Methodological Handbook

SYREALITY

سيريالية

Chapter 3: The Qualitative Data

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Lea Müller-Funk, Saja Abusulttan, Mohammad Kabbani,
Isabelle Karabajakian, Lina Omran; and Karam Yahya

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Version History

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1	23.04.2023	Initial version published on project website
2	18.05.2023	Updated interview guide added
3	11.02.2025	Final interview guide added; previous chapters updated; subchapter on data collection added

Contents

Introduction

The SYREALITY project wants to learn about the outlook of people from Syria in Europe, specifically about their life plans, their experiences in Europe and challenges they have faced. SYREALITY collects individual survey data in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Greece as well as life history interviews and cognitive maps in Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, and Athens. More specifically, the project aims to understand:

- How did Syrian forced migrants in Europe envision their future lives before the conflict, and how do they pursue or discard these plans in the face of war and continuing displacement?
- How do unfulfilled or newly forged life aspirations influence forced migrants' displacement trajectories and migration, return, and stay aspirations?
- How are life aspirations and displacement trajectories linked to social class?

SYREALITY collects and analyses a large amount of data in different forms across four countries (Greece, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands). The project will generate the following types of new research data: (i) a survey data set (one wave); (ii) audio material and transcripts of 100 life history interviews (two waves); (iii) cognitive maps which will be drawn as part of the qualitative interviews. Participants in the research project are defined as people born in Syria and/or holding Syrian nationality, having left Syria to Europe after 2011, and living in one of the four countries. The project will also reuse the research data generated by my previous SYRMAGINE project (2017-2019), thus an individual survey data set (n=757) and 41 in-depth interviews collected with Syrians living in Tripoli, Beirut (Lebanon), Istanbul and Izmir (Turkey) in 2018.

The SYREALITY Methodological Handbook aims at documenting the methodological strategy and making the data collection process openly accessible. The chapters are living documents which are started during fieldwork preparation and evolve during fieldwork preparation, data collection, and data cleaning. Chapter 1 elaborates on data management. Chapter 2 focuses on the SYREALITY survey and the quantitative data set. Chapter 3 elaborates on the qualitative data collection (life histories and cognitive maps) and the qualitative data set. Subchapter 3.1 provides insights into the qualitative research approach, interview guide, sampling strategy and ethics. Subchapter 3.2. discusses data collection and challenges related to it.

Chapter 3.1. Research approach, interview guide, and ethics

3.1.1. Qualitative research approach

The SYREALITY project adopts a multi-sited, longitudinal, transnational, and participatory qualitative approach focusing on capital cities. First, SYREALITY follows a multi-sited research design, with qualitative data collection focussing on urban – capital – spaces. SYREALITY collects data in four European capital cities – Athens, Vienna, Berlin, and Amsterdam. Focusing on cities is a conscious choice, which is, on the one hand, motivated by feasibility and time constraints, on the other hand, by the wish to take more seriously the urban nature of forced displacement. Most refugees move to urban areas instead of camps, especially when considering long-term settlement (Sanyal 2014). Particularly capital cities are often attractive for (forced) migrants for realising life aspirations, especially when they are considered to be "top-scale" or "up-scale" cities offering broader possibilities for migrant incorporation and transnational connections (Schiller and Çağlar 2009). Many refugees might undertake internal migration towards capital cities to realise life aspirations. Besides national policies, it is the city context, which shapes migrant dynamics and life realities. All four capital cities where data is collected have all become host to major numbers of Syrians since 2015 (Eurostat 2015-2018) but diverge in the degree of perceived attractiveness for Syrians and their reception context. While Berlin and Amsterdam serve as case studies for a desired European destination city and high asylum applications, Vienna represents a city where Syrians often filed an asylum application without an original intention. Greece is considered to be a transit location on the way to the 'centre' of Europe (Voutsina 2019) but still with considerable numbers of asylum applications by Syrians (Greece 2016: 26,630; 2017: 16,345; 2018: 13,145).

Second, the qualitative data collection follows a longitudinal approach, combining life history interviews with cognitive maps. Overall, research in refugee studies tends to be cross-sectional, capturing hence a particular moment in time (EASO 2018, 34). Few qualitative studies have examined the ongoing experiences of refugees both prior and subsequent to fleeing their homeland (McMichael et al. 2014). However, longitudinal research is particularly important when it comes to refugee settlement. It can provide insights into the changing nature of aspirations, challenges, and opportunities over time – life and settlement stages, critical moments, and key transitions in people's lives (Calman, Brunton, and Molassiotis 2013). Life histories helps to better understand the different ways in which the past is positioned within present narratives (Pascual-de-Sans 2004; Boccagni 2017; Ghorashi 2007; Eastmond 2007). A biographical approach makes it possible to grasp the dynamic nature of how a person's identity is shaped by significant events and other "turning points" in life (Schütze, 1983). Life history interviews are also useful for elucidating sensitive and subjective information such as experiences during the war and displacement, the complex motivations to leave, stay, and return and perceptions of social class positions. As (Eastmond 2007) writes, life histories "can provide insights into how forced migrants seek to make sense of displacement and violence, re-establish identity in ruptured life courses and communities, or bear witness to violence and repression when placed in their wider socio-political and cultural contexts."

Third, the SYREALITY project aims to understand how ongoing ties across borders and how transnational projects are incorporated into life aspirations. These links might induce social and

political change in home societies or not (Portes 2010; Krawatzek and Müller-Funk 2018). Migration-induced social change in sending countries and regions tends to be more far-reaching than in receiving societies where numbers are marginal in comparison to the overall population. While Germany, for example, received the highest share of Syrian forced migrants in Europe between 2011 and 2017, Syrians did not exceed 0.6% of the total national population in 2017 (82.79 mio.). Syria itself, however, has been emptied of a quarter of its pre-war population through displacement, yet many Syrians have stayed in Syria. As Portes (2010) argues, large-scale permanent out-migration – and displacement – rather alters the structure of sending societies because the culture of sending regions may be thoroughly transnationalised. SYREALITY follows a transnational research design by investigating how transnational ties are incorporated into life aspirations.

Fourth, this research project wants to make sure that the research project is relevant to the communities studied via a participatory research approach and methodology. Even though the idea for this research project emerged from many conversations the project lead has had with Syrian friends, participants, and co-workers of her past projects, she is entirely aware of the fact that her being a European white, female, and privileged researcher will influence the outcome of the research. Consequently, the research team of SYREALITY involves team members who – apart from their extensive educational and professional experience and interest in social science and research and /or civil society – faced displacement, know the Syrian context, and live in the cities or countries where data is collected to include their views along the research process, to establish trust relationships with participants and to avoid eurocentrism. The research team members jointly develop the interview guide, decide about the sampling and recruitment strategy, and contribute to analysis and writing via joint brainstorming, feedback sessions and co-authoring texts.

3.1.2. Developing the interview questionnaire

The interview questionnaire (see annex) was first drafted by the project lead in March and April 2023 and later discussed, adapted, tested, and translated into Arabic together with the whole research team during a workshop prior to data collection in mid-April 2023. Also, first insights from the SYREALITY survey (which ran between February and March 2023) influenced the interview questionnaire insofar as the interview questionnaire incorporated feedback from survey respondents about the content of the survey and their wishes for alternative and additional questions. Some survey respondents voiced the opinion that the survey questions lacked detail and expressed their wish that there should have been more emphasis on personalised and in-depth accounts and especially the challenges Syrians have faced in Europe, such as difficulties to deal with bureaucracy and racism, difficulties to integrate into society, difficulties to obtain, work, suitable housing, and the imposition of conditions that lead to the separation of families and difficulties to obtain citizenship. This mirrored our own reflections when we developed the survey questionnaire: We had decided to address challenges and obstacles specifically in the qualitative interviews.

The qualitative interviews were structured into a life history part and a semi-directed part inquiring into challenges related to realising life aspirations, migration and stay aspirations, changing social class positions, and life satisfaction and well-being. The interviews were planned to last approximately 2-3 hours, depending on the responsiveness of the participants.

The life history part was envisaged as an uninterrupted narrative, with the interviewer only probing and asking for more details if participants tell their lives in a very short way. The life histories included a first part where the participant was invited to narrate his/her autobiography which remained uninterrupted, a second part which allowed for narrative probing; and a third part reserved for why-questions to draw more abstract conclusions (Schütze 1983, 285). We invited participants to tell us their life stories along three phases (before 2011, between 2011 and before arriving in Europe, since their arrival until now). At the end of each phase, we asked participants about their perceptions of a good life and their life aspirations at that time.

At two different points of the life history interview (life before 2011; life now), cognitive mapping activities were included to better capture refugees' subjective understandings of their daily itineraries and the value they give to certain places in their past and current surroundings. Overall, space-related visual tools focus on the spatial dimensions of everyday experiences. Cognitive maps and mobility mapping are tools to address both every-day spatial mobility and the subjective meanings which refugees attach to their important places (Weidinger, Kordel, and Kieslinger 2021). Cognitive maps or mobility mapping are the conceptual manifestations of place-based experience and reasoning that allows one to determine where one is at any moment and what place-related objects occur in that vicinity or in surrounding space (Golledge and Gärling 2002; Golledge 1999; Richardson 1981; Asher and Miller 2011; Lopez and Lukinbeal 2010; Weidinger, Kordel, and Kieslinger 2021).

In contexts of displacement, attachment to place, which has been referred to as 'place-based belonging' (Williamson 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006)(Williamson 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006)(Williamson 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006) is of crucial importance. This is also linked to how hope in displacement contexts relates to places. As Mahmud (2022, 187) writes, in forced migration, new-life hope as a central category for explaining the phenomenon of forced migration, is always a place-based hope. From the perspective of a forced migrant, a place should provide at least one of the four main elements: empathic emotions and dignity-recognition (affective elements), and material satisfaction and legal status (instrumental elements). Only when both kinds of elements are satisfied in a specific place, there is a potential belonging that leads forced migrants to believe they can start a new life 'here'. In refugee studies, so far, space-related visual tools have been mostly applied among children and minors with a focus on places they like and dislike (Gifford et al. 2007). Lately, some researchers have used mobility mapping with adult asylum-seekers and refugees in rural areas in Germany (Weidinger, Kordel, and Kieslinger 2021) Embedding cognitive mapping within a qualitative interview can encourage refugees to reflect upon their situations and lived experiences in a multi-sense way, as the drawing reinforces and illustrates what is being said.

