

Transwomen's Navigation of Arrest and Detention In Beirut: A Case Study (En-Ar)

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Abstract

Informal activist narratives in Lebanon rightfully cite that trans* people are subjected to a higher risk of arrest due, in part, to their perceived hyper-visibility as gender-binary-breakers as well as their economic marginalization, which makes them particularly vulnerable to increased policing. We view arrest and detention as processes that define and re-enable gender- and body-policing rather than endpoints or markers of discrimination in themselves. Five transwomen were selected for a post-release semi-structured interview about the circumstances of their arrest and detention. All women have been detained using one of the penal code articles under study; 209/531, 521, 523-6, and 534. Based on these interviews, we argue that transwomen are more likely to be subjected to longer detention spans due to a system of detention and criminalization that breaks existing community ties and makes it difficult for transwomen to navigate their detention and release processes. *This paper is available in Arabic as a pdf file - pdf ??? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????

Keywords: Legal Issues, Gender, Sexuality, Sex Work, Police & Security Institutions, Police Brutality, Trans, Criminalization

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Increased surveillance and policing: inventing 'new' criminals

To begin with, we would like to place transwomen's arrest and detention in the larger ongoing political context of policing and surveillance in Beirut. The past few years – in particular since the outbreak of armed war in Syria in 2011 – have witnessed many new and re-emerging forms of state and communal policing across several local neighborhoods.¹ Citing a general "security threat" facing Lebanon as an urgent incentive, police forces developed new campaigns,² received more funding,³ and increased checkpoints and surveillance in some areas, while communities such as *Burj Hammoud*, *Dikwaneh*, *Sawfar*, and others imposed illegal curfews targeting persons they see as representative of this security threat.



Figure 1: An announcement from the Municipality of Sawfar requesting "the Syrian refugees residing in Sawfar to check with the municipality to acquire an identification card."⁴

New police campaigns and modes of surveillance aim to convince the Lebanese public that the police forces are indeed in control of general security and public order through fusing and framing social concerns as security threats. As such, they extend the definition of state-level security concerns to include the policing of social activities and “moral” principles. Issues such as refugee influx, unemployment, homelessness, sex-work, poverty as well as selective attitudes on proper gender and sexual behavior become reframed as part of the larger imagined security threat facing Lebanon.⁵ Intervening in social and moral questions thus becomes a primary way through which security forces demonstrate their control of public affairs and order. Practically, this means that particular subjects, persons, and acts, become increasingly highlighted as threats to an imagined community and selective moral code.⁶

For example, the *Hamra* neighborhood in particular has seen new forms of surveillance and police restructuring. Complaints from middle class residents and business owners about the numbers of beggars and homeless persons in the streets – which they claimed were turning off customers and

slowing down business in *HamraZ* – were met with several responses. One such response is a joint project between Search for Common Ground (SFCG) – a local non-governmental organization – and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) titled “Better Together: Improving ISF-Community Relations in *Ras Beirut*”. This project included the creation of a new “hip” police force, with officers on bikes riding through the streets of the *Corniche*, with the aim to “foster a sustainable cooperation between residents of *Ras Beirut* and ISF members for the success of community policing in Beirut.”⁸

Curiously, the same project also included the restructuring of *Hbeish* police station and detention center and renaming it the *Ras Beirut* station. *Hbeish* traditionally handles all cases of “*adab*” (morality) arrests in Beirut and is notoriously known among the general public, including the queer community at large, for its harsh interrogation and detention practices.⁹ SFCG and ISF, as well as news reporting on this project, emphasized the refurbishing of *Hbeish* and the training of ISF members as steps that make the station a friendlier place for the community. However, the refurbishing and training only took place in one section of the *Hbeish* building, which has traditionally dealt with *Ras Beirut* security and did not include the section handling all the morality and *adab* cases and detainees – a fact that was not sufficiently highlighted, neither through the project nor the related media reports.



