

**T.C.
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE**

**COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH PLACEMAKING:
CASE OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN QALAMOUN**

MASTER'S THESIS

MARIAM KOUZAYHA

ISTANBUL 2024

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ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH PLACEMAKING: CASE OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN QALAMOUN

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Master's Program in Architecture (English – Thesis)

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Nilay Ünsal Gülmez

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Displacement is an urban phenomenon, an inherent component of the urban landscapes of the latest century, and the "urban tale" of those displaced. The UNHCR estimated that the total number of people forcibly displaced worldwide have reached 103 million by 2022. As these groups enter a new social space, their integration is connected to creating their own "place." A key factor for a community's resilience is its people, and therefore, achieving placemaking for refugees assures successful recovery during a crisis.

Due to the situation in Syria, millions of Syrian refugees have become homeless, with most settling in neighbouring countries, including Lebanon. Even though Palestinian camps have existed for a long time, the Lebanese government refused to authorize Syrian camps. The "No camp" policy forced Syrians to live in private rented dwellings in cities and towns. This study aims to examine the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, shedding light on the effect of placemaking in such communities to achieve social resilience. An examination of Qalamoun, home to a large number of Syrian refugees in North Lebanon, is presented as a case study of refugees' settlements. In addition, this research provides recommendations for policymakers, using placemaking as an approach to creating a resilient community for refugees, using data accumulated from mixed research methods.

Keywords: Placemaking, Refugees, Community Resilience, Displacement, Lebanon.

ÖZ

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Yerinden edilme, son yüzyılın kentsel peyzajlarının içsel bir bileşenidir ve yerinden edilenlerin “kentsel hikaye” lerini içerir. BM Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği (UNHCR), 2022’ye gelindiğinde dünya çapında zorla yerinden edilen insanların toplam sayısının 103 milyona ulaştığını tahmin etmiştir. Bu gruplar yeni bir sosyal alana girdiklerinde, entegrasyonları kendi “yerlerini” bağlantılıdır. Bir topluluğun direnci için anahtar faktör insanlarıdır ve bu nedenle, mülteciler için yer kurma kriz sırasında başarılı bir iyileşmeyi garanti eder.

Suriye’deki durum nedeniyle, milyonlarca Suriyeli mülteci evsiz kalmış ve çoğu Lübnan da dahil olmak üzere komşu ülkelerde yerleşmiştir. Lübnan hükümeti, ülkede uzun zamandır var olan Filistin kamplarına rağmen, Suriyeli kamplarını yetkilendirmeyi reddetmiştir. “Kamp Yok” politikası, Suriyelileri şehirlerde ve kasabalarda kiraladıkları özel konutlarda yaşamaya zorlamıştır. Bu çalışma, Lübnan'daki Suriyeli mültecilerin durumunu ve bu tür topluluklarda yer kurma pratiklerinin sosyal dirençlilik oluşturmaya etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kuzey Lübnan'da büyük bir Suriyeli mülteci nüfusuna ev sahipliği yapan Kalamun'un incelenmesi, mülteci yerleşimlerinin bir vaka çalışması olarak sunulmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu araştırma, mülteciler için dirençli bir topluluk oluşturmak için bir yaklaşım olarak yer kurmayı kullanan politika yapıcılara öneriler sunar ve bu öneriler, karma araştırma yöntemlerinden elde edilen verileri kullanır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yer kurma, Mülteciler, Topluluk Direnci, Yerinden Edilme, Lübnan



To my family,

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Non-ID	Non-Identification
NPMLT	National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territories
PPS	Project for Public Spaces
U.S.	United States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VASyR	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Chapter 1

Introduction

The strength of a community is directly correlated to its relationship with its physical environment (Chamie, 2020). A resilient community can anticipate, adapt to, and withstand disasters while maintaining its fundamental assets, structure, and functions. Based on location, climate, economics, politics, and people, the pillars of resilience vary from one place to another. Therefore, the usefulness of resilience as such is limited if people of a place have little connection to the environment or interest in it (Pendley et al., 2021). A person's well-being and the ability to connect with and contribute to their community are both affected by displacement (Fawaz, 2017). Thus, migration is a key factor in shifting a city's urban dynamics (Pendley et al., 2021).

The connection between individuals and their immediate environment, defined as placemaking (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995), plays a role in the lives of refugees. This connection, understood through a phenomenological lens defining “place” holds immense significance within the context of the right to the city, emphasizing the need for a successful integration approach within the host community (Brand et al., n.d). Creating resilient cities relies on making places that are able to endure crisis. These places are built on shared values, community strength, and cooperation across different parts of society, all of which are key elements for placemaking (Ley, 2019).

The impact of placemaking goes beyond the emotional connections people form with their surroundings. It directly affects a community's ability to deal with important social issues (Gotham & Cheek, 2018). Studies show that a city evolves when its residents feel a connection to it. This sense of belonging not only enriches the socio-cultural fabric but also impacts the city's physical and economic health (Harvey, 2008). Nevertheless, the depth of this connection depends on the safety and maintenance of the environment. A safe environment and active refugee community involvement are key to defining the meaning and use of a place (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995).

The understanding of the connection between placemaking, migration and the establishment of resilient communities is important for this study. As urban environments evolve due to global migrations, social, cultural, and environmental

coalescence play a great role in the transformation of refugees' sense of place. By exploring those themes, we gain knowledge to foster inclusive communities, strengthening social ties and creating refugee communities that are not only resilient but also empathetic and fulfilling for everyone. This research aims to expand the knowledge of human-environment interactions and also to provide urban planners and decision makers with the relevant information enabling them to develop resilient, sustainable, harmonious urban spaces for diverse populations.

1.1 Background

The case of Syrian refugees is considered one of the most protracted and complex humanitarian crises in recent time. Since 2011, more than 13.5 million Syrians have been displaced as a result with over 80% of them lives in neighbouring countries including Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey (UNHCR, 2022). Although Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol, it retains the geographical limitation, granting refugee status only to individuals from Europe (Council of Europe member countries) who meet the Convention's criteria. Asylum-seekers from outside Europe are considered "conditional refugees" if they meet the 1951 Convention criteria, therefore Syrians are granted "Temporary Protection" status. Despite this, Turkey has hosted the world's largest asylum-seeker inflows, comprising nearly 3.7 million Syrians under temporary protection (Erdoğan, 2021).

The Lebanese government refused to authorize formal camps for Syrians refugees due to the past association and very long history of Palestinian camps and related militarization (Zaiter, 2017). The Palestinian crisis has been a driving factor in the decision to implement a "no-camp" policy in Lebanon. 450,000 Palestinians have officially registered to reside in these camps and other settlements throughout the country (UNRWA, 2014). Over 68 years have passed since the camps were established. Given this 'no camp' policy, Syrians are limited to living in privately leased housing in cities or informal settlements constructed on private, often agricultural property (UNHCR, 2019). As the slum areas in Lebanon continued to expand with each wave of refugees, local tenants moved to more central areas, therefore creating a major segregation issue within the two communities. As housing

is a crucial part of a proper life for refugees, it is also a major element of their integration within the local community (Fawaz, 2017).

As a result of the country's current problems, poverty in Lebanon has worsened. This has impeded the ability of marginalized communities to get shelter and other necessities. As a result of war and displacement, many vulnerable Lebanese and displaced people now live in overcrowded, underprivileged urban districts in major cities (Vaudetti et al., 2017). Housing is a problem for low-income Lebanese and refugees alike. The rental market is answering to the ongoing social, economic, and financial issues coupled with the cutback of fuel, food, and medical subsidies. As a result, renter/owner disputes have become more common with more cases of threatened eviction, litigation, and social conflict around renter obligations. The VASyR 2021 by UNHCR reports that 57% of Syrian refugee families live in unsafe, poor, or overcrowded housing (UNHCR, 2021).

The northern region of Lebanon is defined by poverty, high concentration of refugees, and the highest rate of unemployment in the country. Out of the total population of about 1.1 million, around 64% live below the poverty line (UNOCHA, 2016). Decades of civil strife and instability have pushed the Northern Lebanon in a state of economic fragility. This has been a challenge for the local population especially with the arrival of Syrian refugees. The Lebanese Civil War led to a drastic decline in industrial activity, with most investment now flowing into the capitol Beirut instead. The number of Syrian refugees entering Northern Lebanon has significantly increased since the crisis started, primarily because of its close proximity to war areas such as Homs, Hama, and Idleb. Prior to the implementation of more stringent entrance criteria in October 2015, the Aboudiyeh border crossing was accommodating a daily influx of between 4,000 to 5,000 individuals (UNHCR, 2021a).

Qalamoun, situated on the outskirts of the northern capital, Tripoli, boasts a rich history spanning 5000 years. Originally an agricultural settlement, it evolved into a significant centre for metalworking, particularly in copper, brass, and bronze. This transformation took place several decades ago when artisans moved from Tripoli's traditional market to Qalamoun, establishing it as a notable hub for metal craftsmanship (Municipality of Qalamoun, 2016). Today, the town formerly known for its old Lebanese families hosts over 2,000 Syrian refugees within its borders (UNHCR, 2022). Its location on the outskirts of major cities and its reputation as a

safe conservative town made it the best refuge for low-income families of Syrian refugees running from the ongoing Syrian conflict.

1.2 Research Motivation

As I have lived most of my life in my hometown Qalamoun in northern Lebanon, I did not experience refugee communities until the war in Syria started in 2011. Even though Palestine refugees had settled in Lebanon for decades, refugee camps scattered along the country's borders were a possibility for them, and the majority preferred to establish their communities there. Considering that the restrictions between our borders were non-existent, Syrian refugees moved to the northern and eastern parts of the country. As a small town where everyone knew each other, my town residents had a tough time accepting displaced Syrians into their community. As the Syrian issue prolonged over time, these refugees became neighbours, colleagues, friends, and family; they became part of the community and created a place for them to call home. Unfortunately, with the no-camp policy in Lebanon, Syrian refugees had to either go for affordable housing with bad living situations or stay in informal settlements.

My interest in this area further developed when my family started to spread around the world, with all my siblings living in different countries while I moved to Turkey. I began to wonder how to find a place for myself to call home. I searched for a way to integrate myself within my new community, having my new house as a safe space where I can feel secure within its walls. Connecting with my family members abroad and listening to them describe their daily lives in their pristine environment posed questions for me: What is home? How can we create a place for ourselves in a foreign place? How can the house we feel safe in play a role in helping us integrate more with our new surroundings? Furthermore, with us being on the more privileged side, how can refugees, who leave their homes behind, create a resilient place for themselves? Therefore, I dedicated my thesis to answering these questions and shedding light on Syrian refugee issues in my hometown.

1.3 Research Problem and Aim

To explore placemaking as a role in community resilience in the Qalamoun, my research was guided by a main question: how can placemaking play a role in creating a resilient community for displaced Syrian refugees in Lebanon?

This study aims to examine the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, shedding light on the integration of refugees in the urban and social context in the Qalamoun. Permanent changes to the neighbourhood's physical structure and way of life were brought about by the arrival of Syrian refugees. To meet their housing needs, tenants have found ways to increase the number of available dwellings, such as using garage spaces or dividing current ones. Some people have rented out temporary housing, while others have found abandoned or partially built homes to rent. This solution satisfied the need for low-cost housing. However, this did not guarantee a basic level of comfort and safety.

An examination of the urban fabric, the Qalamoun may contribute to the formation of a range of planning suggestions for tackling the most pressing problems facing the refugees, and from which lessons may be drawn up for other areas of Northern Lebanon. The study focuses on the role of placemaking in forming a resilient community to eliminate segregation within the town. For this reason, the thesis intends to be a resource for decision-makers and human rights organizations dealing with situations of a related kind in Lebanon.

1.4 Methodology and Data Collection

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis to answer the main question. Initially, scholarly research is conducted to understand the concepts of placemaking, resilience, and their connection, including past research papers, books, and published articles.

The research is grounded in the theoretical framework of placemaking, which explores the interrelation between place and resilience. Engaging with literature surrounding the placemaking of displaced immigrants facilitates a broader understanding of the town's resilience. Such a framework guides the investigation of

the case study of the Qalamoun and identifies the elements necessary to formulate the study results.

The main social analysis of the community is based on three methods designed to investigate placemaking initiatives among Syrian refugees in Qalamoun, Lebanon. The first method is an observation to examine physical components in order to discover indicators of placemaking and document the state of infrastructure, public spaces, and housing situations. The second method of the study is administering questionnaires to Syrian refugees in order to collect quantitative data regarding their general situation. The last method involves conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews to gain further insight into community-based initiatives and urban transitions. The sample for the interview is selected among the participants of the questionnaire and includes Syrian refugees living in the Qalamoun from various age groups, occupations, and backgrounds. The interview covers everyday life and daily routines, significant people, places, open-ended questions regarding refugees' opinions, efforts at cultural expression and placemaking, and visions. It also includes questions concerning living conditions, housing problems, infrastructure availability, and economic/civic situation. Using thematic analysis, the collected data revealed valuable information about themes such as community resilience and social integration, which aims enhance the overall efforts for the processes of placemaking in Qalamoun.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This thesis focuses on the role of placemaking for displaced Syrian refugees in Qalamoun to achieve social resilience. The research is divided into five chapters. The first and fifth chapters comprise the introduction and conclusion, respectively. The main body of this thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter 2 set the conceptual framework identifying the notions of placemaking, displacement, resilience, and the connection between them, and the people. Therefore, it demonstrates how a “place” is of critical value for displaced populations and how placemaking shall be regarded as one of the main foundations for community resilience building through the contributions of multiple active actors.

The third chapter explores the various challenges and actions associated with the spread of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The analysis starts by examining the displacement of Syrians and the mechanisms adopted by host nations, focusing more particularly on the historical approach of Lebanon in regard to refugee issues. This chapter deals with Lebanon's intensive efforts when it comes to the Syrian displacement problem, which include the “No-Camp” policy for Syrian refugees, government-devised crisis management plans, and the undertaking of a sheltering strategy to accommodate displaced populations. Moreover, it gives a detailed review of settlement geographical distribution and density of Syrian refugees in the Lebanese territory thus informing the spatial patterns of the refugees countrywide. To provide a detailed insight into displaced populations’ urbanization process, the chapter particularly studies the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon as an illustration case.

The fourth chapter introduces the specific case study of Syrian refugees within the Qalamoun. It begins by providing a comprehensive overview of the Qalamoun town, contextualizing the subsequent analysis. The chapter then elucidates the research design and methodology employed, detailing the approach taken to gather and analyse data. Further discussion centres on the sampling strategy implemented, shedding light on the selection criteria of both questionnaire and semi-structured interview participants. The process of data analysis is outlined, explaining the methods utilized to derive meaningful insights from the collected data. The empirical findings are presented in three themes: social and community engagement, housing and physical environment, and economic and civic engagement. Each subsection explores the relevant findings and their implications for refugee communities in Qalamoun. Additionally, chapter 4 visually presents multiple efforts made by Syrian refugees toward cultural expression within the public spaces of the Qalamoun. Finally, the chapter concludes with a synthesized discussion of the empirical findings, drawing connections to earlier hypotheses and theoretical frameworks. Recommendations for policymakers are provided based on the insights gleaned from the analysis, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of placemaking and community resilience among Syrian refugees in Qalamoun.

The conclusion chapter assess and interpret the analysis of placemaking dynamics among Syrian refugees and their communities and their integration in the Qalamoun community. These insights contribute to both theory and practice,

highlighting the importance of understanding and fostering community resilience within refugee populations. Within the context of this chapter, we make recommendations for future research that provide avenues for further exploration and deepen our understanding of refugee settlement dynamics and resilience-building efforts, building upon the insights gleaned from the study of placemaking among Syrian refugees.

The conclusions of this study must be considered in the context of certain constraints. Alongside observations and the questionnaire, the in-depth data is collected through the semi-structured interviews with voluntary refugees within Qalamoun. Therefore, the research is based on a small sample of people who resided in a specific location, which makes this study difficult to generalize to larger scopes.

In addition, information collected from people can sometimes be biased according to their views, experiences, or age group. Understanding the efforts at placemaking and cultural expression within the new place can vary between refugees based on multiple external factors, so drawing a generalized conclusion will be inaccurate.

Furthermore, since I am living and writing this study in Türkiye, the time allocated to fieldwork was limited to three weeks. Given the importance of the field analysis required in this topic, the set time might be insufficient to obtain an adequate amount of data. A more extended time for the site could be a chance for a more detailed and elaborate analysis. Also, the unstable political conditions in Lebanon throughout the research period posed a serious safety issue.

Chapter 2

Placemaking as a Tool for Resilience

At a time of mass migration, increasing inequity, political instability, and global warming, modern cities confront difficulties amid intensifying tensions. As cities worldwide continue to urbanize, the susceptibility of urban areas to such issues increases consistently. In addition, the ambiguity that accompanies all of this in a post-disaster context allows a better understanding of the difficulty of transitioning from rebuilding to regenerating disaster-affected cities.

The escalating susceptibility of urban areas to disasters is exerting distinct strains on societies. The resilience of a city is reliant upon the resilience of its inhabitants, thus emphasizing the importance of prioritizing the well-being of communities to achieve an effective recovery. Strengthening the connections between communities and their places can result in the construction of a resilient community that is capable of withstanding unexpected events. Placemaking is a vital component in the conversion of a physical area into a meaningful space where individuals gradually construct a meaningful place and are motivated to collectively envision and revitalize it.

Therefore, the presence of growing communities has a considerable influence on the capacity to tackle significant societal issues. Several studies have demonstrated that a solid “sense of place” is essential not just for personal health and wellness, but also for the economic and physical well-being of urban areas (Harvey, 2008; Smith et al., 2017; Avi et al., 2021). Engaging in the construction of a place’s significance and utility contributes to the overall experience of that place. The likelihood of individuals forming strong links and investment in a location is diminished when there exists a considerable risk of the place’s unsustainability. The prioritization of placemaking is imperative for the cultivation of resilience, which in turn is a crucial component for the allocation of resources toward place-based development.

2.1 Placemaking and Sense of Place

The term “place” encompasses various meanings, including geographical significance, hierarchical position, time, and social status (Tuan 1974). Historically, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle laid the groundwork for understanding place, which evolved over time to include notions of location, locales, and sense of place (Angnew, 2011). Modern advancements in communication and transportation have reshaped social interactions, allowing individuals to connect across geographical boundaries (Farinelli, 2003). The concept of placemaking emerged as a response to criticisms of urban spaces lacking a sense of place, emphasizing community engagement, human-centred design, and the development of vibrant public spaces. Scholars like Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl played pivotal roles in advocating for the importance of diverse, mixed-use neighbourhoods and inclusive public spaces (Gehl, 2010; Jacobs, 1961). Today, placemaking extends beyond physical transformation to encompass holistic, human-oriented interpretations of place, emphasizing community engagement, cultural integration, and the empowerment of local residents in shaping their urban environment (Frinch et al., 2016).

2.1.1 What is a place? The task of transforming a commonly used term like “place” into a concept that possesses a specific and functional definition can prove to be challenging. The scholarly discourse connected to place, and the associated concept of placemaking, is experiencing a notable expansion within various fields of study including architecture.

The term “place” comprises various meanings, including its geographical significance as a designated area where individuals reside collectively, a specific locality. Additionally, it represents a hierarchical position in a list, as exemplified by the phrase “in the first place,” a time, as in the occurrence of an event, and social status, as in the notion of “knowing your place” within a societal structure (Tuan 1974). Despite the diverse interpretations, the geographical connotations of the term “place” have held the most significance over an extensive period, particularly within philosophical discourse. Plato and Aristotle, who are considered fundamental philosophers, utilized concepts similar to the contemporary English term “geographic place” in the form of *Chôra* and *Topos* (Angnew, 2011). The recent concept of space

can be traced back to the latter, although the term was coined in the 17th century. According to Italian geographer Franco Farinelli (2003), Two separate meanings of place can be identified with the ancient Greeks:

“Place ... is a part of the terrestrial surface that is not equivalent to any other, that cannot be exchanged with any other without everything changing. Instead with space [place as location] each part can be substituted for another without anything being altered, precisely how when two things that have the same weight are moved from one side of a scale to another without compromising the balance.”

The notion of “place” is utilized in diverse manners; however, its definition can be clarified by considering three aspects that frequently emerge in different theoretical stances: location, locales, and sense of place (Agnew, 2011). Firstly, the place is defined as a position or location in a geographical space in which an activity or item is placed and is related to other places through interaction, mobility, and connection. Any form of settlement is always an element of a network of places with movement built into the connection between them. Secondly, two centuries ago, the term "locales" referred to geographical locations. The predominant mode of social interaction then occurred through in-person communication within designated physical settings. In this context, the location encompasses more than just a physical address; it represents the spatial dimension of social interactions and environmental changes in daily existence such as workplaces, religious buildings, public spaces, etc. These settings, by their organization of interpersonal dynamics, contribute to the development and consolidation of societal norms, belief systems, and conduct patterns. Finally, the third aspect refers to the “sense of place,” which encompasses an individual's perception and connection to a specific location, including its distinct community, physical environment, and ethical framework. In this architectural design, each location possesses distinct characteristics, hence rendering it unique and individual. The presence of a profound feeling of “belonging” to a particular location, whether it is a conscious sentiment or demonstrated via regular engagement in place-related actions, can be recognised as an articulation of a “sense of place” (Agnew, 2011).

