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Syrian Refugee Place Attachment and Place Making in Ottawa, ON

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Abstract

How can Syrian refugees' feelings of attachment towards places and spaces in Ottawa, ON be used to indicate their own sense of integration into Canadian society? Exploring research participants' place attachments to the city of Ottawa enables a greater understanding of their lived geographies that either hinder or elevate their integration experience. The mixed-method data collection used in this research study include an online qualitative survey, in-depth interviews, and a mental mapping exercise. The analysis of the data is based upon five factors of place attachment used to define integration. These are *comfort, security, relationships, involvement*, and *rootedness*. Results suggest that all of the research participants have self-identified as successfully integrated into Canadian society.

Key Words

Refugees; Place Attachments; Place Making; Cultural Integration; Social Integration; Canada; Multiculturalism; Place; Space; Integration theory

Summary for Lay Audience

This research study sought to understand how can Syrian refugees' feelings of attachment towards places and spaces in Ottawa, ON be used to indicate their own sense of integration into Canadian society? To answer this question, this research study sought to learn Syrian refugees' experiences in, knowledge of and attachments to various places and spaces in Ottawa, Ontario to understand where, why and what types of places and spaces elevate or hinder their integration experience. Integration is understood as being able to adapt to the dominant culture in Canada without neglecting ones own cultural and social values. This study had three main research objectives. First, to create a means of assessment to assess the nature of place attachment and place making experienced by the Syrian refugees in Ottawa to then learn from and facilitate the integration of future refugee and immigrant populations. Second, to address the gap in knowledge within Canadian geographical literature regarding the relationship between place attachment/place making and the integration of refugees. Third, to challenge the federal government's inadequate understanding of integration in favour of including policies that reflect refugees and immigrants' more subtle cultural and social integration needs beyond the understanding of housing, employment, and knowledge of the official languages. The analysis of the data is based upon five factors of place attachment used to define integration. These are *comfort, security, relationships, involvement*, and *rootedness*. Results suggest that all of the research participants have self-identified as successfully integrated into Canadian society. Although each participant still faces many challenges and barriers on a regular basis, such as not finding employment in fields that they specialize in, a lack of foreign credential recognition and limited housing opportunities, they all showed a strong sense of feeling safe, of belonging and being involved in their community, have developed key relationships within and outside of their own cultural and ethnic group, have a strong understanding and knowledge of Ottawa and how to navigate the city, and have the desire to remain in Canada in hope that their children are given greater opportunities for success.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Syrian Refugee Place Attachment and Place Making in Ottawa, ON

Canada has had a complex relationship with refugees and immigrants. While the British and French colonial empires first came to Canada as traders (CIRNAC, 2017), they soon forced many Indigenous people to flee their land for the purpose of new colonial expansion and settlement (CIRNAC, 2017). The first wave of immigrants mainly came from England, and France (CIRNAC, 2017). Until around the 1970s, the Canadian federal government prioritized immigrant populations from Western and Eastern Europe while remaining unwelcoming and in many cases hostile towards other immigrant populations, most notably migrants from India, Japan, and China (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 2022). Some of Canadas earliest migrants arrived in the mid 1850s, with a large admittance between 1900 until the beginning of World War One (Statistics Canada, 2018). Migration to Canada slowly increased after the First Great War however diminished during the Great Depression and remained at a constant low level until the end of World War Two with migrations once again increasing after the Second Great War (Statistics Canada, 2018). By the 1960s, the Canadian federal government had a fluctuating cycle of increasing/decreasing the number of migrants that were allowed to enter the country (Statistics Canada, 2018). During the mid 1980s the Canadian federal government increased the number of migrants allowed to enter Canada to roughly 230,000 individuals per year (Statistics Canada, 2018). In the mid 2010s the Canadian federal government implemented policies that would significantly increase the number of migrants admitted to Canada to roughly 500,000 permanent residents per year until 2025 (IRCC, 2022). Furthermore, the 500,000 individuals do not include the number of temporary foreign workers and international students that are also admitted each year (Statistics Canada, 2018). In 2022 alone, the Canadian federal government admitted well over 550,000 international students from 184 different countries (Evans, 2023) clearly indicating the federal governments belief and approach towards increased migration flows that will continue for the foreseeable future.

Although some members of the public continue to remain hostile towards refugees and immigrants, Canada depends on immigrants and refugees to grow its economy and to increase its population (Statistics Canada, 2022). The Canadian federal government has accepted over 405,000 newcomers to Canada in 2022 (IRCC, 2022), with objectives of accepting over 465,000 in 2023, 485,000 in 2024, and 500,000 newcomers in 2025 (IRCC, 2022). In addition to growing the Canadian economy, Canada is facing a complex issue with a significant amount of its population aging and thus requiring individuals to not only take care of the aging population, but to ensure that the positions left available from newly retired individuals are now filled (IRCC, 2022). Canadian multicultural policies reiterate the notion of being open and accepting of different populations and their cultures, as emphasized by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and many of his cabinet members welcoming the first waves of Syrian refugees in 2015 at Pearson International Airport (Austen, 2015). Canadian multicultural policies are unique in how they enable civilians to establish themselves and stay true to their roots and heritage, without having to conform to the dominant culture in the host society.

While the majority of immigrants to Canada came from Europe before the 1970s, the majority of recent immigrants are coming from Asia and the Middle East (Statistics Canada, 2022). The percentage of immigrants from Europe fell "from 61.6% in 1971 to 10.1% in 2021" (Statistics Canada, 2022). Roughly one in every four (23%) individuals in Canada are either a "landed or permanent resident" (Statistics Canada, 2022), with 62% of recent immigrants coming from Asia and the Middle East (Statistics Canada, 2022). Between 2016 and 2021, Canada accepted well over 218,430 refugees (Statistics Canada, 2022). The majority of these refugees came from Syria with over 60,795 refugees, 15,505 from Iraq, 13,965 from Eritrea, 9,490 from Afghanistan, and 7,810 from Pakistan (Statistics Canada, 2022). In 2022, the largest share of newcomers that arrived in Canada from the same originating country was India, which included over 18.6% of all newcomers in 2022 (Statistics Canada, 2022).

The diverse population of migrants which now call Canada home also brought with them their cultures, religions, languages, and social practices. In Canada, there are over 7.3 million people that speak a language other than the two official languages of Canada, i.e., English and or French (Statistics Canada, 2021). The diversity of language includes over 50 indigenous and Inuit languages spoken (Statistics Canada, 2021), and languages from major language groups

including Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Cushitic, Austro-Asiatic, Austronesian, Creole, Dravidian, Hmong-Mien, Indo-European, Baltic, Slavic, Celtic, Germanic, Greek, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Italic, Japanese, Kartvelian, Korean, Mongolic, Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Sign languages, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, Turkic, Uralic, and many other language groups and families (Statistics Canada, 2021). The most common languages spoken in Canada other than English and French are the Sino-Tibetan language family which includes over 1.2 million people speaking a variety of the Chinese languages (Statistics Canada, 2021); the Italic language family with over 1.5 million people speaking a variety of the romance languages (Statistics Canada, 2021); over 1.3 million people speaking a Indo-Iranian language including Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, and Persian (Statistics Canada, 2021); over 3.8 million people speaking a variety of languages from the Indo-European family including Germanic, and Slavic languages (Statistics Canada, 2021).

The 2021 census reported that Canadians came from 450 different ethnic and cultural groups (Statistics Canada, 2022). Over 5.7 million people identified as Canadian, 5.3 indicated that they were English, 4.4 million identified as having Irish origins, 4.4 million with Scottish origins and 4 million indicated that they have French origins (Statistics Canada, 2022). Minority populations in Canada are growing significantly with over 7.1% of the population indicating that they are South Asian, 4.7% are Chinese and 4.3% Black (Statistics Canada, 2022). This ethic and cultural change in Canada can also be seen through the religious practices of Canadians. Christianity continues to be the largest religion practiced in Canada with over 19.3 million people indicating that they were Christian (Statistics Canada. 2022). The percentage of Christians in Canada is however decreasing as there were over 77.1% of Canadians indicating that they were Christian in 2001, 67.3% in 2011 and 53.3% in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022). There are over 1.8 million people in Canada that practice Islam, 830,000 practice Hinduism, 700,00 practice Sikhism, 330,000 practice Judaism, 360,000 practice Buddhism, and over 81,000 people indicated that they practice a traditional Indigenous spirituality (Statistics Canada, 2022). The share of Canadians that do not believe in or practice any religion has increased "from 23.9% in 2011 to 34.6% in 2021" (statistics Canada, 2022). Please refer to figure 1.1 and figure 1.2 outlining religious increase and decrease from 2001, 2011, and 2021.
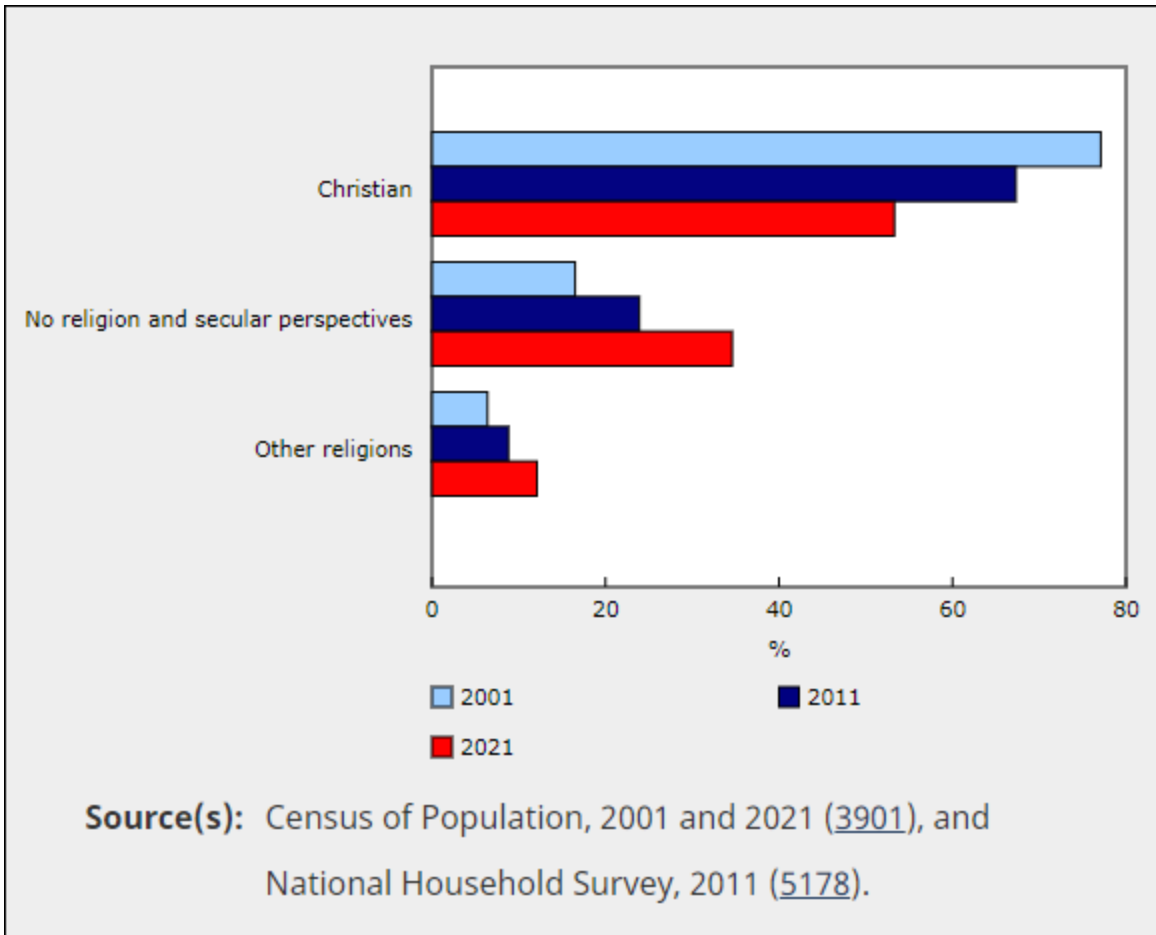
Figure 1 1.1: Census of Population in 2001, 2011, and 2021. Source provided by Statistics Canada, October 26, 2022.
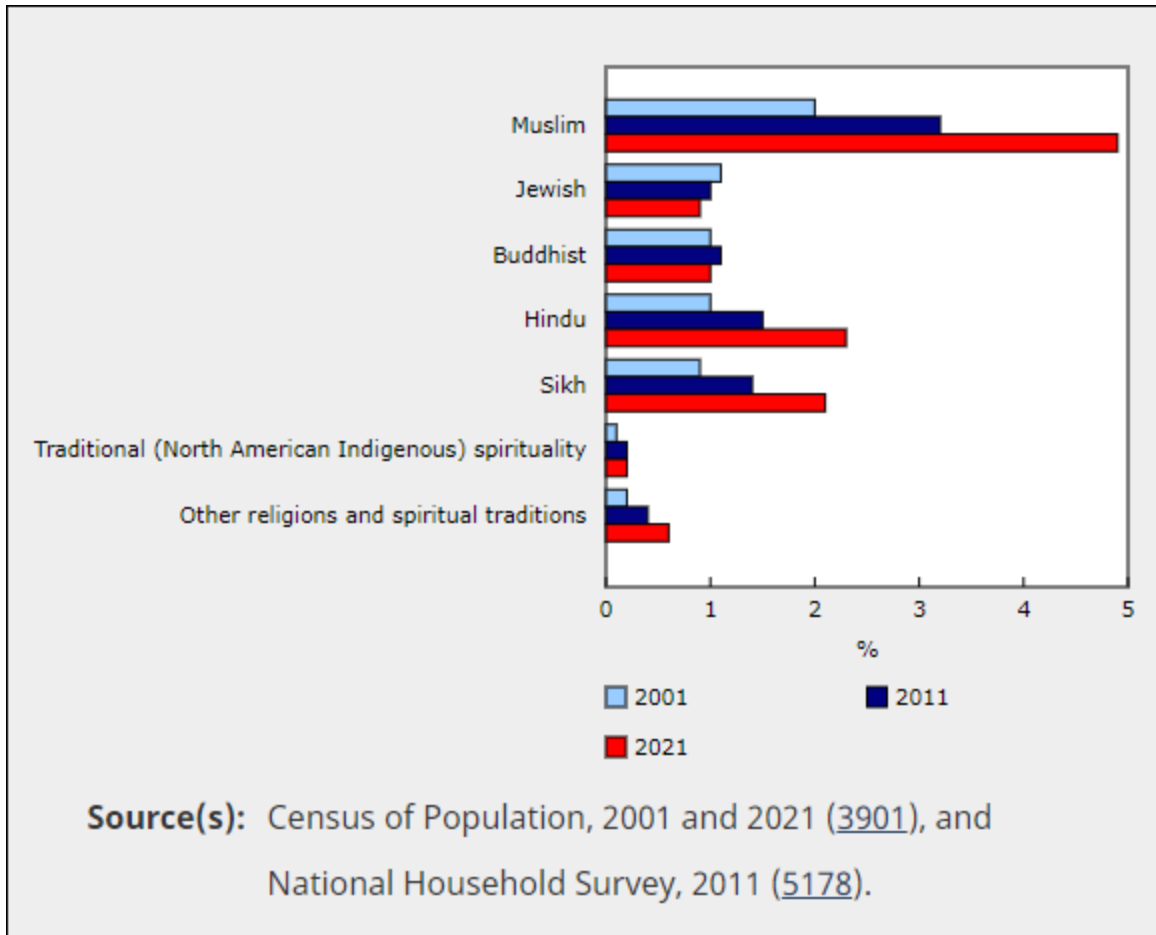
Figure 2 1.2: Census of Population in 2001, 2011, and 2021. Source provided by Statistics Canada, October 26, 2022.