Figure 2: The ISF introduces the new “*Ras Beirut* Section - previously known as the *Hbeish* Station” on the 16th of January 2014.¹⁰

Thus, the emphasis on modernizing the look of the police forces, through including biker patrols and

remodeling part of the police station, are efforts aiming to beautify the look of the ISF and normalize their presence and activities among a certain class of residents; namely middle and upper class home and business owners. By claiming to retrain the staff in *Hbeish*, the ISF appeals to middle-class morals and asks the community to trust its handling of morality cases – and by extension ‘communal security’ – the end result of which is successfully gaining legitimacy for further policing inside these neighborhoods.



Figure 3: Police officer on bike in the Corniche area.[11](#)



Figure 4: ISF organizes community outreach efforts at nearby American University of Beirut campus to promote new "community policing". The ISF has a history of harassing many individuals, including students from the same university, on possession of drugs (i.e. personal use of soft drugs).¹²

Combined, these different policing efforts work together to define who is a proper resident and who is not. Particular persons (such as the homeless, Palestinian and Syrian refugees, working children) as well as certain acts (poor children selling gum and flowers on the street, young people occupying a public space and drinking, etc.) gain a new form of visibility as representatives of security breakdown and subsequent public scrutiny and state intervention.¹³

As is frequently the case locally¹⁴ and regionally,¹⁵ renewed policing efforts reinforce "proper" gender and sexuality norms and behaviors and (re)define which acts or persons would be considered threatening or "deviant". As such, they further predispose certain groups, including transwomen, to higher risks of questioning, harassment and detention. This predisposition is partly what produces the "hypervisibility" of transwomen as subjects that break an existing logic of "respectable" gender difference (gender binary) and assumed sexual homogeneity that is based on the coherence of this difference (heterosexuality). To be clear, we do not claim that harassment, arrest, and detention of trans* persons and practices have increased – indeed, we do not have the sufficient information to make this claim at the moment. The transwomen we interviewed all spoke of varied forms of violence and discrimination they face on a daily basis from business owners to administrators to military

personnel and significant harassment on the street. Thus, we rather suggest that questions of proper sexual and gender conduct are an integral part of how police forces and communities imagine what is respectable and what is not, and thus who should and who should not be targeted in their renewed campaigns.[16](#)

We see this paper of particular interest to practitioners, academics, and activists engaged in civil work and response, particularly in the area of bodily rights and sexuality politics. We hope that illuminating the practical gaps and fallouts for transwomen trying to navigate arrest and detention will assist civil society activists and respondents in further building adequate, inclusive, and intersectional intervention strategies and discourses. We begin with a review of key articles in the penal code that are most frequently used to justify and implement the arrest and detention of transwomen. Then we move to discussing key findings and themes that emerged from our interviews and analysis, and end with a few recommendations.

Regulation in the penal code: routes of criminalization of personal liberties

On legal and self-identification

The Lebanese penal code does not contain any articles that specifically criminalize an individual for identifying as a trans* person. It is permissible by law for physicians to provide counseling, prescribe hormone regimens, and provide surgical interventions as part of the sex-reassignment and transitioning process. The law also provides legal options for persons who have fully completed the transitioning process to change their initial and assigned sex on their identification papers and vital records, as well as take up a new name that corresponds with their self-identified gender.[17](#)

Yet, the law falls short of acknowledging the lived realities of trans* persons. It fails to recognize that self-identification as a trans* person does not necessarily entail that the person will begin transitioning or that the transition process will take the form of a full sex reassignment. The law also fails to acknowledge that transitioning is not an available and viable option to all trans* persons: it is expensive, long-term, and poses several health risks, which in themselves may become the key deciding factor. In necessitating that trans* persons start and complete sex-reassignment surgeries in order to be eligible to change their identification papers and vital records, the law reflects the state's priority in keeping a heterosexual gender binary separation and distinction. People have to prove to the state (through a forensic physician appointed by the court) that they have fully transitioned to the opposite sex. Full sex-reassignment acts as a guarantee to the state that people will not revert back to their biological state and disrupt the gender-binary again.[18](#)

The extent of transitioning options in which trans* people choose to invest depends on several factors, including their personal body and identity perceptions, their residency and living conditions, existing social relations and family and community ties, their health status as well as financial capacity. Some people might not be able to afford nor find a physician(s) to transition, while others choose to carry out specific body modifications and keep elements of their biological sex that they wish to retain. In doing so, trans* persons usually exist in a state of gender fluidity that confounds police personnel, legal bodies and the state when trying to identify or charge them.[19](#)