For the mapping activities, interview participants were given a blank piece of paper along with blue, green, and red pens to map (i) their past home / their current place of living; (ii) all places that they go/went to in some way in their pre-war life in Syria in 2010 / currently; (iii) key places of life events. We hoped that these cognitive maps would reveal places of meaningful activity/opportunity (such as places to play or learn), places of relaxation/restoration, places of safety and sociality (e.g. house of friends, library, semi-public spaces, spaces of conviviality) and places of (changing) life aspirations. The results can reveal how participants conceptualise spaces and the importance of spatial dimensions in

their life-worlds. The cognitive maps could also allow us to compile a subjective atlas[1] of Syria and the four cities as well as an atlas of life trajectories told through the perspectives of our participants and the values they attach to certain places.

The second part of the interview was an additional follow-up semi-structured section. The topics of a semi-structured interview were pre-determined, but most of the questions were formulated by the interviewer in the interview setting. Some questions were only asked if they had not already been addressed in the life history part. In this follow-up section, the interviewer inquired into (i) challenges related to realising life aspirations, (ii) migration and stay aspirations, (iii) changing social class positions, and (iv) well-being. At the end of the interview, participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in a virtual follow-up qualitative interview some years later (2026) to recount their experiences over time.

The interview guide was slightly adapted during the first phase of fieldwork in Athens to make the course of the conversation smoother (see Annex 1 and 2): We incorporated the question on changing social class positions as a repeating question after the end of each life phase (life in Syria until 2011; life in Syria between 2011 and leaving Syria; life since leaving Syria). We also restructured the instructions for the cognitive maps with two separate maps (key places of life and live events in Syria before 2011; key places now and life events between 2011 and now). Timewise, the first map was drawn after finishing the life story of each participants until 2011; the second map was done at the very end of the interview.

3.1.4. Research ethics

Prior to the fieldwork, the project lead consulted the Ethics Advisory Board of the University for Continuing Krems (UWK) and received ethical approval of the study. The project does not collect data which are made openly accessible as the situation in Syria and the region is very volatile, and the respondents are vulnerable in many ways, from the government and other groups from Syria inside or outside the country, from the current host environment, and in relation to receiving asylum in European countries. Ethical issues involved are participants' safety and confidentiality, informed consent, benefit-sharing potentials, minimizing risks, cultural sensitivity, and incidental findings. We are aware that the biggest risk in social science research relates to the disclosure of a person's identity and insufficient protection of private information, which is particularly important when studying forced migrants.

Apart from the mentioned risks about confidentiality, we foresaw risks related to trauma and negative consequences of the research on participants. First, collecting life stories among forced migrants necessarily touch upon traumatic experiences participants have been through. Many forced migrants have been subjected to immense physical, psychological, and emotional suffering. Narrating these past experiences can result in emotional distress for participants – and interviewers. While narrative

[1] For an example how a subjective atlas of Amsterdam could look like, see Arcam's (Architecture Centre of Amsterdam) project here: https://www.subjectiveeditions.org/atlases/p/subjective-atlas-of-amsterdam

interviews can empower refugees to capture the particularity, the complexity and the richness of their experiences and highlight their most serious concerns, it can also be experienced as intrusive and retraumatising (Powles 2004) We discussed before the fieldwork about how to handle such situations in a sensitive and empathic way, learning in particular from each other as some team members had previously worked in psychosocial work and had received training in refugees' mental health. In particular, we explained at the beginning of each interview that the participant had the freedom to refuse questions and indicate topics which are off-limits. As a general rule, if a participant appeared to be unwilling to discuss a particular period of his or her life, or a particular experience, we decided to never not press him or her to do so. Second, the qualitative data collection could also harm participants in case it reveals unknown potential or intended migration routes to and within Europe, which could make it more difficult for forced migrants to seek asylum in or migrate within Europe in the future. Another risk was the possible misinterpretation of specific results by political actors. The project lead decided to carefully consider the risks involved in how results will be addressed and framed in publications, keeping potentially harmful side effects in mind and avoiding publishing results which could harm participants' lives.

We obtained and documented informed consent from all interview participants. Informed consent was oral and was recorded if agreed upon by the participants. For consent to be informed, potential respondents must understand what participating in the study and the interviews in particular entails and voluntarily agree to it. For this aim, the introductory part of the interview explained the general objective of the project, the content of the interview, the funding body, and the confidential and voluntary nature of participation (see interview guide in Annex 1 and 2). We also sent an information sheet to participants in Arabic prior to the interviews informing them about the nature of the project, which data is collected as part of the interviews, how it will be stored and used and that they can withdraw from the study if they wish to do so later and how (see information sheet in Annex 1 and 2). This information sheet was also brought along with us to interviews and was also explained orally with participants prior to starting the interview. We initially feared that such an approach might intimate some participants but soon realised that it in fact encouraged participants and fostered a sense of comfort among them.

Because of the sensitive nature of the data collected, the SYREALITY project does not make data openly accessible. There are too many unknowns involved in determining what may or may not be sensitive for the respondents, now or in future, for an open access research data project. The life history interviews by their nature collect various types of personal data. The interviews also collected information which qualifies as 'special categories of personal data', e.g. religion and language, which might give insight into ethnic affiliation, which are often sensitive. In transcripts, the qualitative interviews involve pseudonymisation. Personal data collected that may indirectly identify a natural person is removed or replaced with pseudonyms/generic descriptors. This includes replacing personal names with aliases, categorising proper nouns, changing or removing sensitive information, categorising background information, and changing values of identifiers. In publication, we pay careful attention that quotations will not make interviewees identifiable. The PI continuously re-assesses any remaining disclosure risk.

Handling and storage of the data respects the rules on data protection laid out by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (see Chapter 1 on Data Management of the Handbook). The SYREALITY

project only makes metadata accessible in open access due to the sensitivity of the collected data. However, in a spirit of making data 'FAIR', which means ensuring that data are findable, accessible, interoperable, and re-usable, data will be shared with researchers who are associated to the project as well as research assistants of the project, if they want to use them for an MA or PhD thesis or for a publication in consultation with the project lead. Research participants can also access their own interview data and the cognitive maps by contacting the project (see Project Information Sheet in the annex).

In terms of data processing, the audio files of the interviews were saved in MP3 or WAV format on the PI's and the research assistants' personal laptops after the end of each interview and deleted from the recording device. Cognitive maps were scanned and stored as JPEGs and Pdfs. They were then transcribed by the research assistants and saved as a Microsoft Word Document and shared via OneDrive with the PI. To ensure the integrity and quality of the research data and increase the potential for data sharing, the transcriptions of the audio files were then checked and anonymised by the PI to make them ready for central storing. The audio files were then deleted from the research assistants' personal laptops. After finalising and checking the transcripts, the PI shared the transcripts with participants via Filr if they wanted to receive them. The text-based transcripts will be analyzed using a qualitative content analysis software (MAXQDA or Atlas.ti). This analysis will be saved in .sav format. The relevant parts of the analysis will be used for the write-up of journal articles and working papers. The cognitive maps may be used for dissemination and to complement/visualize the analysis.

In terms of data storage, the data security measures of the data management plan seek to minimize the likelihood and consequences of (1) unauthorized data access and (2) data corruption or loss. Much of the SYREALITY research data was initially stored in a dispersed way before it was stored and managed centrally on the project's password-protected cloud server (SYREALITY OneDrive). OneDrive is hosted in Sharepoint Online, where information is secured as part of the service and according to data protection schemes in Microsoft Azure. Data is frequently, reliably and automatically backed up in the cloud through the OneDrive folder. Dispersed storage of data occurred especially during data collection. During dispersed storage, storage in protected locations or with protection measures such as password-locked folders or encryption was preferred. Storage devices should be locked away or be under supervision. S The deletion of data processed by research assistants was governed by confidentiality agreements between the PI and the research assistants. After the end of data collection, only the PI has access with editing rights to the SYREALITY OneDrive folder and was responsible for naming, saving and posting files in the central storage. Exceptional access to the central storage is set at the level of folders and individuals if data access is authorized for analytical purposes and is revoked once a project has been finished. People assigned to a folder will only get the permission to view files, not edit them.

Contact details of survey respondents who agreed to a follow-up qualitative interview and of qualitative interview respondents who agreed to a later follow-up interview are stored in a file together with an ID number. The files with contact details are kept separate from the survey and the qualitative dataset. The contact details of survey respondents were shared with research assistants and used to send emails and/or give them a call to invite them for a qualitative interview.

Chapter 3.2. Qualitative fieldwork and the qualitative sample

3.2.1. Collaborative data collection and navigating multiple commitments, polarised elections and war

The qualitative data was collected between April 2023 and April 2024. We conducted the qualitative data in a collaborative spirit as a team of six – the project lead together with five research assistants in a context where some of us faced particular life circumstances. The project lead had envisaged to conduct the qualitative fieldwork together with a team of research assistants who had strong qualitative research skills and had previously been engaged with organisations working with (Syrian) refugees and had themselves heterogeneous lived experiences of displacement in the four research locations. Challenges concerned in particular how to navigate motherhood during fieldwork (the project lead), how to navigate multiple professional commitments at the same time (all team members to different degrees), how to navigate a highly politicised context before, during and after the Dutch national elections, during which refugees were blamed for policy failure on a regular basis (data collection Amsterdam), and how to face an ongoing war in Gaza deeply impacting one's own family and politics globally (one of the research assistants). These circumstances had a strong impact on how data collection was planned, implemented, and ultimately adapted, changing the timing and speed of data collection but also who led the interviews.