Places are not regarded as independent entities, as regional studies have typically perceived them to be. Instead, it is common for them to be situated inside a multitude

of expansive social, political, and economic systems of diverse geographical extent, particularly in the context of an increasingly globalized world (Amin, 2004). The advancement and widespread of communication technologies (telegraph, phone, television, and radio) and the transportation innovations (trains, vehicles, and air travel) facilitated the separation of physical proximity from geographical location. The scope of social interaction expanded beyond physical proximity, enabling people to connect with others remotely (Agnew, 2011). The advent of contemporary travel and communication has facilitated social interaction across various geographical locations. The geographical limitations on the individuals with whom social interactions occur are progressively diminishing (Agnew, 2009). In contemporary society, individuals tend to select individuals to engage with based on shared professions, personal or vocational hobbies, religious convictions, political ideologies, linguistic backgrounds, and cultural ancestries, as opposed to solely relying on physical proximity (Agnew, 2011).

The concept of place, as a cohesive entity comprising its established, interpreted, and lived forms, has been proposed by several prominent theorists in subsequent years following Lefebvre's seminal work "The Production of Space" in 1991 (Cresswell, 2004). Lefebvre argued that people are responsible for constructing the physical and conceptual environment in which they reside. They actively meld this space to align with their own goals and consistently perpetuate it via their deliberate intents (Lefebvre, 1991). According to his perspective, space possesses an organic and alive nature, hence exhibiting a dynamic element. He posits his spatial triad in which space is a social construct including three essential elements. This framework helps analyse how power relations, social practices, and cultural meanings shape the way space is produced and experienced in society (Lefebvre, 1991):

- Perceived Space: The spaces we come across and experience daily are referred to as 'perceived spaces.' It encompasses the material and experiential facets of space that our senses allow us to experience. Due to subjective experiences and perceptions, each person's view of space is unique and liable to change.
- Conceived Space: Architects, urban planners, and other authorities represent, plan, and conceptualize space in this way. It consists of official renderings of space, including plans for cities, maps, and architectural styles. 'Conceived

space' is a more organized, abstract form of space that frequently reflects the goals and ideas of its designers.

- **Lived Space:** The space that is inhabited and occupied by people and groups is referred to as 'lived space,' social space, or experienced space. It includes the social connections, contexts of culture, and individual experiences that people connect to a specific area. People's social behaviours and actions inside a particular space shape lived space, which is dynamic.

According to Montgomery's proposal, a clear structure can be utilized to identify the place as comprising of form, activity, and visual aesthetics. The "form" of a place is defined by the layout of its buildings, streets, and public spaces, giving it a unique character. The events and cultural exchanges as well as the residents' regular activities that take place here are of equal importance. Having a wide variety of things to do gives the area a sense of vitality and makes it more interesting and enjoyable. Further, the "visual aesthetics" ensure the place is visually appealing and consistent through public art, landscaping, and lighting (Montgomery, 1998). Apart from individuals, the influence of variables must also be considered when considering the development of a location. The concept consists of three primary elements: the physical attributes, the local experiences within the environment, and the significance derived from individuals' encounters within the physical setting (Montgomery, 1998). The resolution of issues about a particular location can be addressed not solely through design, but also by comprehending it as an evolving system of management situated within the urban policy framework and the broader economic social structures in which they are situated (Relph, 1976). Relph, a Canadian geographer, posits that places cannot be solely constructed in a physical sense but are also imbued with social significance. The concept of placemaking necessitates an integrated approach that encompasses not just the physical outcome, but also the socio-economic, and organizational processes involved, alongside the views and experiences of individuals within a given place and the contextual factors that influence it (Relph, 1976).

2.1.2 Making the "Place": Placemaking. The notion of a sense of place is a multifaceted and intricate concept that is utilized by various fields and theoretical frameworks. Its meaning is multi-layered and subject to debate. The term "genius loci" is frequently employed as a means of describing the unique attributes and

characteristics of a particular location. A term first introduced by Norberg-Schulz, a Norwegian phenomenologist and architect, in 1980, also refers to the act of experiencing a place as an outsider providing a direct means of understanding its significance to the local community (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). The concept of “sense of place” is determined by both tangible elements, such as the buildings, architectural style, notable features, proximity, and economic potential of organizations, as well as intangible factors, including culture, principles, shared memories, and mutual needs. These attributes may include topography, beliefs, and the psychological connection that individuals have with the place. Alternatively, the term may refer to the sentimental connection, reliance, and sense of identity that individuals have with a location (Norberg-Schulz, 1980).

How individuals establish a connection with their surroundings, commonly referred to as their sense of place, is impacted by how they construct significance through their experiences, perceptions, emotions, interpretations, sensations, and recollections of a particular location (Relph, 1976). The process is influenced by past encounters and individual traits and is subject to change over time. Moreover, individuals impact one another in their process of constructing meaning and are impacted by factors such as regional cultural differentiation, economic conditions, environmental factors, and geographical features (Rapoport, 1982). The establishment of a sense of place engenders a sense of ownership, positive affect, dedication, and self-esteem, and it fosters the development of personal and shared identities (Relph, 1976).

Placemaking emerged as a reaction to criticisms of urban spaces lacking a sense of place, which were produced by contemporary urban planning. During the early 1960s, Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, Aldo Rossi, and other scholars engaged in a discourse regarding the significance of a “sense of place” in urban design. They posited that it plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of community and involvement. The response to the concept of “Placelessness” has undergone a gradual transformation, whereby practical measures have been implemented to tackle more profound concerns such as equitable social conditions, financial revitalization, and communal advancement (Samaha, 2015). The notions of place attachment, identity and collective memory are the primary components of place making process and play a fundamental role in it (Rapoport, 1982). Placemaking incorporates the physical dimension,

including the physical layout, aesthetics, accessibility, and sustainability of a place, as well as the social dimension which pertains to the individuals and groups responsible for the effective utilization and reception of spaces.

The urban regions are considered by Jane Jacobs as being similar in structure as the living organism. She stated that the street serves as a vital component of urban infrastructure, functioning as a rejuvenating force for the city (Jacobs, 1961). Within this particular context, she asserts that public life oriented towards the street can enhance the safety of urban areas. Also, she further proposes that small businesses situated within housing areas may serve as a means of surveillance. As per Jacobs' research, exposure to urban streets results in the development of social bonds and a feeling of belongingness. Furthermore, Jacobs utilized empirical data gathered from her local community in New York to emphasize the social and material dimensions of urban environments. She highlighted the significance of distinguishing between public and restricted areas, as well as utilizing public spaces during both daytime and nighttime to promote safety and increase community surveillance (Jacobs, 1961). Jacobs emphasizes the significance of economic heterogeneity, mixed land use, compact urban blocks to facilitate social interaction, and diverse architectural styles, including affordable, older structures to promote social diversity. Based on her research, she deduces that these factors also play a role in fostering a lively community and the phenomenon known as the "sidewalk ballet" (Jacobs, 1961). The individual posits that diversity manifests itself within public domains and urban planners must take this into account, along with the organizing components of the city, including transportation. She also elaborates that the configuration of a city is subject to the impact of authority dynamics, whereby influential urban planners hold the authority to determine its layout (Jacobs, 1961).

In addition, Architect Jan Gehl's studies established the groundwork for the social components and use of public spaces. He conducted an initial exploration into the psychological effects of public spaces on individuals. According to Gehl (2010), high-quality physical environments, specifically, plazas and sidewalks, facilitate the occurrence of "optional and resultant" interactions in public spaces:

"When outdoor areas are of poor quality, only strictly necessary activities occur. When outdoor areas are of high quality, necessary activities take place with approximately the same frequency – though they clearly tend to take a longer

time, because the physical conditions are better. In addition, however, a wide range of optional activities will also occur because places and situations now invite people to stop, sit, eat, play, and so on. In streets and city spaces of poor quality, only the bare minimum of activity takes place. People hurry home. In a good environment, a completely different, broad spectrum of human activities is possible.”

Although the precise terminology of "placemaking" may not have been defined during the era of Gehl and Jacobs, their significant contributions established the groundwork for the present-day placemaking movement. This movement prioritizes community engagement, design centred around human needs, and the development of vibrant and inclusive public spaces within urban settings; focuses on how city designing should be in a human scale that supports human interaction, then brings up the message that public spaces are the way to improve social interactions and community relationship (Gehl, 2010). The substantial role of Gehl's work for the placemaking principle cannot be overstated, as it is the main idea of building diversity for often populated and communally bonded public spaces. Jacobs highlighted the importance of building diverse, mixed-use neighbourhood, encouraging for the walkable streets, and promoting the existence of local businesses, as these key factors that lead to the ultimate vibrant urban communities (Jacobs, 1961). These notions match significantly with the theories of placemaking, in which the local residents should be actively engaged in the processes of boosting and improvement of their communities.

Nowadays, the role of placemaking is changing profoundly. It is no longer a physical transfiguration of space, but a holistic and human-oriented interpretation of place. The values of community-based engagement and cultural integration now go into placemaking as well adding vibrancy to the social well-being of a community, *“Placemaking is concerned with belonging, meaning, attachment, inclusiveness and community”* (Frinch et al, 2016). This transformation of perspective carries the seed of understanding that places are not simply arising and are the result of the culture and spatial practices of the people who give meaning to them. As stated by Silberberg, *“Present-day placemaking is a response to the systematic destruction of human-friendly and community-centric spaces of the early 20th century”* (Silberberg et al., 2013). The widely known concept of the “right to the city” empowers people to

participate in urban decisions. The Project for Public Spaces PPS project expands this idea further by pointing out that it is “*the right to create, to participate, to be represented; it is the right to see oneself reflected in the place they live*” (PPS, 2015), which puts people’s positions and right in a central position in the processes of placemaking.

2.2 Refugees and Creating A “Place”

The exploration of the dynamic interplay between displacement and refugees is traced back to the historical roots of migration patterns and urbanization dynamics by Ravenstein's Laws of Migration (1885), serving as foundational insights into these phenomena. Forced migration emerges as a prevalent urban issue, prompting discussions on the role of placemaking in refugee integration processes (Galbally, 1978; Silberberg, 2013). Understanding the concept of placemaking as an aspect of refugee integration is emphasized by the role of cultural identity, community participation, and inclusive urban development strategies. Throughout, theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and resilience of displaced populations. In addition, in this thesis, we refer to displaced Syrians as “refugees.” While it is understood that many displaced Syrians in Lebanon may not be officially recognized as refugees by the host country or under international law, the term “refugee” is used here to highlight their forced displacement and the humanitarian context of their situation.

2.2.1 Displacement: A journey of people and places. Migration is an essential aspect in the narrative of human history. Through the recorded history many people were motivated to migrate to new territories looking for home and new territories to inhabit (Ravenstein, 1889). The disciplines of migration studies and urban studies date back to the mid- to late 19th and early 20th century and mostly discuss Europe and North America. German-English geographer Ernst Georg Ravenstein wrote a series of rules known as “Ravenstein's Laws of Migration” in 1885 (Ravenstein, 1885). The findings of Ravenstein’s “Laws of Migration” imply that the urbanization was the main reason for the scientists’ scientific attention in the subject of the migration. Ravenstein’s work was further elaborated upon in 1889 act as the main basis for

understanding the cyclical patterns and determinants of migration. Migration may be caused by diverse external stimuli as people both voluntarily and reluctantly migrate (Lee, 1969).

The phenomenon of forced migration mainly happens in urban space that eventually shapes contemporary urban landscapes. Essentially, it depicts a tale of urban displacement by individuals (Lee, 1969). Upon entering to a different place, refugees bring with them specific cultural elements and have a special standing in the socio-economic aspect of the community. Forced migration may come up due to natural disasters or it might be an indirect result of poor infrastructure functioning that can have a negative impact on local and regional economies. The nature of displacement can be classified as either short or long term regarding the severity of the disaster and the area's recovery capacity. An increase in the frequency and intensity of the natural disasters occurs as the climate change is intensifying. Therefore, more and more people have to move from their places of residence in a forced manner (Jayawardhan, 2017).

Investigating forced migration issues from the standpoint of various theoretical frameworks gives a valuable foresight on the intricacies that world's refugees currently face. As shown in Table 1, “conflict theory, the role of political unrest and violence in displacing societies is the real issue, whereas in “the push-pull theory” a holistic model provides a good explanation for the reasons why people migrate, considering both positive and negative factors. “The theory of structural violence” provides a clear understanding of the consequences of structural inequalities, which require individuals to independently navigate and address difficulties within their own communities. “The network theory” on the other hand, brings forward the ability of social bonds in helping migrants through their trips. For the “human rights theory”, the fight for safety and dignity becomes the central concern for the displaced people. Finally, “environmental migration theory” integrates the environmental causes of forced migration such as ecological factors and declining resources. The community's capability to adapt, resist, and rebuild in the face of overwhelming challenges is a confirmation of different theories together, showing the power of the human spirit to overcome adversity. And the role of these theories in policy formulation and targeting interventions cannot be underrated. Policymakers and humanitarian organizations that acquire knowledge of these theories, can implement more effective policies to deal with the problems of

displaced populations. In addition, these theories also become a source of the ground for the foundation of effective and well-designed solutions to the refugee crisis including the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis.

Table 1

Key Theoretical Approaches to Forced Migration

Theoretical Approach	Description	Main Contributors	Key Concepts	Date
Conflict	Forced migration often arises from conflicts, wars, and political turmoil, where individuals and groups are displaced due to violence and insecurity.	Max Weber	Power struggles, social inequality, and political unrest contribute to the displacement of populations.	19 th century
Push-Pull	Migration is defined as departure of the person from their place of origins with the aim to move to another place that often creates "push " and "pull" factors.	Everett S. Lee	All factors referred to as push factors are crises like poverty, war, and environmental disasters, while all factors that we name pull factors are advantages like job opportunities, improved living conditions, and political stability.	1950s
Structural Violence	Structural factors, such as economic and political inequalities, can lead to forced migration as individuals and communities seek safety from violence and oppression.	Johan Galtung, Paul Farmer	The harm caused by unequal power structures, including poverty, discrimination, and human rights abuses.	1960s
Social Network	Social networks and connections play a crucial role in migration decisions. Individuals may be influenced by family, friends, or community members who have already migrated.	Mark Granovetter	The importance of interaction and the exchange of knowledge in influencing migratory behaviours.	1970s
Human Rights	Human rights misconduct induces forced migration. It claims that deprived or endangered fundamental freedoms lead individuals to leave.	Eleanor Roosevelt	Everyone has the inherent right to get refuge from danger.	Mid-20 th century
Environmental Migration	Forced migration is driven by ecological factors such as declining resources, catastrophes, and global warming.	Norman Myers	The impact of environmental changes on displacement and the need for adaptation and mitigation strategies.	Late 20 th century

Source: Lee, 1966; Farmer, 2004; Granovetter, 1983; Weber, 1978; Roosevelt, 1949; Myers, 1993.

As explained in Table 1, a sociological perspective known as “conflict theory” emphasizes how power, inequality, and social conflict shape human societies. The

application of “conflict theory” to the Syrian refugee crisis offers a thorough framework for comprehending the factors that have resulted in the forced migration of millions of Syrians. Different political groups are fighting in Syria. This power struggle has led to a humanitarian crisis characterized by violence, disintegration of social and economic institutions, and persecution. Furthermore, the applicability of “human rights theory” is demonstrated by the fact that political repression and violence against civilians constitute human rights violations that have been a primary impetus for Syrians to abandon their country. Also, as in Lee’s “push-pull theory,” pull factors such as safety and stability provided, and economic possibilities draw Syrian refugees to host countries. Push factors such as violence, persecution, economic hardship, conflict, bloodshed, and human rights violations are the reasons why Syrian refugees leave their country.

2.2.2 Refugees and Placemaking: Building Community. Refugees are individuals who have been forced to abandon all that they have and seek refuge in a foreign nation in pursuit of safety. The 1951 Refugee Convention, also known as the “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees”, was issued by the United Nations to provide a universal definition for refugees in 1951 (United Nations, 1951). Before January 1, 1951, the protection of refugee status was limited to Europeans. This was because the UNHCR was established in the aftermath of the Second World War to assist the countless numbers of Europeans who were either uprooted or left without a home. The UN was obligated to tackle concerns about refugees on a worldwide level, extending beyond Europe, due to the extensive displacement of humans caused by conflicts. Concerning the situation of Refugees, the “United Nations Protocol (1951)” further removed geographical and temporal limitations, thereby extending its scope to encompass individuals who are in search of asylum beyond national borders as defined below:

“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a

result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

The definition of a refugee in the United States was established by the Refugee Act (1980) as stated below:

“any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”

The resettlement process involves a lengthy and intricate adjustment to an unfamiliar environment after displacement. This experience significantly affects individuals who come from cultures distinct from that of their host community, especially when the hosting surroundings are vastly different from what they are familiar with (Galbally, 1978). The resettled individuals' lifestyle is influenced by their hometown's past practices in life, viewed through the framework of their distinct social norms, customs, and shared connections (Chambers, 1994). In his work, Chambers (1994) tackles the interplay of migration, culture, and identity through his analysis. The author analyses migratory experiences and their interaction with the cultural and social environments in which they are situated. The conceptions of placemaking, and sense of self remain critical factors in the relocation process, as this exercise entails the development and depiction of new ways of life. Long-lasting effect of transnationalism, where refugees hold their country of origin ever dear to heart while broadly engage with their host countries will add into the complexities of cultural identities. Sometimes, forced migration brings forth the individuals and groups to redefine their cultural identities in an unfamiliar and multicultural place where the identity changes might happen. Hence, refugees move between their cultural heritage and the societal ideologies of the host society, and the result of this interaction emerges in creating hybrid cultural identities (Chambers, 1994).

The connection between culture, place, and placemaking shows the relationships between these three concepts which require each other for the existence (Galbally,

1978). Place can be understood as a platform that is open to many different ways of culture expression through the practice of making place. At this point, place appears to be an environment where the character participates in certain events that determine the role they play in the world. As a result, they become identified with a particular “place”. The cultural products, including literature, art, music, and film, among others, represent the experiences and identities of refugees (Olwig & Hastrup, 1997). It helps preserve their cultural heritage and allows them to belong in foreign surroundings. By means of different art forms, refugees can still feel that they are in touch with their country of origin and that they form a community among themselves (Chambers, 1994). Cultural diversity through artistic production also serves to educate local residents about the history of refugees and their interactions within the community. (Olwig & Hastrup, 1997). Moreover, the art may serve the purpose of language acquisition, economic empowerment, as well as mental healing, and overall integration for refugees (Chambers, 1994). Cultural production inevitably becomes an important part of the refugee placemaking process, which enables a new identity of place and a sense of belonging.

Placemaking is a concept that tackles the typical top-down urban strategies by devolving some powers to communities where they can become real owners of their settings. It is interluded with social tie and community participation. Placemaking has the ability to create an environment that gives a strong sense of belonging and ensures renewed feelings of optimism by immigrants (Silberberg, 2013). Both placemaking and place-based strategies develop as the essential means to ensure social integration of the refugee population and protect their well-being. The determining factors behind any successful strategies are, how the host community people take in the government's recognition and acknowledgment of the existence and needs of refugees. The problems underlying the objectives of placemaking are further mirrored when one looks at refugees, as it is likely that refugee populations in general may experience alienation in locations that are supposed to be the very architects of their integration and feelings of belonging. (Gill, 2010). Guma (2019) points out the crucial role that local communities play in providing refugees with care or support. This, in turn, helps to enhance well-being of everyone as well as successful integration of refugees into the community.

2.3 Resilience Building of Refugee Communities

Displacement emerges into the very fabric of human history, a tale of people seeking new horizons and opportunities (Ravenstein, 1889). Yet, amidst the narratives of voluntary movement lies a stark reality – forced migration. Driven by crises ranging from natural disasters to political upheavals, this phenomenon disrupts lives and reshapes communities (Lee, 1969). For refugees, forced to flee their homelands in search of safety and security, displacement marks the beginning of an arduous journey. The struggle to rebuild their lives in unfamiliar territories is fraught with challenges, from cultural adaptation to economic integration (United Nations, 1951; Chambers, 1994). In this tumultuous journey, placemaking emerges as a beacon of hope, offering avenues for cultural preservation, social cohesion, and collective empowerment (Chambers, 1994).

Resilience, both individual and collective, aims to sustain communities in the face of adversity (Peacock et al., 1997). It is the resilience of individuals and the resilience of communities that enable them to weather the storms of displacement and emerge stronger on the other side (Tromeur et al., 2012). And in this journey towards resilience, placemaking assumes a pivotal role. By fostering social connections, preserving cultural identities, and empowering communities, placemaking becomes a catalyst for resilience, enabling communities to not just survive, but thrive amidst uncertainty (Leong et al., 2007).

2.3.1 Resilience: Physical and Social. Since the 1980s, when such a notion as “resilience” derived from the fields of ecology and social life studies was first introduced, scholars have used it to analyse a way of social physical system reacting to disasters. While resilience can be described as the ability to address the inevitable effects and challenges that come with a significant event featuring disruptions, it does it by effectively providing a recovery mechanism. The term resilience is gradually speculated to mean the inherent ability of organizations that can survive and even be capable of speedy recovery and continue their operations following catastrophes (Peacock et al., 1997). The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction UNDRR (2009) describe the “resilience” as:

“The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.”