1.2 Research Question

When identifying how refugees adapt to and integrate into a new society, researchers often consider themes relating to education, housing, economics, employment opportunities, paying taxes, barriers to resources and services and access to health care (IRCC, 2021). There is however a scarce amount of academic literature in Canada pertaining to which spaces and places refugees are able to develop feelings of attachment and the placemaking processes involved. Questioning in which places and spaces refugees identify with in their new environment, where they feel safe, and which areas they consciously avoid, can help identify how Canadian citizens, policy makers, and the federal government might better help to facilitate the integration of refugees, and by that extent all immigrants that are new to Canada.

The main research question that this study addresses is as follows.

How can Syrian refugees' feelings of attachment towards places in Ottawa, ON be used to indicate their own perception and sense of integration into Canadian society?

By examining the experiences, values, emotions, and daily livelihood of Syrian refugees who arrived in Ottawa between 2015 and 2017 and have continued to reside there, this research study will build upon the existing place attachment and placemaking literature as a means to identify the spaces and places that the Syrian refugees use or do not use on a daily basis. By feelings, the researcher is referring to each individuals' beliefs, attitudes, affections, fondness, emotions, sentiment, and desire regarding various geographical places and spaces in Ottawa.

1.3 Research Objectives

There are thus three main objectives of this study. *The first objective of this research study is to develop a means of assessment to identify the nature of place attachment and place making experienced by the Syrian refugees in Ottawa to then learn from and facilitate the integration of future refugee and immigrant populations within Canada.* By establishing and identifying the elements that have both heightened and or diminished the individuals own understanding and experiences of place attachment and integration. The results and analysis would then hopefully be used to provide an idea of how future refugee and immigrant populations might experience integration and how might it be experienced in different neighbourhoods, cities, and regions within Canada. As indicated previously in this chapter, it is not to say that the experiences of the Syrian refugees will be identical to other refugee and immigrant populations, but rather that there may be similar patterns in how these groups navigate and come to experience social and cultural integration within Canada.

The second main objective is to address the gap in knowledge within the discipline of Canadian geography. This study has specifically identified the general lack of research dedicated to refugee place attachment and place making literature within the Canadian academic literature context. Much of the scholarly research delves into the education (Ali, 2015), barriers to resources and services (Ghahari et al., 2019), access to health care (Beiser, et al., 2015), and employment opportunities (Samers & Snider, 2015) without giving much thought to how might

social and cultural factors affect the integration of refugees. By establishing the patterns of place attachment and place making in Ottawa, ON, this research study will be able to identify where, why, and for what reasons the Syrian refugees were able to develop feelings, emotions, and experiences towards certain spaces and places while also uncovering why this population found other spaces and places more challenging to establish place attachments. This focus will help challenge the current contemporary understandings of what integration actually is, and how policy makers and the Canadian federal government might facilitate and augment the integration experience of future refugee and immigrant populations.

The third objective is to impact how the Canadian federal government and policy makers approach integration and how best to facilitate the integration of refugees and immigrants. Although this study specifically focusses on the experiences of the Syrian refugees that arrived in Canada in 2015 to 2017, the knowledge acquired can be extrapolated to other refugee and immigrant populations as these groups are often faced with similar challenges upon their arrival to new destination. It is not to say that the experiences of the populations within this research study will be the exact same as to other refugee and immigrant populations, but rather that similar patterns including lack of resources in specific neighbourhoods and feeling safer in certain places might be consistent and similar to many other refugee and immigrant populations. As the Canadian federal government is set to accept well over 500,000 new immigrants and refugees each year by 2025 (IRCC, 2022), there is a need to help facilitate their arrival and to ensure that there remain opportunities for their success and growth. With this research study there is the hope that policy makers and the federal government will introduce policies that address the cultural and social needs of refugees and immigrants.

1.4 Research Location

The research location will be situated in Ottawa, Ontario. Ottawa was selected as the research location due to a relatively large number of Syrian refugees that initially came in 2015, 2016 and 2017 with over 1,700 Syrians settling in the city (Houle, 2019), and second, because the main researcher is a native Ottawan and has knowledge, awareness, and a developed understanding of the city.

The city of Ottawa has a population of around 970,000 as of the 2016 Census Profile, however the overall population when considering the CMA of Ottawa-Gatineau area is closer to 1.3 million people (City of Ottawa, 2023). Ottawa is considered to be a multicultural city as there is a plethora of diversity, boasting large ethnic populations from Asia, Africa, Europe, Central and South America, and several Indigenous communities (Statistics Canada, 2021). Some of the diversity in ethnicity includes those that are from the British Isles, French, German, Polish, Ukrainian, Italian, Haitian, Jamaican, Egyptian, Somali, Ethiopian, Iranian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Syrian, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese communities (Statistics Canada, 2021). This diversity also includes several ethnic enclaves in Ottawa, including Little Italy, and China Town (City of Ottawa, 2023). There are also numerous festivals celebrating the ethnic diversity, including the Capital Ukrainian Festival, the Great India Festival, Ottawa Lebanese Festival, Carnival of Cultures, and Ottawa Italian Week Festival amongst many others (City of Ottawa, 2023).

The demographic profile of Ottawa is made up of around 185,000 individuals that were born outside of Canada (City of Ottawa, 2023), roughly equating 19% of Ottawa's population. Ottawa, in comparison to the rest of the country has one of the largest immigrant growth rates in Canada (14.7 % from 1996-2001) (City of Ottawa, 2023). Only three cities in Canada have a larger immigrant growth rate and they include Toronto, Calgary (15.5%), and Vancouver (16.5%) (City of Ottawa, 2023). There is a large Middle Eastern population in Ottawa, of which the largest ethnic populations include 7,000 Iranians, 4,600 Iraqis, 26,000 Lebanese, 4,000 Palestinians, 4,500 Syrians, and 3,000 Turks (Statistics Canada, 2021). In total there are over 65,000 individuals in Ottawa that have Middle Eastern heritage and ethnicity (Statistics Canada, 2021)

1.5 Key Concepts

There are five concepts inherent in this research question that warrant clarification: *space*, *place*, *place attachment*, *place making*, and *integration*. Each of these terms is explained and described in great detail within Chapter 2: The Research Context - Literature Review and Conceptual Clarifications. The list of terms here is brief and succinct and intended to merely introduce the reader to key concepts intrinsic to the approach employed by the researcher.

Space in a general sense is a geographic location, commonly understood as any given area (Gregory, 2009). Crucially, space does not usually have significance or meanings attached to it as they are often bound by or to nothing in particular. For example, space can be understood as being a section of the prairies, or perhaps a street corner. *Place*, however, has a specific meaning and reference point (Tuan, 1974). Place is also a type of space, an area, but it has been assigned meaning by humans, be it personal and individualistic including a local Tim Hortons, the Ottawa International Airport, or even the city of Ottawa itself. Place can be collective and shared wherein it has been given a purpose which is relative based on each individual and how they come to interpret a set location (Tuan, 1974).

Place attachment and *place-making* are the places and spaces in which any given individual has experiences, emotions, feelings, sense of belonging, and or spent a significant amount of time within a set location (Tuan, 1974). The meanings behind each space and place will differ as it is relative and subjective to each individual in how they have experienced that particular location (Bogac, 2009). Place attachments relate more closely to how an individual has developed memories, experiences, and feelings in a past or current environment that actively shapes how they perceive and come to understand their current living environment (Tuan, 1974). For example, an individual might develop place attachments to a local hockey arena that they played in during their youth and subsequently developed strong memories to that place. Place making similarly involves the individuals' feelings and experiences, however it relates more closely to whether the individual is actively engaging in their current environment (Schuch & Wang, 2015), and how society supports their engagement or keeps them isolated. One example might include how a local population might encourage refugees to partake in in community activities, while also learning from and coming to participate in the refugees cultural and social celebrations. The idea and concept of community within the geographical framework is best understood as "a group of people who share common culture, values and/or interests, based on social identity and/or territory, and who have some means of recognizing and (inter)acting upon, these commonalities" (Gregory, 2009 p. 103).

Integration in the context of this research study specifically refers to how a refugee and or immigrant to Canada can adapt and adopt different cultural practices within Canada, including the dominant Canadian culture, without needing to neglect, disregard, or diminish their own

ethnic and cultural identities and practices. Therefore, each individual that comes to Canada has the ability to freely practice any given social, cultural and or religious festivity and or practice that they choose to participate in so long as it does not impose and infringe on the right and freedom of expression of any other individual and adheres to the laws of the land.

1.6 Immigration, Place and Geography

The Canadian geographical literature that pertains to refugees is typically broken down into four unique categories. As the reader will see within the literature review section of this study, Chapter Two, they are **barriers and access to resources**, **youth education and social integration**, **employment and economic opportunities**, and lastly **access to health care and health resources**. Each theme has a plethora of research dedicated to uncovering and finding how new immigrants and refugees integrate within those confines. The section below is meant to be a brief introduction to the Canadian immigrant and refugee literature, with a more thorough review of the literature in the literature review chapter that immediately follows.

Within the sub discipline of *barriers and access to resources*, the main patterns established by Canadian researchers relate to how recent immigrants and refugees often do not have the language skills needed to navigate through society and to find adequate employment (Ghahari et al., 2019). Although there are some language resources and classes offered to newly arrived immigrants and refugees so that they may develop and increase their English and or French proficiency, there often is not enough time for these individuals to dedicate the necessary hours to partake in these language classes as their priority is to work and help take care of their family. Another key barrier is that many newly arrived immigrants and refugees often have a hard time finding adequate employment as many employers simply do not recognize their level of education. This often results in these populations finding work in fields that are paying lower wages and or workplaces in which they cannot advance their career. Furthermore, access to transportation (Farber, et al., 2018) and being isolated are major barriers to newly arrived immigrants and refugees (Udayar et al, 2021).

Youth education and social integration research often identifies the need to develop strong friendships with other youth members and to have well developed and obtainable goals within the classroom (Ali, 2015). Stewart et al., (2019) further outlines the need to have access to

important resources including academic tutoring, to have access to additional language classes, and participating in extra curricular activities and athletic club. Without having access to specific services and resources, these children are likely to fall behind their peers.