Altogether, collecting the 100 life histories took us a bit over one year: We undertook data collection in Athens in April and May 2023, in Vienna in June and July 2023, in Berlin in July, September and October 2023 and in Amsterdam from November 2023 to April 2024. Most interviews (75) were conducted by the project lead and one research assistant together. In Berlin and Amsterdam, data collection took longer than foreseen, hence several interviews were conducted by research assistants alone without the project lead because she had to return home. Overall, the decision of who would conduct interviews in which of the cities was driven by who knew the city/country context best and who had personal networks to facilitate finding participants. Data collection in Athens was conducted by Mohammad Kabbani and Lea Müller-Funk, in Vienna by Isabelle Karabajakian, Karam Yahya and Lea Müller-Funk; in Berlin by Lina Omran, Karam Yahya, and Lea Müller-Funk, and in Amsterdam by Saja Abusulttan and Lea Müller-Funk. Our specific experiences and networks in the four cities hence shaped how we organized and connected to participants: Mohammad knows Athens very closely and had a large social network among Syrians as he had lived there for many years and had worked as a psycho-social worker in a mental health and development association in Athens. Isabelle was a PhD researcher focusing on migration at the Central European University in Vienna at the time of data collection and was also involved in grassroots initiatives with and for refugees in the same city. Lina had lived in Berlin for several years prior to the fieldwork and followed a master degree in social sciences at Humboldt University in Berlin at the time of data collection. Karam had similarly just finished a master degree in social sciences in Berlin and also had family in Vienna. Saja had recently completed a master degree in global health, leadership and organization, from the University of Maastricht, where she focused on migration context. She had also worked for the Student Service Centre's Refugee Project ELPEEDA during her studies. Lea, on the other hand, grew up in Austria and lived in Vienna during her studies and returned to work in Austria for the SYREALITY project in 2022 after several years abroad. She also knew Amsterdam well as she had lived there for multiple years;

while she had many contacts in Berlin due to existing personal and professional networks and her family partly originating from Germany, she had only visited Athens as a child and teenager for holidays.

The project lead had planned data collection around her multiple commitments, especially those connected to being a mother of a two-year-old daughter at the time of data collection but also teaching responsibilities and developing a new research proposal for funding. As other researchers with care responsibilities who simultaneously deeply care about and believe in the value of qualitative fieldwork (Muhammad 2019a; 2019b; Vindrola-Padros 2019), she decided for a strategy of teamwork, relying on the motivation and networks of the other research team members and her partner, who took care of her daughter while she was away. This profoundly changed the ways in which she had previously conducted qualitative fieldwork: In contrast to her previous research experiences, qualitative data collection was initially planned over a much shorter period of time (two weeks per city), which reduced the time for her to immerse herself in an environment, build new social networks, and recover mentally from often psychologically draining interview encounters as she had previously done. This also meant that Lea shifted more responsibilities to her research assistants: While we conducted most interviews together, the research assistants connected with and recruited all participants and set up all the meetings.

Karam, on the other hand, had transitioned into a new job as street social worker just one month after joining the SYREALITY team. This rapid change, after years of limbo, presented a dilemma for him: After initial hesitations about the limited time for travel and the worry that he might not fulfil his responsibilities adequately, he still decided to join the project trying to fulfil both work commitments given his passion for research. This proved to be very challenging for him due to his working hours as a social worker. Ultimately, we decided that Karam could take more time for data collection in Berlin and conduct some interviews without Lea after she had left Berlin.

Unlike the other research assistants, who are Syrian, Saja, a Palestinian refugee, grew up in Gaza. For her, fieldwork happened during the events in the Gaza Strip which broke out in October 2023, broadcasted globally and resulting in the emergence of demonstrations worldwide. The continuous bombardments, killing and wounding of Gaza's population affected Saja personally as a Palestinian and as someone whose entire family is living in Gaza. The fieldwork happened at a time when she felt responsible to prioritise advocacy for ending the genocide in Gaza, calling for a ceasefire, and doing everything possible to save her family. Saja ultimately decided to continue the fieldwork as part of her commitments to address the experiences and struggles which refugees face in Europe to alleviate their sufferings and advocate for their rights. Similarly to Karam, we decided that Saja could take more time to conduct the interviews in Amsterdam, doing a large number of interviews after Lea had to returned home from Amsterdam.

Retrospectively, such a collaborative and adaptive approach proved beneficial on a multitude of levels for the project with all challenges included: It was crucial for navigating parenthood for the project lead, for a deeper understanding of the context – the origin context but also different host contexts, for developing, translating, and adapting the questionnaire, for developing trust and finding suitable participants. Three important lessons learned were the importance of being open and honest about one's needs and multiple commitments to be able to adapt to them as a team, the planning of a

generous time buffer to be able to be flexible about deadlines, and the need to allow for more time for fieldwork in the future to build new networks and trust (also through joint activities) but also to allow for more time between interviews to recover from very long – and often exhausting – conversations.

3.2.2. Sampling strategies in practice and experiences with recruiting participants

The overall aim of the sampling strategy prior to the fieldwork was to obtain views from a diverse range of people across the four cities and to reach diversity in terms of key dimensions of the research questions. Eligibility for participation in the qualitative interviews was defined as being born in Syria (and/or having Syrian nationality) and having left Syria after 2011, currently living in one of the four capital cities (Athens, Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam) under different legal statuses, and being between 27 and 65 years old in 2023 – hence participants who were at least 15 years old when the uprising took place in Syria in 2011. We considered 15 years to be an age when people have first ideas about their broader life aspirations. Our objective was to conduct 25 interviews in each city.

We were not looking for representativeness in numerical terms but aimed to cover a variety of situations and experiences. Special attention was given to the fact that participants were diversified in six aspects: (i) gender, (ii) educational level, (iii) profession in Syria (or parents' profession in Syria), (iv) geographical origin in Syria (West of Syria; East/Northeast of Syria, South of Syria, coast region of Syria; urban-rural divide), (v) year of arrival in Europe, and (vi) current legal status (asylum-seekers, recognized refugees, people whose asylum application was rejected, people with subsidiary protection, alternative stay permits, or who moved via family reunification). We decided to measure social class by three dimensions: educational attainment, occupational status and geographical origin in Syria which could reflect socio-economic fault lines in Syrian society. We also tried to pay special attention to the rural and urban divide in Syrian society, given that rural and urban origins are important indicators of social positions in Syrian society. Suitability of potential participants was not only a question of having specific characteristics with reference to these criteria, but also openness and interest to participate in the research. The document "Overview of potential participants" in Annex 1 was a template which we developed to help the team select participants with the different dimensions of diversity in mind. In practice, our aim to gather a diversified sample across the six categories in each city proved to be challenging. As expected prior to the fieldwork, it was particularly difficult to find participants who identified as women, participants with lower educational levels, and participants originating from rural areas in Syria.

We interviewed 25 people in each of the four cities. When recruiting respondents, we relied on respondents' assessment of their place of living – some few respondents in Vienna and Amsterdam lived outside the city but still felt that their main place of living was the capital, given that they spent most of their time there due to work, studies, or social relationships.

Interview participants were planned to be recruited via purposive sampling through two different strategies: First, we planned to build on the quantitative data collection by contacting people who had previously randomly participated in the SYREALITY survey (which was an online survey on the national

level, which recruited participants via social media ads on Facebook and Instagram) and who had agreed to a qualitative follow-up interview, selecting potentially suitable participants based on the different criteria mentioned previously. We then planned to select and contact potential participants from this pool based on our diversification matrix, first by email and then by phone if the number was available. Second, we planned to draw on the research team's extended social networks and use snowball sampling via several entry points to find additional participants. We also wanted to make sure to avoid timing bias, such as family obligations, working, participation in language courses, or visiting friends and relatives by suggesting conducting interviews at different times of the day and different days of the week.

We decided not to offer incentives apart from Athens where we paid an incentive of 50 EUR per interview. With this decision, we wanted to take into consideration the specific context of each research location. We considered Greece to be a special case because we partly interviewed people who were still on the move: Some of them had just left Syria few months ago, some of them were stuck in Greece in a way or another, with everyone having a different plan for their next step. However, they all shared that they faced financial difficulties, and we considered it adequate to compensate them for their time in such a difficult situation. Similarly, for some interviewees who had settled in Greece and were working, the compensation played a major role in participation as Greece as a hotspot has been over researched. Some participants initially did not want to accept the incentive, but we decided to treat all participants equally and insisted on paying the incentive to everyone who participated.

Each of the two recruitment strategies faced specific challenges: First, the recruitment strategy via previous survey respondents did not work equally well in all cities. Of all 1,962 survey respondents who had completed the SYREALITY survey, only 229 were eligible for the qualitative interviews (living in one of the four capital cities), had agreed to a qualitative follow-up interview and had entered their contact details – with significantly more respondents in Berlin and Vienna than in Athens and Amsterdam. This meant that we had to rely much more on snowball sampling and personal contacts in these two cities than in Berlin and Vienna, which was more time intensive. Overall, 61 participants were recruited via the social networks of the research team, 37 via the survey and 2 two via referrals of previously interviewed survey respondents.

Second, it was particularly challenging to reach beyond middle-class and highly educated participants via snowballing through the personal contacts of the research team given their specific profiles. The random element in the recruitment strategy via previous survey respondents helped to balance this bias in some instances. For example, we managed to reach stay-at-home mothers who had newly arrived in a city through the survey. On the other hand, social contacts via the research assistants allowed us to reach some groups who were potentially underrepresented in the survey – such as respondents with lower educational attainment, people who were still on the move (Greece), and people who identified as non-binary or queer.

Mohammad, for example, did not rely much on the participants from the survey in Athens due to their low number and reached out to people from his social circle and his extended network whom he believed would add an interesting variety of perspectives to the project, including people who were still on the move and/or undocumented. While he was initially concerned that interview encounters

could feel awkward as he knew people personally, this did not happen after presenting the project, its aims, and the data collection process.

In Vienna, Isabelle faced less challenges in recruiting participants from the pool of previous survey respondents since we had many respondents from the survey who had indicated their willingness to participate in an interview and hence were rather open when she reached out to them. However, when trying to reach out to potential respondents through her existing contacts in Vienna, she faced some resistance from one contact (who she counted on to link her to many potential respondents) who feared that project results could be used by anti-refugee voices in Austria. For Karam, who had agreed to focus on finding participants who we found hardest to reach in Vienna and Berlin – people from rural areas and with lower educational levels –, arranging interviews was more challenging than foreseen, also due to the fact that, while he had family in Vienna, he travelled to the city for the first time for the fieldwork. For him, finding participants in Berlin, where he lives and which he is very familiar with, was significantly easier.

Lina, who recruited participants in Berlin together with Karam, experienced outreach as largely successful, particularly due to the significant number of survey respondents who had expressed their willingness to partake in interviews. However, a considerable portion did not respond when initially contacted through the first email. Subsequently, the reminder email yielded a positive response from more participants. Conversely, while attempting to engage potential respondents through her existing contacts in Berlin, she encountered a predicament: her network primarily consisted of middle-class, highly educated individuals. Despite this, concerted efforts enabled her to connect also with individuals with lower educational attainment.