Illegal Impersonation

Given that changing gender on identification papers is only allowed in the earlier mentioned cases, many trans* people find it difficult or embarrassing to access spaces and locations that require identification. These 'checkpoints' could be police/army checkpoints, roadblocks, college campus entrances, guards at bars and pubs, and so on; they represent compulsory outing points where trans* people have to present their status and explain it to the other person and whoever is present in the vicinity (many of these checkpoints are public).[20](#)

Many people would refer to two options to move around and circumvent these outing points; they might either not carry their ID cards with them or carry an ID card of a sibling or a relative who looks similar to how they are presenting themselves. Both options pose legal repercussions that can lead to an arrest. If they did not have an ID card, they are usually arrested (unless the police/army personnel decide to let them go), taken to the nearest police station, and their background is checked. The other option might lead to an arrest and a charge of impersonation according to article 469.[21](#) In either case, some people have tried to bribe the police/army personnel to let them go for a sum of money, which at times worked and at other times backfired. Sometimes, the police/army personnel would be the person who would ask for a bribe to let them go.[22](#)

Body-policing and breaching spaces for women

Article 521 of the Lebanese Penal Code[23](#) poses a serious concern as to how the law polices the appearances and body expressions of transwomen. Though it is easy to debunk the charge when the person shows the officer a paper from a physician (usually a psychiatrist) explaining that she is a trans* person and that she is in the midst of transitioning, it stills opens the door to embarrassment, harassment and possible arrest.

We cannot tell at the moment the prevalence or the likelihood of persecution of transwomen under article 521. However, many of our interviewees have reported that either themselves or their friends have been arrested several times on the streets for “masquerading” as women.[24](#)

Morality and Offences against public decency

Offences against public decency are detailed in article 209 and later reiterated in articles 531, 532, 533. In article 209, offences are conceptualized as (i) acts and gestures, (ii) speech and communication, and (iii) writings, drawings, photographs, pictures, films, signs and any form of imagery. Articles 531 and 532 define the offence for each of these items, while article 533 reiterates the use of materials mentioned in the third item of article 209 that would be used to “distribute or inform the public about”.

Article 534 has been targeted by local civil society organizations for its use in criminalizing homosexuality.[25](#) Various reports have documented several cases of men that were arrested and detained through raids and reports of “doubt” and “suspicion of homosexuality”. While we have little data that documents the use of this article to criminalize other bodies and/or sexualities, we can safely say that its interpretation and usage grows beyond the scope of criminalizing homosexual acts. For trans* persons, they can still be persecuted under article 534 through the criminalization of same-sex

intercourse. This would happen when the police or legal bodies take into account the biological sex of the person and not their declared gender identity or self-presentation. So a transwoman would be read as a man according to her ID papers and her sexual relations with other men would be read as same-sex acts in violation of article 534.

The most well-known and recent case wherein a transwoman was considered a man and charged with article 534 was reported in the proceedings of the Metn Court on 25/6/2014. However, the 2014 rule itself can be considered a landmark due to the judge's separation of the "trans*" and "gay" identities (we use these definitions loosely). In this case, the judge began by referring to the transwoman as a male subject and then proceeded to neutralize her gender by using the "he/she" pronouns as he followed her transition throughout the case. In his ruling, he separated the gender of the defendant from her sexual orientation and vindicated her on *each* ground; that a person is free to choose their self-identified gender and that "unnatural sexual intercourse" cannot be applied to same-sex acts.²⁶ Thus, the case was a victory from a transgender point of view first, and a victory against article 534 second.