Much of the research dedicated to the subfield of *employment and economic opportunities* for refugees and immigrants shares similar themes to the subfield of barriers and access to resources (Samers & Snider, 2015). Employers prejudice and lack of foreign credential recognition is a major issue amongst these populations once they enter Canada. In many cases, for newly arrived individuals to be able to access better quality jobs, they require Canadian documented education within their field of study, even though they already have the knowledge to perform their set tasks.

The subdiscipline of access to *health care and health resources* involves the need of practitioners to have access to better information and clear guidelines on how to interact with newly arrived refugees and immigrants (Kiselev et al, 2020) as there are often language, cultural and social barriers between both the health practitioner and the newly arrived individual. In several studies, refugees and immigrants try to find health practitioners that are of the same ethnic and cultural background as they feel more comfortable interacting with practitioners that share a common language and have similar customs and etiquettes.

The *place attachment* and *place making* literature, of which very little is based in Canada, focuses on the amount of time and experiences that an individual has and the memories that the individual creates within an environment to be the main impacts on developing place attachments and place making abilities to a place and or space (Bogac, 2009). Other factors will include more personal biases, and influences, such as the language that the individual speaks and how it differs to that of the region that they are now living in. Consider also the religious, political, cultural, and economic influences (Schuch & Wang, 2015) that an individual has and how they might be able to negotiate their own experiences from a past environment in a new environment (Biglin, 2020). Furthermore, the place attachments and place making abilities can also be impacted by the looks, smells, sounds, feels, and tastes of an environment (Tuan, 2008). The looks can be what type of environment you are located in i.e., the type of natural environment that surrounds the individual such as a desert, a tropical rain forest, a mountainous region or perhaps flat land. The smells can be the general aroma that is present in the

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environment, i.e., aromatic flowers, or perhaps the smell of humans in a dense environment. The sounds can be the language that is spoken in an environment or the different animals that live within the general area. The feeling of a city can be understood in both a physical and or mental capacity. Consider how an individual might feel when navigating through a park or district without knowing much about their environment. For some individuals, this lack of knowledge might make them feel unsafe, confused, or unhappy while for others this might make them feel excited and come to enjoy the relative unknown as it is an opportunity to explore the environment. An example of a physical feeling of a place and or space may be the general altitude that the individual is in. Living in an environment that is several thousand metres above sea level will contrast significantly to how an environment will feel at sea level. Lastly the tastes of an environment might relate to the kinds of foods, spices, colours, and specific culinary styles that are presented in a certain environment in comparison to what the individual had experienced in their previous residence. All these influences will impact how a refugee and or immigrant is able to integrate into their new environment in which they call home. Within the geographical field, the idea of home is also understood as being "an emotive place and spatial imaginary that encompasses lived experiences of everyday, domestic life alongside a wider sense of being and belonging in the world" (Gregory, 2009 p. 339-340).

1.7 Overview of Thesis

This research study is composed of five chapters, including this introduction chapter. Chapter Two includes the literature review and introduces the reader to the important terms, ideas, and literature that has been published pertaining to refugee integration within the Canadian framework, and the place attachment and place making of refugees and immigrants from a global perspective. The literature review helps situate and inform this research study and makes explicit how the various themes employed were developed and subsequently employed in the analysis and discussion of results. The literature review provides valuable context to not only past research, but how this study and future research studies might approach and facilitate the integration of future refugee and immigrant populations upon their arrival to Canada.

Chapter Three is the methods chapter which introduces the reader to the ways research participants where solicited, the rationale for the questions posed, and the means and justification

of the data analyses. This chapter introduces the three mixed methods that were employed within the study, namely online surveys, in-depth interviews, and mental mapping exercises. Furthermore, this chapter identifies the reasons behind employing the three mixed methods, and how the researcher interpretated the data based on the five conceptual frameworks. The five conceptual frameworks includes ***comfort, involvement***, ***relationships, security,*** and ***rootedness*** and were used to help identify and determine reasons why the Syrian refugees were either able or unable to develop feelings and emotions of place attachment and apply or not place making abilities to various places and spaces within Ottawa, Ontario.

Chapter Four is the analysis and research findings which presents the data that was obtained through the three mixed methods. In order to breakdown the analysis and findings, this chapter is composed of sub sections that analyses each individual conceptual framework. Each sub section further includes findings that was obtained from the methods employed. The last component of this chapter analyses what the researcher calls each participants 'Places of Integration'.

Chapter five is composed of the conclusion and reflections. This chapter focusses on what was learned through this research study by outlining the important findings, how the three main objectives and primary research question were answered, the limitations of this research study, what future researchers should consider when conducting research relating to the refugee and immigrant populations within the Canadian geographical perspective, and lastly a few reflections from the researcher. The following chapter introduces the reader to the Canadian geographical literature relating to refugees.

Chapter 2: The Research Context: Literature Review and Conceptual Clarifications

The objective of this chapter is to illustrate the importance and the fundamental roles that the key concepts and academic literature have in guiding the approach employed to understand how Syrian refugees become integrated within Canadian society. Examining how refugees, in particular the Syrian refugees that arrived in Canada in 2015 to 2017 and how might they have integrated, requires a wide variety of academic literature to contextualize the research and inform the findings. The first section introduces several crucial key concepts pertinent to this research project, while the second contextualizes it within the relevant academic literature pertaining to immigration, refugees, and integration. The key concepts discussed are space and place, place attachment, place making, and integration. These provide context and a base understanding of how this research project analyzes the experiences, feelings, and sentiments of the Syrian refugees that have settled in Ottawa, On. The relevant academic literature can be broken down into four main categories. These are 1) barriers and access to resources, 2) youth education and social integration, 3) employment, and economic opportunities, and 4) access to health care and health resources. These provide the necessary context to interpret the experiences of the Syrian refugees' respondents, provide a basis for how academics, policy makers and the general public might help to better facilitate the integration experiences of not only Syrian refugees in particular but future refugees that are come to Canada.

The Syrian population and those that have Syrian ethnicity in Canada includes roughly 40,840 individuals in 2011, with an additional 40,000 Syrian refugees arriving between 2015 to 2017 (IRCC, 2015). Historically, there have been three major waves of migration to Canada from Syria. The first took place from 1885 to 1908 and included mostly Syrian Christians that lived in what is now Lebanon (IRCC, 2015). The second wave is considered to be from the end of World War Two until 2012, however the majority of Syrians that migrated during that period came between 1980 and 2012 in which Canada accepted over 31,000 permanent residents (IRCC, 2015). The latest migration wave includes the 40,000 Syrian refugees that the Canadian federal government accepted between 2015 and 2017. The majority of Syrian migrants to Canada from the first two waves settled in Ontario and Quebec of which 16,000 individuals live in

Ontario, mostly residing in Toronto and its suburbs and a smaller number in Ottawa (IRCC, 2015). 17,000 individuals were settled in Quebec with the majority residing in Montreal (IRCC, 2015). Roughly 2,600 Syrians settled in Alberta and roughly 1,700 Syrians ended up residing in British Columbia (IRCC, 2015). The majority of Syrian refugees that came between 2015 to 2017 have settled in Ontario, boasting 45% of the 40,000 refugees, 17% in Quebec, 12% in Alberta and 9% in the Atlantic provinces and British Columbia (IRCC, 2019).

2.1 Key Concepts

The four concepts of *space* and *place*, *place attachment* and *sense of place*, *place-making*, and *integration* are crucial to this study as they provide a theoretical context for the questions posed, and the interpretation of the qualitative data elicited from the research participants.

2.1.1 Space and Place – Its Role in Shaping our Understanding of Geography and Immigration

'Space' can be described as the geographical location, or an area (Gregory, 2009); however, space is not bound by or to anyone. Space itself will vary depending on the position and the direction of which the person is viewing the area. When space is given meaning and or a point of reference, it then becomes a *'place'*. As Tuan (1974) indicates, points of reference and meanings such as an address, name and purpose will develop a space into a place (Tuan, 1974). It is also the experience that an individual has within an area, and therefore how the area is occupied that will determine the meaning towards that place and or space (Tuan, 2008). As an example, an individual that was born and raised in a specific space and place will have unique experiences of that area which will likely differ than that of an individual that grew up several hundred kilometres away. Their perception and understanding of that area will contrast as they may have completely different experiences, and meanings towards those spaces and places (Tuan, 2008). Places are thus created by an array of factors, including the individuals political, environmental, gendered, economic, cultural, social, inequalities and religious experiences and values. How spaces and places are understood remains fluid due to the place attachments and place-making of the people that are making experiences within these areas (Biglin, 2020).

Additionally, the attachments that the individual has within these places will be affected by the five senses of that specific place i.e., how it looks, smells, feels, sounds, and tastes (Tuan, 2008).

As an example, consider how the capital city of Canada, Ottawa, ON might compare to that of the capital of Syria, Damascus. Ottawa and Damascus are vastly different when comparing their climates and geographical locations. The looks of each city will differ significantly as Ottawa is situated in the Ottawa valley, surrounded by green belts, rivers, and Boreal forests (Walsh & Patterson, 2022) whereas Damascus is located upon an oasis in the Syrian desert (Yahia & Johansson, 2014).

Figure 3 2.1: Aerial Image of Ottawa, Ontario. Source provided by World Atlas, June 26, 2023.

Figure 4 2.2: Aerial Images of Damascus, Syria. Source provided by TRT World, June 26, 2023.

The identities of Ottawa and Damascus will differ when comparing each of their climate and weather patterns, the various types of architecture found, or perhaps how society interacts with each other. When comparing the average temperatures of the two cities, during the summertime in Ottawa the temperature will rise to on average around 19 degrees Celsius only for it to feel much warmer when factoring in the humidity (City of Ottawa, 2011), whereas summer in Damascus will feel much warmer and dryer, with average summer temperatures hovering around the 35 degrees Celsius mark with the occasional humidity (Yahia & Johansson, 2014). During the wintertime, Ottawa's average winter temperature falls to around -9 degrees Celsius but will feel much cooler with the wind chill (City of Ottawa, 2011), whereas the temperature in Damascus will fall to around 0 degrees Celsius (Yahia & Johansson, 2014). These contrasting temperatures and weather patterns provide an example to how each city will be experienced in differing ways. Syrian refugees that are not used to absurdly cold winters are likely to experience some level of shock as the snow, temperature and cooler climate contrasts significantly to the environment in which many of the Syrian refugees are from.

The sounds of the city will also differ. Some sounds might be universal such as hearing neighbors yelling over a backyard fence being built on the other persons property line, the sounds and noise of hundreds of people being stuck in traffic, the sounds of an ambulance

maneuvering through traffic during rush hour to get their patient to a hospital or perhaps the sounds and noise of construction work being done on the street that an individual lives on. The sounds that may differ from Ottawa and Damascus are more likely to be cultural sounds. By cultural sounds, it refers to the types of music that buskers might be playing in a local park, or perhaps the language that is being spoken in the area. In Ottawa you will hear people speaking English, French, and several other languages including Hindi, Urdu, Mandarin, and Arabic to simply name a few (Statistics Canada, 2021), while in Damascus the languages most commonly spoken are various dialects of Arabic (Mazigh, 2016). Furthermore, the various animals and bird species that call Ottawa and Damascus home will also differ substantially. In Ottawa, some of the most common bird species include the Broad-Winged Hawk, American Crow, Song Sparrows, and the Pacific Loon whereas in Damascus there are the Great Crested Grebe, the Corn Bunting, and the Eurasian Coot (Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2022). Interestingly, both cities and regions have thousands of European Starlings, however the vast difference in bird species provides another example to how the sounds in each city contrast.

Understanding what space and place mean and how they are determined is extremely important when considering how might refugees come to understand their new environment. The Syrian refugees that have come to Canada are given the opportunity to occupy a new space, to create a new place for themselves, and start a new life in Canada; however, because they have little to no experiences and knowledge of the spaces and places in Canada, it will be challenging for them to adapt to their new surroundings and to develop place attachments and place making. In other words, to understand and navigate a space and place will be different for individuals that are from the area, speak the same language or is familiar with the legal and societal proceedings of that region and or country in contrast to someone that has no previous knowledge or very little knowledge of that space and or place. Therefore, it can be quite challenging to adapt to an entirely new space and place, especially when the individual has already developed unique understandings and ways to navigate the environment from which they are from.

2.1.2 Place Attachment and Sense of Place – The Refugee Context

'Place attachment' refers to individuals' feelings, emotions, and sense of belonging towards any given place (Tuan, 1974). As an example, individuals can develop place attachment towards their house, or a public place, such as an urban park. Place attachments are achieved through spending a significant amount of time in an area, having had experiences, and developed memories of that set place (Bogac, 2009). This notion was supported by the work that Rowles (1983) conducted which saw some individuals that were older than 75 years of age had stronger attachments to their physical environment than those that were younger (Rowles, 1983). Similarly, in the research conducted by Bogac (2009), it became apparent that of the individuals that were forcibly removed from their homes, the older populations or those that had significant memories and spent a significant amount of time in their previous homes still felt strongly attached to them than compared to younger populations that did not have enough time to develop significant memories of their previous home. Sense of place and the feelings that one has is commonly understood within the geographical literature as the relative attitudes and emotions that both individuals and groups hold regarding the geographical areas that they live and exist around. It can be both the affection and attachment that one has towards an area while also exhibiting positive and negative emotions towards those set places and spaces (Gregory, 2009). I anticipate that some of the Syrian refugees may feel attachments to various cultural and or religious centers and events, places that serve food that is culturally similar to what they would have eaten in Syria or even places where people will be speaking the same or similar language that the Syrian refugees would have been surrounded by in Syria.