Saja lived in the south of the Netherlands at the time of data collection, and, in contrast to the other research assistants, had fewer established contacts among Syrians in Amsterdam prior to the fieldwork, which made finding participants more challenging for her, especially given the fact that we had a limited number of contacts from the survey in Amsterdam (17) of whom only 4 replied positively. This was partly due to missing phone numbers. Several potential respondents had instead shared their Facebook profiles but contacting them via Facebook proved difficult without being Facebook friends because Facebook hides messages from non-contacts. There was one participant from the survey who asked for a very high amount of financial compensation (1000 EUR) to participate in the interview. As we decided before in no compensation for any participants especially in Amsterdam fieldwork, he wasn't not recruited. This was combined with the difficult political context during the Dutch elections and the events in the Gaza Strip. Consequently, the remaining 21 participants were recruited through social networks, for which Saja had to create new connections. Recruiting female participants was particularly challenging for her, given that they often had time constraints if they had children and tended to be more hesitant to participate and needed more time to build trust. It was also difficult to find older respondents willing to participate, respondents with lower educational attainment and respondents who originate from other areas than Damascus, as many Syrians in Amsterdam are of young age (under 30 years), single and originate from Damascus governorate as she discovered during the fieldwork.

3.2.3. The qualitative sample

While being relatively diverse (see Table 1 below), our qualitative sample reflects at the same time the broader characteristics of the Syrian refugee population in Europe – which has been in its majority rather young, more male than female, and with higher educational levels than the average pre-war population in Syria (Ashour 2022; Welker 2022; Rich 2016; Buber-Ennser et al. 2016; Dagevos et al. 2018). Existing research shows that Syrians in Germany – and probably in Europe more broadly – are positively selected on education, with those being relatively better educated being more able to reach a distant destination (Welker 2022). For example, nearly half of the Syrians who arrived in Germany were between 18 and 27 years old, have higher levels of education and English language skills compared to other migrant groups (Rich 2016) and often have high educational ambitions (Brücker et al. 2016). Similarly, in the Netherlands, recognised Syrian refugees in 2015 had followed primary and lower secondary education, a third vocational or upper secondary education, and another third a higher education programme (Dagevos et al. 2018, 5).

Table 1 gives a broad overview of our respondents' characteristics with regards to key characteristics of our sampling strategies. Two-thirds of our respondents identified as male (67), roughly a third as female (30) and three respondents identified as non-binary. Educational level in Table 1 refers to current educational level irrespective of whether a degree has been finished or not; this includes therefore interrupted educational programmes but also ongoing enrolment or continued education after interrupted education and displacement from Syria. A very large number of our respondents had pursued university or post-secondary education (62) or attended secondary school (20) or middle school (14). Very few of our respondents had solely attended primary school (4). Professions were too divers to meaningfully categorize for the purpose of providing a short overview here.

With regards to geographical origin in Syria, we categorised geographical origin into North (such as Aleppo, Idlib, Rif Idlib), Coast (Latakia, Tartus), East-Northeast (such as Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Qamishli, Hasake), West (such as Damascus, Rif Damascus, Homs, Hama, Salamiyye), and South (such as Quneitra, Daraa, Suweida). These categories should be, however, considered to be rough indications as respondents had often moved to other governorates over their lifetime prior to 2011 and obviously after 2011. In Table 1, we omit those later movements in life for easier readability and to provide a rough overview of geographical distribution and family origins. Most of our interlocutors originated from Syria's West (46) or Syria's North (29). Roughly a quarter of our respondents originated from Syria's East or Northeast (12), the coastal region (8) and Syria's South (5). To categorise urban / rural origin, we used our respondents' self-descriptions if they originated from a village versus a city or town. Most of our interlocutors originated from urban areas (75) compared to rural areas (25).

The year of arrival in Europe of our respondents mirrored general trends of Syrian displacement to Europe, with roughly half of our participants having arrived between 2015 and 2017 (49). Our participants had a wide variety of legal statuses: 55 had asylum status or subsidiary protection, another 5 had refugee status or subsidiary protection after a family reunification procedure, 15 had acquired citizenship, 7 held a residence permit for work, studies or via private sponsorship, 6 were still in the asylum procedure, and 7 had no regular status, either because their asylum application was rejected or because they had not applied for asylum. The last group of interlocutors concerned particularly participants in Athens who were planning to move on to another destination in Europe.

Table 1: Characteristics of qualitative sample (life histories, n=100), first wave

Gender	
male	67
female	30
non-binary	3
Educational level (enrolment)	
primary school (1-6 grade)	4
middle school (7-9 grade)	14
secondary school (10-12 grade)	20
university or post-secondary training	62
Geographical origin Syria (governorate)	
West (Damascus, Rif Damascus, Homs, Rif Homs, Hama, Salamiyye)	46
North (Aleppo, Rif Aleppo, Idlib, Rif Idlib; Afrin, Azaz)	29
East-Northeast (Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Qamishli, Hasake)	12
Coast (Lattakia, Tartous)	8
South (Quneitra, Daraa, Suweida)	5
Geographical origin Syria (urban-rural)	
urban	75
rural	25
Year of arrival in Europe	
2012	2
2013	3
2014	8
2015	26
2016	13
2017	10
2018	3
2019	11
2020	6
2021	5
2022	11
2023	2
Legal status in host country	
refugee status or subsidiary protection	60
refugee status or subsidiary protection after family reunification	5
citizenship after refugee status, subsidiary protection, or residence permit	15
residence permit (work, studies, sponsorship)	7
asylum seeker	6
irregular status (no asylum application)	4
irregular status (rejected asylum application)	3
Location	
Amsterdam	25
Athens	25
Berlin	25
Vienna	25
Sampling strategy	
via social network	61
via survey	37
via survey referral	2

3.2.4. Interview encounters and reflections on our positionalities

Interviews were all conducted in colloquial Arabic; in very few instances, participants chose to talk in English when interlocutors felt equally or more comfortable to address certain topics in English. The locations of the interviews were participant-driven, with interviews being conducted in parks, cafés, respondents' homes, and a space which served as our office during fieldwork in case we had one (Athens, Berlin). We experienced giving respondents the choice to choose the interview locations as an advantage: It not only allowed participants to choose a place where they felt comfortable and safe but also allowed us to discover places that participants cherished in the four cities. It also allowed participants with care responsibilities – especially mothers with young children – to participate in the interviews. We spent a considerable time at the beginning of the interview to explain informed consent and data use, which was extremely important to establish trust. Interviews lasted on average three hours, some few longer which often left us emotionally and physically drained and in need of time and space to reflect, recharge and create an emotional distance from participants' narratives.

Photo 1: Interview location in Athens (office)

Photo 2: Interview location in Vienna (park)

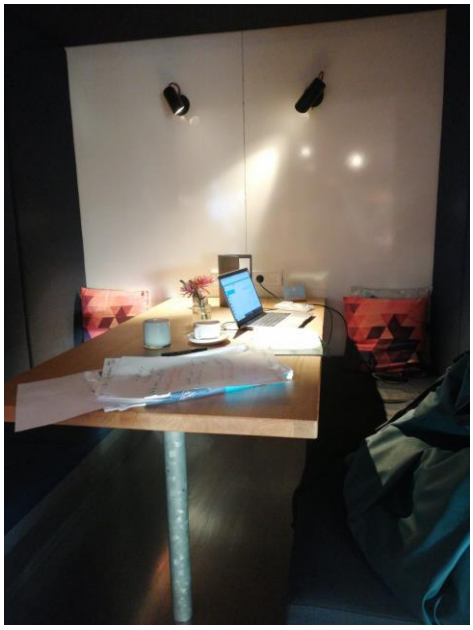

Photo 3: Interview location in Amsterdam (café)

All in all, we experienced the life history interviews as a (at times) challenging but ultimately rewarding experience – at the end of these long interpersonal exchanges, we felt a great sense of familiarity and understanding of the respondents' life. The life history interviews allowed us on the other hand to grasp the dynamic nature of how a person's life was shaped by significant events and other turning points in life as well as their subjective interpretation. They also proved useful to talk about sensitive and subjective information as such an approach allows participants to document grievances but also emphasises their agency. We gave participants the freedom to leave out episodes experienced as too painful or as irrelevant. However, most participants chose to also talk about extremely difficult episodes of their lives with us – while other indeed opted for not talking to us about their journey through the Mediterranean Sea. We realised that remembering in the frame of a life history interview constitutes a multifaceted process, influenced by numerous factors, such as the participant's mood during narration, age, maturity, capacity for reflection, objectivity in hindsight, and current life struggles but also the interviewer's capacity to interview, listen and connect to the participant. Conducting a life history interview poses in particular the challenge of fairly comprehending an individual's experiences and history within a specific time span of the interview, while still maintaining practicality.

We felt that many participants experienced the interview encounters as positive, with some participants sharing with us that it was a self-reflective exercise for them, which made them realise their challenges but also their resilience in life. It also helped participants remember a cherished past in Syria and rebalance negative memories with more positive ones. Changes in subjective well-being and mental health emerged as natural themes of life history interviews but were juxtaposed with periods of happiness and safety. We decided to give respondents the freedom to elaborate on some parts of their life as they wished in an attempt to be empathetic listeners and witnesses of their lives. This approach was at the same time a challenge – it was sometimes difficult to bring conversations to a conclusion and keep interviews to a manageable length. Guiding the conversation was a delicate equilibrium – striking the balance between respecting participants' willingness to divulge intricate

facets of their lives and preventing them from being overwhelmed by traumatic memories and recollections to avoid any unnecessary emotional distress or pressing them to mention events that could upset participants. For Lina, an obstacle encountered during the interviews involved in particular determining the appropriate juncture to transition to subsequent questions or sections, especially when participants engage in extensive discussions that evoke intense emotional responses. We were also faced at the same time by the challenge not to become therapists in the interview process – we countered this challenge by repeatedly clarifying our role as social scientists. We as interviewers had different degrees as to which we directed the conversation. In Berlin and Amsterdam, for example, we decided to implement a three-hour time restriction for both participants and ourselves, dedicating one hour to each section and urging participants to focus on crucial events within the pertinent timeframe, which we experienced as a good strategy. Almost all participants agreed to participate in a future follow-up interview, which could be an indication of how participants felt about the interview encounter. Overall, we had the impression that life histories interviewing as a method is a method that is sensitive to trauma, with a therapeutic effect in some instances – which comes with its own challenges. In few cases, we checked in with participants after the interview when we sensed that participants were emotionally affected by recounting their story to ensure them that their story held significance for us beyond its academic value and convey our appreciation for their trust and time.

