplane or changing direction when they saw police on the street). However, over time they had felt more relaxed and positive towards police in Amman and felt that they had a sense of stability in the city.

5.1. Gendered identities and negotiating security

However, like participants in Lebanon, women highlighted how gendered identities led to differing experiences of security, police, and space. Discussing spatial mobility in the city, many talked of how Syrian men in public space were perceived as "risky" or a "threat", whilst women were positioned as vulnerable, domestic, and innocent, indicating the relationship between identity, security, and spatiality. When encountering police in public space, women insisted that they would feel safe and confident:

> They treat women as if they are holy here, they don't ask for ID's or anything.[97]

> The police are really nice, and kind, and they respect women here.[98]

Many women associated their female identity as key to aiding their relationships and interactions with security services. Here patriarchal norms and kinship ties worked in positive ways for women, as they expressed a sense that police (who were predominantly male) felt an element of responsibility and duty towards protecting women refugees. This in turn created a twofold sense of security and safety. First, that they were not a "target" for police, and that secondly, they were able to access security services if they needed assistance because of societal and kinship obligations to protect and respect women.

Gendered differences also emerged when discussing working opportunities and interactions with security services, similar to participants in Beirut. Whilst MOI identity cards had a largely positive outcome on refugee's sense of security and belonging within Jordan, work and working permits were far more complex issues. Women described efforts by their male relatives to secure informal work opportunities, such as construction or painting, despite not having legal permits or a *kafala*. Men would

96 FGD 3 Ashrafyeh, Amman.
97 FGD 2, Ashrafyeh, Amman.
98 FGD 1, Ashrafyeh, Amman.

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wait in known public spaces in order to attract work opportunities, which in themselves often had a public, outdoor element (e.g. painting a building). This public "law breaking", whilst attempting to establish a livelihood and provide for their families, led to a pervading fear of being caught by the police or *Wafedein*, which could result in deportation. When discussing security institutions, women would often contrast their broadly positive attitudes with that of their male relatives, describing how men were frightened of police and of being caught whilst working illegally:

> My husband is absolutely terrified by [the police], because once he was painting a building, and he was chased by [them] [. . .] if he was caught, he would be deported.[99]

> In terms of my husband, and in terms of work and such, he is completely terrified of the police.[100]

As few refugees possessed genuine work permits, the threat of arrest was high as the *Wafedein* frequently ran work permit raids on the refugee and migrant hosting neighbourhoods in East Amman. Migrant workers as well as refugees were targeted in these searches. Participants recalled how plainclothes officers would quickly descend on a neighbourhood to check for work-permits, creating a sense of panic amongst residents:

> [The atmosphere changes when the *Wafedein* arrive]. Everyone is scared, everyone is running around. It is so bad [. . .] people don't know where to go [. . .] it's like a flashback to when we were still in Syria. They use the huge police cars that are armoured.[101]

Alongside these increasingly frequent "raids" of the informal neighbourhoods of the city, many women had personal experience of male relatives who had been caught working without a permit and subsequently imprisoned, deported, or moved to a camp. Therefore, there was a far stronger sense of fear related to male relatives being deported amongst participants in Amman than those in Beirut. Participants expressed deep frustration and upset that Syrians were deported when simply trying to support their families who were in dire financial circumstances. This led to a sense of resentment with State security provision within the city and a feeling amongst some participants that such services were callous and untrustworthy, hindering their inclination to approach them for assistance.

5.2. Ambivalent attitudes towards State security providers

Many refugee women felt that their position in Jordan was better than Syrian women in Lebanon, who they perceived to be at the mercy of a complicated, plural governance, and security structure. However, despite a more secure status through the MOI, women

99 Interview, Nailah, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.
100 Interview, Zarifa, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.
101 Interview, Rabiah and Zafira, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.

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in Amman still expressed ambivalent perceptions of security services in Jordan. Issues of identity, both gender and nationality, were relevant to experiences.

Despite their legal status, women in Amman were wary about their refugee status and social positioning and this mapped onto perceptions of police and security services. Many referred to themselves as *gharib:* "strangers" and outsiders. Participants referenced the high incidence of verbal harassment they encountered in the day to day as evidence of this. Women felt that police mediation between Syrians and Jordanians would result in favouritism towards Jordanians regardless of the context: "If we got into trouble with a Jordanian [. . .] the right would be with them. The son of your country is closer to you."[102] Socio-economic positioning in informal neighbourhoods also meant that some participants felt unable to approach police for assistance as they feared community reprisals.[103] Many women continued to express a need to keep all conflict to a minimum and to maintain silence in the face of violence, crime, and fraud, echoing the opinions of participants in Beirut.