The current emphasis in the field of resilience mostly revolves around physical aspects. Physical resilience in urban areas typically applies to the capacity to withstand or reduce the effects of hazards through modifications to infrastructure and/or design. Consequently, the concept of physical resilience, when used in the context of cities, corresponds to the general idea of urban resilience. The concept of urban resilience is a subject of debate due to the difficulty in clearly defining the terms “urban” and “resilience” individually, as well as the interdisciplinary nature of research in this field. As a result, definitions of urban resilience vary across different areas of study. It is defined, according to agriculture and ecology, by “. . . the degree to which cities tolerate alteration before reorganizing around a new set of structures and processes” (Alberti et al., 2003), or “. . . *the ability of a system to adjust in the face of changing conditions*” (Pickett et al., 2004). For engineers, urban resilience is “. . . *a sustainable network of physical systems and human communities*” (Godschalk, 2003) or “. . . *encompasses the idea that towns and cities should be able to recover quickly from major and minor disasters*” (Lamond and Proverbs, 2009). When for social science, Brown (2012) defined it as:

“. . . the capacity . . . to dynamically and effectively respond to shifting climate circumstances while continuing to function at an acceptable level. This definition includes the ability to resist or withstand impacts, as well as the ability to recover and re-organize in order to establish the necessary functionality to prevent catastrophic failure at a minimum and the ability to thrive at best.”

Moreover, resilience has an extensive historical background within the realm of psychology. Previous studies have aimed to address questions regarding the factors contributing to an individual’s higher resilience in the face of stress and ability to adapt to difficult conditions. The studies have also explored the associations between positive adjustment and adaptation, and various personality traits, cognitive styles, and coping mechanisms employed when confronted with difficulties in life (Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1987). According to Masten, resilience is a notion that involves two primary

forms of judgments, namely inferential and contextual assessments. The initial assessment pertains to the potential risks associated with the inference. The subsequent assessment included in an inference on resilience pertains to the standards used to evaluate the quality of adaptation or developmental outcome, determining whether it is deemed “good” (Masten, 2014).

In response to the influence of climate change on urban design, it is important for resilience initiatives to incorporate social concerns in addition to physical infrastructure. The implementation of a resilience strategy necessitates more than just modifications to our physical buildings. There is a growing acknowledgment among governments and catastrophe planners regarding the significance of social infrastructure, which includes individuals, and places. Social resilience, a people-centred concept, refers to the capacity of people, communities, populations to effectively adapt, recuperate, and flourish following challenges, crisis, or disruptions. These challenges can include natural disasters, economic crises, social conflicts, or other adverse events (Tromeur et al., 2012). Resilience has emerged under prominent focal point in scholarly investigations involving social-ecological systems. One of the fundamental concepts conveyed in Holling's (2003) work is that resilience may be understood as a metric for assessing the durability of systems and their capacity to absorb and adapt to perturbations and disruptions:

“Resilience, for social-ecological systems, is related to (a) the magnitude of shock that the system can absorb and remain within a given state, (b) the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization, and (c) the degree to which the system can build capacity for learning and adaptation. . . . More resilient social-ecological systems are able to absorb larger shocks without changing in fundamental ways. When massive transformation is inevitable, resilient systems contain the components needed for renewal and reorganization.”

Social resilience includes two components: Absorptive capacity, which refers to the ability to withstand disruptions and maintain a certain level of stability, and the capability to rebound, reorganize, and reinstate the operations of disturbed systems. Also, resilience encompasses more than just a restoration or substitution of a previous state. It entails reorganization, adaptation, and systemic changes (Folke et al. 2002).

The concept of community resilience necessitates the comprehensive examination of several aspects that extend beyond purely physical features. Such factors include social, economic, and institutional factors (Kwok et al, 2016). According to Kwok's article on "Social Resilience", the policy makers, emergency managers, and disaster researchers do not even agree on a common definition for this concept. In contrast, social resilience is better viewed as a multifaceted and holistic concept that encompasses social networks, adaptability, and community cohesion. Despite not having one definition, community resilience generally is understood as a crucial part of disaster risk reduction, helping in response, preparation, and recovery after disaster (Kwok et al, 2016).

2.3.2 The role of placemaking for community resilience. Since the 1990s, making space for people and the experiences of communities has profoundly shaped the way urban developments are carried out. Designers and planners have been able to maintain their share when it comes to urban planning by bringing focus to the role of shared public spaces and subsequently further emphasizing the concept of placemaking. In the realm of resilience, placemaking can be appreciated as a connected process aimed at accomplishing community resiliency. Placemaking and resiliency also feature collaborative efforts at strengthening bonds beyond the physical infrastructure and the confines of urban design (Ley, 2019).

Placemaking, in resilience, encompasses two distinct but interrelated dimensions: fusion of social placemaking and physical placemaking (Mehta, 2007). Social placemaking draws greater emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of space emphasizing community engagement, social interaction, and culture conservation. Its goals include building communal places which would be admired and accepted by the community by promoting social cohesion and communal activities such as events that celebrate local culture and history (Relph, 1976). However, physical placemaking addresses the spatial layout, infrastructure, and aesthetic features of an area, by involving city planners, architects, and designers. Although culture is involved, it focuses more on efficient land use and development of spaces for diverse functions and activities in the urban area (Steadman, 2003). Both dimensions are effective in

transforming the character of communities and the nature of that space, each adding their own characteristics to the whole environment.

Displacement leads to the establishment of a defined geographical area, where interventions, conflicts, and resistance give rise to the formation of a community framework. Therefore, the concept of "placemaking" may be employed as one of the common strategies aimed at the growth of community resilience (Maclean, 2013). This is because both placemaking and community resilience include collaborative actions, to foster social connections that go beyond physical infrastructure and the limitations of urban architecture. Community resilience is defined as the capacity of a community to withstand, adapt, and recover from disruptive crisis, including displacement, and still maintain its social fabric and cultural identity. These ideas have multiple connected factors (Leong et al, 2007):

- **Social Cohesion and Networks:** Passing on the skills to the community and building strong social ties and networks within facilitates mutual support, resource mobilization, and mutual assistance.
- **Cultural Identity and Heritage:** Cultural values and traditions provide a sense of belonging and unity during displacement and recovery.
- **Historical Context:** The community's history of migration and entrepreneurship influence their responses and adaptive capacity.
- **Community Engagement and Activism:** Active participation shapes recovery efforts and advocacy for community needs and interests.

2.4 Placemaking for Community Resilience among Displaced Populations: A Comprehensive Literature Review

The concept of placemaking is getting more attention among the urban planning and revitalization sectors. On the other hand, there are studies inquiring about how the idea of "placemaking" may be useful towards the building of a resilient community of displaced persons. The accounts demonstrate the effects of displacement and the act of creating a sense of place on the positive psychological well-being of individuals who have experienced such traumas. Resilience is a significant attribute that assists individuals in overcoming difficult and distressing events. The present research clearly

demonstrates the viability of combining the themes of resilience, migration, and placemaking.

Many scholars point out the power of placemaking to build a feeling of belonging and give identities to communities in the relocated areas. The experience of the European refugee crisis in 2015 was populated by an increase in the number of refugees who faced problems such as financial issues and discriminatory sentiments. It was emphasized that integration of newcomers and host societies is a two-way process which includes engagement of the parties and respect of each other. In order to decrease the risks of social isolation, the public spaces have been confirmed as primary places for the development of a sense of belonging and solidarity (Guma et al., 2019).

Following, Smith et al. (2017) carried out qualitative research inside a refugee camp in order to examine the effect of place making activities which included community gardens and art projects on the resilience and sense of community among the displaced people. The research results showed how such activities stand for numerous mental health benefits and help create a sense of community.

In 2018, a study focusing on Oromo and Somali refugees in Eastleigh, Nairobi did a highlight of those challenges which were associated with displacement, socioeconomic problems which they were facing and the uncertainties that were surrounding their resettlement. Even though they tried to get accustomed to the daily life activities, they couldn't really get that they were a part of society. The refugees' efforts to distinguish between "being acted upon and acting", as well as their ability to manage their behaviour, were crucial to the process of placemaking. (Johansson, 2018).

Besides, Upadhyay and Sa-ngiamwibool, (2021) conducted an exhaustive critique of "community disaster resilience", showing the lack of attention paid to this field and the need for further research in this direction. Avi, Dewi, and Pandin (2021) performed literature review on initiatives undertaken at national level for geostrategic resilience. Geostrategic resilience refers to a nation's ability to withstand and recover from various geopolitical challenges and disruptions, including political, economic, environmental, and security-related threats. Placemaking is shown to be pivotal in fostering a sense of belonging, boosting mental health, and developing social bonds.

The review concludes that the placemaking has the ability of strengthening the community resilience (Avi et al., 2021).

These studies may have provided important knowledge about the key role of placemaking in strengthening community resilience among displaced people, nonetheless, some constraints should be mentioned. While previous research has uncovered that placemaking is a vital lever in disaster preparedness of the inhabitants that can bring about the sense of ownership, belonging, and social ties, further research through empirical studies will help us understand the long-term effects of placemaking interventions and to arrive at a more in-depth comprehension of the effective workings of these initiatives in different situations.

2.5 Conceptual Framework: Placemaking for Community Resilience

The concept of “Placemaking for Community Resilience” has been proposed to demonstrate the interconnectedness of community for refugees, resilience, and placemaking efforts. This idea aims to illustrate how social, economic, physical recovery, and resilience are intertwined with placemaking approaches (see Figure 1). The term “placemaking” describes the place created to encourage social unity, cultural liveliness, and environmental viability. Here, placemaking extends beyond the concept of constructing physical community and infrastructure to include preparing a neighbourhood to withstand and adapt in post-crisis situations, such as displacement influx, by promoting a social framework that is accessible for recovery through community efforts.

The primary objective of the framework is to advocate the integration of Syrian refugees into their new community by incorporating the principles of placemaking. This involves fostering inclusivity, encouraging active participation, facilitating cultural expression, and promoting social interaction, all with the aim of establishing a resilient and adaptable society. This holistic approach acknowledges the complex character of resilience and the challenges it entails. Resilient societies do not simply endure crises but rather thrive and flourish by constantly adapting to ever-shifting conditions.

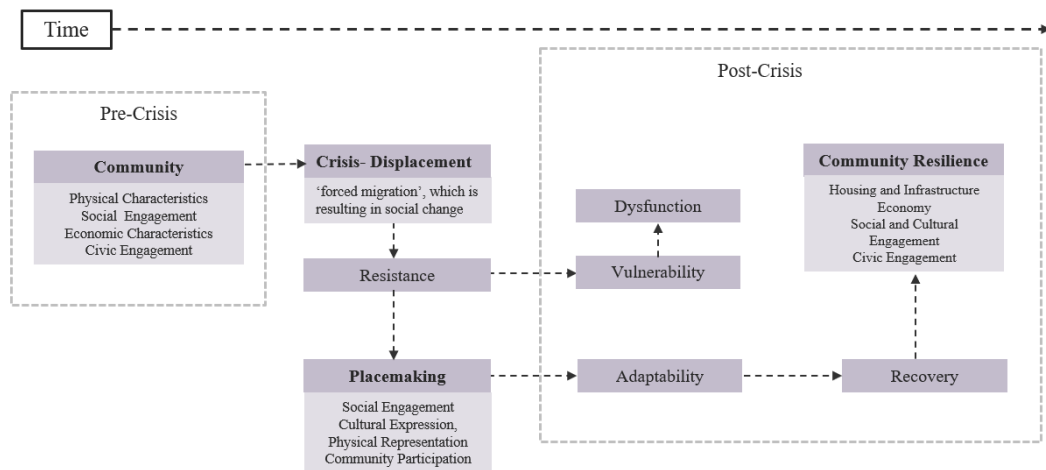


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of community resilience through placemaking

The framework illustrated in the diagram in Figure 1 captures the dynamic process of community transformation across three distinct phases: Pre-Crisis, Crisis - Displacement, and Post-Crisis. The Pre-Crisis community represents the baseline state of the community, characterized by its physical, social, economic, and civic attributes. Physical characteristics encompass the infrastructure, housing, and other physical assets. Social engagement refers to the level of social interaction and community bonding, while economic characteristics pertain to the economic activities and stability within the community. Civic engagement involves the participation of community members, both locals and refugees, in civic activities and decision-making.

As the crisis unfolds, the community experiences displacement, resulting in forced migration and subsequent social changes. This phase leads to significant change and upheaval. The community's initial reaction to the crisis involves resistance, where efforts are made to withstand the immediate impacts, maintain stability, and prevent further deterioration. In the post-crisis phase, vulnerability arises as a direct consequence of displacement and social change. It represents the community's susceptibility to further harm and dysfunction. Increased vulnerability can lead to dysfunction within the community systems, affecting social cohesion and functionality.

Placemaking is crucial in the road to recovery and rebuilding the social and physical fabric of the community. It involves rebuilding social bonds and encouraging interaction among community members through social engagement. Cultural

expression promotes cultural activities and expression to strengthen community identity. Physical representation involves creating and maintaining built spaces and housing that reflect community values and needs, while community participation involves engaging community members in decision-making processes and development initiatives. Through effective placemaking, the community builds the capacity to adapt to new circumstances and challenges, fostering adaptability and reaching community resilience, signifying a community's ability to withstand future crises, maintain functionality, and thrive. Achieved through successful recovery and adaptability, community resilience embodies the capacity to endure, rebuild, and prosper post-crisis.

This framework outlines a structured approach to understanding community dynamics before, during, and after a crisis, emphasizing the importance of placemaking in building resilient communities. By providing both locals and refugees with the tools and opportunities, placemaking becomes a process in which communities actively contribute to the development of their locality, focusing on creating resilient changes that encompass both the improvement of physical characteristics and the enhancement of the social engagement. In general, community resilience, achieved through placemaking, encompasses the ability to endure, rebuild, and prosper following the displacement caused by disasters.

Chapter 3

Urbanization of Displaced Population

The concept of “urbanization of displaced population” is recognized both internationally and nationally. It has been illustrated in 2011 by the Syrian crisis, which is considered one of the most serious humanitarian catastrophes in recent times. This chapter is dedicated to exploring the urbanization of the displaced Syrians and their settlement experiences, particularly their life in the host country Lebanon. It delves into the displacement of Syrians and host country resettlement policies, uncovering the challenges faced by refugees. Furthermore, this section integrates a historical summary of Lebanon’s refugee and resettlement policies, starting from the Palestinian refugees, providing a context for the country’s response to the Syrian displacement.

Lebanon's approach to the Syrian displacement crisis, the "No Camp" policy, and the crisis response system are analysed. The attempts to build enough housing and infrastructure for Syrian refugees in urban areas are presented, as well as the way refugee populations are dispersed in different urban areas in Lebanon. Starting from the displacement of Syrians and different policies on settlements adopted by host countries, to Lebanon’s response, this chapter provides insights into the idea of displacement and integration of refugees in their new communities.

3.1 Displacement of Syrians and Settlement Policies in Host Countries

The ongoing Syria displacement crisis continues to be one of the worst displacement disasters in modern times, with over 13.5 million Syrians being forcibly displaced. Almost six million Syrian refugees are currently being accommodated by neighbouring countries, despite worsening socio-economic and humanitarian circumstances. UNHCR reported that approximately a million refugees had already sparked from the war-torn Syria by the beginning of 2013 to land for safety in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq and millions more people were internally displaced within Syria’s borders. Twelve years later, the Syrian refugee crisis is still the most significant displacement crisis on the planet, accounting for 5.6 million registered refugees in

2023 that still reside in camps, informal habitations, in host societies (UNHCR, 2023). According to Table 2, Lebanon, and Jordan host the highest percentage of refugees by population, followed by Turkey with over 3.2 million. But, compared to its overall population, Lebanon faces significant social and economic challenges due to the 15% proportion of Syrian refugees among all host countries. Those numbers include the registered Syrian refugees with the UNHCR. However, it has been approximated that the whole Syrian refugee population in Lebanon amounts to over 1.5 million. This emphasizes the need for continued international help, to ease resource strain, sustain refugees, and host populations. As for Iraq and Egypt, the percentage remains particularly low due to the long distance between Syria and Egypt, furthermore the unstable situation Iraq is facing makes it less of a safe choice for Syrians to take refuge in. Also, data gaps, particularly in North Africa, indicate a lack of complete information (UNHCR, 2023).

Table 2

Syrian Refugee Statistics Registered with UNHCR by Neighbouring Countries in 2023

Country	Source	Data Date	Syrian Refugees	Population	Refugee Percentage of Total Population
Lebanon	UNHCR	30 Jun 2023	795,322	5,353,930	14.85%
Jordan	UNHCR	31 Aug 2023	655,283	11,337,052	5.78%
Türkiye	UNHCR	14 Sep 2023	3,288,755	85,816,199	3.83%
Iraq	UNHCR	31 Jul 2023	267,839	45,504,560	0.59%
Egypt	UNHCR	31 Aug 2023	149,454	112,716,598	0.13%
Other (North Africa)	UNHCR	31 Dec 2022	45,003	-	-

Source: UNHCR, 2023

This situation has given rise to a dire humanitarian emergency, marked by formidable challenges in the provision of essential needs like food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare for displaced Syrians (UNICEF, 2023). While host governments persist in their efforts to generously deliver crucial services to vulnerable refugees and impacted host populations, the strain on public resources and infrastructure is progressively becoming more evident. According to UNICEF, a total

funding of \$867.3 million is necessary to effectively address the urgent needs of 4.2 million individuals, including Syrian refugees and other vulnerable populations (UNICEF, 2023).

Currently, over 3.2 million Syrian refugees are present in Türkiye (UNICEF, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic's compounding effects, which have harmed the refugee population, have made the situation even worse. Furthermore, Turkey has seen a concerning degree of inflation, which escalated to an unsettling 80%, which is the highest rate of inflation observed in Turkey in the previous 24 years (Orhan, 2014). Similarly, an extreme economic collapse in Lebanon has resulted in hyperinflation, making the entire population of Syrian refugees unable to afford the basic spending basket needed to survive (UNHCR, 2021b). The growing economic problems in Egypt and Jordan have also affected every part of society. For example, the rising cost of food has made things hard for refugee families. Meanwhile, parts of Iraq that are taking in refugees are having a challenging time getting water and it appears like a drought, which makes disease outbreaks and public health problems much more likely (Orhan, 2014).

Income-generating opportunities are limited inside refugee households, resulting in a significant and growing disparity between income and expenditures. Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq often secure employment that is informal, intermittent, and primarily low-skilled. Approximately 30% of the refugee population of working age in these countries engage in some type of irregular paid work (Orhan, 2014). However, due to intense competition for employment opportunities, salary levels are experiencing a decline. The fact that most refugees reside in metropolitan areas is a crucial determinant, as it enables them to actively participate in economic endeavours compared to refugees living in encampments. Nevertheless, the available alternatives for urban refugees are significantly restricted, and the degree of vulnerability to economic challenges experienced by these individuals is equally as severe as that faced by refugees residing in camps (Orhan 2014, UNHCR 2021).

The health care systems in the host countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt) that are impacted by the Syrian refugee crisis are inherently vulnerable due to factors including insufficient capacity and inadequate infrastructure. These already overburdened health service sectors are under tremendous strain from the flood of

Syrian refugees, particularly in terms of primary healthcare delivery. This is to be expected since most refugees live in host towns and use the same medical facilities. Due to the significant increase in demand, primary care facilities and hospitals, especially those situated in border areas and locations with high refugee concentrations have been severely under pressure (Orhan 2014, UNHCR 2021).

3.2 The Historical Overview of Lebanon's Refugee and Settlement Policy

Lebanon's refugee crisis finds its roots in the aftermath of the Nakba in 1948, a major event in the Middle East that resulted in the forced displacement of a substantial number of Palestinians from their residences. After the Nakba, which means "catastrophe" in Arabic, Lebanon witnessed a significant arrival of Palestinian refugees. This event had a lasting impact on the country's population composition and socio-political dynamics (Allan, 2007). To understand the situation facing the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, it is important to go back to one of the very first refugee influx that Lebanon faced and analyse the response and the dynamic between such crisis and the Lebanese government.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East UNRWA categorised the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon into distinct groups summarized by the following; (a) refugees who are registered with both UNRWA and the Lebanese government; (b) non-registered refugees with UNRWA but are recognized by the Lebanese government; (c) non-ID Refugees who are neither registered with UNRWA or recognised by the Lebanese government (UNRWA, 2015a).

The 3,000-5,000 "non-ID" Palestinians in Lebanon face significant risks in obtaining legal status due to the lack of recognition by the Lebanese government which affects their ability to exercise their human rights and access essential services (UNRWA, 2023). According to reports, Palestine refugees in Lebanon face extreme socioeconomic hardship as well as legal barriers that prevent them from fully exercising their rights (UNHCR, 2015). Throughout history, they have experienced marginalization, and exclusion from important social, political, and economic spheres; they do not possess the right to own property; they have restricted access to public services beyond UNRWA's purview, including healthcare and education; and they are

restricted to particular professions and employment opportunities (U.S. Department of State, 2014). Basic living requirements and services such as education, healthcare, social services, and work opportunities for Palestine refugees is heavily dependent on the aid provided by the UNRWA. Before the influx of Syrian refugees, the existing services and camp infrastructure were already under significant strain. The flood of refugees from Syria has further strained the resources, services, and employment prospects for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, resulting in heightened community tensions (UNRWA, 2015b; Amnesty International, 2014).