Photo 4 and 5: Examples of cognitive maps

The cognitive maps were originally included in the interviews as a tool to understand key places and subjective meanings attached to places at two points in time – before 2011 and at the time of the interview – as well as key events in participants' lives and how they link to places. In practice, for many participants, drawing distance proved too complicated with participants focusing solely on key places. Many participants also chose to write instead of drawing. On the other hand, some participants with low educational levels chose to draw. Participants with artistic merits and interests also chose to express themselves in the activity through artistic sketches. In that sense, the cognitive maps did not turn out to be real "maps" as originally envisaged. Instead, they rather turned out to be a tool that helped people remember details in the past, brought out additional elements of life histories and

served as a sort of closure of two interview phases (life before 2011 and life now). As such, they were a useful tool to visualise thoughts and to help respondents remember. Rather than helping to analyse and deepen our understanding of spatial mobility, they might rather be a tool to understand different elements of place attachment and how they have changed over time. In some instances, comparing the two maps – in the past and the present – made participants self-reflective about what importance they connect to which places and how the now compares to the past. For many participants, their physical home ('beyt') had a deeper importance in Syria than now. Overall, "maps" were extremely diverse, which makes their analysis and interpretation challenging.

Reflections on interviewer effects and the positionality of interviewers

We experienced that we, in our role as interviewers, influenced interview encounters in several ways.

Muhammad, for example, thought that the personality of the interviewer is a key element of the success of the interview. For him, it was crucial to be flexible, ready to face several types of moods and characters and be able to react and adapt to any sudden emotional distress, anger, and confusion. One of the important things for him was also to be able to change and adapt our interview guide along the first interviews, which made us improve the interviews and our interviewing skills with every encounter. Muhammad thought that we managed to talk to a diverse group of participants in Athens from different backgrounds, dialects, cultures, and ethnicities, with most participants opening up to us. He also thought that working with interviewers who share not only the same language but also the same country of origin was crucial to establish trust and react adequately in interview situations. At the same time, he believed that it was key to use a "white" / neutral Syrian dialect in order for participants to feel that the interviewer is a neutral person. The use of a specific dialect could subconsciously or consciously trigger something in participants, with certain events or incidents being linked to certain dialects and accents. Muhammad himself was not asked about his background and/or his political opinions about the situation in Syria by participants. He believed that this might be related to the fact that Syrians might perceive Damascene Syrians (or those speaking in Damascene dialect) as less threatening. Prior to the interviews, Muhammad was concerned that it might feel slightly awkward to interview respondents who he knew personally before and if they might provide a sufficient level of depth of information. However, rather to his surprise, this was not the case after he explained the interview as a professional task, which gave participants a sense of security both on the technical and emotional side.

Isabelle, on the other hand, felt that, for many if not most of the interviewees, they were glad to have someone they could talk to and recount their life challenges especially in Austria. Similarly to Muhammad, she felt that the fact that she was Syrian helped many respondents feel more at ease when recounting certain things both in relation to life in Syria (e.g., "you know how things work back home") and to the refugee experience since all Syrians have been affected by it one way or another. On this note, however, Isabelle was constantly aware of her own privilege (as she came to Austria through a study visa) and made sure not to allow it to "manifest" so that respondents remain comfortable in the conversation. A notably positive experience took place in relation to how Isabelle thought she would be perceived by respondents. Prior to the start of fieldwork, she was apprehensive that her status as a minority in Syria would be picked up on instantly by respondents either through her name or her accent (especially for those who are from the same city as her) and that this could

somehow affect the interview or make them immediately associate her with one side of the conflict. Although this did happen in several interviews where the participant picked up on it (e.g., "you're from [x], right?"), Isabelle did not believe that this fact altered the proceedings of the interview or how comfortable the respondent felt. Isabelle also had the experience that it was easier for her to interview someone she knows or considers a friend than someone she was unacquainted with, as she felt that they were more comfortable divulging sensitive parts of their lives in this case. Isabelle also experienced that, having the project lead present during interviews was beneficial in several aspects. It felt like the dynamic of the interview was smoother both for her and for the respondent, as the conversation would bounce off one another between three people rather than two (thus making it feel less like an "interrogation" by one person of another). It was also comforting for her to know that she would be reminded of something important to address in case she might forget it. Lastly and very speculatively, for some respondents, having the project lead along may have conferred a further veneer of authority upon the interview process. The main challenge for Isabelle personally was the psychological toll (and accompanying anger) some of the interviews ended up having, especially in the beginning and especially in interviews where the respondent would speak at length about specific experiences such as their journey through the sea. But the most 'triggering' instances were when the respondent would recount some painful experience that she personally or her loved ones have experienced since the beginning of the conflict in Syria. However, that was something she had anticipated prior to the start of fieldwork and a few days of fieldwork in, with some time and space to herself to emotionally regulate the issue, became manageable. There were also a few occasions where she got particularly frustrated because of her inability to help the participant to deal with the challenges they were talking about (which she would have done in a personal capacity but did not have enough resources to be able to).

For Karam, the fieldwork in the frame of the SYREALITY project opened up new understandings to him, as every story we heard in Vienna and Berlin gave him a new horizon of his own story. It provided a profound insight into life in Syria from various perspectives, through the common thread of exile and migration. Learning and listening to how people coped, how they found themselves again or still struggle with memories increased his knowledge. Karam discovered through the data collection that the psychological effects which Syrians in exile experience are often tied to memories after migration and the emotional connections people have with them. Karam experienced the interviews he conducted with the project lead as less challenging as those he conducted alone – especially with friends from northern Syria, as their stories, often filled with frightening experiences, were unfamiliar to him despite their longstanding personal relationships.

Lina, who conducted interviews in Berlin, was conscious about how her own background could influence interviews for two reasons: firstly, her minority background and secondly, being Syrian. While her Syrian background might have encouraged many participants to open up, it could have made at least one participant more cautious due to knowledge of her sectarian affiliation. Conversely, Lina felt that sharing the same sectarian background facilitated greater openness in another participant. Lina was also consistently mindful of her privilege to be able to travel back to Syria, a detail she refrained from mentioning unless specifically asked in order to maintain a comfortable atmosphere during the conversations. However, no one asked. Having the project lead present during the interviews had varying effects on the flow of the interviews in Lina's experience: On one hand, her presence proved advantageous in multiple ways, the interview dynamic felt smoother as the

conversation could flow naturally between three individuals instead of just two. This approach helped avoid the sense of a one-sided "interrogation". Additionally, the project lead's involvement provided a sense of reassurance that important points would not be overlooked. Furthermore, her different background allowed certain participants the flexibility to shift between her and Lina, especially when discussing sensitive subjects. Conversely, Lina did recognize the potential impact of having someone from a European background on the interview dynamics. She observed that some participants might have tempered their criticisms of the German system, potentially aiming to express themselves more politely. Overall, Lina, as a researcher with a migration background similar to participants, found it challenging not to draw comparisons between her own life and the life of participants in interview encounters, and to avoid moments where she passed judgments on participants' actions and choices. Maintaining empathy towards certain participants proved sometimes challenging for her during the interviews, especially when she felt that they were not sufficiently self-reflective about their experiences or if they had divergent political views – for example, when participants did not reflect on their family's ties to the regime as part of recounting their life experiences or when they were not critical enough about the adverse effect of American aid on certain regions in Syria. Even though she later distanced herself and endeavored to adopt a neutral and sympathetic stance towards each participant's experiences, this was not an always an easy task for her. Over time, she reminded herself that our role as researchers is to comprehend the challenges individuals face and their coping mechanisms without necessarily endorsing or ethically justifying their actions.

For Saja, who conducted interviews in Amsterdam, the events in the Gaza Strip impacted interview encounters in many ways. On Saturday, October 7, 2023, just one day after her new baby niece was born, she was heading to Amsterdam by train in preparation for the SYREALITY fieldwork. For Saja, the news was overwhelming, knowing that it would not bring any ease. As someone who had survived the war multiple times, she anticipated what would follow would be on a massive scale. Nonetheless, she chose to conduct the fieldwork, feeling it was crucial to spotlight the lived experiences of people and their life histories to contribute to a wider understanding of how war can shatter everything and to confront the dehumanization process of refugees. As a Palestinian, she considered herself resilient, even though there were moments of tremendous struggle in navigating this, especially with all her family in Gaza facing a massive-scale war while she was interviewing participants who had survived it. At the same time, interviewing participants gave her a sense of hope and solace, as well as an understanding of what her family was facing at that time, being unable to contact or communicate with them due to the telecommunications blockade in the recent war.

The current events were addressed by many participants in the interviews, drawing parallels between participants' past experiences and current events in Gaza, with participants also reflecting on how the world can let it continue while watching. At the same time, the events made Saja feel very connected to participants and their life experiences under war – not only because of growing up in the same region and sharing many close cultural and historical ties between Syria and Palestine but also because of common experiences of injustice and oppression. Saja felt that being a researcher, who had herself migrated from the Global South to Europe, and who works with a diverse range of qualitative methodological skills with regard to fieldwork, equipped her with the necessary tools to overcome the challenges during the fieldwork in Amsterdam, such as connecting to participants, building new social connections, and building trust. Moreover, having Lea present at the first part of the interview was empowering, especially as it coincided with the onset of the war in Gaza. Lea's presence brought

support, comfort, and joy. Later on, Saja decided to space out the interviews, firstly due to the Dutch elections in November, as it seemed wiser to allow some time so people wouldn't be hesitant to participate and to develop trust. Secondly, the war in Gaza made some people hesitant to participate, questioning the purpose of research in the face of war. This led Saja to contemplate her position as a researcher in a European university, despite being a Palestinian refugee from Gaza with a direct family trying to survive a war. She reflected on how current political and humanitarian events could hugely influence people's perceptions of research institutes and researchers from both the Global South and North. As a researcher in the migration context, a refugee herself, and a global health expert who had conducted research in mental health, Saja handled the interviews with care, especially when participants shared very hard experiences that happened to them or their loved ones, such as loss and death. Saja felt connected to the people behind the stories, and some mentioned that they felt as if they were in a therapy session and how this helped them. Some disclosed that there were parts they had never told anyone about; some turned off the microphone for specific moments to avoid recording specific parts they didn't want to be included in the research but still wanted to share. For Saja, allowing time to recover between interviews, especially during adverse events, is crucial for participants, interviewees, and researchers. She believes that we should communicate more about such experiences in fieldwork and be open to sharing them.