Developing attachment towards a place is possible by spending a significant amount of time, having experiences, and developing memories of a specific location. Even if the place changes as time passes, the meanings and memories of that place will remain significant to the individual (Larter et al., 2019). Having spaces that are culturally and socially relevant to the Syrian refugees will be essential to developing attachments to places (Krūmiņa, 2021) in Ottawa, ON and thus increasing the likelihood of feeling integrated. The spaces and places that celebrate the culture of the individual will help develop this sense of attachment, and thus help facilitate the integration of that population (Wimark, 2021). In addition to having attachments towards

certain places, refugees need to develop attachments and expand their own social networks through community engagements (Veronis, 2007) and to become part of the broader society (Drozdzewski, 2007). Interestingly, the places that refugees may develop attachments towards are not easily predictable. A study conducted on refugee place attachment and place making in US mid-west found that refugees had developed attachments towards community gardens as it provided an opportunity for community participation and to expand their social networks while learning new gardening techniques (Strunk & Richardson, 2019).

The ability of a refugee to develop attachments towards places in their new environment should not interfere with developing social and cultural relationships outside of their own community. If refugees are unable to interact and make connections outside of their own population, it may hinder their ability to integrate, resulting in isolation (Danzer & Yaman, 2020). The lack of connection can also lead to downwards assimilation as having low social and economic mobility can prevent this population from seeking opportunities within broader society (Long, 2015).

To further help the Syrian refugees develop feelings of attachment to places, it is crucial for society to remain inclusive and that policies at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels are made to be open and accommodating to enable the refugee to find success in their new environment (Tine, 2017). In addition to the implementation of proactive and open policies, it helps to live in a secure neighborhood that has access to important resources, including grocery stores, clean water, safe housing, and employment opportunities (Eltokhy, 2020).

2.1.3 Place Making – Refugee Engagement

'Place making' refers to the "active engagement of humans with the places they inhabit" (Schuch & Wang, 2015 p. 216). It encompasses different populations having access to, being supported, and having different landscapes to promote their own cultural and social identity within a mixed space (Schuch & Wang, 2015). Similar to place attachments, place-making is impacted by the "physical, cultural, social, economic, and political" (Schuch & Wang, 2015 p. 218) and is always changing with the movement and new experiences of different populations. This is further exemplified by the geographical works of Fritzsche and Nelson in that new forms of identities come through different political spaces and places (Fritzsche & Nelson, 2020),

however remain relational due to shifting networked politics (Pierce et al, 2010). Although it may seem straightforward, the place making experiences of refugees and immigrants are not that simple. Wu et al (2012) establishes the pattern between immigrant generations and social integration in that their relationship is affected by and largely depends on numerous factors, including the individual's racial status in the host society as it can be a potential barrier, how the neighbourhood in which these individuals establish themselves sees them as, and the individual's generational status (Wu et al., 2012). As suggested by the work of Krūmiņa (2021), having spaces and places that are culturally and socially significant to foreign populations will help establish a sense of attachment, and facilitate place-making within a new environment (Krūmiņa, 2021). Hoekstra's and Pinkster's geographical work further outlines this narrative as the sense of belonging is a dynamic emotional attachment, one that can be determined and facilitated through specific places and spaces that have some kind of shared meaning that relates to the population. Inequalities will exist as these places and spaces are shifting and changing due to various historical and political decisions (Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2017). This notion was also supported by the work that Eckenwiler and Wild (2021) conducted in relation to refugee health, and ethical place-making and if successful could help support and establish their resettlement and place-making within a new environment (Eckenwiler & Wild, 2021). A geographical study in Scarborough Ontario further outlines the complexities of place making. An individuals home making, and place making is unique, shifts constantly and is heavily impacted by their past experiences. As the study outlines "many who have faced histories of trauma and violence, suggest that the settlement experience is not devoid of anxiety and pain. Memories of places and communities left behind, sometimes never to be returned to, harness a longing and deeper need for place-making – often spilling into the public realm such as community centres, grocery stores, and schools – where the process of home-making also becomes a constant and unstable process of city-building for a "common good." (Basu & Fiedler, 2015 p. 44).

The place making experiences of refugee groups tends to be bound by how the society in which they find themselves in views their existence. In a society where the refugees are able to develop, participate and share their culture, food, language, and to participate in the local economy and politics, there is room for these refugee groups to grow and to develop place making attachments. The place making experiences of many Myanmar refugees in Australia was achieved "by accessing networks both within and outside the Myanmar community" (Hughes,

2019 p. 302) through the sharing of their food culture and even gardening. Regardless of how open a society might be towards refugee groups; refugees are likely to encounter challenges. Similar to how in Canada many Syrian refugees are likely to find it challenging to adapt to the Canadian environment, one might also consider how refugees will adapt to a new city, especially if they are originally from a rural area. The experiences of a group of Ethiopian refugees in Australia indicates the wider issue of how to enable the success of refugees in an environment that appears to be more chaotic, rushed, and stressful than the environment from which they came from (Tefera & Gamlen, 2021). Place attachments were hindered due to what the study indicates as a "temporal logics" in that the unfamiliarity of the urban environment and the pace at which life flowed was overwhelming for this population, however the Ethiopian refugees that had come from more urban environments found it less challenging to adapt, and thus were able to make some place making attachments (Tefera & Gamlen, 2021 p. 257). Although this article does not provide a solution on how societies can enable the success of refugees that come from a rural background into an urban area, the article does bring forth some important ideas. How do societies enable the place making ability of refugees that are new to the environment, whether it be to a rural and or urban area, where they may lack adequate services, connections to employment opportunities, connections to cultural and social settings, and or proper housing to support their family?

The opposite is also true in that if refugee groups are treated negatively, given no political agency and are unable to make decisions for themselves, it often leads to unhappiness, the inability to have place making attachments and diminishing their ability to raise their quality of life resulting in the idea of relocating to a new country in which they may find success and autonomy (Hoffstaedter, 2014). In Malaysia, Chin refugees were treated as low priority and were unable to develop place making attachments. This soon led to many of Chin refugees envisioning themselves leaving Malaysia for a country that will provide them with more opportunities for not only themselves but also for the next generation (Hoffstaedter, 2014). Refugees that were housed in more rural and peri urban areas in Portugal found it challenging to develop place making attachments as there was the inability to find employment that matched their previous employment and educational background, resulting in many refugees relocating to areas in which they were more likely to find employment without the states help (Challinor et al., 2022).

A component of the place making field of study that is slowly increasing in awareness and importance is that of the digital place making. As the world economy and politics are increasingly connected, so to have place attachments on the digital web for refugees. Refugees, and by that extent most humans are able to connect with family and friends over large geographical distances. This digital infrastructure is what enables family members to remain connected even through unimaginable horrors and challenges, but to also familiarize themselves within their new environment, to navigate through their new environment and to rely on these digital places for emotional support and belonging (Palmberger, 2022). Although these spaces can be used for access to information, services, and support, many of these digital spaces are being used to spread dissent, hostility, and hate towards refugee populations. The article focusses on the digital place making of hostile groups in Turkey after the mass resettlement of Syrian refugees, however, also paints the larger image that these forums and spaces exist in most countries and continue to be present (Ozduzen et al., 2021).

2.1.4 Integration

'Integration' in the Canadian context is often understood as finding employment and economic productivity (Kyeremeh, et al., 2021), owning property, paying taxes (IRCC, 2021), as "language acquisition, education, labour-market status and income, and cultural and social adaptation" (van Heelsum, 2017 p. 2137); however, integration is a far more complex geographical exercise. The integration of refugees'—of making a place for themselves in Ottawa, is impacted by various open and closed policies that are directed towards them, and their ability to interact spatially and thus socially and culturally in their community and neighborhood. The Federal Government of Canada does provide some essential services including resettlement services, income support for a year, housing services and basic information (IRCC, 2019); however, it falls short on more subtle needs such as cultural and social specific services. This is made all the more challenging because refugees must adapt to various unknown practises of the dominant cultures in Canada in unfamiliar spaces, while simultaneously holding onto their own cultural identities, customs, and values. Integration for refugees is a complex process of spatial hybridity wherein familiar places are necessarily abandoned and new place attachments must be made. The more we know about this process, the better able host societies can be in assisting refugees. Crucially, integration is subjective, and the meaning will change over time based on

societies values, beliefs, perspectives, and ideologies (Kyeremeh, et al., 2021). The contemporary Canadian perspective is that integration is a process in which immigrants are in demand for demographic and economic necessities, while being given opportunities and institutional support by the government and society (Kyeremeh, et al., 2021).

Canadian multicultural policies help facilitate the integration of refugees and immigrants by seeking to assist all Canadians in overcoming cultural barriers, to promote social and cultural diversity and to help newly immigrants and refugees learn the official languages of Canada (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). Multiculturalism also attempts to grant equal opportunities to find employment, and to enable all members of society the opportunity to express their own cultural, social, religious, and political values (Liston & Carens, 2008). While establishing the right and freedom to be who the individual wants to be, it also challenges the notion of what a visible minority refers to and the various discriminations that these members face from the dominant culture (Song, 2020). As Alba and Foner (2015) noted in their book <u>Strangers no morel immigration and the challenges of integration in North America and Western Europe</u>, integration in a multicultural society allows each individual, whether they are an immigrant or native to the area, to acquire political, cultural, social, and civil rights. Although multicultural policies seek to grant opportunities of freedom of expression, they are not perfect by nature as there still exists racism, prejudice, and discrimination at most levels of society. In addition to the racism, prejudice, and discrimination, societal structures, and society itself tends to view racialized and ethnic boundaries as divided thus perpetuating the notion of stigmatisation and discrimination when in reality ethnicities are far more flexible and contextual (Torngren et al., 2021).

The decision to utilize the word *'integration'* as opposed to *'assimilation'* or '*acculturation*' was made with purpose. Integration loosely relates to how migrants and refugees can adapt to and adopt various practices from other cultures including the dominant culture in Canada, without diminishing their own cultural values. For example, a migrant and or refugee should not feel pressured to celebrate Canadian holidays if they would prefer not to, while also they should not disregard and devalue their own cultural and religious holidays. This ensures that any and all members of the Canadian public, whether they be Canadian citizens or not, have the fundamental right and ability to practice, speak and celebrate whatever language, art, culture, food, or religious practice that they would like without persecution from other members of the

public and or the state. Integration is used as a way to enhance opportunities for immigrant and refugee populations to find success in their new society while ensuring that the host population remains accepting of others (Kivisto, 2016).

This research project did not use the terms assimilation and acculturation because both terms are inherently limiting and can prevent individuals from establishing and expressing their own cultural uniqueness. Assimilation is best understood as "a process whereby migrants give up their cultural traditions, including attire, language, cuisines and ways of thinking, and take on the cultural traditions of the society in their destination country" (Gregory, 2009 p. 38). As noted by Alba & Nee, assimilation amounts to the "disappearance, of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it" (Alba & Nee, 1997 p. 15). Acculturation "involves the adjustment of a subordinate culture to the impositions and exactions of a dominant culture, a process of learning and even 'acquiring' the idioms of the dominant culture" (Gregory, 2009 p. 768-769). Where assimilation and acculturation seek to have society conform to one singular culture and approach to how a society should present itself as, integration, in theory enables all members of society to establish and celebrate their own cultural preferences while also being part of the dominant culture. This creates the opportunity for all members of society, including new refugees and or immigrants to feel that they belong in Canada.

The theoretical analysis of assimilation and acculturation help support the notion of limiting migrants in their new society. Gordon's influence on Acculturation, or 'structural assimilation' and 'Identificational assimilation' involve cultural adoption to the majority population of any given society while completely rejecting the cultural expressions and values that minority groups have and might wish to express within the larger society (Alba & Nee, 1997). This notion is crucial to Gordon's theories as it ensures that minority groups are forced to forgo their own culture and values to become part of what was deemed a national identity (Alba & Nee, 1997). The national identity may come in various forms, including the language spoken, the clothing being worn, and values that people have.

Straight line assimilation involves newer generations identifying less and less with their parents' culture, values and customs, and instead opting to identify with the values and culture of the majority population of the region (Alba & Nee, 1997). Take for example a family moving to the United States from India. Although the parents are likely to hold onto their cultural and social

values, their children's values and perceptions will become less identical to their parents', and instead begin to mimic the values and perceptions of the dominant populations culture. This continues until the generation after and so on emulate and completely identify with the majority populations dominant culture and values instead of their own ethnic heritage.