Sex work: Incitement on debauchery

Sex work in Lebanon is technically legal as long as it is licensed and occurs in registered brothels. However, since the end of the Lebanese civil war, no brothel was given registration. As such, sex workers were obliged to move their work outdoors; meaning that the sexual encounter itself could no longer take place inside the brothel or club but in the customer's home, a public place, over the phone, or online. All these forms of sex work are considered by law secret prostitution and are punishable by imprisonment and/or fine. The only exception is a legal loophole where a non-local person (usually a woman) can enter country via an "artist" visa. Women who enter the country as "artists" are usually trafficked and forced into the sex industry operating within certain "super nightclubs".²⁷²⁸

Articles 523, 524, 526, and 528 criminalize the solicitation of others for sex. Sex workers are targeted through these articles as solicitors of selling sex, while article 527 criminalizes facilitators and the employers of sex workers. Persons charged with any of these articles are prone to deportation under article 530.

In our interviews, we found a significant overlap among trans* women and sex work. In the face of unwavering financial and social constraints and obstacles, many transwomen are pushed for outdoor sex work to mitigate costs of living, create alternative support networks and so on. Transwomen who engage in sex work practice it outdoors by meeting clients on the streets or negotiating with them over the phone prior to the meeting. In this regard and with the absence of any support or exit programs, they are at a higher risk of being arrested for prostitution and in many cases they become repeat offenders as they always return to the street for work.

Themes in arrests and detention

The logic of detention cells

One of the primary concerns for transwomen upon arrest is the police's decision on whether to place them in the sex-segregated cells on the basis of their declared gender identity or on the basis of their

assigned sex at birth which is listed in their identity documents. The transwomen interviewees mentioned that they were placed in the women's cells during the detention period. However, the security forces' decision was not informed by respect to the transwomen's declared gender identity, but by concerns that they would be sexually assaulted and/or that their presence would cause disorder. The gendered and sexual logic operating here is that transwomen are seen through the penetrator/penetrated lens both by the detainees and the police. Under this binary and phallogocentric logic, transwomen are frequently read as deviant or disturbed effeminate men who, by choosing to pose as feminine/female are seen to declare that they are penetrable. Thus, to avoid unrest the security forces often choose to place the detained transwomen with women detainees.

For example, one of the interviewees who was detained in *Hbeish* was initially placed in the men's cells. She described being immediately attacked by a group of inmates wherein several of the male detainees began to violently grope her. The detention officer intervened in this case and placed her in the women's cells. Other interviewees mentioned that they were placed in the women's cells as well, and were subjected to a different treatment. For example, they would be woken up during the late night shift and asked to serve coffee and tea for the officers on duty. One interviewee mentioned that in return she was allowed to make a phone call to her relative and ask them to bring gender-appropriate attire.

Though the action of the police officers in the first story was protective, we argue that the decision to place transwomen in the women's section should not be reactionary. This reactionary decision reflects an identification of individuals based on their biological sex that could only be circumvented under the need to ensure the detainee's safety.

Yet we also acknowledge our limits in challenging this argument, particularly since we did not interview detained transmen. It would be worthy to look at the experiences of men born as biological females who underwent arrest and detention and to examine the police's decision making process in their placement in detention cells.

Heightened harassment and invasive curiosity

Harassment was a recurring theme throughout all of the interviews and stories that the participants shared with us. Harassment and body invasion were so normalized in these stories that many of the participants brushed them off as a given presence within the detention center.

The main manifestation of this harassment was evident through the recurrent requests from police officers and judges to inspect the bodies of the transwomen, especially the ones who had undergone breast enlargement procedures. One transwoman who was arrested and detained for an absent judgment (a technicality created by not attending the court ruling) was met with a personnel who identified himself as a physician and proceeded to lift her shirt and grope her breast while repeatedly asking her where she performed the enlargement procedure and who was the physician who performed the surgery; despite this information's complete irrelevance to her case. Over her week-long stay at the police station, she had numerous requests from other police members to lift her shirt and let them see and touch her breasts. Another transwoman shared her story where she requested her court session to be private and then found herself in the judge's office where he had changed to his undershirt, shorts

and slippers. The judge proceeded to ask her to show him her breasts, raise her arms above her head and stand against the wall for ten full minutes, then turn around in front of him while he questioned her about the hair on her lower back.

We read these behaviors as dehumanizing body inspections and invasive curiosity that these personnel found themselves at liberty to perform with impunity.