Around 53% of the registered Palestine refugees in Lebanon are located within officially designated refugee camps (UNRWA, 2023). However, these camps encounter significant problems, such as overcrowding, limited housing, and bad infrastructure (sewage, water, and electrical systems). In addition, the Lebanese authorities enforce regulations that restrict the transfer of construction materials into these settlements, significantly impeding the people's capacity to improve their living conditions (Sayegh, 2015). In addition, after the change in legislation in 2001, it has been claimed that Palestine refugees residing in Lebanon are subject to legal restrictions that prohibit them from engaging in the lawful acquisition, transfer, or inheritance of real estate (Darr, 2015). Housing options available to Palestine refugees are currently constrained to the following (NRC, 2013): (a) residing in Palestine refugee camps, with bad living conditions; (b) seeking housing outside of the camps, where rental prices are prohibitively high for a significant portion of the population; (c) depending on informal and legally unprotected arrangements with Lebanese individuals, who purportedly acquire or retain properties on their behalf, either through purchasing or ownership before 2001.

Due to the ongoing conflict in Syria, displaced Palestinians living in Syria have been forced to flee to neighbouring countries, such as Lebanon. Lebanon restricted Palestinian refugees' ability to enter the country in August 2013, making it harder for them to flee for their lives (UNHCR, 2015). Official Palestinian refugee camps housed about half of the 31,400 Palestinian refugees from Syria living in Lebanon as of July 2023; the other half did not live in any of these camps (UNRWA, 2023). Palestinian refugees from Syria face the threat of restraints, penalty, and forced repatriation to Syria due to the lack of recognition from the Lebanese government. The scarcity of housing, marked by soaring rental costs, stands out as a critical issue. Sixty percent of

Syrian-Palestinian refugee families reside in crowded accommodations, sharing dwellings with multiple families. Alarmingly, one in ten families lives in severely cramped spaces (UNRWA, 2015a).

In 2011, Syria was embroiled in a multifaceted and catastrophic conflict that began as a sequence of nonviolent demonstrations calling for political changes. The protests, fuelled by the Arab Spring uprisings in neighbouring countries, were met with severe government repression. With the increase in disagreement, the situation transformed into a complete and intense civil war. Multiple sides, including government forces under the leadership of President Bashar al-Assad, rebel organizations with different ideologies, and extremist elements, emerged as significant participants in a complex and prolonged struggle. The Syrian conflict has precipitated a profound humanitarian crisis, resulting in the displacement of millions and extensive devastation. The involvement of other countries added complexity to the situation, making the conflict one of the most urgent and complex crises of the 21st century.

3.3 Lebanon's Response to Syrian's Displacement Crisis

Lebanon's approach to the Syrian displacement crisis has been shaped by historical dynamics and contemporary challenges. Implementing a “No Camp” policy, Lebanon avoided establishing formal refugee camps due to concerns about security risks, a stance influenced by past experiences with Palestinian refugee camps (Government of Lebanon and UN, 2014). Consequently, informal tented settlements have emerged across the country, accommodating a significant portion of the Syrian refugee population. Despite introducing visa requirements in 2015 to regulate the influx, Lebanon continues to host a large number of Syrian refugees, straining its infrastructure and resources. Initiatives such as the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) and the 2015 Shelter Strategy have aimed to provide humanitarian aid and improve living conditions (UNHCR, 2015), yet issues like overcrowding, poverty, and tensions with host communities persist. The ongoing economic downturn in Lebanon exacerbates these challenges, highlighting the imperative for sustained and comprehensive support.

3.3.1 The “No Camp” Policy for Syrian Refugees. Due to the ongoing civil conflict in Syria, more than a million people have fled their country and entered Lebanon since 2011. Since Syria and Lebanon have always had an open border, entering Lebanon was considerably simpler than entering Jordan, which is bordered by Syria as well (Government of Lebanon and UN, 2014). Additionally, there is a long and tense history between the two nations. Over time, Syrian immigrants have travelled to Lebanon to work in occupations like construction and agriculture. But since the conflict started, this connection has changed even more.

Travel between Syria and Lebanon was unfettered until 2015 when regulations of not needing visas at the border had changed. Starting from 5 January 2015, a visa is mandatory for entering Lebanon from Syria, which marks a significant shift from the formerly lenient border crossing policies between the two nations (Government of Lebanon and UN, 2014). The first official Lebanese paper since the crisis, the “Policy Paper on Syrian Refugee Displacement” was adopted by the Council of Ministers by the end of 2014. This policy document included new restrictions to prevent Syrians from entering Lebanon and tighten residency and work visa approvals. The main goal of these rules was to minimize Syrians in Lebanon. As a result, Syrians were left undocumented, unrecognized, and at risk of being deported (Frangieh 2015; Lenner and Schmelter 2016).

As the situation has dragged on and the number of migrants has increased, tensions between the local population and the refugees have grown. Families who are already having financial difficulties have been further burdened by refugees, who have also overloaded infrastructure and resources in many regions of the nation (UNHCR, 2021b). Based on the data provided in the National Physical Master Plan for the Lebanese Territories NPMLT (2005), the projected population of Lebanon in 2030 is around 5,230,000. Surprisingly, this estimated figure was already reached in 2015 (6.4 million people), 15 years ahead of the projection. However, although the population has since decreased, standing at 5.3 million in 2023, it is still larger than previous estimations (Worldometer, 2023). Rapid population increase places significant pressure on the infrastructure and services of the country, while also bringing attention to the problem of finding housing options for the refugees dispersed around Lebanon (UNHCR, 2021b).

Lebanon's historical experience with Palestinian refugees since 1948 significantly influences its policies towards displaced Syrians. The Lebanese authorities have resisted establishing refugee camps due to concerns about potential security risks (UNHCR, 2021b). The presence of armed Palestinian groups in camps played a role in the country's civil war from 1975 to 1990, and Lebanese authorities feared that creating new camps for Syrians could lead to similar issues (Government of Lebanon and UN, 2014). The discourse and formal determinations around refugee camps in Lebanon by the government, have been and continue to be associated with Lebanon's historical and existing encounters with Palestinian refugee camps. These camps are often seen by many as having a detrimental and even distressing impact. The Lebanese government has long regarded the Palestinian refugee camps as centres of radicalism and militarism. Consequently, there exists a distinct apprehension that a similar occurrence may transpire if Syrian camps are established. As a result of this 'no camp' policy, instead of official camps, more than four hundred informal tented encampments have emerged across Lebanon to accommodate Syrian refugees (Thorleifsson, 2014, Government of Lebanon and UN, 2014). These encampments don't have basic necessities like water, electricity, and hygiene. Syrians, often arriving with few possessions and traumatized, find themselves living in makeshift shelters in various places, including shops, garages, and even a slaughterhouse (UNHCR, 2021b).

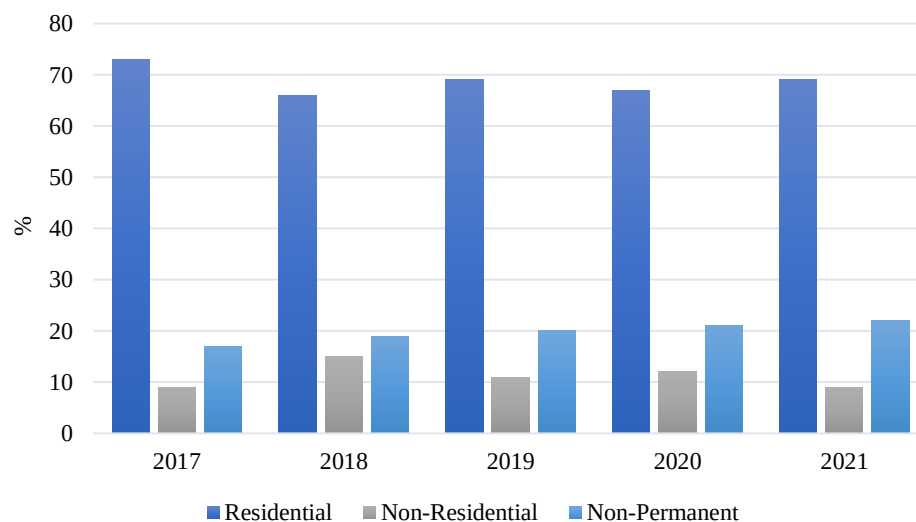


Figure 2. Bar graph showing the percentage of Syrian refugees' households by shelter types in Lebanon between 2017-2021 (UNHCR, 2021b).

The diagram in Figure 2 depicts the distribution of Syrian refugees' residences in Lebanon among diverse types of shelters for the period from 2017 to 2021. The data is displayed as percentages, providing insights into the evolving trends of housing for Syrian refugees within the selected period. The three main categories comprise residential shelters (apartments and houses), non-residential shelters (informal settlements, warehouses, factories, etc.), and non-permanent shelters (tents). The breakdown of Syrian refugee households among the primary shelter categories exhibited a predominantly consistent pattern, with the majority 73-66% residing in residential structures, 17-22% in temporary shelters, and 9-15% in non-residential structures throughout the given five years.

The high concentration of Syrian refugees in residential shelters, such as rental accommodations, suggests possible pressures on local infrastructure and ongoing difficulties in ensuring the social security and integration of refugees. This also raises concerns about the stability and adaptability of the communities that are forming in these areas, and their ability to cope with future changes. Furthermore, the reliance on rental housing brings concern regarding rent, living conditions, overcrowding and poor housing infrastructure and services.

Lebanon has accommodated a considerable number of the Syrian refugee population by 2015 (a total of 1,5 million Syrian refugees including 815,000 registered with UNHCR), amounting to more than one-third of the total population. When considering the proportion relative to its domestic population, Lebanon's burden is comparatively higher than that of other host nations. Furthermore, Lebanon is now accommodating a population of 450,000 Palestinian refugees and 50,000 Iraqi refugees. The Government opposed the creation of refugee camps, which led such population to look for alternative options including shelters such as rental housing or informal settlements (UNHCR, 2021b).

It is worth noting that the northern region of the country house a sizeable portion of the refugee population and their freedom of movement remains unrestricted. Consequently, self-settled refugees rely significantly on assistance provided by local communities and relief organizations, leading to prevalent issues such as overcrowded living conditions and worsening poverty. There exists empirical data indicating a notable escalation in the level of friction between the indigenous population and refugees, primarily attributed to the competitiveness within the labour market, which

has emerged as a prominent area of apprehension. According to the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon in 2020, competition for jobs was cited most commonly (40%) as one of the main drivers for tensions between the refugee and host communities; this was, however, a stark decrease from 2019 (51%) (UNHCR, 2020).

3.3.2 Lebanon's Crisis Response Plans. Lebanon does not possess the status of a “State Party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” and has refrained from signing the associated “1967 Protocol”. Lebanon voluntarily adopts certain articles of the Convention and exercises its discretionary authority in determining the granting of refugee status to individuals (Davies, 2008). The Government of Lebanon consistently emphasizes its enduring stance, reiterating that Lebanon does not serve as a host country, permanent destination, or resettlement location for refugees. The term “displaced” is employed by the Lebanese government to denote Syrian refugees who entered Lebanon after March 2011. Nevertheless, after four years of the crisis, both the government and foreign organizations recognized the significance of engaging the government and community in the recovery process. This recognition is seen via the establishment of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan in 2014. The “Lebanon Crisis Response Plan” LCRP was adopted for individuals who have sought refuge from Syria after March 2011, identified as (Government of Lebanon & United Nations, 2014):

- “Persons displaced from Syria” (which can, depending on context, include Palestine refugees from Syria and Lebanese Returnees as well as registered and unregistered Syrian nationals),
- “Persons registered as refugees by UNHCR,”
- “de facto refugees.”

The LCRP typically outlined strategic objectives, including (Lebanon & United Nations, 2014):

- Providing humanitarian assistance and needs (food, shelter, and healthcare).
- Promoting resilience and livelihood opportunities for both refugees and host communities.
- Ensuring access to education for Syrian refugee children and supporting the Lebanese education system.

- Addressing protection concerns, including those related to child protection, gender-based violence, and legal assistance.
- Enhancing coordination among humanitarian actors and government agencies to streamline the response.

The thesis primarily centres on Syrian refugees, utilizing specific data from the “Lebanon Crisis Response Plan” to focus on targeted groups aligned with our objectives.

3.3.2.1 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016. In 2015, despite the challenges faced by the Lebanese government, collaborative efforts with the UN and specific NGOs enabled the identification and support of designated groups as outlined in the crisis response plan, including the 1.5 million Syrian refugees located in Lebanon (Lebanon & United Nations, 2015).

In line with the idea of resilience, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan for 2015–2016 placed a high strategic priority on social stability, energy, water, and shelter (see Table 3). The plan, which had a hefty budget of \$138.7 million, was designed to guarantee enough housing and better living circumstances for more than 2.14 million people, including 625,372 Syrian refugees. Concurrently, a specific \$391.2 million was set aside to improve the water and electricity infrastructure for 2.4 million people, including 865,000 refugees from Syria. Through the provision of stability, security, and necessary resources, these concentrated efforts not only met the urgent needs of the impacted communities but also helped them develop resilience. In addition, \$119.4 million was set aside for Social Stability programs that prioritized preventing violence and empowering communities among the 3.32 million people in need, including 1.5 million Syrian refugees. The strategy demonstrates a comprehensive approach to creating resilience by carefully allocating resources to these critical areas, thereby preparing communities to withstand, adapt, and recover from difficulties over an extended period.

Table 3

Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016 Summary

Sectors	Objectives	Population in Need	Population Targeted	Syrian Refugees in Need	Syrian Refugees Targeted	Requirements (US\$)
Food Security	Enhance the presence, consistency, accessibility, and utilization of food resources.	1,401,721	1,109,832	959,721	836,320	473.5 million
Healthcare	Improve patient access to primary care, hospital facilities, advanced practice referrals, disease outbreak control, and key institutions, and maintain responsibility and openness amongst healthcare partners.	2,565,470	1,602,000	840,000	840,000	290.9 million
Education	Enhancing national education systems, regulations, and oversight; expanding access to educational opportunities; and raising the standard of instruction and learning.	983,284	529,933	477,034	459,800	388.2 million
Livelihoods	Vulnerable groups, like women and young people, have better access to jobs and finances.	555,369	134,607	210,000	33,651	143.3 million
Basic Assistance	Access to basic goods and services, lowering socio-economic risk, and making the social safety net stronger (NPTP).	1,551,638	915,090	1,078,338	754,980	356.6 million
Protection	Fundamental rights, including legal stay and access to justice. Communities are encouraged to self-manage and develop their protection measures. Protection from abuse, exploitation, violence, and neglect, including assistance and protection.	3,320,174	1,862,189	1,500,000	1,500,000	178.4 million
Energy and Water	Enhancing energy, water, and sanitation systems while emphasizing hygiene maintenance and giving priority to contingency planning.	2,427,000	2,022,000	865,000	760,000	391.2 million

Table 3 (cont'd)

Sectors	Objectives	Population in Need	Population Targeted	Syrian Refugees in Need	Syrian Refugees Targeted	Requirements (US\$)
Shelter	Ensuring sufficient shelter and enhanced living conditions in temporary settlements and impoverished urban areas.	2,142,047	817,946	625,372	519,567	138.7 million
Social Stability	Local communities and institutions are empowered to manage tensions and prevent conflicts, and the response is guided by a comprehensive understanding of tension dynamics.	3,321,362	2,245,762	1,500,000	942,337	119.4 million

Source: Government of Lebanon & United Nations, 2015.

3.3.2.2 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2023. Lebanon is still at the centre of one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in modern history, more than 12 years after the Syrian conflict began. The assistance, which includes humanitarian and stabilization activities, is made possible by donations from donors and is conducted by a joint effort of humanitarian, governmental, and developmental partners under the LCRP. This help has prevented the most disadvantaged people's living situations from further deteriorating by offering significant and vital support across several areas. According to the World Bank, Lebanon has been facing an unprecedented and complex economic, financial, social, and health crisis since 2019. As a result, starting in 2023, the LCRP continues to tackle these issues using an all-encompassing, integrated strategy that is directed by medium-term, multi-year planning (UNHCR, 2023).

The ongoing economic decline in Lebanon is exacerbating the already dire situation for Syrian refugees. As the host country contends with significant challenges, the repercussions extend to all populations within its borders. Despite a decrease in the overall number of Syrian refugees since the peak in 2015, their living conditions have failed to improve and, instead, have been adversely affected by the broader issues facing Lebanon.

According to the 2023 VASyR, 58% of the Syrian population in Lebanon that has been displaced live in subpar and insufficient shelters. That works out to 870,000 people (registered and unregistered by UNHCR) who are crammed into shelters that

are subpar by humanitarian standards, overcrowded, or in danger of collapsing. Seventy percent of the displaced Syrians reside in residential buildings, twenty-one percent in temporary shelters, such as informal settlements, and ten percent in non-residential buildings. For both tenants and landlords- that is, Lebanese and non-Lebanese people, the rental situation has gotten worse. The primary cause of this is high inflation, which makes it harder for low-income households to pay for rent while they struggle to prioritize their needs for food and healthcare. Ninety percent of Syrian families who have been displaced require assistance to meet their basic survival needs. Therefore, The LCRP's strategic goals for 2023 are as follows (UNHCR, 2023):

- Assure the safety of susceptible populations.
- Provide vulnerable populations with urgent support.
- Encourage the delivery of services via national systems.
- Bolster the environmental, social, and economic stability of Lebanon.

In Table 4, three major categories are covered specifically, related to the resilience scope of the thesis, while analysing the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan for 2023 that are Social Stability, Shelter, and Energy and Water. The targeted population in the Energy and Water sector, which makes up 21% of the total population in need, highlights the importance of strategically focusing on infrastructure and resource availability. Notably, a sizeable fraction, roughly 40% of the population under consideration, are Syrian refugees. Within the Shelter sector, the targeted population addresses those in need by around 34%, suggesting that urgent housing solutions are given priority. The majority of those targeted are Syrian refugees, who make up about 82.5% of the total population. There is a focus on enhancing living conditions, especially for Syrian refugees. The targeted population in the Social Stability sector complies with the entire population in need, indicating an integrated approach to community well-being. About 46.2% of the targeted population are Syrian refugees, highlighting their crucial role in stabilization initiatives.

Table 4

Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2023 Summary for Energy and Water, Shelter, and Social Security Sectors

Sectors	Total Population in Need	Total Population Targeted	Syrian Refugees Targeted	Requirements (US\$)
Energy and Water	3,211,400	678,487	272,122	99 million
Shelter	1,993,390	681,311	561,660	115 million
Social Stability	3,774,982	3,249,772	1,500,000	171 million

Source: UNHCR, 2023

The strategy highlights a focus on infrastructure, immediate housing solutions, and community well-being when examining various sectors. Significantly, the attention is primarily directed at Syrian refugees, by the overarching dedication to meeting their distinct needs. Comparing the data presented by the LCRP in 2015-2016, the LCRP for 2023 still targets a large percentage of Syrian refugees in its main sectors concluding that since 2015, the problems the Syrian refugees in Lebanon facing are still ongoing. This indicates the need for an ongoing dedication to a comprehensive and resilient approach to address the diverse demands of the impacted community.

Importantly, the 2023 plan is continuing, therefore a complete evaluation will be feasible only after the designated time. After the deadline, the plan's success in accomplishing its goals and improving living conditions, notably for Syrian refugees, will be assessed.

3.3.3 The Sheltering Strategy for Syrian Refugees. The 2015 Shelter Strategy for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon was established to meet the urgent housing and shelter requirements of Syrian refugees who had fled to Lebanon because of the ongoing crisis in Syria. By 2015, Lebanon was hoisting its largest number of Syrian refugees which led to huge constraints on its resources and infrastructure. Therefore, a stable shelter with proper living conditions was introduced through this strategy, not only as an answer to the pressing housing problem for Syrian refugees but also as a sustainable answer in the long term (UNHCR, 2015).

The 2015 Syrian Refugee Shelter Strategy in Lebanon had several key stakeholders. First, multiple UN organizations such as UNHCR and UNDP funded and managed such a plan in collaboration with the Lebanese government, whose main goal

was to establish the legal structures for the project. Also, a large part of local and international NGOs provided temporary shelter and aid while the shelter strategy was ongoing. By involving Syrian refugee groups in decision-making procedures, the housing solutions were designed for their uses and needs. The collaboration among different groups and streamlining resource allocation to efficiently address the humanitarian challenge and provide secure and appropriate housing for people requiring refuge were a key factor in successfully implementing the shelter strategy (UNHCR, 2015).

The strategy's main goal was to give displaced Syrian families emergency shelter, alongside other supplies that are essential for survival including temporary tents, blankets, and beds. Apart from providing initial assistance, the plan developed housing options while emphasizing community involvement and engagement, having refugees have a voice in the selection of housing options and listening to their needs and preferences. Direct coordination between different government and non-governmental organizations alongside humanitarian groups was vital to have an effective complete response and efficient resource use during all the project phases (UNHCR, 2015).