The *kafala* process, whereby Syrians are sponsored in their employment by a Jordanian, also compromised Syrian refugee's wider sense of security and who they could approach for assistance. One participant described how her 11-year-old daughter had been molested by her husband's employer, their *kafala*. As reporting the incident to the police would endanger the family's sponsorship, her husband would not allow her to report it. They eventually dealt with the perpetrator through informal mediation. However, the participant was extremely angry and frustrated with this process, stating that it was unjust for her daughter. She was disgusted that the family's reliance on the *kafala* system had placed her daughter in harm's way and had denied her wider justice and protection.

Furthermore, negative encounters with police eroded women's faith in traditional protective institutions. Very occasionally, participants would mention approaching the police and being rebuffed or ignored,[104] whilst other women felt the police were inaccessible and would not assist refugees in problems and conflicts stating: "The police don't solve our problems. The only person who would solve your [own] problems is you."[105] These expectations and experiences left refugees concerned and reticent to trust police.

Encounters with the *Mukhabarat*, the Jordanian secret police, also greatly intimidated participants. When approaching a local church for assistance with third country re-settlement, Leesha was grabbed off the street by *Mukhabarat* officers. The subsequent interrogation, which lasted 24 h, was predominantly focused on her suspected involvement with the church and therefore her potential conversion to Christianity (which would be illegal) rather than her status as a Syrian refugee.[106] However, the experience left her fearful, deeply shaken, and nervous regarding State security, especially as her family had not known her whereabouts for over a day.

102 FGD 1, Ashrafyeh, Amman.

103 Interview, Mouna, Hashmi Shamali, Amman

104 Interview, Saba, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.

105 Interview, Basmaa, Ashrafyeh, Amman.

106 Several humanitarian organisations work out of local churches in Jordan to assist refugees with asylum to third countries. Conversion to Christianity is illegal in Jordan. However, churches as institutions and Christianity as a practised religion are generally tolerated if they are not actively proselytising.

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One focus group participant explained that a *Mukhabarat* officer had smuggled her family from one of the border camps. Once arriving in Amman, he had then blackmailed her family, threatening to return them to the camp or deport them if they did not provide him with more money.[107] These experiences affected women's perceptions of State security institutions, leaving them fearful and distrustful of their wider power. Despite positive accounts of interactions with the police and with border forces, for the large part women remained cautious, wary, and ambivalent about the degree to which these providers were accessible to them, and the extent to which they were able to provide a sense of protection and security in the everyday life.

5.3. Political parties in Amman as alternative security provision

In contrast to Lebanon, where political parties often mediated neighbourhood-level conflicts, there appeared to be few alternative security and justice providers in Amman that refugee women interacted with or accessed. When asked if political parties were active in the neighbourhood, if refugees were involved with them, or if neighbourhoods had a sense of hierarchy or dominant, well-known figures, women answered in the negative: "There are no political figures here. There are no searches [. . .]. But a lot of charities come."[108]

As touched on above, many women had been deeply affected by how highly securitised Syria had become during the war and commented (positively) that they found Jordan remarkably lacking in roadblocks, house searchers, and sectarian sensitivity. Many women were averse to discussing political issues or political parties, feeling that these sorts of discussions had led to the Syrian civil war. Nailah commented that:

> Since the day of Hafez al Assad [. . .] we were raised not to talk about politics [. . .] here we take that habit with us and we never interfere with politics or political parties or anything of that sort.[109]

Nailah perceived Jordan as a stable and neutral nation, where there were few sectarian divisions and only "Christians and Muslims". She emphasised that women as well as men were discouraged from engaging in political debate and political matters when in Syria, and that most Syrians in Amman had continued this habit. This statement, underlining the dislike of discussing political parties, suggests that there could be further involvement, but that participants simply did not want to discuss it.[110] The hybrid political and security provision network that exists within Lebanon is unique to its socio-political history and civil conflict. Jordan emerges from quite a different history and its State is stronger and more resilient to outside influence. Therefore, it is unsurprising that significant alternatives to State security provision were rare. Political parties did not appear to be embedded at the grassroots,

107 FGD 1, Ashrafyeh, Amman.

108 Interview, Sabah, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.

109 Interview, Nailah, Hashmi Shamali, Amman.

110 For more on this see, M. Eidmouni, "Political Empowerment Not a Priority for Syrian Refugee Women", *Syria Deeply*, 2017, available at: https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2017/07/26/political-empowerment-not-a-priority-for-syrian-refugee-women (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

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neighbourhood level, acting as mediators where migrants or refugees feel unsure of accessing police services, or ingraining themselves into the dynamics of neighbourhood society. Although some civil society organisations hinted that there was political activism happening in the neighbourhoods of East Amman amongst refugees,[111] I found it difficult to secure interviews with any organisation that would discuss this in depth. Past political protests by Syrian refugees in 2012 resulted in refugees being deported to Syria[112] and there has been well documented, harsh treatment of politicised Sudanese and Somalian refugees in Jordan. These State responses communicate a clear and aggressive message to refugee communities in Jordan to "keep quiet and accept what is on offer" or face imprisonment and deportation.[113] These quick and uncompromising expulsions of refugees from Jordan undoubtedly shape decisions to remain wary and aloof from political activity in Amman.