Unprofessionalism and intentional neglect

Among our interviewees, two transwomen were arrested and detained for over 20 days; which is an unusually long detention period for the type of their cases. We question and place the logic of this prolonged detention in two themes; intentional neglect and community breaking efforts (the latter will be explored in the next theme). Though the two women were eligible for release shortly after their arrest, they were kept in detention simply because none of the police personnel took the time to process their papers after the investigation. The women were kept in the dark about all matters pertaining to their detention: they were not informed of their court date or status, did not have their rights recited, were not informed that they would need a lawyer to follow up with their case and were only informed about their court hearing at 8PM of the day prior to it. Many other women shared their stories about how they were denied any information about their status; as one summarized: “They just kept telling us that we will be out the next day... everyday”.²⁹

Here we feel it is important to highlight one of the authors’ – Ahmad Saleh – direct experiences in navigating the detention and police facilities while doing casework. Through Saleh’s handling of several transwomen’s cases, we learnt that unlike other cases of cisgender men and women that he works on, the majority of the workers he came in contact with in the police stations knew who was the client he had come to see. In addition, private details of the transwomen’s cases were publicly shared across several offices in the police station (and in breach of confidentiality principles) despite the fact that there are various departments at each police station. The workers sometimes went as far as to take liberty in asking questions about whether the transwomen and Saleh were part of a “group” and whether him or his colleague were going to transition too.

We read these behaviors as an evident lack of professionalism as well as an informed and intentional neglect of the detainees’ best interests and right to basic confidentiality.

Community breaking efforts

Arrest and detention procedures have an especially negative impact on transwomen’s lives and relationships with their communities. Irrespective of the charge, transwomen are often reluctant or unable to contact any relatives or friends for help out of fear that they might get arrested as well. As such, they remain unable to purchase food or water (both of which they report being denied) or have access to a change of clothes. For example, in one case, a detainee almost missed their court date because they were not allowed to walk into court with slippers – the only shoes the person possessed. As explained earlier, transwomen are also unable to ensure that a person on the outside is pushing their paperwork and working on their case, which makes them vulnerable to longer detention periods.

In addition, the police station and detention center function as a particular zone of policing which extend the logics of gender-binarism and class respectability to the persons who attempt to follow up on these women's cases. Caseworkers, friends or relatives, if they show up, are expected to demonstrate a "respectable" appearance and performance. For example, when inquiring about the status of one of the detainees, a friend of one of the interviewees – who is a cisgender woman from a poor background – was questioned about her choice in attire. Similarly, Saleh was asked to leave the station and return without his piercings during his visits to the detained women or even when asking for simple information. It was evident that he was required to wear pants when visiting these stations (as opposed to only shorts) and closed shoes.

In addition, a particular gender performance is preferred in these stations. Through Saleh's work in multiple and varied cases over the past few years, he has observed that police officers and personnel (males) are more responsive to requests and/or pleas from women who reciprocate their advances/perceptions. As such, cisgender women caseworkers or friends who display normatively feminine, middle class, and "pleasing" attitudes are able to negotiate better with the police officers. Subsequently, they are also susceptible to higher harassment from the officers themselves. In one case, while a cisgender female friend was attempting to locate her friend in one of the police stations, the officer repeatedly asked her to sleep with him before answering her questions.

Summary, Recommendations and Further Thoughts

Arrest and Detention: the police's role in criminalizing Transwomen

Transwomen face disproportionate discriminative and criminalizing moments in their navigation of their daily lives, which is based on their presentation of themselves (for example, inconsistent identification papers) and openly breaking the gender-binary and a heteronormative order. From arbitrary suspicion of "masquerading" or suspicion of sex work, these women face a continuous risk of harassment, policing, arrest and detention solely on the basis of their gender identity (gender-based discrimination). The following excerpt from one of the interviews clearly illustrates the difficulty and discriminatory treatment that transwomen face in their daily navigation of the city, particularly from the authorities:

A: What happens if you pass through a checkpoint on the road with your current ID?