Shibutani and Kwan's 'Ecological Analysis' assimilation theory identifies the various ways in which a migrant, or citizen is treated by society. Their analysis identifies that an individual will often be determined by how they are defined, as opposed to who they are. The interpretation being that there are important preconceptions that influence how various populations perceive and associate members of other community groups and or ethnicities (Alba & Nee, 1997). For example, there may be an Indian migrant that works in retail, however the preconception is that they should be a doctor, lawyer, scientist or perhaps mathematician. The preconception of a Mexican migrant might be that they are an illegal immigrant, working on a farm, landscaping or as a cleaner, when the reality might be that they are a teacher or perhaps a doctor. It is only when the minority group increases in population size to an extent where it can challenge the dominant populations beliefs and values that these preconceptions and power dynamics change within society (Alba & Nee, 1997). Some of the changes include new government policies that represent the needs of a more diverse population, the types of advertisements being made, and the actors shown within them, and workforces becoming more culturally diverse to represent Canada's cultural and ethnic diversity.

Integration theory, as opposed to assimilation and acculturation theory, diverges from the notion of conformity and the dominant population. Instead, it focuses on integration to what, the settlement and adjustment to their new society, and how these populations navigate their cultural, social, political, economic, and religious values and beliefs. Integration theory encapsulates immigrants becoming accepted into their new society, interacting with other minority and majority cultures and populations, adapting to, and adopting some of their values, while also maintaining their own ethnic and cultural identities (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018). As Berry outlines, this is only possible if and when the government, the host society, and members the migrating populations are willing to mutually adapt and coexist with one another's cultures and values (Berry, 1997).

It is important to note that not all immigrants and refugees will have the same idea of integration as the state or even amongst themselves. Where for some individuals' integration might mean economic productivity, or adapting to Canadian culture and language, for others integration might refer to having a family and simply living in Canada. It is therefore crucial to explore the different perspectives and aspirations of integration and what it means for each individual. Adopting a geographical perspective can help identify where and in what places and spaces these refugees and immigrants feel that they have integrated and thus feel attachments and place-making abilities towards.

2.1.5 Linking the Concepts

Spaces and places will have different meanings for different people based on their own experiences, memories, the time spent in an environment and the kind of environment it is, their proximity to the space and place of question, and by how each space and place looks, feels, sounds, smells and tastes. All these factors enable individuals to develop place making and place attachments for these spaces and places. To enable refugees to develop these attachments and place making ability, it is crucial that they are able to integrate at various levels, whether it be culturally, socially, economically, and positively impact their mental and physical health. Furthermore, there needs to be spaces and places that promote safe environments whether it be in school, work, house environments, and more recently, online on the digital web.

2.2 Immigration, Refugees, and Integration – A Documentation of Academic Literature

There are four main categories that make up the bulk of academic literature pertaining to immigration, refugees, and integration. They are *barriers and access to resources*, *youth education and social integration*, *employment and economic opportunities*, and *health care and access to health resources*. The four categories are crucial to this study as they provide context to the experiences of past migrants and refugees, they help identify what policies, services and resources have worked and where improvements need to be made. Furthermore, by analyzing these four main categories we can determine where in lies the current gaps in literature and how this research project will attempt to bridge the gap in knowledge. The term refugee refers to an

individual that has been "involuntarily displaced from their homes and dispossessed of their livelihoods" often without any protection from their government (Gregory, 2009 p. 628). An immigrant however refers to when individuals leave one region or nation-state voluntarily and settles in another (Gregory, 2009).

2.2.1 Barriers and Access to Resources

Ghahari et al. (2019) conducted a study on determining what some of the barriers that refugees were faced with daily and how they were perpetuated. They were able to determine that some of the challenges that refugees faced on a daily occurrence related to gender role conflicts, language barriers and a loss of employment opportunities as employers did not recognize their level of education (Ghahari et al., 2019). From an economic perspective, it is evident that these barriers prevent refugees from fully integrating into society, as they prevent refugees from being able to obtain a familiar occupation while also belittling their cognitive ability. It begs the question, why is there not a better standardization system to enable all migrants and refugees that have medical, engineering, teaching, trades, and law degrees, amongst others, from obtaining employment in those fields? Perhaps it is the ugly truth that although Canada wants the best and brightest individuals from other countries, resulting in a brain gain in Canada, society only wants those individuals to work in industries that Canadians themselves do not want to work in.

A study located in the Durham region of Toronto sought to understand the barriers that Syrian refugees had when accessing city transportation and how that would affect their ability to participate in society (Farber, et al., 2018). The results of the research found that although in most cases the Syrian refugees were able to complete their "mandatory activities such as attending their language classes", (Farber et al., 2018, p. 187) the inaccessibility had a profound effect on their "health, loneliness and overall wellbeing" (Farber et al., 2018, p. 186). The results differed as the inaccessibility had a greater effect on the Syrian refugees than it had on the overall population in the Durham region (Farber et al., 2018). The researchers offered some insight to how governments might prevent this kind of social isolation amongst refugees from repeating. They included, providing new policies to aide agencies that help sponsor refugees to determine areas that are more suitable and accessible to public transportation i.e., not suburban areas, and to offer services such as ride shares or van pooling to help facilitate travel to "culturally specific food stores" (Farber et al., 2018, p. 190).

In addition to the language, not recognizing education levels, transportation and isolation barriers that prevent refugees from fully integrating economically and socially, there are also emotional barriers as refugees are often isolated from their families and friends over large geographical distances (Udayar et al, 2021). It then becomes crucial for community groups to help provide resources such as language support to facilitate the interactions and experiences that refugees have within their new environment (Nam et al, 2022).

To help identify the barriers and lack of resources, the next three sections are dedicated to introducing where specifically refugees might face challenges. They are youth education and social and cultural integration, employment and economic opportunities, and lastly access to health care and health resources. It is important to note that these three categories are all related and impact one another, whether it be at the institutional level from a top to bottom approach or the local level with a bottom to top approach. These categories help identify the ways in which institutions and policy makers have approached the field of study and in what direction they may be headed towards. It is also important to note that not all the research relates specifically to Canada, as there is the need to compare and look at how various societies provide access to resources and or the barriers that are in place to isolate and prevent the success of refugees.

2.2.2 Youth Education and Social Integration

Much of the research dedicated to the education of youth indicates that it is crucial for immigrant children to learn the language of the dominant culture (Ali, 2015). The success of integrating the child in any school environment also depends on the relationship between the child's parents and teacher. If both parties have similar expectations of the child, it can foster an environment for success, establishing realistic and consistent objectives for the child to attain (Ali, 2015). If children are unable to adapt to the language of the dominant culture, it may result in the child falling behind their peers, limiting their opportunities to higher education and thus obtaining "low-paid, low-status jobs" (Ali, 2015, p. 278). Similarly, to how language is seen as a crucial step towards integrating into Canadian society, it is equally important that refugee children be educated and well versed in the education system of the host country as it will increase their chances of and access to post-secondary education and to better economic opportunities (Dryden-Peterson et al, 2019). Within the schooling environment, it is crucial that refugees, and the larger population be exposed to a less dominant nationalistic Canadianism

agenda of favouring certain groups of individuals over others and instead focus on education that includes all members of society and that grants better opportunities (Dryden-Peterson et al, 2019). Furthermore, having access to post-schooling opportunities is vital for the success of refugees, especially those who are from an older age group (Dryden-Peterson et al, 2019).

Stewart et al. (2019) focussed on the "educational and psychological needs" (Stewart et al., 2019, p. 2) of Syrian refugee children in Winnipeg and Calgary. The research team were able to conclude that to be able to facilitate the integration of these children, it was pivotal to have supports in place for when emotions of trauma, separation anxiety, interrupted schooling and experiences of racism and discrimination arose (Stewart et al., 2019). Schools remain a place where children, whether they are refugees, immigrants, or citizens are able to participate regularly with one another, create friendships and relationships that will influence how they grow up and what their aspirations are and how to communicate within society, fostering a sense of belonging (Matthews, 2008).

A key component to the success and or detriment of refugee children in a schooling environment is whether the host country and their educational institutions foster an environment which values or neglects their education and whether these institutions are prepared and have adequate resources to best serve these refugee children (Crul et al, 2019). In Turkey and Lebanon, many Syrian refugees did not participate in local schools even when participation was mandatory, and in some cases simply kept on learning from the Syrian curriculum (Crul et al, 2019). In Germany there was a distinct focus on vocational learning, which at times came to the detriment of access to more academic education paths, whereas in Sweden much of the education was focussed on regular instruction with regular classes focussing on second language education (Crul et al, 2019). Educational spaces need to be well resourced to enable a place for belonging and to help direct students towards their future successes (Dryden-Peterson, 2016), however without these services and access to better education, there is the potential end result of many refugees not being able to participate in the wider economy and perhaps become a burden to the society (Crul et al, 2019).

There seems to be a huge change towards the education and perception of refugees after the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine and forced millions of Ukrainians to flee their homes, thus becoming refugees. As a result of this conflict, many governments including Canada, the United

States of America, and several European nations are providing better access for Ukrainians to obtain refugee status, working status and educational status. Ukrainian refugees were essentially granted free movement across European nations which is a stark contrast to the experiences of refugees in many other parts of the world (Morrice, 2022). There is now an emphasis on post-secondary education amongst these Ukrainian refugees, a push that was not seen nearly as much when comparing to other refugee populations. To provide some examples "Canada has introduced a primary immigration stream for Ukrainians, with benefits such as work authorisation" (Morrice, 2022 p. 252), Austria announced that "it will waive tuition fees for Ukrainian nationals and will fast-track applications for recognition of Ukrainian qualifications to support rapid integration into education" (Morrice, 2022 p. 253). Finland has taken the opportunity to cover the entire educational costs of 2000 Ukrainian students (Morrice, 2022). Germany is enabling refugees that work in research to continue their research studies, similar to Italy in setting up various funds for students (Morrice, 2022) while Scotland "plans to give free tuition and living cost support" (Morrice, 2022 p. 253).

Unfortunately, these experiences are not the same for foreign students that were studying in Ukraine, mainly from countries including Nigeria, India, Morocco, and Egypt. These students have often been met with challenges in locating access to other European countries, forcing many of them to end their studies and return home at a loss (Morrice, 2022). Of the 44 countries in Europe, only Hungary and France are providing some financial aid to non-Ukrainian students that were studying in Ukraine at the time of the invasion (Morrice, 2022).

The excuse and narrative that many western countries share in that they cannot provide adequate services to refugees has since been disproven with the events of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and with the immediate response to help Ukrainian refugees. This then begs a few questions, how can institutions and governments be more open towards individuals that are not of the same cultural, religious, and or geographical proximity? Will this change remain in place for all future refugee groups or is this a one time grant of permission to those that are culturally closer to the rest of Europe, and by that extent Canada, and the US?

2.2.3 Employment and Economic Opportunities

In Michael Samers and Mitchell Snider's chapter "Finding Work: The Experience of Immigrants in North America", they introduced how migrants are typically treated in the labour market. Migrants are often faced with prejudices as "employers hire and promote workers on other bases such as nationality, gender/sex, or skin colour" (Samers & Snider, 2015, p. 170). In addition, as policy towards labour markets changed in the 1970s and coupled with the rise in neoliberalism (Samers & Snider, 2015), migrants are often only hired on a "part-time or on a temporary basis" (Samers & Snider, 2015, p. 171). Permanent employment is also challenging to obtain as many refugees have various social, emotional, and psychological traumas, making employers hesitant to consider them (Newman et al, 2018). Samers and Snider also indicated that migrants and refugees often engage in migrant social networks, where individuals are hired based on the same or similar ethnic backgrounds and may involve a so called "economy of favours" (Samers & Snider, 2015, p. 175). This choice of employment however often leads to downward assimilation due to the lack of social and economic mobility and thus perpetually stuck in the same low income vocation (Long, 2015).

Senthanar et al. (2021) sought to understand how the employment integration of Syrian women would differ based on the different refugee streams i.e., private sponsorship, government-assisted, refugee claimants, and blended visa office referral (Senthanar, et al., 2021). The study found that of the four categories, women that came from the government-assisted program typically faced more barriers as they were more likely to experience "greater mental health issues, and often lacked language skills, education or work experience" (Senthanar et al., 2021, p. 588), whereas the Syrian women that came from the private sponsorship and blended visa program had the most success as they had more social support networks and job prospects (Senthanar et al., 2021). Many refugee women faced barriers including finding adequate and safe childcare, and transportation to get to the place of employment (Senthanar et al, 2019). Furthermore, many privately sponsored refugees had kept in contact with their sponsors and thus were more likely to have these resources, and networks available to them, which enabled their short and long term economic integration (Kaida et al, 2019).