Participants often expressed surprise at questions relating to civil society, mediators, hierarchy, and political parties. When the context for these questions was explained in more detail (e.g. that Syrian women in Lebanon received support and mediation from political parties and other representatives), many participants in Jordan were quick to criticise what they perceived as Lebanon's support for the regime in Syria. Women were conscious of how poor conditions were for refugees in Lebanon and during their interviews explained that they had chosen to avoid Lebanon because of its complex governance system, the close linkages between Syria and Lebanon and the influence and role of Hezbollah. Seeking out the support or assistance of alternative security providers was not perceived as something that was positive, but rather potentially antagonistic, unsettling, and confusing. Overall, because of the hybrid political and security context in Beirut alongside the inconsistent support provided to Syrian refugees, women considered their position in Jordan to be far more secure, settled, and safe than Syrian women living in Lebanon. However, despite these opinions, examining experiences in both contexts, women expressed ambivalent perceptions towards such providers in both contexts.

6. CONCLUSION: LIVED AND AMBIVALENT (IN)SECURITIES

By taking a comparative approach across two urban contexts, several patterns emerge regarding Syrian refugee women's perceptions and experiences of security provision in their host cities and provides a wider insight into experiences of (in)security for urban refugees in these contexts. If this study focused purely on experiences in Beirut, it may have led to theorisations that ambivalent experiences of security were primarily related to the weakness of the Lebanese State and its plural security framework. However, drawing out examples and experiences of women across two contexts allows for deeper theorising and illuminates the role of identity interacting with structures of policy, law, and security in shaping experiences of (in)security for refugee women which leads to some essential understandings. First, that although not

111 See for example, N. Malik, "The Cost of Syrian Refugees", Carnegie Middle East Centre, 2013, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/53049 (last visited 17 Nov. 2021). His work details the involvement of some Syrian refugees with the Muslim Brotherhood in early 2012.

112 N. Malik, "Syria's Spillover Effect on Jordan", Carnegie Middle East Centre, 2014, available at: http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/54509?lang=en (last visited 17 Nov. 2021).

113 R. Davis and others, "Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan", *Middle East Report*, 46(279), 2016, 1–9, 3.

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gendered at the State level, refugee law is applied in gendered ways in the everyday life by State and non-State security providers and that this has direct outcomes as to how refugee women perceive and access security services in their host cities. Secondly, that whilst women perceive both formal and informal security providers in ambivalent terms, legal status in their host countries has a positive impact on their perceptions of security and they are deeply appreciative of State security presence in urban areas which seem vulnerable to tension and conflict. Thirdly, in order to understand ambivalent experiences of (in)security of (in)formal security providers, we need closer examinations of the ways in which identity interacts with structures of policy, law and culture, using feminist theories of intersectionality and geolegality.

Status and legality within host cities effected women's sense of security, welcome, and stability. Women in Jordan linked their MOI documentation through the UVE process with a sense of being "permitted" and legal and felt that they should be able to approach and police in Amman. In contrast, women in Beirut felt that State security providers, such as the ISF, LAF, and GSD were inaccessible at best, and potentially dangerous, at worst. Despite a stronger sense of security being expressed by women in Amman, participants in both contexts expressed ambivalent opinions towards security providers, citing an awareness of their identity as "outsiders" and a sense of bias towards citizens. Even though women did not want to be the focus of the security gaze, many desired an overt State security presence in the city to provide a societal sense of stability, order, and reassurance.

Whilst there is often an assumption that refugee communities will prefer informal mediation and alternative security provision due to the accessibility of these providers and the socially marginalised position of refugees, this study reveals contrasting findings. Akin to formal security providers, informal security provision is perceived and experienced in ambivalent terms. Participants in Amman were quick to indicate that such providers were not present within their neighbourhoods. Furthermore, they indicated that such providers would be an unwelcomed dynamic, further confusing an already complex environment. Whilst some women expressed a complimentary appreciation and gratitude for alternative security provision in Beirut, emphasising that these providers could be more accessible, many expressed concerns over the overtly (masculinised) securitisation of public space and the confusing political undercurrents at work within the city. Overall, in both contexts, women preferred to remain as anonymous as possible, downplaying conflict and avoiding encounters and the attention of both State and non-State security providers.