The Strategy helped 264,000 Syrian refugees by meeting their housing needs, providing support with rental payments, and implementing programs to restore communal units. Almost 1,000 temporary shelter units were constructed on private land. On-site improvements have been completed in informal settlements to reduce overcrowding and answer the issues of bad infrastructure (UNHCR, 2015). Reflecting on emergency shelter, sustainable housing, and community engagement, this approach is comprehensive and adaptable. Nevertheless, the future needs of refugees should be considered. A holistic evaluation of this approach on the overall status of the Syrian refugee population is needed to discuss its sustainability.

3.4 A Geographic Overview of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

The distribution of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon is depicted in Figure 3, with a particular emphasis on the cities that accommodate significant proportions of the overall refugee population. Zahle, in the Bekaa region, is in first place with 136,694 registered refugees, or around 16.98% of the total. With 101,425 refugees hosted, Akkar, which includes Zgharta, El Minieh-Dennie, and El Koura, comes in second place with roughly 12.59%. Other large cities with noteworthy percentages are the capital, Beirut, which houses 1.55% of the 12,453 registered refugees; Tripoli, which houses 4.38% of the refugees; and Baalbek, which is located in the Bekaa area, which houses 13.49% of the refugees.

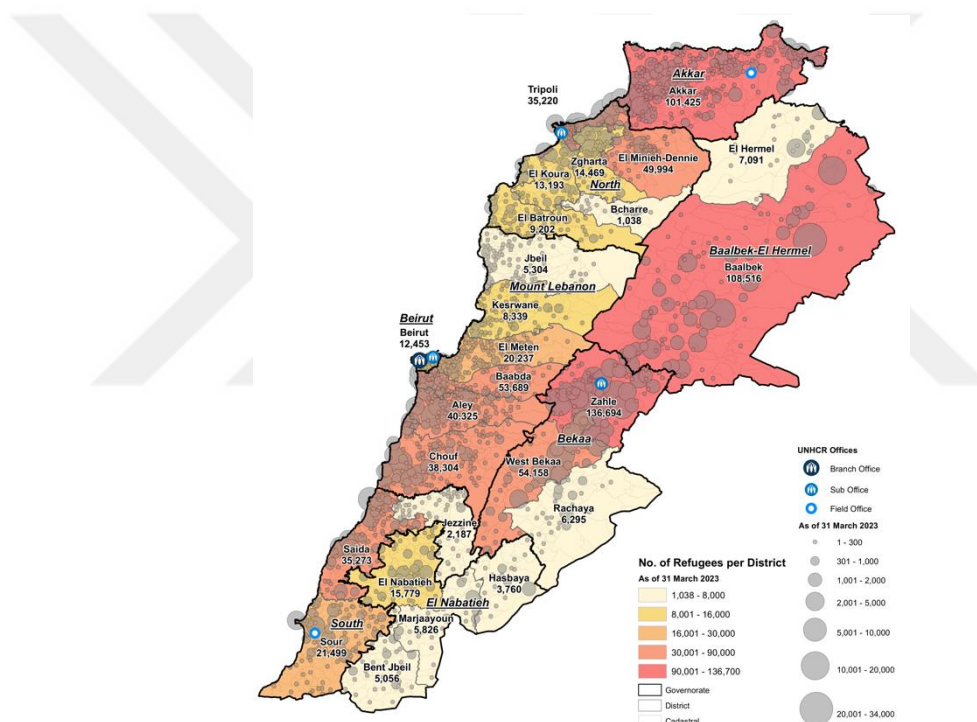


Figure 3. Map showing the registered Syrian refugee distribution in Lebanon by districts in 2023 (UNHCR, 2023c)

These percentages highlight the significant influence on important cities, which makes them essential for focused actions and resource distribution. Pre-existing infrastructure and services, economic possibilities, and geographic closeness all play a major role in the concentration of refugees in these urban zones. As a prominent destination for refugees, Zahle is largely impacted by its accessibility and physical proximity, acting as a crucial point of entry for individuals escaping crisis areas. Moreover, the current concentration may also be influenced by past settlement patterns

and the presence of refugee populations in certain locations, which gives the displaced a feeling of familiarity and community. Furthermore, due to its agricultural nature, Zahle became a host of informal camps and settlements (Rocchi, 2018).

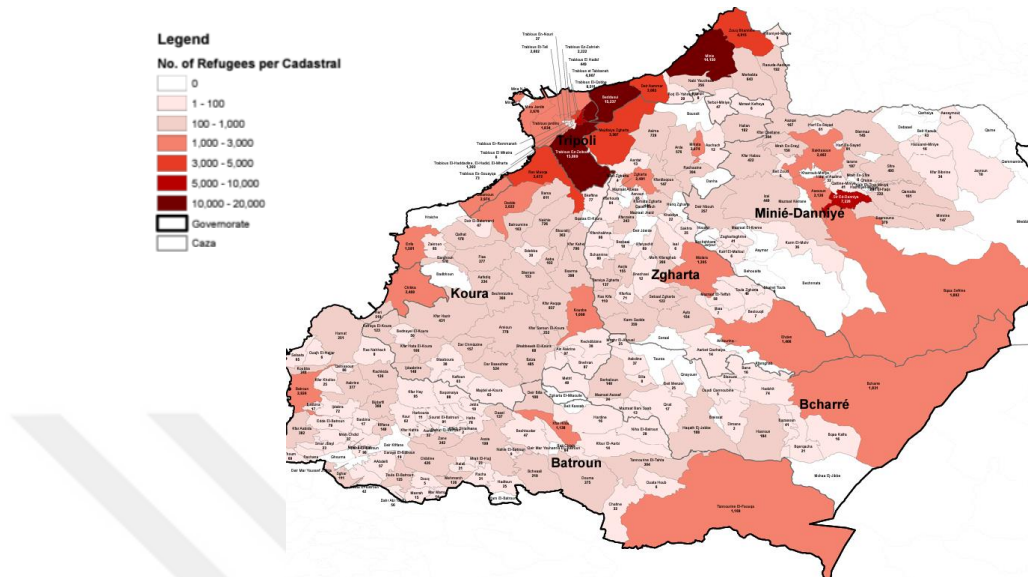


Figure 4. Map showing the distribution of the registered Syrian refugees at the cadastral level in North governorate in Lebanon (UNHCR, 2016)

Northern Lebanon, as presented in Figure 4, formerly comprising a single governorate consisting of seven districts, is among the poorest regions in the country. Of the 731,251-population recorded in 2016, 70% are Lebanese, over 22% Syrian refugees, and the rest varied between Palestinian refugees and others (UNHCR, 2016). The most vulnerable areas are around the Syrian border and east and north of Tripoli. Lebanon's second-largest city, Tripoli, reached a total of 80,000 Syrian refugees by 2023 out of the 121,398 total refugees in the North governorate (UNHCR, 2023c). Syrian refugees are distributed across 297 villages, predominantly residing in highly demanding urban and semi-urban environments. A primary issue arises from the escalating count of informal settlements, which exceeds 100, attributed to exorbitant rental expenses and limited housing alternatives. At least 50 families have faced eviction from their dwellings (UNHCR, 2022).

Chapter 4

Syrian Refugees Within the Qalamoun

This study investigates the aspects of placemaking in the overall context of building community resilience for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Qalamoun, which has always been known for its small community structure and its traditional social and cultural fabric, is the focus of the study. Nevertheless, the socio-demographic background of Qalamoun changed after the flood of the refugees in 2011, resulting in the development of a region of Qalamoun that is a host for diversity.

The choice of Qalamoun town for a case study area gives rise to an intellectual endeavour that investigates the multiple implications of displacement on community life. The demographic change and the cultural infusion resulting from the influx of the refugees have produced far reaching consequences, resulting in reconfiguration of social networks, economic structures, and cultural identities across Qalamoun. This study allows the understanding of emerging dynamics of placemaking and community resilience in Qalamoun as well as the scholarly perspective on the existing challenges and possible solutions.

After a detailed introduction to the town and its background, this chapter focuses on the mixed-methods research conducted, which is used for investigating placemaking and resilience within the Qalamoun. The research design includes direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires to collect the data needed. The data is analysed through combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. MAXQDA is used as the main software for identifying the key themes. The chapter identifies the primary indicators to analyse the Syrian refugee's situation in this community by employing diverse approaches.

4.1 Qalamoun: Contextualizing the Case Study

Qalamoun is a coastal town located in the North Governorate of Lebanon, specifically in the Tripoli District. The town is located 5 kilometres to the south of Tripoli and is the first town encountered when travelling south from Tripoli (Tripoli City Council, 2010). Qalamoun's population primarily comprises Sunni Muslims, with

a small Christian minority totalling around 7,000 residents (Qalamoun Municipality, 2016). The population is primarily clustered in the central area, specifically between the ocean and the main highway, with a special concentration around the old centre. In the Northeast, there are dispersed villas primarily occupied by affluent families who originate from Tripoli. The construction of the main highway was finished in the mid-1990s, effectively dividing the town into two parts. In the past, transit traffic used to travel down the coastal route and through the centre of Qalamoun, resulting in positive effects on the local economy. The railroad, which had been inactive since the Civil War, now connects these two main roads (Qalamoun Municipality, 2017).

In May 1982, Tripoli, Mina, and Beddaoui were consolidated into the Al-Fayhaa Union of Municipalities (UN-Habitat, 2016). Qalamoun, the fourth municipality, was unable to officially affiliate at this time due to its geographical separation from the others. Qalamoun is physically isolated from the other three municipalities due to the presence of Ras Maska municipality. Nevertheless, after intrincating administrative and judicial manoeuvres, Qalamoun was eventually granted admission to the union in July 2014 (Al Samad, 2014) as shown in Figure 5. Lebanese legislation has opportunities for neighbouring towns to form alliances known as unions. Unions serve the objective of facilitating Meso-level cooperation of municipal services and resources. This pertains to obligations that are more effectively handled at a strategic scale that transcends municipal boundaries, as stated by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities in Lebanon in 2015 (Rajab, 2015).



Figure 5. Map showing the union of municipalities of al Fayhaa, and the Tripoli metropolitan area boundary (UN-Habitat, 2016).

Qalamoun is known for its extensive historical background and varied cultural legacy. During the Greco-Roman days, this place was referred to as Kalamos or Kalomo. In the era of the Crusades, it was known as Calmont or Calamón (see Figure 6) boasting a 5000-year history (Tripoli City Council, 2010). Qalamoun has been referenced in several historical and travel literature dating back to ancient times. A Greek historian named Polybius wrote a book called “The Histories”. In this book, he talked about a place named "Calamos". Polybius (1836) talked about King Antiochus III’s journey as such “entered Syria through a hill called Theoprosopon and from there seized Botrys, burnt Tyre, Calamos, and reached Berytus.” Pliny the Elder (1934), a Roman historian, mentions Qalamoun in his encyclopaedia "Natural History":

“On the coast in southern Lebanon, there is the river Magoras, Berytus, a colony called Felix Julia, the city of Leontos, the river Lycos, Palæbyblos, the river Adonis, the cities of Byblos, Botrys, Gigarta, Tyre, Calamos, and Tripolis, which are inhabited by Syrians, Sidonians, and Aradians.”

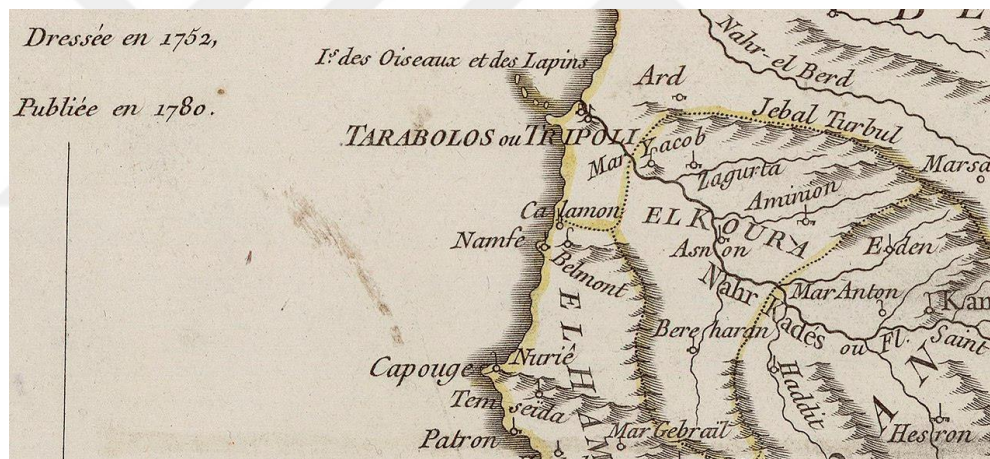


Figure 6. A map of Calamon (Qalamoun) in 1752
(Anville, 1752)

Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi (1722), a teacher and writer from Damascus, describes his arrival to a village in his book “Al-Tuhfa al-Nabulsiyya fi al-Rihla al-Ṭarabulsiyya” as in the following:

“Until we reached a village called Qalamoun, all of its inhabitants are from the Hashemite family. They received us with great hospitality, accommodated us with respect and modesty, and prepared sacrifices for us in their places and accommodation in their homes.”

Victor Guérin (1882–1884), a French archaeologist and geographer, talked about a Muslim village near Tripoli named Qalamoun with a population of 800 in his book called “The Holy Land”:

“After an hour and a half of walking, we arrived at Qalamoun. It is a Muslim village on the seashore; it has a population of eight hundred inhabitants. It is surrounded on three sides by a ring of beautiful gardens, filled with fig, orange, lemon, pomegranate, olive, and mulberry trees, and its origin is the ancient city of Calamus (Calamos), mentioned by Polybius (Volume V, Chapter LXVIII) and Pliny (Volume V, Chapter XVII). Outside the village and to its east, there are ancient quarries indicating the importance of this town in the past, even though its importance has diminished in the contemporary period.”

Qalamoun is known for its architectural heritage, including the Bahr Mosque (see Figure 7). This historic mosque is thought to have been built 800 years ago during the Crusader era and was later rebuilt in the late 18th century. The mosque, built with sandstone and adorned with intricate cornices, consists of two spacious halls, serving as a symbol of the town's lasting cultural legacy. The Ayn el-Jami'i prayer house, located next to it, was originally built by Muslims during the Crusader era. It was later converted into a theological school by a humanitarian organization (Qalamoun Municipality, 2017).



*Figure 7. Bahr Mosque in Qalamoun
(Qalamoun Municipality, 2016)*

From an economic standpoint, the town flourishes since its main street is adorned with numerous small workshops that specialize in the production of traditional brassware and the sale of antique pieces. The town transitioned from its origins as an agricultural settlement to establish itself as a prominent hub for metalworking, specializing in copper, brass, and bronze. This shift occurred when craftsmen relocated from Tripoli's conventional marketplace to Qalamoun several decades ago. Roadside stands specialize in the sale of olive oil products, fruit juices, and syrups. Qalamoun is famous for its distilled flower and rose essences, which are used in sweets. Qalamoun is also recognised for its famed Jazariyyeh pumpkin sweet (Tripoli City Council, 2010).

An overview of Qalamoun town, illustrating its several zones and neighbourhoods (see Figure 8), each possessing distinct characteristics and population dynamics is presented in Table 5 (Qalamoun Municipality, 2017):

- The Western Neighbourhood (orange zone) and the North Neighbourhood (purple zone) serve as hybrid zones that accommodate both local town residents and Syrian refugee populations. Nevertheless, the purple zone plays a vital part due to its noticeable state of degradation and its position on the outskirts, making it a financially feasible choice for refugee settlement because of its affordability and relative isolation.
- Al-Ain neighbourhood and the mountainous area (Yellow zone) is located in the mountains and is separated by a highway. It is a unique area with a lower population density but a higher level of commercial activity. This arrangement of space creates a unique social and spatial environment characterized by a combination of natural landscapes and commercial points, such as gas stations, retail stores, and restaurants.
- Eastern Villas Lane (red zone) has a completely different nature, as it represents a wealthy area that is separated from neighbouring sectors by internal roads. This zone is mainly occupied by wealthy residents, and it represents exclusivity with its abundance of private villas, which highlights the significant socio-economic division within Qalamoun.

- The internal main road lane (blue zone) is located next to the main maritime route and is a diverse area with various types of land use. This zone is a combination of commercial, residential, and communal areas that represent the liveliness of city life. It is characterized by a busy town port that serves fishermen as well as business and residential buildings.



Figure 8. Qalamoun town map: neighbourhood and zone identification (Qalamoun Municipality, 2017)

Table 5

Overview of The Characteristics for Each Zone in Qalamoun

Zone Name	Characteristics	Photo
Western Neighbourhood	• Hybrid zone accommodating local town residents and Syrian refugees. • Low rise residential buildings with a commercial ground floor.	
North Neighbourhood	• Isolated zone with affordable housing. • Highly congested residential buildings with a commercial ground floor. • Fair to poor building conditions.	

Table 5 (cont'd)

Zone Name	Characteristics	Photo
Al-Ain and Mountain Neighbourhood	• Blend of natural landscapes and commercial buildings. • Scattered residences amidst natural landscapes.	
Eastern (Villas) Lane	• Wealthy occupants, primarily residing in villas and private residences. • Large and luxurious villas with spacious grounds and high walls for privacy.	
The Internal Lane	• Dynamics of urban life, mix of commercial and residential activities. • Waterfront properties and warehouses near the town port serving fishing and maritime industries.	

Following the outbreak of Syrian crisis in 2011, the number of refugees coming into Qalamoun increased steadily, consequently, the demographics of the region underwent a drastic change. By 2016, the number of Syrian refugees in Qalamoun reached 3,639 people (around half of Qalamoun local population) (UNHCR, 2016). Even though the population of refugees has been decreasing, according to the latest data, there are currently 2634 Syrian refugees (around one third of Qalamoun local population) (UNHCR, 2023c).

The town of Qalamoun is a place for Syrian refugees to find refuge for many significant reasons. Qalamoun, in the first place, provides refugees with a sense of safety and security during the ups and downs of the Syrian crisis. Because it is located in the relatively safe part of Lebanon, where there is no conflict zone, allowing refugees to have stability and peace during the time of displacement. It's a conservative town that celebrates culture and generosity, and it was a welcoming hub for refugees running away from Syria. Moreover, Qalamoun fosters education by providing access

to schools (afternoon schooling dedicated to Syrian refugee children), which are vital for refugees trying to rebuild their lives and make a better future for their children. Moreover, being close to the Tripoli main city enables refugees to take advantage of vital services, employment possibilities, and transportation ways that offers economic opportunities. Besides, when urban centres are compared to Qalamoun, the former has a much higher rent and living expense, which makes them less affordable for the refugees. These compounding elements tempt Syrians in search for safety, stability, and chances to live better in the midst of the displacement difficulties.

As one of the efforts that fostered integration, and supported Syrian refugees, a non-governmental non-profit organisation which relied on the use of volunteers workers, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implemented an employment initiative in Qalamoun in partnership with Utopia, a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to abolishing social discrepancies and promoting social justice regardless of political or religious beliefs through specialized programs and voluntary work. The objective of this effort was to restore the neighbourhood. They provided additional earning opportunities for refugees and local people. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development BMZ and EU sponsored the program. The services allowed temporary workers to get direct pay (GIZ, 2020). The initiative was called “Qalamoun in colour”, as shown in Figure 9, since it renovated buildings and walls by painting. GIZ, Utopia, and Qalamoun’s municipal government planned and executed the project, and it was completed in 2020. Utopia's screening ensured that only those who need short-term work are provided with them. About 120 Lebanese and Syrian refugees worked in painting, beach cleaning, and rubbish management. Group members designed the works. This has strengthened the bond between indigenous people and displaced people seeking refuge. The neighbourhood rehabilitation program helped locals and migrants integrate and the Cohabitation between the two groups improved. The community, Utopia, and GIZ wanted to build up the idea after its success (Utopia, 2019; Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, 2020).



Figure 9. Internal road in Qalamoun after the end of the "Qalamoun in Colours" project (GIZ, 2020).

4.2 The Design of the Methodology

The study delves into the urban landscape of northern Lebanon, with a particular emphasis on the Qalamoun, where a significant number of Syrian refugees have settled. Furthermore, this study functions as a case study, offering a comprehensive analysis of the refugees' settlement in the Qalamoun. Case studies serve as valuable research tools, allowing for a detailed examination of specific instances within their real-life context, and providing insights into the factors at play in the given situation (Yin, 2009).

The research methodology adopted for this study utilizes a mixed-method approach. Mixed method research, involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques within a single study or research project, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the situation, in this case, the experiences of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The qualitative aspect aims to comprehensively understand the complexities of social phenomena, enabling an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and behaviours of the involved subjects (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). Quantitative methods and numerical data, on the other hand, enable broader generalizations about a larger population (Bryman, 2012).

In this study, within the scope of the mixed-method research, the qualitative data will be gathered via direct observations and semi-structured interviews; and the quantitative data will be gathered via a questionnaire. The data collection and analysis methods were approved by the ethical committee in the university after the submission of a detailed report. The research design entails three main methods (see Figure 10).