For Lea, conducting the interviews together with Muhammad, Isabelle, Karam, Lina and Saja was experienced as a great advantage. Like the other team members, Lea felt that the flow of the conversation was much more natural in a group of three than a typical one-to-one interview situation. While Lea speaks (Syrian) Arabic, being able to have another person present to reframe questions in case they were not easily understood, translate unfamiliar words or expression, made interviewing much easier for her and made her feel at ease. At the same time, Lea felt that her attempts and willingness to speak Arabic created an atmosphere of trust and familiarity. Asking about explanations when she did not understand a specific expression also led to a less formal atmosphere. At the same time, being Austrian and possibly representing someone from the host country to participants, she was aware that participants might express themselves more hesitantly or positively about their experiences in the host context when she was present. This impression was confirmed by the interviews that were conducted without her presence, in which respondents were more open about their challenges and impressions about life in Europe. At the same time, not being present for all interviews did not allow her to check if all essential questions were being asked – which resulted in having missing elements in some interviews conducted without her and some interviewees being slightly younger than the predefined age group. For Lea, having another interviewer present who has gone – at least partly – through similar experiences as participants and originates – at least partly – from a similar cultural background, ensured that we as an interviewing team reacted in a sensitive and culturally appropriate way to what we were being told. As the project lead, she was aware of the potential interviewer effects of her own presence and those of the research assistants – with names being potentially indicative of religious belonging and/or geographical origin but she expected that the advantages of having a partially shared experience would overshadow the disadvantages. She tried her best to choose research assistants who represent diverse groups within Syrian society in order for the project not to be perceived as one-sided.

Annex 1: Interview guide English [Version 8 June 2023]

The interview guide is an instrument for the interviewer to ensure that none of the important issues to be discussed is left out of the conversation. An interview guide for qualitative interviews is *fundamentally different* from a survey questionnaire. It is not a list of questions, but a general guide to a dynamic conversation. Importantly, our guide should be a *single sheet of paper* in the end. There are two reasons for this: First, it allows interviewers to focus their attention on the informants and what is being said. Since the interviewers are not flicking through papers and reading from a list, we avoid a situation in which informants give short answers and wait for 'the next question'. Second, qualitative interviews always require that interviewers are well prepared and know the aims of the interview and most questions by heart. Only in that way is it possible to respond adequately to what the participant is saying.

Make interviewees comfortable by asking how they are, how their day went, how their family is, or some other appropriate small talk.

Ensure informed consent and explanation of the project:
We are doing a study about the outlook of people from Syria in Europe, specifically about their life plans, their ideas about the future, their experiences in Europe and challenges they have faced. SYREALITY collects survey data and qualitative interviews in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Greece. This project is funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and led by Dr. Lea Müller-Funk. We are a team of seven researchers in total. In the qualitative interviews, we collect life stories of 100 Syrians who have come to Europe and live in Athens, Vienna, Berlin, or Amsterdam. We are trying to capture the diverse experiences of people. Every story is valuable and so is your story. We are interested in your personal stories. As part of the interview, we will also do drawing activities to document places which were/are important to you. The project is not connected to any governmental authorities and has no impact on your legal situation in Europe. Your participation may however help NGOs and policymakers to base their decisions on the evidence we collect.

Ensure confidentiality and explain how we will protect privacy. Ask for oral consent.
Everything you say to us will remain anonymous. We will not keep a record of your name and we will not ask you about your political opinion about the conflict in Syria if you don't choose yourself to talk about it. The decision to participate in the study is completely up to you and you can interrupt the interview at any time. You can also decide not to answer a question or tell us which topics you do not want to talk about. You can also decide later to withdraw from the study.

- *Do you agree to participate in the interview?*
- *Is there anything which we should not ask you about?*

Data usage
We will use the data to write academic publications, blogs, and reports. We will use the in-depth interviews to understand individual situations in more depth and cite parts of the stories in our writings. We will make sure that these excerpts do not reveal the identity of the speaker by citing short snippets. You can withdraw your participation from the study until the end of the project (2026). Only the project lead and researchers working in the project under the supervision of the project lead will have access to the data. These datasets will not contain your name or contact details. After the end of the project, the datasets will be deposited in a 'data archive' for scientific data but access will remain restricted.

Ask for permission to record interviews:
Can we record the interview? Let me explain why. It is important for us exactly how you say things, so we would like to record our conversation. If we just take notes, it is easy to make mistakes and not reproduce your words truthfully. Afterwards, we will listen to the recording and write everything down

accurately. If you like, we will share this transcript with you. We will not record your name and you can choose a pseudonym for yourself or other people if you like.

- *Is this OK for you? (record oral consent to participate in interview)*
- *How would you like to be called in the interview? Which pseudonym should we use?*
- *Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Life history pre-2011 (Part 1)

We are interested to hear your personal story and your experience. We would like you to first tell us the story of your life from your birth until 2011. Please begin as far back as you remember and include as many details as possible.

- Probing 1: Support the respondent's narrative by asking for details and years, specific life events such as place and year of birth, family situation (including professions of parents), finishing school / education, getting engaged / getting married, having children, getting, losing, and changing job, or change of residence if the conversation gets stuck.
- Probing 2: Why questions
- Follow-up question:
    - *How was your socio-economic position in society in Syria at that time?*
    - *What were your ideas about what a good life was at that time?*
    - *What were your aspirations for life at that time?*

Mapping exercise 1:
Participants will be given a blank piece of paper along with a blue, red, and green pen.

We now would like you to draw all places that were important to you at the end of 2010. Start with the place which you considered home and draw this place in the centre of the piece of paper with the blue pen. Then draw all places you usually visited in your everyday live according to the perceived distance to your home (red pen). Then draw places which were related to key life events at that time of your life according to the perceived distance to your home (green pen). For us, it is not important how beautiful your map is, we want to understand which places were important for you at that time.

- Map probing: *Could you explain to us what these places are and what they meant for you?*

Life in Syria during the conflict (Part 2)

Now we would like you to continue telling us the story of your life starting from 2011 until you left Syria. Please include as many details as possible.

- Probing 1: Support the respondent's narrative by asking for details and years, specific key life events (education, getting engaged, getting married, having children, getting, losing and changing job, change of residence, internal displacement) if the conversation gets stuck; possible probes: *How was your life in Syria during this time? Could you tell us a bit about the time when you left your original place of residence? How was the context when you left Syria?)*
- Probing 2: Why questions
- Follow-up question:
    - *How was your socio-economic position in society in Syria at that time?*
    - *What were your ideas about what a good life was at that time?*
    - *What were your aspirations for life at that time?*

Flight trajectory and life in Europe (Part 3)

Now we would like you to continue telling us the story of your life since you left Syria until you arrived in Europe. This can be about where and how you lived elsewhere before coming to Europe, your life in other places in Europe and your life here. Please include as many details as possible.

- Probing 1: Support the respondent's narrative by asking for details and years, specific key life events (life in other places outside and inside Europe, settling down in Europe, finishing school/education, getting engaged/getting married/relationships, having children, getting, losing and changing job, change of residence, migration trajectory within Europe, experiences with asylum procedure and reception conditions) if the conversation gets stuck; possible probes: *Did you live somewhere else between leaving Syria and arriving in Europe? How was life there? Did you live somewhere else in Europe before arriving in this place? How was life there? How did you arrive here? And how is life here now?*
- Probing 2: Why questions
- Follow-up question:
    - *How do you perceive your socio-economic position in society here now?*
    - *What do you think is a good life now?*
    - *What are your aspirations for life now? How do you imagine your future now? Are you hopeful about the future?*
    - *What have been the main challenges in your life since you arrived to Europe? How have these challenges impacted your life and your aspirations? What were your imaginations about life in Europe before?*
    - *What are your thoughts about settling here or migrating to another place? Would you like to migrate to another country? Would you like to stay?*
    - *What do you think about the situation in Syria? Do you ever think about returning to Syria?*
    - *All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?*
        - *Probing 1: Which factors are important for your satisfaction with life?*
        - *Probing 2: What would you like to change to improve your satisfaction with life?*

Mapping exercise 2:
Participants will be again given a blank piece of paper along with a blue, red, and green pen.

We now would like you to draw all places that have been important to you since 2011. Start with the place where you live now and draw this place in the centre of the piece of paper with the blue pen. Then draw all places you usually visit in your everyday live according to the perceived distance to your home (red pen). Then draw all places which were related to key life events between 2011 and now according to the perceived distance to your home (green pen).

Map probing: *Could you explain to us what these places are and what they mean for you?*

Finish

1. This was the last question, thank you a lot for your participation. Do you have any additional comment?
2. Would you be willing to be contacted again for another shorter online interview in a couple of years to see how you are doing (if yes, write down contact)?

3. Would you like to receive the transcript of our conversation? If you have any questions regarding the project, please get in contact with us (provide email / contact, share the website and Facebook page of the project to follow publications).

Annex 2: Interview guide Arabic [Version 8 June 2023]

The interview guide is an instrument for the interviewer to ensure that none of the important issues to be discussed is left out of the conversation. An interview guide for qualitative interviews is *fundamentally different* from a survey questionnaire. It is not a list of questions, but a general guide to a dynamic conversation. Importantly, our guide should be a *single sheet of paper* in the end. There are two reasons for this: First, it allows interviewers to focus their attention on the informants and what is being said. Since the interviewers are not flicking through papers and reading from a list, we avoid a situation in which informants give short answers and wait for 'the next question'. Second, qualitative interviews always require that interviewers are well prepared and know the aims of the interview and most questions by heart. Only in that way is it possible to respond adequately to what the participant is saying.

اجعل الأشخاص الذين تتم مقابلتهم مرتاحين عن طريق السؤال عن أحوالهم، وكيف سار يومهم، وكيف كانت أسرهم، أو بعض الأحاديث الصغيرة المناسبة الأخرى.

تاكد من وجود الموافقة المستنيرة وقم بشرح المشروع

نحنا عم نعمل دراسة عن الافاق المستقبلية للأشخاص يلي من سوريا وعايشين باوروبا. بشكل أساسي عن خططهم الحياتية وافكارهم عن المستقبل وتجاربهم باوروبا والصعوبات يلي بيواجهوها. مشروع سوريالیتي رح يجمع معلومات عن طريق الاستبيانات والمقابلات بالنمسا وألمانيا وهولندا واليونان. هيدا المشروع بيموله الصندوق النمساوي للعلوم وبتقوده الدكتوره ليا مولرفونك. نحنا فريق مكون من سبع باحثين. بالمقابلات النوعية منجمع قصص مية شخص من يلي عايشين باوروبا بأثينا، فينا، برلين و أمستردام.