Similar to how there are preferences for certain groups of refugees when it comes to education, such as the Ukrainian refugees, the same preference exists in terms of economic and

employment integration. There is often the prejudice of not selecting refugees from Muslim dominant countries (Lundborg, 2013). It also seems that many of the refugee populations that were better able to find employment, might be aided by the networks that people have made that are of the same ethnicity in the host country (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014). In several cases many refugees end up taking the first job that they find as they are determined to find some kind of economic and financial stability. The urgency in finding an employment often means that they are working in a profession that they either have very little to no education or knowledge of, and do not know of the proper safety and rights that they have, thus exposing them to potential dangers and to potentially being exploited by their executive (Kosny et al, 2019). To help facilitate the process of refugees finding employment opportunities, it is vital that refugees are made aware of their rights and safety, to deny work that they feel is unsafe to them, to know the risks of completing certain employments, and to match their education and work knowledge in a profession that is similar or identical to what they had worked in, in their country of origin. Furthermore, there needs to be cultural learning, and job readiness training. Providing support to refugees not only enables and helps their economic transition into the hosts economy, but it also benefits employers as they are able to create a more efficient and dynamic work environment (Lee & Szkudlarek, 2021).

2.2.4 Access to Health Care and Health Resources

One health related study focused on how integration of the Sri Lankan Tamil population might be influenced by their mental health, access to social resources, and adversities that they were faced with before and during the migration to Canada (Beiser, et al., 2015). The results of the study were intriguing as they found that the integration of these Sri Lankan refugees was "multidimensional" (Beiser, et al., 2015, p. 39). Their research revealed that "pre-migration adversity, stress-related mental disorder and a relative lack of human and social capital" (Beiser, et al., 2015, p. 39) negatively impacted their ability to integrate into society. The study would go on to suggest that the Sri Lankan population who had neglected their mental health had done so to better integrate economically (Beiser, et al., 2015). Furthermore, the study outlined that the Sri Lankan participants were unwilling to seek specialists as they held "a poor view of the system" (Beiser, et al., 2015, p. 39). Unfortunately, this research study was unable to determine why there was so much distrust in the Sri Lankan refugee community.

To help develop this relationship between medical health practitioners and refugees, it would be prudent to set clear guidelines on the best practices when trying to provide service and help to refugee populations. The guidelines should also indicate culturally sensitive topics as it might be improper to discuss certain topics in front of certain individuals or there are specific times for sensitive issues to be discussed (Kiselev et al, 2020). In addition to language being the most common barrier when looking at access to health care, there are also barriers of waiting times, transportation, and economic ability to take time from work to visit a medical health practitioner (Mangrio & Sjogren Forss, 2017).

There also needs to be greater agency between various organizations to ensure that the appropriate and necessary information is being shared across all platforms to better aide refugees (Rashoka et al, 2022). In addition to the greater communication and agency, there needs to be better policies and strategies at the institutional level to help provide resources and aid to refugees (Rajaratnam & Azman, 2022). Although there has been progress in the care and the delivery of health care services and resources to refugees in Canada, there still remains room for improvement.

2.2.5 Summary of the Documentation of Academic Literature

There are many barriers that refugees face when it comes to youth education and social integration, employment and economic opportunities, and access to health care and health resources. Some include language barriers, access to proper transportation, no adequate or affordable childcare, lack of employment opportunities due to not recognizing their education, emotional and psychological barriers, prejudice against certain populations amongst other barriers. To help facilitate the transition of refugees, it is crucial that employers, members of the public, teachers, health care workers, and others remain patient, and are made aware of the unique cultural factors that may impact their ability to integrate. It is important to foster a positive environment to facilitate their integration into Canadian society, especially as there are likely to be more refugees due to continued conflicts and the inattentiveness of addressing climate change issues. Crucially there is the need to have spaces and places that are culturally significant to refugees to help provide a sense of attachment and place making. These spaces and

places need to extend past the usual natural, physical, social, and built environments, to also include safe places and spaces in the digital world.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter identifies the key concepts, terms, and literature that will guide my approach and understanding when determining in what spaces might the Syrian refugees feel comfortable or perhaps uncomfortable in, whether they themselves feel that they are integrating or have integrated in Canadian society and what places the Syrian refugees have developed attachments, feelings, and a sense of belonging towards in Ottawa, On. As indicated, spaces and places have different meanings depending on the experiences, memories, and knowledge of these areas, and to the biases, exposures and influences that the individual has experienced. Places and spaces are thus impacted and influenced by an array of factors, some of which include political, cultural, religious, and economic influences. Spaces and places are however fluid and contextual, and because of this fluidity they are continuously changing. Spaces and places are also impacted by the different senses, i.e., the looks, smells, feels, sounds, and tastes of a particular area.

Place attachment and place making are developed by spending a significant amount of time, the experiences that one has, and the memories one has within certain places and or spaces. The extent to which an individual will feel attachments to a place and space will vary enormously and thus determining the place attachment and place making ability of an individual is never universal, as each experience and memory is unique to each individual. There are however some important themes that can help determine the place attachment and place making of an individual. Individuals that have spent a greater amount of time in an environment will find it more challenging to leave that environment and start a new life in an environment that is unknown to that individual. On the other hand, it is more common for individuals that have spent less time in their previous environment to find greater success in adjusting to and adapting to an entirely new environment, space and or place.

Integration is often seen as the migrants employment, housing and economic value to Canadian society, however integration is far more complex and how an individual is able to integrate will be determined by their ability to adjust to a new environment, whether the host nation is open and allows migrants to culturally, and socially integrate i.e., allowed to practice

various spiritual and or religious festivals and rituals, having the ability to speak their native tongue and can adapt to and adopt various practices from other cultures including the dominant culture in Canada, without diminishing their own cultural values. Integration for refugees is a complex process of spatial hybridity wherein familiar places are necessarily abandoned and new place attachments must be made. The more we know about how this process, the better able host societies will be able to assist refugees.

There are currently four major areas of study pertaining to refugees and refugee experiences in Canada. They include barriers and access to resources, youth education and social integration, employment and economic opportunities, and access to health care and health resources. Although a lot of research has gone into these categories, determining how one feels integrated is inherently complex and multidimensional and relies on several factors. Furthermore, there is a clear lack of research dedicated to specific place attachment and place making experiences of various refugee populations in Canada.

The objectives of this research study are first, to develop a means of assessment created to assess the nature of place attachment experienced by these particular refugees holds the potential to facilitate the integration of future refugees in Canada by identifying the factors that both heighten and lessen a refugee's self-identified sense of place attachment and integration. Ideally, these factors could be accentuated or minimized accordingly in other cities for other refugees. Second, this study will address a gap in knowledge within the discipline of geography which encompasses the general lack of research dedicated to other factors of integration, including social, and cultural integration. Furthermore, it will challenge the current contemporary understandings of place attachment and integration which asserts to integration being primarily understood as having employment, paying taxes, and owning property. Third, to impact how the Federal Government of Canada approaches integration to establish more appropriate policies that directly impact the cultural, and social needs of refugees.

The following chapter introduces the three main research methods employed, the recruitment of participants, the research location, and the five conceptual frameworks that were used to analyze the Syrian refugees place attachment and place making experiences in Ottawa, Ontario.

Chapter 3: Methods of Data Collection

3.1 Introduction

In analyzing the larger concept of place attachment and place making of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa, Ontario, readers need to understand where and how this research study was conducted and through what methods were used to collect and analyze data. This chapter will introduce the study site, the theoretical and methodological perspectives employed, and the means of data collection and their analyses. The intent of this chapter is to make explicit for readers the rationale of the study's design, its approach and the data collected and analyzed. This chapter will first establish the study site, indicating why Ottawa, Ontario was the desired location for this research study. Second, it will examine the theoretical perspectives of place attachment and place-making at the core of this investigation. This will also include how the research study analyzed the data through the five-fold place-making/attachment criteria of comfort levels, involvement, relationships, security, and rootedness of the Syrian refugees in the social and cultural settings of Ottawa, Ontario. The third section introduces the methodological approaches, including the case study analysis, and the qualitative approaches employed through the on-line survey, in-depth interviews, and mental mapping exercise. The fourth section explains the data collection methods and justifies their use. The fifth section explains the analyses of the survey, interview data, and the mental map exercises while also including the storage of the data. The last section of this chapter provides a statement that ethics approved this research study with approved documented information found within the appendix, and the means of participant recruitment.

3.2 Study Site: Ottawa, Ontario

The study site was conducted in Ottawa, ON (Figure 5 3.1), including neighborhoods such as the downtown core, all the way to Orleans in the East, South Keys/Nepean in the South, and Kanata in the West with a population of 970,000 as of the 2016 Census profile (Statistics Canada, 2021). Please refer to Figure 6 3.2 for the research study site boundary. The boundary was selected to help identify the main city limits and to try and obtain participants who were able

or unable to develop place attachments to the actual city of Ottawa, and not towards rural townships. The boundary decision (as shown with the red line in figure 6.3.2) allowed the researcher to keep the study site location focussed and consistent with the main research question. This Boundary illustrates where the majority of Ottawans live in the city.

Figure 5 3.1: Ottawa, Ontario. Source provided by Google Maps, January 2018, 2023.

Figure 6 3.2: City Boundaries, Ottawa, Ontario. Source provided by Google Earth, January 18, 2023.

Ottawa, Ontario was selected as the desired study location for two key reasons. The first reason relates to the researchers own knowledge, awareness, and ability to navigate Ottawa. It is the town in which I grew up in and have primary residence. As an Ottawan, the researcher has a

well-developed understanding of its many geographies. This provides the researcher with the local knowledge and opportunities to engage with individuals and organizations that assist with identifying and connecting with potential research participants. Second, of the tens of thousands of Syrian refugees that received asylum in Canada during 2015 to 2017, many were resettled and still reside in Ottawa, ON, making Ottawa a good study location. With over 1,700 Syrian refugees in Ottawa (Houle, 2019), the moderately large population allows for a larger pool of potential informants. The moderately large population also increases the chance that some research participants may know of other potential participants and thus increasing the awareness of the research study, and potentially increasing the number of individuals participating through snowballing methods. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis will be the population of Syrian refugees, while the unit of observation will be each individual Syrian refugee.

3.3 Place Attachment and Place Making Perspective

The feelings of place attachment, emotions, sense of belonging, and time spent in an environment, and place making active engagement within their environment, is crucial for immigrants and refugees alike to be able to integrate within Canadian society (Tuan, 1974). Like all newcomers, feelings of place attachment and the ability to develop place making feelings and emotions for the Syrian refugees are dependent upon the amount of time, experiences, and memories that one has within a given environment (Bogac, 2009). How an individual feels regarding a specific place and or space will differ as each individual will have unique experiences and memories of a particular place. Other factors that can influence the place attachment, and place making ability includes how the place looks, smells, feels, sounds, and tastes (Tuan, 2008). An example of how a place might taste involves the type of cuisine and foods, spices, and herbs that are used in a given place in comparison to where the individual originally came from. The five senses help direct and uncover how an individual might come to navigate and experience a new location and environment that is contrasting from the environment in which they were originally from. These senses can be experienced through the language that an individual encounters on a daily basis, the foods and type of cuisine that are present in their new location in contrast to where they were originally from, or even how the

built, physical, natural, and social environments can impact how an individual integrates in a new environment.

To identify data that will allow me to assess the place attachment and place-making experiences of the Syrian refugees, the researcher elected to use a five-component conceptual framework based on the concepts of *'rootedness'* by Proshansky (1983) and four others by Cutchin et al. (2003), namely: *'comfort', 'involvement', 'relationships'*, and *'security'*. These five conceptual frameworks were crucial to being able to fully analyze and comprehend the experiences of place attachment and place making of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa, ON as they have helped identify some factors that have influenced the Syrian refugee's integration experiences.

i. Comfort

The first of the five conceptual frameworks includes the notion of comfort. Comfort in the sense of this research study specifically relates to the individuals' emotions, feelings, and sense of being within Ottawa, ON (Cutchin et al., 2003). Comfort seeks to determine whether the individual calls their new residence in Ottawa a home. This section also tries to uncover what home means to each individual, how they identify as, what their favourite places and spaces are within Ottawa, how comfortable they feel when interacting with strangers and their overall satisfaction with the natural environment (Cutchin et al., 2003).