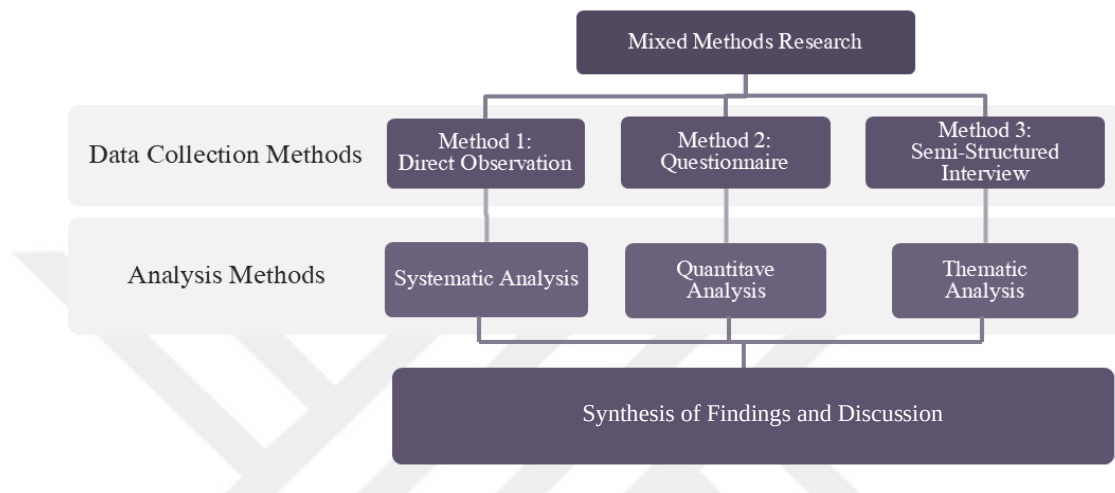


Figure 10. Data Collection and Analysis Methods Diagram, by author

The first method was a direct observation of the physical aspects to identify signs of placemaking in the Qalamoun and document the infrastructure, public spaces, housing conditions, and any signs of placemaking initiatives in the neighbourhood. Subsequently, the collected data is systematically analysed, aiming to identify patterns, themes, and commonalities in the placemaking efforts of Syrian refugees. This method is all about the documentation and analysis of differentiated aspects of places in the Qalamoun, covering critical physical components like infrastructure, outdoor spaces, dwellings and overall placemaking evidence. A comprehensive review is aimed at bringing out the role of placemaking within the community which in turn becomes an instrumental element of community resilience.

The direct observation was conducted in Qalamoun, Lebanon between March 4th and March 24th, 2024. A period of three weeks was allocated for the data collection period. The observation timetable was designed considering how place and level of activity vary at different times of a day (morning, afternoon, evening, weekdays, weekends). I documented via photographs the area's physical characteristics such as buildings and road networks, as well as visual representation of social activities. I paid

close attention to the concern of privacy, had vocal consent to take pictures of anyone including bystanders or things that should not be photographed. Every observation session took about one to two hours to visit all the designated areas and photograph indicators. The size of the neighbourhood, the concentration of people and the specific research aims impacted the time each observation session took. Considering this is my hometown, and it is not big in region, I was able to be efficient in time by allocating hotspots and having a good understanding of where some visual indicators and efforts can be localised. Also, to minimize the disturbance, I adapted myself with the environment, I avoided to attract the attention and also, I made sure my presence does not disturb the normal conditions and activities happening in the public.

The second method was a questionnaire that was distributed to Syrian refugees residing in Qalamoun (see Table 6) via google form link (See Appendix A). The form was in Arabic, and after the process has ended, the gathered data was translated by the author before analysing it. The questionnaires were conducted with 40 participants. The sampled population (Syrian refugees) for the questionnaire consisted of diverse age and gender groups within the Qalamoun in Lebanon. All participants are Syrian refugees who left their country due to the 2011 conflicts and currently reside in Qalamoun, Lebanon.

Table 6

The Questionnaire Questions Sectioned by Theme and their Content.

Section Themes	Questions Content
Demographic Data	10 multichoice questions about age, gender, nationality, marital status, household composition, employment status, income, duration of residence, and education level.
Housing and Living Conditions	5 multichoice questions about housing, including tenure, household size, number of rooms, and overall dwelling condition.
Social and Community Engagement	9 yes or no questions about social interactions within the community, access to support networks, involvement in cultural activities, and cultural heritage.

Finally, the third method involves semi-structured interviews with selected Syrian refugees residing in the Qalamoun who participated in the questionnaire. The

final selection included those who showed interest in being part of the community or expressed the interest to do so if given the opportunity. Around 20 possible participants were contacted, and based on availability and consent, 16 participants got interviewed.

Conducting interviews with Syrian refugees for placemaking research demands a meticulous approach. Following the selection of 16 participants and obtaining their consent, the interviews were conducted using open-ended questions, aiming to explore their specific experiences, particularly focusing on aspects such as community interactions and the influence of placemaking efforts (See Appendix B). The data was recorded upon the consent of the participants with the utmost respect for privacy and ethical standards, ensuring the participants' comfort and well-being throughout the entire process. The interviews were conducted inside or outside the houses of the interviewees. Every interview session took between 30 to 60 minutes, all based on the willingness of the participant to engage and elaborate more on their answers. Even though a good number of refugees expressed interest in conducting the interview, some were hesitant to engage in a detailed conversation and gave more of a simple direct answer.

The semi-structured interview questions can be categorized into three main themes aimed at investigating the resilience and placemaking efforts in Qalamoun town (see Table 7): (a) the social and community engagement section delves into refugee's participation in the social life and activities with both local residence and their fellow Syrian refugees. Also, it investigates their cultural involvement, feelings, and future aspirations; (b) the housing and physical environment section explores their housing situations, infrastructure conditions, possible physical development within the town and preparation for any crisis responses. They also shared their housing preferences and underlying issues with their homes; (c) the economic and civic engagement section mainly questions their participation in decision-making processes, in addition to any economic opportunities they have had in the Qalamoun and their effects on their financial situation and growth. By addressing these three main themes, the qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews provided a holistic understanding of the Syrian refugees in Qalamoun.

Table 7

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions Sectioned by Theme and their Content.

Section Themes	Questions Content
Social and Community Engagement	Q1, Q2- Social Participation Q3- Cultural Exchange Q4- Personal Feelings Q5- Crisis Response Q6- Opportunities for Cultural Expression
Housing and Physical Environment	Q1- Housing Situation Q2- Infrastructure Situation Q3- Personal Feelings in Housing Q4, Q5- Future Aspiration
Economic and Civic Engagement	Q1, Q2- Financial Situation Q3- Civic Involvement

The collected data was subjected to thematic analysis using MAXQDA software, which proves beneficial for placemaking research due to its flexibility, depth, and contextually rich exploration of qualitative data. This approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in community-based initiatives and urban transformations. Thematic analysis can reveal multifaceted themes, including community resilience, cultural preservation, and social integration. This method provides a comprehensive understanding of the placemaking efforts among refugees and their impact on both the refugee community and the host society.

4.3 Sampling of The Research

For this mixed method research, the sample population consists of Syrian refugees who left their country due to the 2011 conflict and lives in Qalamoun, Lebanon. The main type of sampling for this study is called “purposive sampling”. The purposive sampling allows the researcher to select the participants based on certain factors, such as country of origin and length of displacement. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher chooses the participants based on the research requirements (Black, 2010). Also, the sample size is determined by the specific information needed for the analysis required and the desired level of accuracy for the results. Therefore, the sampling can be explained as

intentionally selecting participants with diverse backgrounds, skills, and experiences related to placemaking, all sharing the common background of displacement due to the 2011 Syrian conflicts and currently residing in Qalamoun.

Following this method, the sample size for the quantitative questionnaire was decided to be around 30 participants minimum, which was achieved and reached 40 by the end of the data collection period. All participants were Syrian refugees living in Qalamoun and have diverse gender, backgrounds, occupation yet they all share the same displacement reason. The age range of participants spans from 14 to 63 years. The gender distribution is fairly balanced, with 47.5% (19 participants) being male and 52.5% (21 participants) being female. In terms of marital status, the majority are married, representing 77.5% (31 participants), while 15% (6 participants) are single and 7.5% (3 participants) are divorced. Most participants have children, with 80% (32 participants) having between one and five children, while 20% (8 participants) have no children. Regarding the length of residency in Qalamoun, a significant portion of participants, 70% (28 participants), have lived there for more than five years, while others have been residents for shorter periods, 17.5% (7 participants) for 2-5 years, and 12.5% (5 participants) for less than a year.

Subsequently, finding interviewing respondents for in-depth interviews took a more specific approach. The sampling process was based on factors from answers obtained from the previous questionnaire. Also, the selection was based on their level of participation in the community and social life, that was acquired in the Section C from the questionnaire (See Appendix A), where refugees were asked multiple questions about cultural expression, their engagement within the community and the importance of culture in their lives in Qalamoun. 20 possible participants were contacted and based on consent and availability 16 interviewees participated the semi-structured interviews as listed in Table 8.

Table 8

Interview Participant General Information

Interview ID	Name Initials	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Number of Children	Years of Residency in Qalamoun
#1	Arouba M. A.	Female	28	Married	2	over 5 years
#2	Yasser S. A.	Male	30	Married	3	over 5 years
#3	Diala E. T.	Female	39	Married	3	2-5 years
#4	Fatima H. A.	Female	35	Married	3	2-5 years
#5	Mohammed A. M.	Male	26	Married	N/A	over 5 years
#6	Firas A. F.	Male	23	Single	N/A	over 5 years
#7	Ahmed N.	Male	43	Married	5	over 5 years
#8	Nawal N.	Female	43	Married	5	over 5 years
#9	Reem A. S.	Female	31	Married	4	over 5 years
#10	Fatima K. D.	Female	40	Married	4	over 5 years
#11	Abeer M. M.	Female	42	Married	4	over 5 years
#12	Mohammed Z. H.	Male	39	Married	3	over 5 years
#13	Abdullah	Male	27	Single	N/A	over 5 years
#14	Amina A. K.	Female	24	Married	3	over 5 years
#15	Ahmed H.	Male	35	Married	3	2-5 years
#16	Mohammed A.	Male	34	Single	N/A	over 5 years

The list presented in Table 8 is intended to provide the main demographic data concerning those who took part in this study's semi-structured interview. The majority of participants are married individuals (13) with different number of child's raging between 2-5, with the exception of 3 single and 1 married with no kids. The age range is wide, covering from 23 to 43 years old, with an even distribution between male (8) and female (8) participants. The majority had been living in Qalamoun for over 5 years (13) while 3 of them had been living between 2-5 years. Every line stands for a single interviewee marked with a designated ID. Thereby, the information of each subsequent participant in the study are given which can be used to quickly assess the participants' characteristics. This information enables a quick identification of the sample group and also helps contextualize the presented data collected in the following sub-titles.

4.4 Data Analysis

MAXQDA is a specialized program developed for qualitative research projects. Users can utilize this tool to write and analyse sources, assess survey data, do mixed-methods investigations, and create various data visualizations. MAXQDA allows for more systematic and methodically precise analysis of textual data.

After entering the collected data into MAXQDA, I categorized it based on the method of data collection. I then developed an initial coding framework by identifying key themes and sub-themes relevant to the research objectives and interview content. This manual coding process involved a thorough review and refinement to accurately capture the nuances of the data. I conducted a contextual analysis, interpreting the coded data and linking it back to the research questions and theoretical framework. By integrating various pieces of evidence, I constructed a coherent narrative that highlighted key insights into placemaking and resilience.

MAXQDA streamlined much of the data management process, enabling me to systematically code large volumes of text and explore relationships between different codes. The software's search and query functions were particularly useful for identifying patterns and correlations within the data. Its visualization tools, such as thematic maps and code frequency tables, helped me summarize and present my findings effectively. This integrative approach, combining MAXQDA's analytical capabilities with my hands-on involvement, ensured that the findings were thoroughly analysed and clearly communicated.

Three main code systems (see Figure 11) were devised to facilitate the study, each with its sub-codes, following these classifications. The purpose of these parent codes is to classify the collected data under the main themes used to analyse it and conclude evidence of placemaking and resilience. The first theme is social and community engagement. The second theme analyses housing and physical environment-related factors. The third theme examines the economic and civic involvement in the town. In addition, sub-codes were allocated to each primary code to offer more comprehensive insights into the analysis data with a positive and negative categorization of each main code. Using indicators extracted from the interview answers, sub-codes were categorised and used to allocate data to their specific subcode.

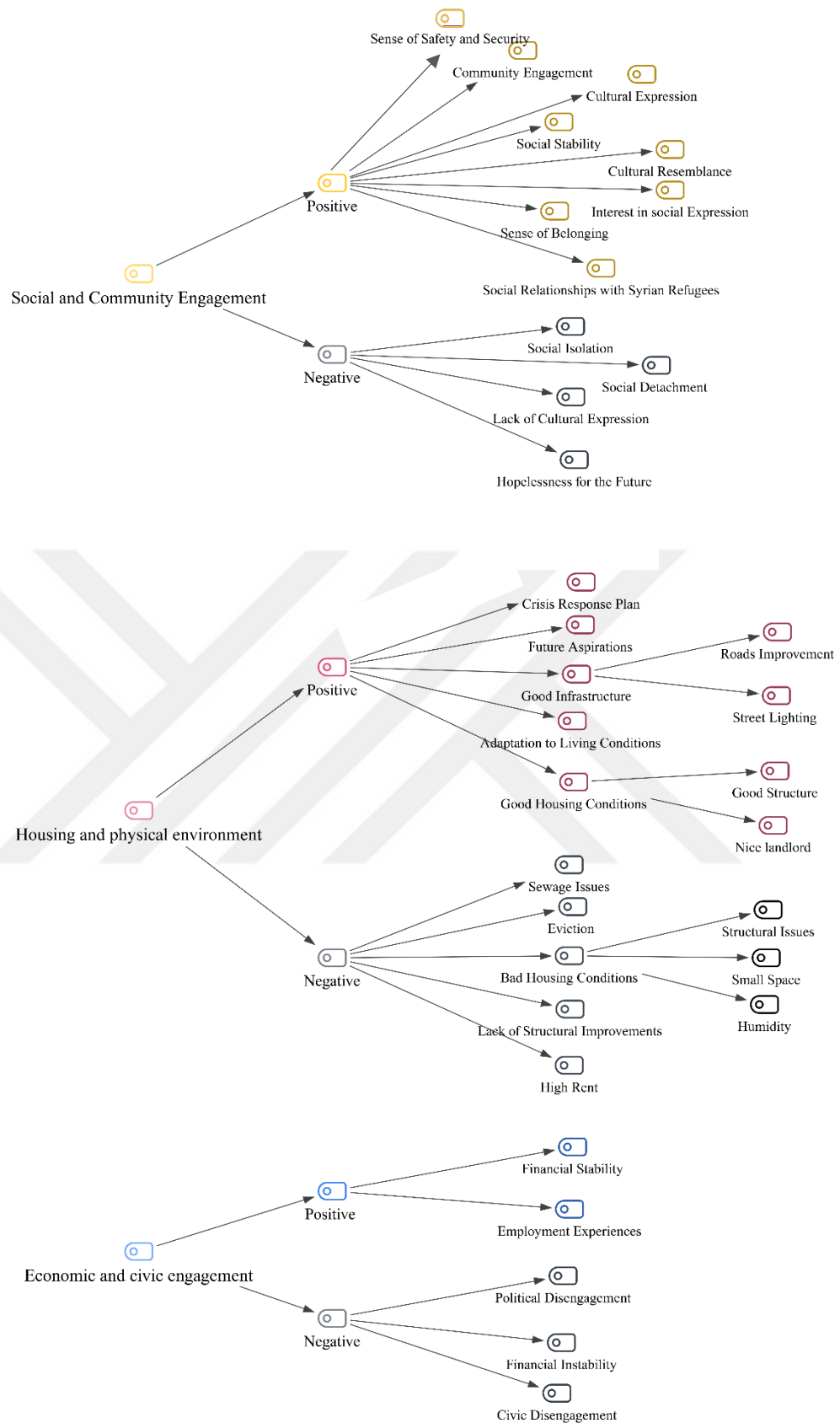


Figure 11. Codes and subcodes system under three main parent codes in MAXQDA, by author

4.5 Findings of the Research

This study's methodology incorporates both qualitative and quantitative approaches that gather data using direct observations, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. These diverse data collection methods highlight the community placemaking and resilience among Syrian refugees. Quotes from interviews will provide an in-depth insight about the lived experience of Syrian refugees in Qalamoun. Such data will be further collaborated by the quantitative questionnaire findings presented through diagrams and percentages. In addition, photographs collected from the observations will be used as a visual documentation of the data presented. The approach comprises connecting various data sources into a single system. Rather than treating them separately, the findings of the three methods will be presented and analysed in an organic system where they mutually support and complement one another, under the three main themes used. Employment of this integrative and holistic method of analysis will ensure that strong results which truly reflect the direct experiences of the people involved are obtained. This will be followed by an articulation of the key aspects of this integrated approach through the interpretation of results.

4.5.1 Social and Community Engagement. Social placemaking is connected to community resilience as it focuses on enhancing social unity, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering active participation within the community. It proves that both placemaking and resilience necessitate cooperation that goes beyond just physical infrastructure (Folke et al. 2002). Community resilience relies on factors such as social networks, cultural identity, cultural background, and community engagement (Chambers, 1994). It refers to the capacity to withstand and recover from difficulties while maintaining social cohesion and preserving cultural legacy. These factors not only help during crises but also influence how people react and develop the ability to adapt, by working together to create strong and resilient communities (Folke et al. 2002).

Table 9

Subcode and Frequency Analysis Regarding Social and Community Engagement

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	93	73.8
Community Engagement	20	15.9
Sense of Safety and Security	14	11.1
Social Relationships with Syrian Refugees	13	10.3
Sense of Belonging	12	9.5
Social Stability	12	9.5
Cultural Expression	10	7.9
Interest in Social Expression	8	6.3
Cultural Resemblance	4	3.2
Negative	33	26.2
Social Isolation	14	11.1
Lack of Cultural Expression	14	11.1
Hopelessness for the Future	3	2.4
Social Detachment	2	1.6

Table 9 provides an overview analysis of different sub-codes under the theme of social and community engagement and categorizing them into positive and negative. In terms of positive social and community engagement, the data indicates a strong social presence of Syrian refugees and active engagement with a total of 73.8%. This implies the presence of active community engagement in the community with 15.9%. Additional favourable factors, such a sense of safety and security (11.1%), a sense of belonging, social relationships and stability are observed with stable frequencies around 12-13.

Syrian refugees express a healthy engagement within the community through workshops, holidays, scouts, social gatherings, volunteering, and forming social relationships with people within the community. In all shapes, such engagement practices foster social cohesion, a sense of belonging, mutual support, and a resilient social life within the Qalamoun community.

Abdullah, a 26-year-old male, explains diverse ways of engaging in the community and its effect on him below:

“I actively engage in community life by volunteering with various associations. This involvement has had a profound positive impact on me ... I have participated in scout activities, including with the Abd Al-Rahman Scouts and those affiliated with the Projects Association in the past. Through these experiences, I've not only made meaningful contributions to society but also gained diverse insights and social connections.” (Interview #13, Abdullah)

Apparently, educative opportunities through workshops gave female refugees the opportunity to decrease the vulnerability through active involvement as claimed by Arouba M. A., a 28-year-old mother of 2:

“I've taken part in several lectures focusing on important topics such as child protection from sexual harassment, addressing early marriage issues, and spreading awareness about COVID-19 prevention.” (Interview #1, Arouba M. A.)

Qalamoun has been seen by a large percentage of refugees as a familiar and safe environment to live, engage, participate, and raise a family. Town people were described as kind-hearted, generous, and welcoming to refugees. None of the interviewees expressed any sort of segregation exercised on them from Qalamoun residence. The quotes below by Fatima H. A., a 35-year-old mother of 3, further reveals that perception on the side of the Syrian refugees:

“There's a high level of respect, knowledge, culture, and positive competition. There's also a great potential for development.” (Interview #4, Fatima H. A.)

Similarly, Amina A. K (24-year-old mother of 3) and Mohammed Z. H. (39-year-old father of 3) share the feelings of unity and comfort that they have felt with the people of Qalamoun, showcasing the values of generosity, kindness, friendship, and respect that they have been exposed to:

“The people here are kind-hearted and generous, and everyone feels like family. The most important thing is the sense of unity and love among the residents. (Interview #14, Amina A. K.)”

“I feel like I'm among my own people and my homeland, as I have only seen love, cooperation, assistance, and tolerance from the people of the town of Qalamoun.” (Interview #12, Mohammed Z. H.)

The feelings expressed in the interviews emphasize the strong sense of unity and comfort among the locals of the Qalamoun. Both Abdullah (27-year-old male) and Mohammed A. (34-year-old male) describe how happiness and content, along with a sense of safe and security are experienced within the small town:

"I feel content and secure in Qalamoun. The community's warmth and support contribute to a sense of belonging." (Interview #13, Abdullah)

"I feel comfortable and safe because the area is beautiful, peaceful, and the people are very kind." (Interview #16, Mohammed A.)