نحنا عم نحاول انو نشمل التجارب المختلفة للأشخاص. كل قصة هي قصة مهمة متل ما هي قصتك. نحنا مهتمين بقصتك الشخصية. كجزء من المقابلة رح نعمل أنشطة رسم عن الأماكن الي كانت ويلي هلا مهمة الك. المشروع مانو مرتبط باي جهة حكومية وما إله اثر على وضعك القانوني باروربا. بس مشاركتك ممكن تساعد المنظمات يلي مانها حكومية او الناس يلي بموقع لصنع القرار انو يبنوا قراراتهم (يعني يحسنوا الأوضاع للناس) على أساس النتائج يلي منوصللها بهيدا البحث.

تأكد من السرية واشرح كيف سنقوم بحماية الخصوصية. اسال عن الموافقة الشفوية.

بدي وضح هون انو كلشي رح تخبرنا ياه بيضل مجهول المصدر يعني مافي شي بيدل مين حكاه. وما رح نحتفظ باي تسجيل لاسمك مع المعلومات يلي رح تذكرها. ما رح نسالك كمان عن رايك السياسي بشو صار بسوريا الا اذا انت حبيت تذكر هالشي بنفسك.

قرارك انو تشارك بهالدراسة بيعود الك بشكل كامل وفيك توقف مشاركتك باي وقت. كمان فيك تقرر انو ما تجاوب عاي سؤآل منسآله او تخبرنا عن المواضيع يلي ما بتحب تحكي عنها. كمان فيك تنسحب من الدراسة كلها بعدين.

- هل بتوافق تشارك بالمقابلة؟
- هل في أي موضوع مابتحب نسالك عنه؟

استخدام البيانات

نحنا رح نستخدم البيانات / المعلومات لحتى نكتب أوراق اكاديمية او مدونات عالانترنت أو تقارير. رح نستخدم هي المقابلات لنفهم الأوضاع الشخصية للناس بشكل أعمق ونقتبس أجزاء من قصصكم بكتاباتنا. رح نكون حريصين انو ما تكشف الاقتباسات عن هوية الشخص يلي عم يحكي بانو نستخدم اقتباسات قصيرة. فيك تسحب مشاركتك من هي الدراسة حتى نهاية المشروع ب ٢٠٢٦. المسؤولة عن المشروع والباحثين يلي مشاركين بالمشروع يلي بيشتغلو تحت اشرافها بس هنن يلي بيقدروا يوصلوا للبيانات. مارح تتضمن البيانات اسمك او أي معلومات اتصال معك. بعد ما ينتهي المشروع المعلومات رح تتخزن بارشيف بيانات المعلومات بس الوصول اله مقيد.

اسال عن الاذن لتسجل المقابلة

هل ممكن نسجل المقابلة؟ خليني اشرح ليش. من المهم بالنسبة النا نعرف كيف بتقول الأشياء بدقة. لهيك نحنا بحاجة انو نسجل المحادثة. في حال اخدنا بس ملاحظات فسهل انو نعمل أخطاء او ما ننقل يلي قلته بدقة .

بعد المقابلة نحنا رح نسمع التسجيل ونكتب نص المقابلة واذا حبيت فينا نشارك معك النص. مارح نسجل اسمك وفيك تختار اسم وهمي لحالك او للناس التانيين يلي رح تذكرهن اذا حبيت .

- هل هيدا مناسب الك؟
- كيف بتحب نندهلك/ نقلك بالمقابلة ؟ شو الاسم الوهمي يلي بتحب انو نستخدمه؟
- هل في عندك أي أسئلة قبل ما نبلش؟

تاريخ الحياة ما قبل ٢٠١١ (الجزء الأول)

نحنا مهتمين انو نسمع قصتك الشخصية وتجاربك. فيك أول شي تخبرنا قصة حياتك من لما خلقت حتى اخر ٢٠١٠؟ اذا فيك ترجع بذاكرتك أبعد ما بتقدر وتذكر تفاصيل قد ما فيك.

- Probing 1: Support the respondent's narrative by asking for details and years, specific life events such as place and year of birth, family situation (including professions of parents), finishing school / education, getting engaged / getting married, having children, getting, losing, and changing job, or change of residence if the conversation gets stuck.
- Probing 2: Why questions
  - كيف كنت تشوف وضعك الاقتصادي-الاجتماعي (بالمجتمع) بسوريا بهلوقت؟
  - قبل ٢٠١١ كيف كنت بتشوف فكرة الحياة الكريمة؟
  - شو كانت طموحاتك بهيداك الوقت؟

الخريطة 1

Participants will be given a blank piece of paper along with a blue, red, and green pen.

هلا رح نطلب منك ترسم كل الأماكن يلي كانت مهمة الك حتى اخر ٢٠١٠. رجاء بلش بالمكان يلي كنت تعتبره البيت وارسمه بنص الورقة بالقلم الأزرق. بعدين ارسم كل الأماكن يلي كنت متعود تروح عليها بشكل يومي حسب قديش بعاد او قراب كانو عن البيت بالقلم الأحمر، بعدها اذا فيك ترسم المحلات يلي كانت مرتبطه بأحداث أساسية ومهمة بهديك الفترة من حياتك بالقلم الأخضر. ما بيهمنا الخريطة تكون حلوة لأنه الهدف الأساسي منها انو نفهم أي المحلات كانت مهمة بالنسبة الك.

- هل ممكن تشرحلنا شو هي هي الأماكن وشو كانت تعنيلك؟

الحياة في سوريا خلال الصراع (الجزء الثاني)

هلا اذا فيك تخبرنا عن قصة حياتك من ٢٠١١ لحتى تركت سوريا؟ يعني مثلا كيف عشت بسوريا ووين كنت عايش قبل ما تترك سوريا. واذا فيك تحكيلنا وتذكر تفاصيل قد ما فيك.

- Probing 1: Support the respondent's narrative by asking for details and years, specific key life events (education, getting engaged, getting married, having children, getting, losing and changing job, change of residence, internal displacement) if the conversation gets stuck; possible probes:
  - كيف كانت الحياة بسوريا بهلوقت؟
  - هل فيك تخبرنا عن الوقت يلي تركت فيه بيتك؟
  - كيف كان الوضع لما تركت سوريا وشو صار وقتها؟
- Probing 2: Why questions

- كيف كنت تشوف وضعك الاقتصادي-الاجتماعي (بالمجتمع) بسوريا بهلوقت؟
- قبل ٢٠١١ كيف كنت بتشوف فكرة الحياة الكريمة؟
- شو كانت طموحاتك بهيداك الوقت؟

الحياة خلال مسار النزوح والحياة في أوروبا (الجزء الثالث)

هلا رح نكمل، اذا فيك تخبرنا عن قصة حياتك من لما تركت سوريا لهلا؟ يعني مثلا كيف ووين كنت عايش قبل ما تجي عاوروبا في حال كنت بأي محل تاني بعد سوريا وقبل ما توصل لأوروبا أو حيات بأماكن تانية بأوروبا أو حياتك هون. وكمان مرة تانية اذا فيك تحكيلنا وتذكر تفاصيل قد ما فيك.

- Probing 1: Support the respondent's narrative by asking for details and years, specific key life events (life in other places outside and inside Europe, settling down in Europe, finishing school/education, getting engaged/getting married/relationships, having children, getting, losing and changing job, change of residence, migration trajectory within Europe, experiences with asylum procedure and reception conditions) if the conversation gets stuck; possible probes:
  - هل عشت في مكان تاني بأوروبا قبلما وصلت لهون؟ كيف كانت الحياة هنيك؟
  - كيف وصلت لهون؟ وكيف الحياة هون هلق؟
- Probing 2: Why questions

- Follow-up question:
  - كيف كنت تشوف وضعك الاقتصادي-الاجتماعي بهلوقت؟
  - كيف بتشوف فكرة الحياة الكريمة اليوم ؟
  - و شو هي طموحاتك بالحياة اليوم ؟
  - كيف بتتخيل مستقبلك؟ أنت متفائل بالمستقبل؟
  - شو هي التحديات او الصعوبات الأساسية بحياتك من لما وصلت عأوروبا؟ كيف أثرت هي الصعوبات على حياتك وطموحاتك؟ شو كانت تخيلاتك عن الحياة بأوروبا من قبل؟
  - شو بتفكر بخصوص انو تضل هون أو تهاجر لمحل تاني؟ هل بتفكر بالهجرة لبلد تاني أو هل بتحب تضل هون؟
  - كيف بتشوف الوضع هلا في سوريا؟ هل فكرت من قبل انو ترجع عسوريا؟
  - اذا اخدنا كل الأمور بعين الاعتبار (بشكل عام) قديش انت راضي عن حياتك هالأيام بشكل عام؟
    - شو هي الشغلات المهمة الك لحتى تكون حاسس بالرضا عن الحياة؟
    - شو يلي بتحب تغيره لتحسين رضاك عن حياتك؟

تمرين الخريطة 2

Participants will be again given a blank piece of paper along with a blue, red, and green pen.

هلا بدنا نطلب منك ترسم كل المحلات يلي كانت مهمة الك من ٢٠١١ لهلا. أول شي فيك تبلش بأنو ترسم بنص الورقة المحل يلي عايش فيه بالقلم الأزرق. بعدين اذا فيك ترسم كل المحلات يلي انت متعود تروح عليها بشكل يومي حسب قديش بعاد أو قراب عن البيت بالقلم الأحمر. آخر شي اذا فيك ترسم كل المحلات يلي مرتبطه بأحداث مهمة وأساسية بحياتك من ٢٠١١ لهلا بالقلم الأخضر.هل ممكن تشرحلنا شو هي هالأماكن وشو بتعنيلك؟

الخاتمة

- هيدا كان سؤالنا الأخير، شكرا كتير لمشاركتك. هل بتحب تضيف أي شي أو عندك أي تعليق؟
- هل عندك مانع نتواصل معك مرة تانية مشان مقابلة تانية أقصر، بعد كم سنة من هلا عبر الإنترنت أو عبر الهاتف لنشوف كيف مشت معك الأمور؟ (اذا كان جوابه نعم قم سجل معلومات التواصل)
- هل بتحب نعطيك نسخة من نص المقابلة؟ ان كان عندك أي سؤال عن المشروع فيك تتواصل معنا (زوده بالايميل وصفحة الفيسبوك)

Annex 3: Template “Overview of potential participants”

This sheet should help you to choose suitable informants and will help me to understand the diversification of the sample of our interview. Complete the background information if it is known (it might not be known until you become more familiar with the participant). You will fill out information about many more participants than you will eventually interview respondents.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION: Keep in a secure place and do not share with others! Keep contact details in a different document.