Despite the differing legal approaches and security frameworks in place, Syrian women in both cities expressed mutable and ambivalent attitudes towards State and non-State security services. When discussing such providers, a spectrum of emotions was presented, from fear and resentment to appreciation, and these attitudes and emotions underpin overall perceptions of "security" within refugee's host cities. Perceptions of security providers and (in)security were not fixed. Rather, they were fluidly shaped by the interaction of women's identities with the wider socio-political and legal structures at work. Women are conscious that their gendered identities shape their interactions with, and access to, security providers. Recollecting encounters with security providers, they contend that they are seen through a neutral lens of domesticity, whereby their gendered identity is typically foregrounded over their

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Syrian nationality. Women also feel that they can emphasise this aspect of their identity, and its links to the patriarchal and societal norms, to negotiate with providers. Participants frequently juxtaposed their own experiences with those of male relatives who they believed were the primary object of scrutiny of both formal and informal security providers. Other identities, such as class, also aid in discussions with security providers and power dynamics in such neighbourhoods and thus lead to a stronger sense of security.

Feminist geolegal approaches draw attention to the ways in which law has spatial and gendered repercussions, and this study demonstrates that although refugee laws and policies are rarely (if ever) gendered, in everyday practise, treatment and attitudes towards refugees are frequently shaped by refugee's gendered identities. This has quotidian spatial consequences, influencing refugee men and women's different senses of welcome, belonging, and security within their host cities, and shaping their perceptions and experiences of security provision and conflict resolution. Intersectional approaches further enrich understanding the ways in which categories of class, ethnicity, and religion shape interact with gendered identities to shape experiences of (in)security. Refugees do not have homogeneous experiences and the intersection of their various categories of identities will shape their lived, daily experiences. An intersectional lens demonstrates the importance of looking beyond just one aspect of identity, or speaking from one viewpoint. It provides insight into the complexity of experience and the ways in which the interaction of different categories of identity can create varying oppressions or advantages. There needs to be closer attention to identity and the everyday spatialised experiences of refugees to interrogate the real outcomes of policies and laws and to further examine how refugee laws and policies have gendered applications and outcomes and affect different identities in different ways.

Women's experiences of security and insecurity in such contexts are clearly spatial and "intertwined", linked to scalar geopolitical issues (such as the State policies).[114] However, what this article demonstrates is some of the "how" and "why" of this intertwining and the reasons why experiences and perceptions of (in)security are in continual renegotiation. Being attentive to categories of identity and the ways in which these interact with wider structures of policy, security and justice provision, it is clear that these factors affect lived experiences of security and wider perceptions of security provision amongst urban refugee women. By examining spatialised, everyday experiences of (in)security in host cities across two contexts, the wider "essence" of security and security provision as something which is both ambivalently perceived and experienced is captured. Looking to other contexts, this theoretical approach provides a way of understanding the complex ways in which refugees experience mutable and ambivalent (in)security in urban settings. Its focus on structural and casual factors (of both categories of identity and socio-political structures) on everyday experience enables a means of understanding the ways in which particular oppressions, marginalisations, or even privileges occur.[115] Whilst being mindful of the

114 E. Lyytinen, "Refugees' Conceptualizations of 'Protection Space'"; Lyytinen, "Congolese Refugees' 'Right to the City'".

115 A.M. Dy, L. Martin & S. Marlow, "Developing a Critical Realist Positional Approach to Intersectionality", *Journal of Critical Realism*, 13(5), 2014, 447–466.

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unique lens that intersectionality offers, this broader understanding of ambivalent (in)security, which is where socio-political structures intersect with categories of identity to shape lived experiences of (in)security, can be applied to other contexts.

From a policy perspective, this article demonstrates the importance of examining individualised, lived experiences. Urban refugees continue to be overlooked, and there is need for research on the particularities of their experience. This research demonstrates some of the challenges that refugee communities have in accessing appropriate security, justice and conflict resolution, and how this is exacerbated in contexts where they do not have legal status or protection frameworks. It also highlights the disjuncture between State-level policies and lived realities. Refugee communities need recognition, status, and protection, particularly in countries of first asylum, in order to ensure they are not exploited and further endangered. Furthermore, there needs to be more support within local hosting communities to support formal and informal security providers in their responses to refugee communities. Using intersectional approaches to consider the ways in which identity affects varied experiences of (in)security amongst refugee communities will also enable the development of a more effective policy approach by organisations and governments.

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