By identifying the individuals understanding of what a home truly means and if they are able to call their place of residence a home in Ottawa, the researcher is gaining valuable insight to whether the individual was truly able to develop a sense of belonging and place attachments to their place of residence. If the individual indicates that they do feel at home and comforted by their place of residence, they are at the very least indicating that they somewhat feel integrated within Canadian society. The inverse is also true in that if the individual is unable to call their current residence home or if home means something completely different to them in which Ottawa can simply never offer to the individual, then that person is unlikely to have developed a significant place attachment and place making ability to Ottawa. If the individual does not have these sentiments of attachment to Ottawa, then it is likely that they are unhappy living in their current residence and being in Canada (Cutchin et al., 2003). Being unhappy within their environment indicates that they are unlikely to be integrated within their living environment. It is

not to suggest that the individual will always feel this way in the next year or decade, but rather at the current moment, the individual most likely does not feel that they have fully integrated within Canadian society or that they may not even want to fully integrate within Canadian society. If the individual is unable to identify with Canada, then they are unlikely to feel integrated within Canada as no matter how hard they try or how hard society tries to incorporate these individuals, the feeling of home and their sense of normalcy may never fully translate to life in Canada. Satisfaction with their environment will also impact the refugees' ability to develop place attachments and place making connections as if individuals are unable to appreciate their current environment, whether that be the natural, physical, built, and social environment (Schuch & Wang, 2015), then they are unlikely to be able to develop feelings of attachment to various places and spaces. In context of the Syrian refugees, where snow was not common in many parts of Syria, most places in Canada experience snow for several months of the year. It may be challenging to adapt and come to appreciate their new environment if the individual loathes snow, the cold, and the volatile weather.

ii. Involvement

The involvement of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa, ON, refers to whether the individual actively engages and participates in their community and or neighbourhood (Cutchin et al., 2003). As seen in the relationships section, individuals that are able to develop relationships are more likely to be able to develop and experience the necessary place attachments and place making abilities, which then impacts their likelihood of feeling integrated in society. Having the knowledge, and being able to participate in community events, festivals, sporting events, or perhaps most significantly their child's own recreational and academic activities, parents and individuals are able to become part of their community. These events, and festivities become crucial locations for individuals to develop and establish important networks, feelings, and a sense of belonging towards specific places and spaces (Schuch & Wang, 2015).

Several of the questions being asked within the involvement section of the online survey directly relates to what activities does the individual and or their family participate in (public and within their own living spaces), if they have heard or are aware of a list of community events and festivities in Ottawa and if they have participated in them, the types of transportation that they frequently use (buses, cars, walking etc.), a list of public spaces that they may use (parks,

libraries, sporting facilities etc.), and if they actively engage in a religious and or non-religious community. Each of the themes listed above seek to understand not only whether the individual has participated in a set list of community festivities and events, but to also uncover the knowledge that the individual has of what resources, services, community events and festivities are available for the individual to partake in.

Having prior knowledge of various community events, festivities, resources, and clubs will likely result in the individual participating at some level within the broader society (Krūmiņa, 2021). If the individual has children, then they are more likely to be exposed to and have different social connections due to interacting with their children's parents, teachers, and or other community members. This social participation likely means that they are more likely to be settled within their new life and thus have integrated to some degree within Canadian society. On the other hand, not having knowledge of various community activities, clubs, festivities and so on might indicate that the individual is still somewhat unsettled in their new environment (Danzer & Yaman, 2020). They may not have developed strong relationships and involvement in their community and are thus unable to develop meaningful connections to various places and spaces in Ottawa indicating that they are unlikely to feel integrated within Canadian society. Therefore, involvement is an alternate approach to determining how this population have developed or perhaps not been able to develop place attachments and place making feelings, emotions, and connections to various places and spaces in Ottawa, which then influences their likelihood of feeling integrated.

iii. Relationships

The relationships that a refugee and or immigrant has within their new environment can help identify whether they feel that they belong in their community. The category of relationships involves a hole host of connections, including whether the individual has family members living within their new environment, whether the individual was able to make friendships and acquaintances with other members of their community and neighborhood and or relationships at their employment (Cutchin et al., 2003). The relationships developed actively shapes each individual's ability to interact with and participate in society. Being socially isolated often results in individuals feeling that they do not belong to a specific location, will generally experience a lack of social ability and mobility, and also at times stigmatization as they are

unable to connect with their peers or perhaps have been purposefully isolated by their community (Danzer & Yaman, 2020). Refugees and or immigrants that are isolated from society often results in individuals not being able to develop feelings of attachment and place making abilities as they do not have any meaningful connections and engagements with broader society. The inability to engage with society will then impact their ability to obtain valuable experiences, emotions, and a sense of belonging to their new environment and thus indicating they are unlikely to feel integrated within Canadian society.

Refugees and or immigrants that are able to make valuable connections and develop friendships and relationships with their fellow community members and neighbours are more likely to experience positive emotions, and thus enabling these individuals to identify and develop place attachments and place making abilities. These engagements might take place in the individual's home, a park where parents can meet with other parents while watching their children make friends or perhaps in a local community event and or festival. Having the opportunity to experience and participate in these events are likely to increase the refugees and immigrants' own perception of feeling integrated within Canadian society (Cutchin et al., 2003).

The major themes within the relationship section of the online survey directly asks individuals if they have family members within their new environment, have developed meaningful friendships with other members of the public, if they arrived in Canada with their family or alone, whether they have friends only of their own ethnicity or were able to develop friendships outside of their cultural boundaries, if they were married and had children when they initially arrived to Canada and whether their children were able to develop meaningful friendships with their classmates. By asking questions related to these major themes, the researcher is able to identify two key factors. The first factor relates to whether the individual came to Canada alone or if they had family to initially help grow their social sphere. Second, if the individual had kids once they arrived in Canada and or had kids while living in Canada, it then increases their likelihood of engaging with other members of the public and thus developing key relationships. Having children often provides the opportunity to meet other members of the public as children are more easily able to develop friendships, participate in school activities, play in extra curricular sports, all of which enables the parent to meet other parents and individuals at these events and thus providing an opportunity to engage with and develop

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relationships (Ali, 2015). It is therefore crucial to understand the relationships or perhaps lack of relationships that the Syrian refugees have within Ottawa, ON as it can indicate their overall sense of place attachment and place making ability, and thus whether they feel that they have successfully integrated, are still making the adjustments to Canada, or perhaps are isolated and unable to make meaningful connections to other members of the public.

iv. Security

The security of the individual and how they feel regarding their environment is another factor to analyzing the place attachment and place making of the Syrian refugees. Security refers to whether the participant feels comfortable navigating their new environment (Cutchin et al., 2003). This can be through navigating their neighbourhood in which they live in, perhaps their work environment and whether they feel secure talking to their managers and or colleagues, or even how these individuals interact with other members of the community, and society in general (Cutchin et al., 2003). As an example, individuals that are unfamiliar to a new environment might feel unsafe walking through the area. By understanding the Syrian refugee's overall security in Ottawa, the researcher gains insight towards how they perceive places and spaces, where they feel comfortable and most importantly where they feel safe and why they may feel unsafe in certain places and spaces. Identifying why they may or may not feel safe and secure within an environment will help establish patterns to which spaces and or places are needed to help ensure that they are able to develop these necessary feelings and emotions of place attachment and place making, and thus influencing how they experience integration in Canada. If an individual does not feel safe in an environment, how can they develop positive feelings of attachment and feel that they are integrated?

Some of the questions being asked within the security section include whether they feel safe in their current neighbourhood that they reside in, if there are places that the research participants actively avoid, what makes them feel safe and or unsafe in a general area, and what might help them feel safe and secure within any environment in which they navigate. By uncovering the patterns of security, the research study gains valuable insight to the kinds of places and spaces that directly impact the refugees place attachment and place making in Ottawa, ON, and how these places and spaces will either augment or hinder their ability to integrate

within Canadian society. Having spaces and places that enable a sense of security is crucial to being able to feel that they belong and to stay within Canada (Cutchin et al., 2003).

v. Rootedness

By analyzing the rootedness of a refugee, the researcher is able to gain valuable insight to whether the individual has been able to adapt and feel rooted in their new life. Rootedness, or stability refers to the period of time spent in one location in Ottawa, ON and whether they can call the place of their residence a home (Proshansky, 1983). Establishing the rootedness of an individual allows for the researcher to understand their overall comfort. If the individual can stay in a specific location for a longer period of time, it often indicates that they have established community bonds, networks, and employment (Proshansky, 1983), all of which impacts the refugee's ability to feel attached to places and being able to have place making experiences. These experiences are thus impacting their own understanding of whether they have successfully integrated within Canadian society. In contrast, refugees that are constantly moving from one location to another, whether it be within the same city or perhaps to different regions, often reflects a general lack of stability within their new environment. This lack of stability often negatively impacts their ability to develop place attachments, and place making opportunities as they are not spending the necessary amount of time to develop meaningful experiences within the set location (Proshansky, 1983). Being unable to identify with and have these feelings, and emotions linked to specific places and spaces will infringe on their own likelihood of feeling integrated within Canadian society. Rootedness is therefore one framework that helps understand the unique scenarios that refugees might experience upon their ability to integrate into a new environment.

In order to assess the rootedness of each individual, there is a specific section within the online surveys that directly asks questions related to their stability within their new place of residence. Some of the questions found within the rootedness section of the online survey directly asks the research participant regarding their previous employment in Syria and whether they were able to find stable employment in Canada within their field of expertise, and if they feel fulfilled or unhappy with their current line of work. Understanding their line of work and how they feel about their current employment directly impacts their likelihood of wanting to remain within their current environment, and thus impacting their overall level of being rooted in

their current residence. Another important question relates to how many times the individual has moved upon initially settling in Ottawa, ON, the type of residence they live in, aspirations of changing their current residence and lastly, where they would like to live in the future. Respondents that were able to remain in one set location are more likely to be rooted within their environment and are thus more likely to feel attached and connected to various places and spaces in Ottawa. Being able to remain in one set location augments the individual's ability to make connections, seek employment, and participate in different community activities which will help develop their sense of place attachment and place making in Ottawa, ON, and thus increasing their odds of feeling integrated within Canadian society (Proshanksy, 1983). Research participants that have resettled in multiple locations, who are unhappy with their current living arrangements, and unsure of whether they will stay in Canada are not considered to be rooted and thus less likely to have developed meaningful attachments to places and spaces, outlining a general unhappiness with living in Canada and thus generally not being well integrated within Canadian society.

3.4 Methodological Approach: Case Study

The methodological approach to this research will be a case study analysis. Case studies, with the help of qualitative analysis help by narrowing the research focus to a specific population, allowing for in depth knowledge and experiences to be learned (Baxter, 2021). A case study approach is appropriate for this research study as this study aims to learn the place attachments, and place making ability of the Syrian refugees, and how it can be used to indicate whether they themselves feel integrated into Canadian society.

This research study is a three-stage mixed-method design in which qualitative surveys, in-depth interviews, and mental mapping exercises are used. The first stage includes qualitative surveys and acts as my primary data source as they provide a broader, more general, and bigger picture analysis of the experiences of the Syrian refugees (McGuirk & O'Neil, 2021). The qualitative surveys were conducted through Western University's Qualtrics platform. Once research participants have been identified, they were each given a link to conduct the survey via their cellular device, and or any other device that has internet capabilities. Their responses are

being kept safe through the appropriate measures provided by Western's Office of Research Ethics.

The second stage involves in-depth interviews as they provide a much more detailed and specific analysis of the participants experiences (Dunn, 2021). The in-depth interviews were held online over Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and or via cellular calling. The reason for conducting in-depth interviews online is to enable access to a wider group of individuals to participate in this research project. The potential to interview participants in person is alluring as there are often important nuances and subtleties that will occur during interviews that may otherwise be missed if the interview is solely conducted over Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and or via cellular calling, however given time constraints, costs to meet at neutral locations, and the organization and time requirements to meet in person, it was decided that meeting either online or via cellular communications was the preferred choice. The researcher has recorded the semi-structured interviews using a recording device with the consent of the research participants. Any research participant that wished to not be recorded were then asked by the researcher if they could simply write down notes of what is being discussed. The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed manually. By using both methods the researcher has the potential to uncover information that might have otherwise been overlooked or unexpected as it increases the chance of coming across unintended and hidden results (Abu et al., 2019).

Research participants that participated in the in-depth interviews were also asked if they would like to participate in drawing mental maps. This method was not made available for participants that were unable to meet via Zoom or via Microsoft Teams due to material and mental map collection issues. For the research participants that were willing to conduct a mental map, they were allotted 5-10 minutes to draw a mental map of the various places in Ottawa that are meaningful to them. The researcher also asked participants to draw a picture of what and how they remember Syria and how might it differ from how each individual comes to understand their current residence in Ottawa. Mental maps are useful as they enable the researcher to gain valuable insight to the political, economic, social, and environmental views, knowledge, and biases of each individual person regarding the area that they are mapping out (Gould & White, 1986).

This research study seeks primarily qualitative data from the Syrian refuges that have settled in Ottawa, Ontario. Qualitative data is crucial to the purpose of this research study as the primary objectives are to determine in which places and spaces have the Syrian refugees developed place making abilities and place attachments towards and whether it can be used to understand whether they themselves feel that they have integrated into Canadian society. Given the nature of this research in determining the unique experiences, memories, values, and emotions that the Syrian refugees have towards places and spaces, the online surveys, in-depth interviews, and mental mapping exercises were specifically designed to uncover and discover the unique subtleties that the Syrian refugees will have experienced while living in Ottawa that would otherwise not be obtainable in a more quantitative approach (McGuirk & O'Neil, 2021). Furthermore, there is a need to uncover and obtain the description, experiences, unique language, and the participants own interpretations to be able to determine and obtain data relating to understanding why, how, in what capacity, where, and when these experiences of place making, and place attachment occurs, and the root causes of these behaviours and emotions. The unique and subjective understandings of place attachment and place making abilities for the Syrian refugees might help to uncover larger patterns that might be universally experienced by different refugee and immigrant populations when arriving and settling in Canada. These methods of observing to collect data would simply not be effective if this study employed a quantitative approach or even by using one singular qualitative method. Although qualitative research does not usually provide the statistical representation that can be used for all populations and interpretation at large, the advantages are numerous in how the data that is being obtained for this research study will be in-depth, insightful, profound, intuitive, and instinctive.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Profiles of Study Participants

The profiles of the research participants include the following criteria. All research participants needed to be above the age of eighteen. There was no given maximum age requirement, meaning that any potential research participant above the age of eighteen was given the opportunity to participate. Research participants needed to have a high enough reading, writing and speaking proficiency in English to be able to participate. The research team did not

utilize any translators for this research study; however, it is possible that some research participants who might not have been overly comfortable with the English language to have asked someone that they trust, perhaps a community member and or child to help translate some pieces of information. Research participants needed to have arrived in Canada with refugee status, come in the initial wave of Syrian refugees from 2015 to 2017, and have settled in Ottawa, ON for the five years minimum to ensure that they had time to develop place attachments and place making to Ottawa, ON.