Identifying information for your own use (e.g. first name or description of person)	***Educational attainment***	***Profession (Syria) Or parents' profession (Syria)***	***Geographical origin Syria***	***Gender***	***Year of arrival Europe***	***Legal status host country***	***Relationship between the interviewee and the informant or sampling via survey***	***Willing to participate again (yes, no, maybe)***	***Interviewed (date)***
	Primary Secondary Post-secondary		***(NE/E, W, S, Coast rural vs. urban)***						
1									
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Annex 4: Information sheets for participants

About the project

What is the goal of this project?

The SYREALITY project wants to learn about the outlook of people from Syria in Europe, specifically about their life plans, their experiences in Europe and challenges they have faced. SYREALITY collects survey data in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Greece and in-depth interviews in Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam and Athens. As part of the in-depth interviews, participants are also invited to draw maps about their daily life.

Which countries are included?

SYREALITY covers Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Greece. These countries were chosen because they all have seen large numbers of Syrians arriving since 2011 with different conditions regarding living conditions and the asylum procedure. This makes them highly relevant cases to study the relations between people's assessment of their life and their aspirations to settle down in a country. The study has a focus on cities as more than half of the world's displaced people live in urban areas.

Who is funding this research?

The study is funded by the Austrian Science Fund.

Who has reviewed this research project?

This project has been reviewed by the Austrian Science Fund and by external reviewers. The project was also reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria.

Who is leading this research?

The SYREALITY project is led by Dr. Lea Müller-Funk of the University for Continuing Education Krems and supported by several research assistants. For information on all team members see here: https://syreality.com/the-team/.

Your involvement

What will you do with my data/answers?

We will use the data to write academic publications, blogs, and reports. From the survey, we will only use aggregate data such as averages (for example "refugees who are often in touch with their family back home, more often remit money to their family members"). We will use the in-depth interviews to understand individual situations in more depth and cite parts of the stories in our writings. We will make sure that these excerpts do not reveal the identity of the speaker by citing short snippets.

Can I stop my participation in the study if I don't want to participate anymore?

You can stop your participation until the end of the project (2026).

Data protection and confidentiality

Will my participation in the study be confidential?

Your participation will be kept confidential.

Who will have access to the data?

Your answers will be stored in a dataset on a secure server that meets requirement of data protection laws. Only the project lead and researchers working in the project under the supervision of the project lead will have access to the datasets. These datasets will not contain your name or contact details. The project ends in 2026. After the end of the project, the datasets will be deposited in a 'data archive' for scientific data but access will remain restricted.

What information will you collect about me in the in-depth interviews?

The in-depth interviews will cover the story of your whole life.

Can I access my personal study data?

You can access the data of the in-depth interviews and the maps since. Please contact Dr. Lea Müller-Funk (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) and you will be able to access the transcript of your in-depth interview and a scan of your maps.

I've indicated I'm willing to be contacted about a second round of the survey or a follow-up in-depth interview and entered my email address for this purpose. How will you store and use my email address?

Email addresses are stored in a file together with an ID number. The file with email addresses is separate from the dataset with answers to the survey questions and is only accessible to the project leader. All datafiles will be held on a secure server that meet data protection requirements regulations. The email addresses will only be used to send out a second survey and invite you for a qualitative interview. We will use the ID number to connect answers from the first and second survey. The file with email addresses will not be shared with anyone.

I've indicated I'm willing to be contacted about a second round of the interview and entered my contact details. I have changed my mind. Can you remove my contact details from the file?

Yes we can. Please contact Dr. Lea Müller-Funk (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) and your email address will be removed.

Who can I contact with questions or concerns?

You can contact Dr. Lea Müller-Funk (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) or the head of the Ethics Committee of the University for Continuing Education Krems (ethikkommission@donau-uni.ac.at).

حول المشروع

ما هو الهدف من هذا المشروع؟

يريد مشروع SYREALITY التعرف على آفاق الناس من سوريا في أوروبا، وتحديداً عن خطط حياتهم وتجاربهم في أوروبا والتحديات التي واجهوها. تجمع SYREALITY بيانات المسح في النمسا وألمانيا وهولندا واليونان والمقابلات المعمقة في فيينا وبرلين وأمستردام وأثينا. كجزء من المقابلات المتعمقة، يُدعى المشاركون أيضًا لرسم خرائط حول حياتهم اليومية.

ما هي الدول المشمولة؟

تغطي SYREALITY النمسا وألمانيا وهولندا واليونان. تم اختيار هذه البلدان لأنها شهدت جميعًا وصول أعداد كبيرة من السوريين منذ عام 2011 بظروف مختلفة تتعلق بظروف المعيشة وإجراءات اللجوء مما يجعلهم حالات وثيقة الصلة بدراسة العلاقات بين تقييم الناس لحياتهم وتطلعاتهم إلى الاستقرار في بلد ما. تركز الدراسة على المدن التي يعيش فيها أكثر من نصف النازحين في العالم في مناطق حضرية.

من يمول هذا البحث؟

يتم تمويل الدراسة من قبل صندوق العلوم النمساوي.

من قام بمراجعة هذا المشروع البحثي؟

تمت مراجعة هذا المشروع من قبل صندوق العلوم النمساوي ومن قبل مراجعين خارجيين. تمت مراجعة المشروع أيضًا والموافقة عليه من قبل لجنة الأخلاقيات بجامعة التعليم المستمر في Krems، النمسا.

من يقود هذا البحث؟

يقود مشروع SYREALITY د. ليا مولر-فونك من جامعة Krems للتعليم المستمر وبدعم من العديد من الباحثين المساعدين. للحصول على معلومات حول جميع أعضاء الفريق انظر هنا: https://syreality.com/the-team/.

مشاركتك

كيف سوف تستخدم بياناتي / إجاباتي؟

سنستخدم البيانات لكتابة المنشورات الأكاديمية والمدونات والتقارير. سنستخدم فقط البيانات التي تم جمعها من خلال هذا الاستبيان مثل المتوسطات (على سبيل المثال "اللاجئون الذين غالبًا ما يكونون على اتصال بعائلاتهم. في المنزل، في كثير من الأحيان يقومون بتحويل الأموال إلى أفراد أسرهم"). سنستخدم المقابلات المتعمقة لفهم المواقف الفردية بمزيد من العمق والاستشهاد بأجزاء من القصص في كتاباتنا. سوف نتأكد من أن هذه المقتطفات لا تكشف عن هوية المتحدث/ة من خلال الاستشهاد بمقتطفات قصيرة.

هل يمكنني إيقاف مشاركتي في الدراسة إذا لم أعد أرغب في المشاركة؟

يمكنك إيقاف مشاركتك حتى نهاية المشروع (2026).

حماية البيانات والسرية

هل ستكون مشاركتي في الدراسة سرية؟

ستبقى مشاركتك سرية.

من سيكون له حق الوصول إلى البيانات؟

سيتم تخزين إجاباتك في قاعدة بيانات على خادم آمن متوافق مع متطلبات قوانين حماية البيانات. لن يتمكن من الوصول إلى قاعدة البيانات إلا قائدة المشروع والباحثون العاملون في المشروع تحت إشراف قائدة المشروع. لن تحتوي قاعدة البيانات هذه على اسمك أو تفاصيل الاتصال بك. ينتهي المشروع في عام 2026. بعد انتهاء المشروع، سيتم إيداع قاعدة البيانات في "أرشيف بيانات" للبيانات العلمية ولكن سيظل الوصول إليها مقيدًا.

ما هي المعلومات التي ستجمعها عني في المقابلات المعمقة؟

ستغطي المقابلات المعمقة قصة حياتك كلها.

هل يمكنني الوصول إلى بيانات الدراسة الشخصية الخاصة بي؟

يمكنك الوصول إلى بيانات المقابلات المتعمقة والخرائط. يرجى الاتصال بالدكتور ليا مولر فونك (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) وستتمكن من الوصول إلى نص مقابلتك المعمقة ومسح خرائطك.

لقد أشرت إلى أنني على استعداد للاتصال بي بشأن الجولة الثانية من الاستطلاع أو لإجراء مقابلة متابعة معمقة، وأدخلت عنوان بريدي الإلكتروني لهذا الغرض. كيف سيتم تخزين واستخدام عنوان بريدي الإلكتروني؟

يتم تخزين عناوين البريد الإلكتروني في ملف مع رقم معرف. الملف الذي يحتوي على عناوين بريد إلكتروني منفصل عن قاعدة البيانات التي تحتوي على إجاباتك على أسئلة الاستبيان ولا يمكن الوصول إليها إلا لقائدة المشروع. سيتم الاحتفاظ بجميع ملفات البيانات على خادم آمن يلبي لوائح متطلبات حماية البيانات.

سيتم استخدام عناوين البريد الإلكتروني فقط لإرسال استبيان ثانٍ ودعوتك لإجراء مقابلة فردية. سنستخدم رقم المعرف لربط الإجابات من الاستطلاع الأول والثاني. لن تتم مشاركة ملف عناوين البريد الإلكتروني مع أي شخص.

لقد أشرت إلى أنني على استعداد للاتصال بي بشأن الجولة الثانية من المقابلات المعمقة وإدخال بيانات المتصل. لقد غيرت رأيي. هل يمكنك إزالة بيانات المتصل من الملف؟

نعم نستطيع. يرجى الاتصال بالدكتورة ليا مولر فونك (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) وستتم إزالة بيانات المتصل بريدك الإلكتروني.

بمن يمكنني الاتصال إذا كانت لدي أسئلة أو مخاوف؟

يمكنك الاتصال بـ د.ليا مولر فونك (lea.mueller-funk@donau-uni.ac.at) أو رئيس لجنة الأخلاقيات بجامعة التعليم المستمر كريمس (ethikkommission@donau-uni.ac.at).

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