D: They automatically pull you to the side.. leave you for 4-5 hours until they dismantle the checkpoint and take you to the station. Then they bring out your papers. I don't know what they think of us; they think you're a terrorist. One day they say you're 'suspect', another day that you're masquerading, another time that 'there is no law for liwat/fags', once they told me "you're strange" – what does that mean, 'strange'? All of this is wrong. Now I would jump out of the car or go walking [rather than pass through a checkpoint]. I didn't do anything wrong.[30](#)

It is evident from the above excerpt that the police and military personnel play a role in maintaining the cis-heteronormative gender order and in labeling trans* persons as security threats to justify their criminalization. All of the transwomen we spoke with said they mistrusted the police forces and would

not seek their help if they needed to. All of them also mentioned that the largest amount of daily street harassment they receive is actually from the police and the military. In one case, one of our interviewees mentioned she can no longer return home or live there because the military checkpoint near her home has marked her as an unwelcome person and refuses her entry “just because”.

As we illustrated, transwomen are also more likely to stay longer in detention due to intentional neglect on the part of the police to follow up on their cases after investigation. Moreover, with a system that is structured to make it harder for people to be released than be detained, and with continuous efforts from that system to break the ties that these women have with their networks and communities, transwomen always end up disconnected from the people that could push their paperwork and secure their release; many of whom are threatened and/or shamed when they try to intervene on the transwomen’s behalf.

Sex Work: Continuing the Local Debate

We acknowledge that sex work was an important aspect in the lives of the women that we interviewed. We also realize and point out that not all transwomen engage in sex work and that this might be an observational bias on our side given our sample.

However, we see the experiences of these women in multiple arrests and detentions as providing a well-developed and critically informed perspective on how to address the question of sex work in Lebanon through policy making. In particular, we would like to add to the ongoing activist debate on the criminalization of sex work and point out that it must critically engage with the lives and experiences of transwomen sex workers who work on the streets and not in nightclubs. For the women we spoke with, sex work is often a definitive resort and the sole accessible income source. As one of our interviewees put it:

“I could not open a bank account because the bank refused my papers once they saw me [...], I was thrown out of a cell phone store and told ‘we do not serve people like you’ [...] and even the hairdresser does not allow us to come see her before 6 pm because she is afraid of offending and losing her own customers [...] I would take any job, I don’t care, but [you see how people see me]; I’m obliged to work [at night and on the street].”³¹

Recent campaigns, currently spearheaded by the local Lebanese NGO Kafa, have rightfully but unreflectively criticized men as the buyers of sex in their campaign titled “You Can’t Buy Love”.³² The campaign called for “Fight[ing] Prostitution” without paying attention that this slogan singles out street sex workers and potentially exposes them to more policing – especially, as we hope we have made clear, in the case of the transwomen sex workers who would be at risk of detention for an array of reasons and under several articles. Further, by seeking to link the urgent and serious question of trafficking in women and girls with that of forced sex work and building policies from that departure point, one completely overshadows the structure of sex work on the ground inside the city, and deliberately ignores the different conditions of sex workers in the queer community.

Activists and policymakers must recognize that for some poor transwomen, sex work is the only way to secure a living. They must also come to terms with the fact that sex workers may choose to go back to sex work even after finding a different position to make extra money or make ends meet. Criminalizing sex work – which the latest campaign “Fight Prostitution” is inevitably calling for – without proper exit strategies (none were proposed so far by the campaigners) only further pushes these women into poverty and makes them more vulnerable to detention and arrest.

Thus, before aiming for legislation that would tie policies on sex work with policies against trafficking, we strongly propose digging deeper into the reality of sex workers outside of the night clubs and listening not only to their needs but also to their definitions and views of sex work. Any legislation on sex work would do great harm to already vulnerable groups if it does not take into account local sex workers’ reality.

Finally, from previous periods of political unrest in Lebanon, we know that times of perceived and real instability are often accompanied by increased calls for maintaining moral order (often meaning sexual order) and a series of moral panics. These panics always manifest themselves through the policing of certain underprivileged groups at the expense of others. As such, they affect women, poor and homeless persons, refugees, and the queer community first. Civil society organizations must be very careful in not fashioning policies that further the existing discriminatory policing of the very groups they are defending

Terms

Cisgender: Identification with a gender identity that is socially consistent with the assigned sex at birth.