Besides the peaceful environment and the friendliness of the people, Syrian refugees prefer Qalamoun over other regions for the sense of security it has. Around the safety concerns other refugees might face, Abeer M. M., a 42-year-old mother of 4, affirmed Qalamoun as her best choice for wellbeing and safety, and explaining how she finds a place where she belongs and feels safe:

"I prefer to stay in Qalamoun because it feels safer compared to other areas. I've heard about troubles in neighbouring regions, and I believe Qalamoun provides a sense of security. Despite the challenges, I believe it's the best choice for us." (Interview #14, Abeer M. M.)

Yasser S. A., a 30-year-old father of 4, makes the point that the town has good aspects like a strong structure, friendly and a warm community that accepts Syrian refugees:

"Qalamoun is one of the better towns to live in, especially in terms of organization, neighbours, and overall flexibility in dealing with refugees." (Interview #2, Yasser S. A.)

Furthermore, the data collected from the questionnaire (Section C, Q3) where Syrian refugees were asked about the sense of belonging in the Qalamoun community, the findings presented in Figure 12 show a high level of 93% (37 participants out of 40) expressing a sense of belonging in their host community in Qalamoun. This further indicates that the majority of participants in this questionnaire feel accepted in Qalamoun. A low percentage (8%) of respondents answered negatively, which proves they have not successfully integrated with the new community. Yet, it is still important to address the findings from the answers of these respondents and investigate possible

reasons for the lack of sense of belonging they are experiencing in their host community.

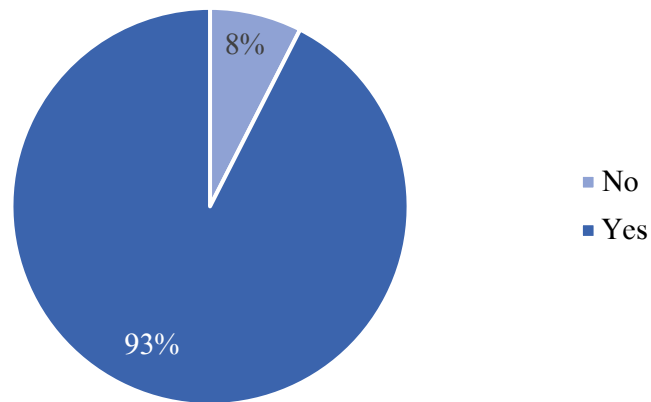


Figure 12. Pie chart of the questionnaire answers regarding the sense of belonging of Syrian refugees in Qalamoun, by author

The engagement in the community not only formed relationships with local Qalamoun residents but also created a small community among fellow Syrian refugees. Such communities that share similar backgrounds and similar displacement stories and cultural help preserve that heritage and make it easier to express it alongside a larger group of people as explained by Abdullah, a 26-year-old male:

“Absolutely. I’ve fostered meaningful social connections with my Syrian refugee colleagues. These relationships have been instrumental in broadening my social network and understanding of different perspectives within the community.”
(Interview #13, Abdullah)

However, the analysis reflects a mixed picture of social and community engagement. Although there is a high percentage of mentions of positive community engagement, the high presence of mention of isolation and lack of cultural expression, 26.2% each as presented in Table 9, indicate that some Syrian refugees lack a sense of belonging and have not participated in expressing their own culture within their new environment. This detachment often leads to feelings like isolation and leads to a potential separation between the Syrian community and their host community in the Qalamoun.

Such feelings of isolation, felt by both parents and children, were expressed by Diala E. T., a 39-year-old mother of 3 as below:

“I feel a lack of belonging. There are some difficulties, even my children feel excluded.” (Interview #3, Diala E. T.)

As a result of not having an opportunity to establish a sense of belonging and feeling detached from the community, some refugees expressed a desire to return to their home country if safety conditions are provided, similar to the case of Yasser S. A., a 30-year-old father of 4, who said:

“If allowed to return safely, I would not hesitate to do so, and I believe many others share this sentiment.” (Interview #2, Yasser S. A.)

The main reasons for the absence of cultural expression or interest among Syrian refugees residing in Qalamoun can be attributed mostly to their concentration on livelihood and the limited time available for other activities. Most refugees lost interest in expressing their heritage within their new environment and expressed it by stating it or by refusing to answer questions related to the topic. Most answers were simply a “No” and this shows the deep separation these Syrian refugees are feeling.

Yet a good number expressed the desire to contribute to the Qalamoun community through different efforts and initiatives such as educational lectures, workshops, volunteering, and skilled services to express their heritage if given the opportunity as explained below by Mohammed A. (32-year-old male) and Fatima H. A. (35-year-old mother of 3):

“I could express my culture or myself by creating something related to our cuisine, establishing something representing our Syrian heritage, or bringing in something that reflects our traditions”. (Interview #16, Mohammed A.)

“I wouldn't hesitate to share my skills with the community in Qalamoun. Initiatives for education and training for both young and old, launching entrepreneurial projects and guiding their owners, health and social awareness, and psychological support.” (Interview #4, Fatima H. A.)

This point is further proven by the data collected through the questionnaire where participants were asked about cultural expression in Section C:

- Q6; Have you participated in any cultural exchange activities within the community?
- Q8; Would you be interested in sharing your cultural traditions with the local community?
- Q9; Is it important for you to preserve and celebrate your cultural heritage?

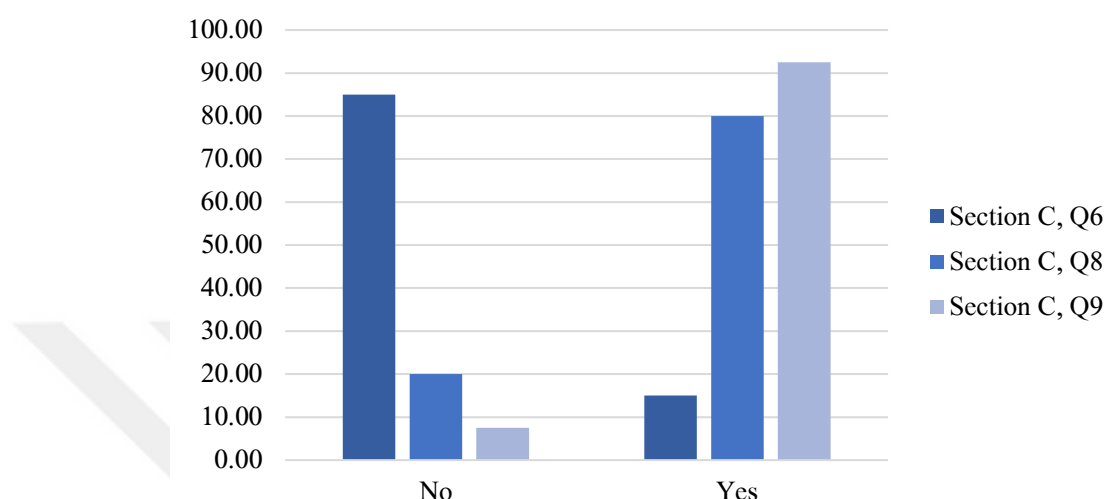


Figure 13. Bar graph showing a comparison of answers from three questions from section C in the questionnaire, by author.

By comparing the data for these three questions, the results presented in Figure 13 indicate a very low level (85%) of engagement in cultural activities for Syrian refugees in Qalamoun. Although the level of involvement in cultural exchange activities may be limited, there is a significant interest in cultural expression and exchange (80%) and a firm belief in the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage (92.5%).

4.5.2 Housing and Physical Environment. Housing and the physical surrounding are crucial for community resilience in Qalamoun. The quality of housing infrastructure which directly affects residents' ability to withstand and recover after crisis determine their resilience (Chamie, 2020). Housing does not only offer people a shelter, but it gives them a place to belong and express their culture in a community. Proper housing conditions that do not contain structures defects and environmental hazards help with refugees' sense of security and comfort (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995). Along with that, regular maintenance of the physical environment, including roads, street amenities, and efficient waste management, improves the quality of life for both locals and refugees and their ability to withstand crisis and recover (Alberti et

al., 2003). In summary, spending resources in housing and infrastructure not only tends to provide a secure and comfort environment for the residents but also makes the community ready to tackle any given challenge, and therefore achieve community resilience.

Table 10

Subcode and Frequency Analysis Regarding Housing and Physical Environment

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	47	67.1
Crisis Response Plan	16	22.9
Good Housing Conditions	15	21.4
Nice Landlord	3	4.3
Good Structure	12	17.1
Good Infrastructure	8	11.4
Street Lighting	3	4.3
Roads Improvement	5	7.1
Future Aspirations	6	8.6
Adaptation to Living Conditions	2	2.9
Negative	23	32.9
Bad Housing Conditions	8	11.4
Structural Issues	4	5.7
Humidity	2	2.9
Small Space	2	2.9
High Rent	6	8.6
Sewage Issues	4	5.7
Lack of Structural Improvements	3	4.3
Eviction	2	2.9

Table 10 provides an overview analysis of different sub-codes under the theme of housing and physical environment and categorizes them into positive and negative. The data indicates a strong positive living situation in Qalamoun with 67.1% mentioning indicators of good housing and infrastructure conditions and efforts. The highest frequency was for the response to crisis within the community with 22.9% mentioning adequate plan measures to crisis (such as COVID-19).

Furthermore, the housing conditions, including structures and the relationship with the landlord, attributes to 21.4% indicating a high level of contentment with housing indicating stability which helps in promoting better mental and physical wellbeing.

From the presented data collected from questionnaires, the dominant classification for most buildings in Qalamoun is fair (48%) indicating that conditions are acceptable, but further improvement of maintenance should be considered. In addition, 32% are categorised as good, which means the buildings are overall in good condition (See Figure 14). Additional favourable factors, such as good infrastructure (9.5%), future aspirations (7,1%) within this housing and adaptation to living conditions (2,4%) are observed with lower frequencies.

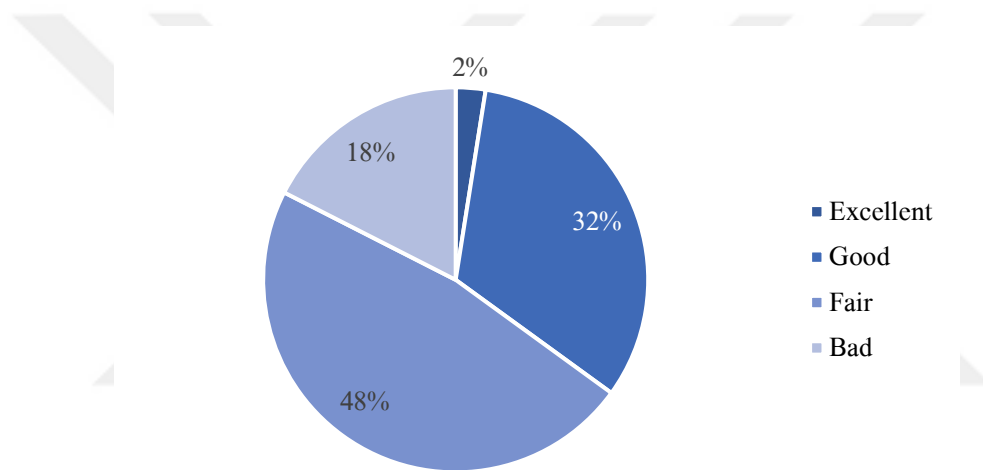


Figure 14. Pie graph showing the general state of the building collected from questionnaire, by author.

The first step to achieving resilience is to be able to adapt to the issues that may arise during a crisis and recover positively. The community in Qalamoun has responded well to COVID-19 preventive measures, with sanitization, vaccination, and responsible living during the pandemic. The interviews show a commendable community reaction to public health guidelines and instruction. Residents follow the ministry's health guidelines, showing the coming together of the community to safety and precaution.

The accounts portray the community's active attitude in protecting public health, and effort in containing the spread of infectious diseases and safety of the local population as mentioned by Yasser S. A. (30-year-old father of 3) and Fatima K. D. (40-year-old mother of 4) when asked about the community response to COVID-19:

“The community responded by adhering to the Ministry of Health's guidelines for closure and precautionary measures, with penalties for those who violated them.” (Interview #2, Yasser S. A.)

“Everyone followed the home quarantine instructions, practiced sanitization, and wore masks.” (Interview #10, Fatima K. D.)

The interviews demonstrated a good level of structural stability in the homes signifying proper and stable housing in Qalamoun. Nawal N. (43-year-old mother of 5) and Ahmed N. (43-year-old father of 5) agree that housing conditions in Qalamoun are satisfactory, while specifying the responsibility of landlords and homeowners in keeping a positive attitude towards their struggles:

“The housing conditions are good, thanks to the landlords who are kind and helpful, especially during tough times.” (Interview #8, Nawal N.)

“The housing conditions are excellent. The homeowners are very kind people with high morals, and they are to be thanked for their behaviour.” (Interview #7, Ahmed N.)

Abdullah, a 26-year-old male, reports that his home is relatively new, and no structural problems are noticeable:

“Living here provides a sense of stability and comfort. The house itself is relatively new, without any structural issues, contributing to a hassle-free living environment.” (Interview #13, Abdullah)

The municipality of Qalamoun maintains a proper infrastructure development by establishing entryways to the town at night, lighting up streets, paving roads and filling the potholes. Both Yasser S. A. (30-year-old father of 3) and Mohammed A. (34-year-old male) explained some of the efforts to increase liability in Qalamoun:

“Efforts have been made, such as securing the town's entrances at night, illuminating most streets, paving roads, and covering potholes.” (Interview #2, Yasser S. A.)

“Yes, there are always new developments, such as road paving, street lighting, traffic management, and a significant focus on ensuring safety around schools.”
(Interview #16, Mohammed A.)



Figure 15. Map and photographs of observed structure work in Qalamoun, by author

The infrastructure development in Qalamoun collected through the direct observation and presented in form of photographs include several infrastructure efforts (see Figure 15): (a) the development of the seaside road that passes through the Qalamoun has finished (G4.1); (b) work was being carried out on the sewage pipeline infrastructure (G2.1, G2.2); (c) filling up multiple holes with fresh cement all around the town (G3.1, G3.2, G3.3, G4.2); (d) structure work on the exterior of apartment buildings (G1.1).

Moreover, community projects including the “Qalamoun in Colour” was mentioned by Ahmed H., a 35-year-old father of 3, along the sewage line development:

"Yes, the 'Qalamoun in Colour' project significantly beautified the entire village. Also, there's a new water line and the coastal road has been paved." (Interview #15, Ahmed H.)



Figure 16. Photographs of murals in Qalamoun, by author.

As explained in the previous part of this chapter, the “Qalamoun in Colour” was implemented by multiple stakeholders and was carried out by 120 volunteers from both locals and Syrian refugees living in Qalamoun. The street art in Qalamoun project was at its largest covering around 51 buildings (see Figure 16). Through the participation of community members, both locals and Syrian refugees, in the planning and implementing strategies, the project resulted in a sense of belonging and inclusivity among the residents, leading to both social cohesion and community resilience. This collaborative placemaking effort did not only enhance Qalamoun’s physical appearance, but it as well boosted the community’s ability to adapt and overcome challenges which ultimately demonstrated the symbiotic relationship between resilience and the placemaking activities.

However, the analysis reflects a mixed picture of housing and physical environment. The presence of bad housing conditions including structural issues, humidity, and small living spaces is at total of 11.4% (see Table 10). Along with high

rent (8.6%) and eviction (2.9%), decaying houses, declining infrastructure, and unsafe living conditions remain a major problem that affects Syrian refugees everywhere.

The interviews give an insight on the situation of housing around Qalamoun. People become worried about the issue of structural maintainability and their safety, especially since Lebanon is situated along the Dead Sea Transform fault system, including the Yammouneh and Roum faults, making it prone to significant seismic activity (Hancock & Atiya, 2003). Amina A. K. (24-year-old mother of 3) and Mohammed Z. H. (39-year-old father of 3) express anxiety resulting from the presence of cracks and creaking buildings which is at risk of collapse in case of an earthquake (see Figure 17):

"The building itself isn't well-maintained. Well, when the earthquakes hit, it damaged my roof and some walls. The building itself is very old." (Interview #14, Amina A. K.)

"I feel afraid at times due to cracks in the building I reside in." (Interview #12, Mohammed Z. H.)



Figure 17. Photographs of structural cracks in some houses in Qalamoun, by author

Moreover, humidity and discomfort in winter seasons are also something which Abeer M. M., a 42-year-old mother of 4, faces in her home. She explains how damp walls and insufficient sunlight are causing some health issues to her children:

"Honestly, I feel uneasy at home because it's constantly damp, especially during the winter. The walls are moist, and sunlight hardly enters. My children suffer from asthma aggravated by our current living conditions." (Interview #11, Abeer M. M.)

Additionally, as 100% of respondents on the questionnaire are living in rental houses, issues such as high rents and overcrowding are present in high rates. Such issues were expressed by Arouba M. A. (28-year-old mother of 2) and Abeer M. M. (42-year-old mother of) below:

"I've recently relocated to a new house, and while it's not ideal for living due to its size and some structural issues, I've adapted to it for now." (Interview #1, Arouba M. A.)

"Housing conditions in Qalamoun are challenging. I currently live in a small apartment with my family, and the rent is relatively high compared to the quality of accommodation. Unfortunately, there haven't been significant efforts to improve housing conditions." (Interview #11, Abeer M. M.)



Figure 18. Photographs of some Syrian refugee houses in Qalamoun, by author.

Unfortunately, the most common housing solution adapted by Syrian refugees living in Qalamoun is renting garages or basement spaces as their shelter (See Figure 18). These housing solutions create an effect where the difficulties of everyday life are compounded as space is too restricted and people don't have enough room for all

household members or even have their privacy. Also, the homes have poor ventilation and insufficient illumination, creating an unappealing and uncomfortable environment thus, affecting the physical and mental states negatively.

Moreover, the North Zone of Qalamoun marks a difference from the rest of the zones (see Figure 8). Providing cheap rents but on the expense of residents' safety and their quality of life, this area is characterized by rundown structures and poor building states (see Figure 19). Being isolated from other areas and referred to as “the unsavoury part of Qalamoun”, many people avoid it due to safety fears. Regardless, this zone houses the largest number of refugees, who struggles financially, due to low rent followed by inadequate infrastructure.



Figure 19. Photographs of buildings from The North zone in Qalamoun, by author.

This point is further proven by the data collected through the questionnaire where participants were asked about housing size and members living in the house. The data in Figure 20 shows that there are cases of overcrowding, revealing a higher number of individuals occupying a house for a lower number of rooms. To illustrate, there are 8 cases where in houses with 2 rooms, there are 5-6 people sharing the space and even more than 6 people in one case. Similarly, the data shows 8 families living in a 3 rooms house, with 5-6 people sharing the space, and on 2 other occasions, a family of over 6 people are sharing only 3 rooms. Such cases are indicators of overcrowding, especially if the number of occupants exceeds the recommended number for this size of house.

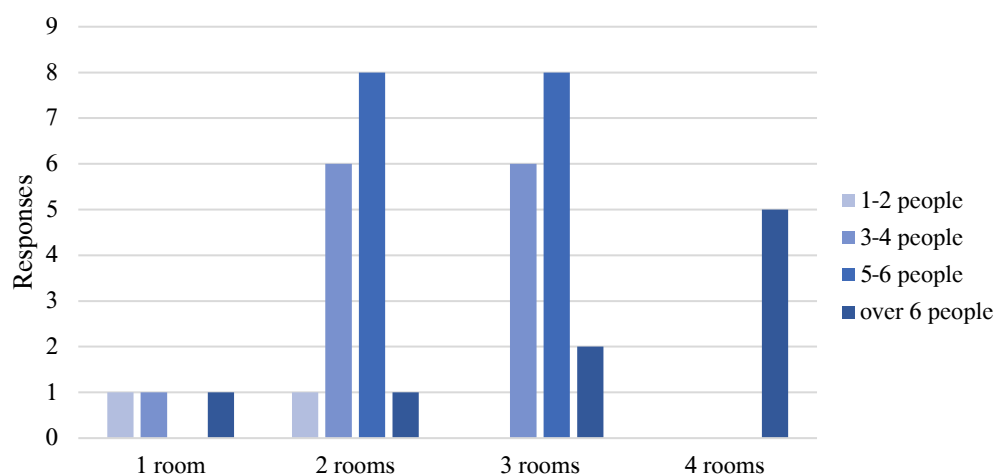


Figure 20. Bar graph showing the distribution of household members by number of rooms in the house based on questionnaire responses, by author.

4.5.3 Economic and Civic Engagement. Two main factors in the building of resilient communities are economic and civic engagements. The aim of economic practices is to reinforce local businesses and generate a financial growth (Jacobs, 1961). This approach pinpoints the bordering relationship between economic prosperity and community well-being, acknowledging that economic stability is a precondition for resilience (Kwok et al, 2016). Likewise, the civic engagement of Syrian refugees in the community decision-making processes encourages a feeling of belonging, enhances social ties of, all of which strengthen the resilience (PPS, 2015). The economic and civic engagement shows that resilience is not only determined by the physical infrastructure but, more importantly, it involves collective activities of the community members to build thriving lives, safe and adaptive societies.