Trans* (gender): Umbrella term used to refer to persons who self-identify with a gender identity that is socially inconsistent with the assigned sex at birth.

Transwoman: Person who is assigned as a biological male but self-identifies as a woman. Transwomen sometimes resort to medical intervention to transition.

Transman: Person who is assigned as a biological woman but self-identifies as a man. Transmen sometimes resort to medical intervention to transition.

Heteronormative: Norms that create a cultural bias that favors opposite-sex orientation.

Cis-heteronormative: Norms that create a cultural bias that favors cis-gendered self-identification and opposite-sex orientation.

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 - [15.](#) See Paul Amar’s analysis of known Queen Boat raid in Cairo in which he focuses on the regimes of securitization and their interaction with policing “deviancy” in Egypt: Paul Amar, *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*, Duke University Press, 2013.
 - [16.](#) For example, in April 2013, the mayor of *Dekwaneh* Antoine Chakhtoura ordered a raid of the local nightclub Ghost, which had been operating for a few years in the same location and frequently monitored by the police. The illegal raid included the arrest of 4 persons, all of whom were Syrians and one of whom was a transwoman – all four were subjected to violent and invasive inspection and interrogation. In defending the raid, Chakhtoura insisted that he is fighting against moral corruption and indecency, which include “drug use, prostitution and liwat” and for *Dekwaneh*’s “land” and its “honor”. The raid, coming shortly before a round of local elections, was widely seen as a cheap method for Chakhtoura to rally support from local constituents by creating a moral and security panic around a social question and a particular social group. See: “Dekwaneh’s ‘No Gay Land’ Triggers Debate on Homophobia”, Karim Nammour, *Legal Agenda*, December 2nd 2013, <http://english.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=562&lang=en> [last Accessed December 21st 2014].
 - [17.](#) For more details, see “Transfocus Report”, Transfocus, forthcoming online, 2015.
 - [18.](#) ME Youmna Makhoul, personal communication, November 2013.
 - [19.](#) Review court order from Metn Court of First Instance in 25/6/2009.
 - [20.](#) These compulsory outing “checkpoints” are also frequently social ones or service providers, including banks and hospitals, etc.
 - [21.](#) Republic of Lebanon, *Lebanese Penal Code*, Article 469, 1943: “A person who presents to a public figure with a false identity in order to bring a certain benefit to himself or to another or in an intention to infringe on someone’s rights, is punished by imprisonment from two months to two years in addition to possible felony offences in case he conspire with a public employee.”
 - [22.](#) J., Informal interview, October 2014.

- [23.](#) Republic of Lebanon, *Lebanese Penal Code*, Article 521: "Every man who dresses up as a woman and enters a women-only designated place or a place that is forbidden for him to enter, is punishable by imprisonment up to 6 months."
- [24.](#) R., Informal interview, October 2014.
- [25.](#) Hussein Yaakoub, "534: ??? ??? ???"; "534: Faqat La ghair" ["534 only"], Beirut, Helem, 2009.
- [26.](#) Youmna Makhlof, "'?????????' ??? ???? ?????: Androgyny Amam al-Qada' al-Jazai" ["'Androgyny' in Front of the Criminal Court"], *Legal Agenda*, Issue 14, February 2014, p.8.
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- [28.](#) "Sex for Sale in Beirut: Lebanon's 'Super Nightclubs' Straddle the Line Between Brothel and Stripclub", Sulome Anderson, *Foreign Affairs*, February 7th 2012, <http://goo.gl/GNEAS2>, [last Accessed December 21st 2014].
- [29.](#) J., Informal Interview, October 2014.
- [30.](#) D., Informal Interview, October 2014.
- [31.](#) D., Informal Interview, October 2014.
- [32.](#) For more information on this debate see Kafa's campaign and report on the topic. "?????-??-?????: al-Hawa Ma-Byinshara" [You Can't Buy Love], KAFA: Enough Violence and Exploitation, [No date], <http://www.kafa.org.lb/kafa-news/80/?????-??-?????> [last Accessed December 21st 2014].