Table 11

Subcode and Frequency Analysis Regarding Economic and Civic Engagement

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Negative	35	87.5
Financial Instability	17	42.5
Civic Disengagement	16	40
Political Disengagement	2	5
Positive	5	12.5
Employment Experiences	3	7.5
Financial Stability	2	5

Table 11 shows data collected through Section C of the semi-structured interviews (See Appendix B) with Syrians refugees living in Qalamoun covering their economic and civic engagement. The data presents a negative situation with a high percentage of 87.5%. Financial instability is among the major issues identified, as it was mentioned in 17 responses (42.5%) that reflect the economic difficulties that the refugees in Qalamoun are facing. Civic disengagement follows with 16 responses (40%) indicates a low involvement of Syrian refugees in community decision-making. This percentage comes from all the participants in the interviews, where all of them answered with “No” when asked about their opportunity to participate in decision making in Qalamoun, therefore indicating that 100% of all 16 interviewees have no engagement in the civic life in the community.

Abdullah (27-year-old male) and Mohammed Z. H. (39-year-old father of 3), two part time workers’ answers underline the foremost problem which Syrian refugees in Qalamoun are grappled with in finding jobs within the town itself:

“Finding employment opportunities in Qalamoun has been challenging due to limited job prospects in the small town. Consequently, most of my work and educational pursuits have been cantered in the city of Tripoli.” (Interview #13, Abdullah)

“I worked in a fruit and vegetable store within Qalamoun in exchange for a meagre salary for two years. Unfortunately, apart from these two years, I haven't found any employment within Qalamoun. Initially, things were going well, but after my father fell ill, the business suffered, and he ended up accumulating debt.” (Interview #12, Mohammed Z. H.)

Moreover, Mohammed A., 34-year-old male fighting unemployment, explains the challenges Syrians refugees are confronted with while seeking local employment where many of the available jobs are reserved for Lebanese nationals or locals:

“I tried to find work but failed to secure employment due to limited vacancies, with a preference for Lebanese nationals if available.” (Interview #16, Mohammed A.)

The economic situation is declining in Lebanon due to inflation and currency problems in the country. Yasser S. A., 30-year-old father of 3, explains that even as a full-time worker, there is no financial security with salaries being at their minimum:

“I've been working in the same restaurant for 11 years now. Financially, it's not as good as before; the salary is relatively low compared to the cost of living.”
(Interview #2, Yasser S. A.)

Another factor that challenges Syrian refugees is acquiring a job suitable with the education level. Diala E. T., 39-year-old mother of 3, explains the difficulties her and her husband are facing due to the lack of the proper job vacancies even for bachelor's degree holders:

“Even with university education for me or my husband. There are no job vacancies in our major of education.” (Interview #3, Diala E. T.)

This point is further indicated by the data gathered from the questionnaire regarding Syrian refugees' education level and employment status. Figure 21 shows the employment status of Syrian refugees based on their educational backgrounds: the largest educational category that's prominent with the respondents are those with primary education (19 responses), followed by bachelor's degree holders (11 responses). Yet those two categories hold the most level of unemployment (a total of 17 responses) showcasing that the education level doesn't play a prominent factor in hiring the Syrian refugees' hands. Additionally, part-time employment shows the highest numbers found among individuals with primary education (8 responses) further solidifying that education background is not a factor for part-time jobs. Yet, the disparity in the data shows potential barriers to full-time employment for certain educational groups, where 4 out of 6 respondents that work full-time jobs have a high school education and higher.

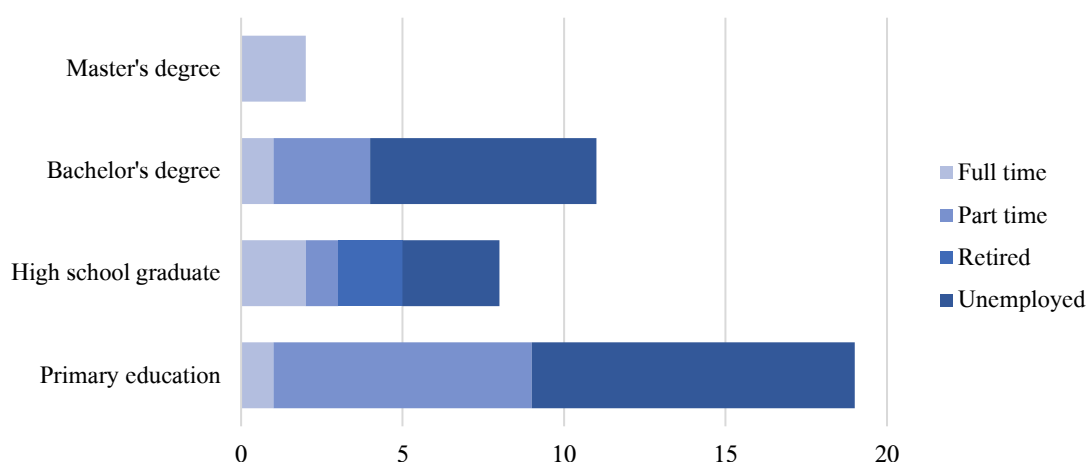


Figure 21. Side bar chart showing responses about employment status by education level, by author

As Table 11 shows, the data regarding employment experiences and financial stability is available yet notably low (12.5%). Despite the challenges, Arouba M. A. (28-year-old mother of 2) and Yasser S. A. (30-year-old father of 3) explained their experience with employment and how it betters their financial situation as well as give a feeling of independence:

“I worked in a wedding hall, which was a fulfilling experience. Working in the wedding hall undoubtedly improved our financial situation and provided me with a sense of financial independence.” (Interview #1, Arouba M. A.)

“I started with daily labor, working with concrete and iron. Then I got the opportunity to work in cooking and food, which became my job upon arriving in Lebanon.” (Interview #2, Yasser S. A.)

These passages from interviews show that Syrian refugees, like Arouba and Yasser, look for employment not only to better their financial circumstances but also for a sense of freedom and fulfilment mid uncertainty. Yasser’s shift from everyday labour to cooking and Arouba’s work at a wedding venue present the resilience of Syrian refugees and the importance to provide displaced people with job chances to promote both personal and economic stability.

4.6 Discussion on Findings and Recommendations

The discussion on findings deals with how Syrian refugees in the Qalamoun of Lebanon have adapted based on the concept of placemaking and resilience. Taking the basis from the themes outlined in the previous chapters, particularly the connection between placemaking and community resilience in the urban environment, we examine data collected under three main themes: social and cultural engagement, physical and housing environment, and economic and civic engagement.

The conceptual framework places emphasis on the link between placemaking and resilience. Placemaking, encompasses two interconnected dimensions: social and physical placemaking. Social placemaking is characterized by social approaches such as community engagement, social interaction, and cultural preservation, while physical placemaking centres on housing, infrastructure, and overall physical environment. Through investigation of the relational processes between the social and

physical dimensions of placemaking, this chapter presents the findings on placemaking among the Syrian refugees and the host community. Through the data collected by the three methods, this part identifies the key problems facing Syrian refugees in the new community and the opportunities for resilience in regards of social integration, living conditions, employment opportunities, and civic participation. Through the combination of theories and collected data, we offer recommendations for enhancing community resilience among Syrian refugees in Lebanon using placemaking efforts.

Displacement creates an impact on a person's feeling of being part of a group and his identity. Refugees are separated from their homes, communities, and familiar surroundings, which usually causes them to feel deeply dislocated and lost. The places that were once their home become distant, and they are placed in unfamiliar places with uncertainty for the future. This disruption to one's sense of place and belonging is an obstacle to emotional well-being, social connections, and cultural identity, therefore a chaos to their road to resilience. The comprehension of the mechanism of the displacement and its effect on the sense of belonging is vital in the design of the effective interventions and the provision of the support systems for the displaced persons to rebuild their lives and find a new sense of home in the new surroundings. For Syrian refugees in Qalamoun, displacement has been a harsh reality where they were forced to flee their homes due to ongoing conflict and violence in their homeland and seek refuge in the border of this small town.

In the context of Qalamoun, the idea of place is flexible and multifaceted, involving both the physical and social aspects. It is the place where space and meaning unite to create a feeling of belonging for Syrian refugees, which in turn leads to them being rooted, connected, and finding a sense of identity in the community. The concept of "place" is not just about its physical boundaries, but it also refers to a variety of meanings and associations. Although, it can be used to denote a particular geographical place or a physical area, in this case the Qalamoun community, it also has the meaning of the way of life, identity, and belonging of displaced Syrians. The place is the ground for refugees to interact with their surroundings, get involved in their communities and express their sense of self. The place can make them feel, remember, and connect to their culture; thus, it affects how they look at themselves and their surroundings. Furthermore, place refers to the social, cultural, and historical background where it is situated and carry the values, traditions, and narratives of the people who reside in it,

and thus, Syrian refugees can shape their collective identity and sense of belonging. It has a lot of meaning and significance, being gathering spots of history, heritage, and cultural expression.

Placemaking can be viewed as creating the place in the context of the community resilience and social cohesion. The social component of placemaking, as emphasized in the framework, is the key factor in the restoration of the social fabric damaged by displacement. Through interaction of refugees in the community and highlighting cultural expression and participation, placemaking becomes an instrument of restoring social bonds and creating feeling of belonging in a community. The analysis of the social and community engagement among Syrian refugees in the Qalamoun shows some positive aspects that indicate their integration into the host community. Furthermore, a lot of respondents have a strong social presence through being involved in community events and developing social connections by actively taking part in community activities like workshops, social gatherings, and volunteering. These activities not only offer chances for social interaction but also allow refugees to contribute to their new community in a meaningful way. The feeling of being a part of the community is also strengthened by the positive characteristics of the locals as kind-hearted, generous, and welcoming people who create an environment of unity. This shows that there is a strong component of togetherness and solidarity among refugees and locals, which led to acceptance and belonging of Syrian refugees in the Qalamoun community.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed the significance of social unity in the case of resilience. Communities that were connected and cooperated successfully were better able to deal with the different problems related to the pandemic. In Qalamoun, both refugees and locals showed great resilience by jointly working with each other and helping one another during the crisis. This collaboration not only eased the pandemic crisis but also strengthened the social relations and the feeling of the community. Social unity also leads to the formation of a united society and gives out the feeling of being included and having a common identity among the people of the community. Through the overcoming of the barriers and the acceptance of diversity, the refugees, and the locals in Qalamoun were able to form stronger relations and to get to know each other problems. This feeling of shared respect and empathy is the main reason for the community resilience because it strengthens the bonds of acceptance, cooperation,

and group work when the community is in need. Besides, social unity encourages people to share resources, knowledge, and skills that they have in the community, which is very important when tackling big and complicated issues. In the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents share the stories of collaboration between Syrian refugees and locals in Qalamoun that led to the distribution of essential supplies, the sharing of information about preventive measures, and the implementation of community-based initiatives to help the people who are vulnerable and need assistance. Therefore, through this unity, the community members, both refugees and locals, showed signs of resilience and adaptation by cooperate with each other and assist each other during an ongoing crisis.

Nevertheless, the possible isolation experienced by refugee communities emphasizes the significance of addressing activities that promote cultural exchange and integration within the community. The analysis shows the social isolation and the lack of cultural expression among the Syrian refugees as the negative aspects. While the conditions are favourable to the community assimilation and acceptance, the participants express desire to return to their homeland, which is associated with yearning and detachment. Such association often stem from factors including language barrier, cultural differences, and unfamiliarity. Yet this case is not present in the Qalamoun where the community shares the same language and a lot of cultural aspects, and most participants have been living there for over five years. Therefore, addressing the issue of isolation requires a deeper understanding of the causes.

Some interviews indicate that Syrian refugees struggle to set roots in the community due to uncertainties for the future and hard living conditions and economic instability. The dream of a better life often generated by those conditions make it difficult for these refugees to fully consider their community as their own, leading some to want to leave if offered a better opportunity. The situation is further complicated by the limited job opportunities within the town as many of the refugees are unable to find jobs due to various reasons, such as the preference of Lebanese or locals in job vacancies. In addition to that, the deteriorating economic situation in Lebanon, characterized by inflation and currency problems, aggravates the financial difficulties of the Syrian refugees.

The educational background also becomes a barrier to employment as the gap between the different levels of education is reflected in the labour market. Even though

some refugees are successfully finding employment in mainly part-time positions, there still remains high unemployment rate in different educational levels. Economic placemaking efforts should aim at offering wide range of assistance to help the displaced people to get the stable livelihoods. These range from skills training programs and job placement services which are specific to the refugees' needs and aspirations.

Moreover, the absence of civic engagement implies a disconnect from community and public affairs, thus limiting the ability of refugees to participate in and lead their local environment. The refugees' lack of engagement in civic life and decision making impedes their ability to form social networks, accessing necessary resources, as well as attaining important skills, which contribute towards managing and overcoming challenges and crises. Moreover, this disengagement is a hindrance to the efforts of making the community place firm roots and form social ties which are important components of community resilience on the long term. Active civic participation of refugees can result in the fulfilment of all above their needs, such as giving them a sense of purpose, agency, and empowerment. Community participation programs such as workshops and seminars, can help refugees understand their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for participation in the civic life.

Additionally, placemaking in the community is represented through the physical spaces such as housing, infrastructure, and living conditions. The data shows that the number of initiatives towards physical resilience targeted at improving housing and has significantly increased the recent years. The projects like road paving, street lighting, sewage pipeline development, and building maintenance make the community safer and more liveable. These measures, in turn, not only have the intended effect of addressing immediate infrastructure but also contribute to the long-term resilience of the community by developing its capacity to prevent and recover in times of crisis. Placemaking, in essence, is building places that provoke a feeling of belongingness, identity, and community amongst the people. Housing, which is one of the basic elements of every community, has a huge impact on the character and the quality of the built environment. It can be said that housing serve as a home for displaced family, implying safety, security, and privacy. Through the fostering of healthy surroundings and affordable housing, placemaking initiatives serve to enhance the quality of life and tackle core problems of displacement.

Most refugees start their road to recovery from displacement by getting a place they can call home. This is a place that not only offers shelter but also a place where Syrian refugees can find solace and start building their own lives. The refugee's new home is where they start to put down roots in their new community. They start to build connections and relationships that will form the foundation of their social support network. Housing infrastructure condition is the main factor that determines the refugees' ability to adapt and thrive, as well as their overall well-being. Hence the support of housing development that includes structural issues is crucial.

The challenges of bad housing conditions including structural problems, humidity, and overcrowding not only put residents' health and safety in danger but gradually weaken the community's resilience. The issue of bad housing conditions and the safety concerns of some interviewees highlighted the need for joint efforts to resolve the housing issues and improve living standards within the community. Such efforts should start by addressing housing in different zones in the Qalamoun area with particular attention to the North Zone which has the most problems in structures. The access to adequate housing and good living conditions is the first step to recover through any crisis.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis investigated the concept of placemaking for Syrian refugees in Lebanon as a way to achieve community resilience. The notion of place is not bound to only the physical factors, but also to the meaning and psychological identity that Syrian refugees attach to it. The sense of belonging to the community depends on how we perceive it as a safe space that we can call home. Various factors contribute to placemaking of displaced people in their host countries which were presented in this study under the case study of the Qalamoun town in Lebanon. The literature analysis on both placemaking and community resilience laid out the main theoretical framework in which the data was analysed. Three main themes defined the analysis and which placemaking efforts were part of both social and physical factors.

When comparing the three main themes, we determine that despite the relatively high levels of success in social and community engagement of Syrian refugees in Qalamoun, there are significant problems in the areas of housing and physical environment, and economic and civic engagement. Living conditions remain a major problem, with overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure threatening the health and safety of refugees. The implementation of Lebanon 's "no camp" policy has resulted in Syrian refugees inhabiting rental housing or informal settlements, often characterized by inadequate infrastructure and limited public spaces. Consequently, the physical conditions of the urban environment become pivotal in determining the success of placemaking endeavours.

Such concerns were addressed in detail in Lebanon Crisis Response Plans, designed to address the urgent housing needs of Syrian refugees by providing stable shelter and improving living conditions. While significant efforts were made to provide shelter assistance to vulnerable populations, through the allocation of substantial resources, the current situation experienced by Syrian refugees reveals ongoing challenges in the realm of shelter. According to the 2023 Crisis Response Plan, a significant proportion of Syrian refugees in Lebanon still reside in inadequate housing, with approximately 58% living in unsatisfactory housing conditions. These challenges include overcrowding, unsafe living environments, and limited access to

basic necessities, exacerbating the vulnerability of displaced families, further proved by the case study in Qalamoun.

Improving housing conditions requires upgrading infrastructure, providing affordable housing options, and ensuring access to essential services. Long-term planning should prioritize sustainable urban development and resilient infrastructure to address both current challenges and future needs effectively. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plans aimed to address urgent housing needs by providing stable shelter and improving living conditions. Despite significant efforts, many refugees still reside in inadequate housing, facing overcrowding and limited access to basic necessities. Sustained efforts and targeted interventions are required to ensure adequate housing and improve the overall well-being of Syrian refugees.

The success of placemaking efforts for Syrian refugees in Qalamoun is closely tied to the quality of the physical environment. Architect Jan Gehl's studies emphasize that well-maintained public spaces and sidewalks foster social interactions and community cohesion. While outdoor areas in Qalamoun, including streets and public amenities, receive some maintenance, further efforts are needed to encourage social interactions and community activities, crucial for effective placemaking. Enhancing the quality of outdoor areas and infrastructure can create a more welcoming and cohesive environment, supporting the integration and well-being of Syrian refugees.

Moreover, economic and civic engagement remain significant issues due to legal restrictions and limited job opportunities, exacerbating social exclusion among the refugee population. Syrian refugees in Qalamoun often engage in informal or "odd jobs," leveraging their diverse skill sets for employment opportunities. This contributes to the diversity and vitality of the community, as highlighted by Jacobs' emphasis on mixed-use neighbourhoods and local business promotion. However, these informal roles lack stability, formal recognition, and adequate protections, presenting challenges for refugees in accessing stable employment and fair wages.

Addressing the economic integration of refugees requires targeted interventions to address economic marginalization and provide legal support to enhance refugees' employability and access to rights. Promoting inclusive policies and initiatives that empower refugees to participate in civic life can foster their integration and resilience. Inclusive economic policies and initiatives are needed to support the livelihoods of Syrian refugees and ensure their meaningful integration into the local economy.

Despite facing numerous challenges, many Syrian refugees residing in Qalamoun have established a social presence within their community. They actively engage in various community events, workshops, social gatherings, and volunteering activities, demonstrating their commitment to integration and participation. Particularly notable is their enthusiasm for participating in cultural activities, showcasing a strong desire to preserve their cultural identity amidst displacement. This engagement not only fosters a sense of belonging among refugees but also helps maintain crucial cultural connections that contribute to their overall well-being.

While the no camp policy presents significant challenges, it also offers opportunities for placemaking initiatives. A notable distinction arises when comparing the experiences of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, revealing varying outcomes influenced by settlement policies. Palestinian refugees predominantly reside in long-established camps, facing distinct integration challenges compared to Syrian refugees dispersed across urban and rural settings. Yet, Syrian refugees, specifically in Qalamoun, experience a “lived space” shaped by their real-life interactions and activities, unlike a “conceived space” governed by official plans and policies. This lived space emerges organically from the refugees’ and local population’s adaptations and interactions, reflecting their efforts to establish belonging and agency within the urban environment. Despite challenges, the lived space of Syrian refugees in Qalamoun highlights their resilience, resourcefulness, and adaptability. It embodies their aspirations for a better future and their struggles with displacement and economic instability.

The circumstances for Syrian refugees can significantly differ across various regions of Lebanon due to variations in local policies, economic circumstances, and community attitudes. These disparities can result in varying levels of integration and resilience among refugee populations. While the experiences of refugees in Qalamoun offer valuable insights, they are not representative of all refugee communities in Lebanon. In the Bekaa Valley, for instance, where there is a high concentration of Syrian refugees living in informal tented settlements, the challenges might revolve around inadequate access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and healthcare. Additionally, the agricultural nature of the region might limit employment opportunities for refugees, leading to economic marginalization and dependency on humanitarian aid. On the other hand, urban centres like Beirut might present different

integration dynamics, with refugees facing issues such as discrimination, competition for housing and jobs, and cultural barriers. However, these areas might also offer greater access to educational and vocational training opportunities, as well as a more diverse social network that facilitates integration. To gain a comprehensive understanding, it's essential to compare different regions. This comparative analysis can help identify shared challenges and effective strategies, thereby informing the development of more targeted and impactful policies and interventions tailored to the specific needs of each refugee population.

In areas like Qalamoun, characterized by greater social cohesion and support, Syrian refugees have successfully engaged in placemaking activities and forged social ties within the community. However, challenges persist in terms of economic integration, access to education and healthcare, and legal protection for refugees. Despite efforts to foster integration, these obstacles underscore the need for comprehensive policies and initiatives to address the multifaceted barriers hindering the full integration of Syrian refugees into Lebanese society. Building resilient communities in the Qalamoun region and beyond may be achieved by establishing places that prioritize social integration, as well as economic stability and housing.

Therefore, the investigation on placemaking of refugees as a tool for community resilience should be further elaborated on a bigger scale. In-depth research on both the displaced community along with the host community should be analysed and the interlocking themes related to community resilience from both perspective is needed. A community is a connected system as a whole and all stakeholders efforts in creating the place is needed to understand the concept further.

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