3.5.2 Participant Recruitment

The recruitment of participants was conducted through snowball sampling techniques. Unfortunately, this research study was unable to acquire the minimum number of respondents wanted for the online surveys, in-depth interviews, and mental mapping exercise. As outlined, this research study wanted 30 survey respondents, 10 in-depth interviews and 5 mental maps. This research project was able to obtain 4 survey respondents, 2 of whom participated in the in-depth interviews and none of the participants conducted the mental mapping exercise. Although this research study failed to meet the minimum number of research participants, it was not for a lack of attempt. The research team identified, emailed, called, and visited six different mosques in Ottawa to see if they were willing to a place a poster in their mosque to help find research participants and or to see if anyone would be willing to participate. These six mosques were the Assunah Muslim Organization, Islam Care Centre, Muslim Association of Canada, Ottawa Muslim Association, Riverside South Muslim Organization, and the United Muslims Organizations of Ottawa. The latter acts as an umbrella organization for the mosques in Ottawa. Furthermore, the research team reached out to the Catholic Centre for Immigrants, Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, and the St. Matthew's Anglican Church, all of whom helped sponsor and provide resources to the Syrian refugees upon their arrival in Ottawa. All the organizations listed above either indicated that they did not want to help this research study, or never responded to the research teams emails or phone calls.

Fortunately, the researcher had contacts with immigration lawyers, scholars, and personal connections, of which only two personal connections had Syrian refugee friends that outlined a desire to participate in this research study. All four research participants came from those two personal connections. The four participants were asked if they knew of any other Syrian refugees

that would like to participate in this study, of which 3 indicated that there were, however none of their friends, colleagues or acquaintances ever contacted the research team and thus the decision was made to not coerce anyone and leave the participants alone.

3.5.3 Online Survey

The survey portion of the three-staged mixed method design will be composed of six different sections. The first section includes a general understanding of who the research participants are by asking very general questions. Second, by asking their comfort and belonging in Ottawa. Third, by asking questions pertaining to their involvement in community and various activities. Fourth, by asking about their relationships that they have maintained and developed while they have been living in Ottawa, Ontario. Fifth, whether they and their family feel secure and safe while living and navigating Ottawa. Lastly, the rootedness of the Syrian refugees and how much they feel attached to where they are currently residing, while also asking about their future aspirations. Please find in the appendix a list of the questions being asked, and guidelines for the survey.

The justification for using an online survey as part of the three-staged mixed method design is to gather a larger pool of information and data to help situate and establish how, where why and in what capacity the Syrian refugees may or may not feel like they have integrated into Canadian society. As indicated above, surveys enable the researcher to obtain a broader more general set of information which can then be crucial for asking further questions relating to a specific topic that the researcher would like to address and or obtain in greater detail. In addition to surveys being good formats for obtaining general information and to enable the researcher to develop their approaches and further questions, surveys also act as a relatively easy format to obtain a large amount of information in a relatively short period of time (McGuirk & O'Neil, 2021). Not all research participants will participate in the full three-staged mixed method design, however the information gathered and acquired through the surveys will provide a formative base level of information that can used to analyze the place attachments and place making ability of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa. The questions developed for the online survey fell under one of the five conceptual frameworks or within a sixth category called general information. As outlined in the methods chapter, each framework offers the opportunity to uncover the unique place attachment and place making experiences that the Syrian refugee participants had and

continue to have in the city of Ottawa. The questions provide a base understanding of the themes of interest that help uncover which places and spaces either elevate or hinder the refugees' ability to develop connections to Ottawa, while also guiding the types of questions that should be asked during the in-depth interviews, and to clarify any uncertain information that the participant alluded to during the online survey. The researcher had hoped to obtain thirty research participants, however, was unsuccessful in obtaining that number. In total, there were four research participants that conducted the online surveys.

3.5.4 In-depth Interviews

The in-depth interview component of the three-staged mixed method design will be composed of three different sections including upon the family's arrival to Canada, after living in Canada for a year, and lastly questions that relate to their current status, feelings, and experiences of being in Ottawa. The purpose of implementing an in-depth interview as part of the three-staged mixed method design is primarily to expand on the themes, experiences, and data that was collected by virtue of the online surveys. An in-depth interview will allow the researcher to address any and all questions and remarks that was learned throughout the online surveys enabling the researcher to specifically inquire about certain themes and topics in greater detail. The in-depth interview enables the researcher to gain valuable pieces of information by asking in greater detail and context, the experiences, emotions, memories, and values that the Syrian refugees may or may not have in relation to their place attachment and place making in Ottawa, Ontario (McGuirk & O'Neil, 2021).

The questions being asked during the in-depth interview will relate and expand on each participants survey response to obtain the unique experiences and nuances of each Syrian refugee. Please refer to the appendix for a list questions that were asked to the research participants during the in-depth interview. There was hope to obtain around ten participants to participate in the in-depth interviews, however only two of the four initial participants were willing to be interviewed. Please refer to the appendix for the list of questions being asked during the in-depth interviews.

3.5.5 Mental Maps

The mental mapping portion of the three staged mixed-method design will assess how individuals place value and what can be described as meaningful places and spaces that they navigate on a daily, weekly, monthly, or perhaps yearly basis. This approach provides a unique opportunity to analyze the spatial meanings, belongings, and experiences of the Syrian refugees (Gould & White, 1986). Mental mapping was chosen as the third research method in this three-staged mixed method design as it helps support the findings and data obtained through the online surveys and in-depth interview portions of this research study. Furthermore, mental mapping exercises provide a visual representation and understanding of the unique places and spaces that the Syrian refugees navigate while living their day to day lives while also visually indicating their feelings of place attachment and place making ability. Having a visual understanding of where the Syrian refugees feel attachments and place making feelings of helps to situate these places and spaces in a more detailed geographical understanding and approach while also providing another opportunity to obtain valuable insight and information to the unique experiences, memories, values, and emotions that the Syrian refugees may have (Gould & White, 1986).

Below are two separate mental mapping examples from the article "Place Attachment in a Foreign Settlement" from 2009.
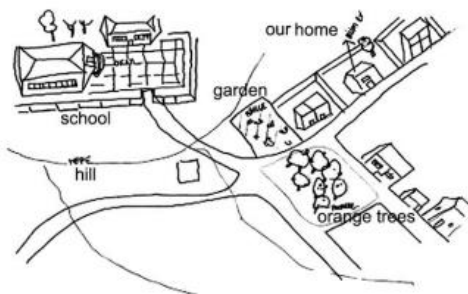
Fig. 3. Resident's drawing of an ideal 'home' and surroundings: Paphos. Drawing by Mustafa Kivanc (male, age 55 yrs).
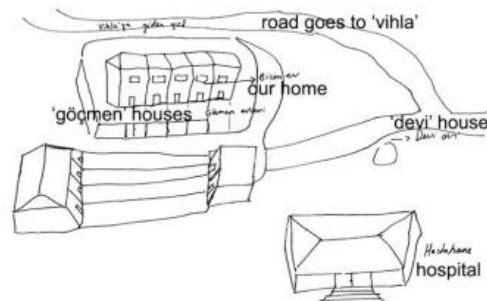
Fig. 5. Resident's drawing of an ideal 'home' and surroundings: Paphos. Drawing by Dr. Halil Adem (male, age 50 yrs), 2006.

(Bogac, 2009).

The images drawn above are representations of what each research participant described as their ideal surrounding in their new place of residence. They are noted as Figure 3 and Figure

5 in Bogac's *Place Attachment in A Foreign Settlement* (2009). The individual that drew Figure 3 expressed the desire to live around a school, and gardens with plants that he was familiar with and had grown up around as a child before being forcibly removed from his home (Bogac, 2009). The image that the researcher drew in Figure 5 was in fact the individuals' former home while also being expressed as their ideal surroundings (Bogac, 2009). There is a distinct pattern being shown by both research participants. Although their images show different types of features, both research participants share the notion that they want to live in an area that has features, environment and buildings that were similar to where they had originally grown up in. Both individuals were able to develop profound place attachments to these places and thus wanted their new residence to replicate what they had grown up in (Bogac, 2009). In the case of the Syrian refugees that have arrived in Canada, they are likely to share the notion of wanting similar types of features, environments, and buildings to which they had developed place attachment feelings and emotions of in Syria. Unfortunately, the two in-depth interview participants did not complete the mental mapping exercise, however, did list a number of places and spaces that are important to them which contributed to the creation of each participants 'Places of Integration'.

3.6 Interview Components and Storage of Primary Data

The data obtained through the online surveys was kept through Western University Qualtrics platform in which was the software platform initially used for the online surveys. Furthermore, data storage of the online surveys was also kept on the researcher's personal desktop computer, which only the researcher has access to. The data obtained through the in-depth interviews was kept on the researchers recording device, and personal desktop computer, in which only the researcher has access to. No data was stored on any of the software programs used to for the interviews, i.e., Western Zoom, and or MS Teams.

3.7 Summary

The methods chapter introduced the reader to the main study site, methodological approaches, methods used to obtain data and the profiles of the research participants, how the data was then analyzed and developed, participant recruitment, and lastly, the storage of primary

data. The study site of this research project was held in Ottawa, ON, including as far west as Kanata, as far south as Nepean, and as far east as Orleans. Please refer to figure 6 3.2 identifying the exact boundary location of this study site. Ottawa ON was selected as the main study site for two key reasons. The first includes the researcher's knowledge, awareness, and connections of the city and how to navigate its many neighbourhoods. Second, there is a relatively large number of Syrian refugees that arrived in Canada during 2015/2016 and settled in Ottawa (Houle, 2019), establishing a population that could participate in this research study.

The study used the place attachment and place making ability of refugees to uncover whether they feel attached to places and spaces in Ottawa, and by linking the patterns of place attachment to their likelihood of being integrated within Canadian society. This was made possible by utilizing the five component conceptual frameworks which included rootedness (Proshansky, 1983), security, relationships, involvement, and lastly, comfort (Cutchin et al., 2003). Each of these five conceptual frameworks helped by uncovering unique data points by establishing links to their connections, emotions, feelings, experiences, friendships, attachments, sense of belonging and knowledge of Ottawa, ON, and where, why, and in what places these sentiments took place.

This research study was a three staged mixed method design, in which research participants were asked to complete a sixty-two question online survey. Research participants were then asked if they would like to conduct an in-depth interview. The in-depth interview was held over MS Teams, over the phone, and or over Zoom. The discussions were intended to last around thirty minutes. Questions relating to each individuals survey responses were then asked during the in-depth interview to be able to obtain data and information in greater detail while also obtaining each individual's personal account and experiences. At the end of the in-depth interview, research participants were then asked to take five minutes and draw a mental map. The mental map was intended to identify specific places and spaces in which the research participants found to be of importance in Ottawa. If time permitted, research participants were also asked if they were willing to draw a mental map of their former residence in Syrian and its surrounding locations.

All research participants needed to have arrived in Canada between 2015-2017, arrived with refugee status, settled in Ottawa for at least give years, be above the age of eighteen, and

have enough English proficiency to be able to read, write, and converse in English. The storage of the data obtained through the online interviews, in-depth interviews, and mental mapping exercises were kept safe by the researcher while following the guidelines provided by ethics. Furthermore, the research data is only accessible by the primary researcher as the data is stored on the researcher personal desktop computer and through westerns Qualtrics.

The following chapter outlines the major research findings and how the Syrian refugees that participated in this research study were able to develop key place making and place attachments to various places and spaces in the city of Ottawa. The analysis chapter was analyzed through each conceptual framework which provided key insights to each individuals experiences, values, and emotions towards Ottawa.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Analyses of Place Attachment and Place-Making of Syrian Refugees

This analysis chapter assesses the place attachment and place-making experiences of the Syrian refugees that participated in this research study. By analyzing each of the four research participants' senses of *comfort, involvement, relationships, security* and *rootedness*, the research study identifies the types of places and spaces that members of this sampled population self-identified as feeling comfortable or uncomfortable by way of their place attachments and place making abilities. These identifiers provide a basis to assess how likely the research participants feel they belong in Canada and integrated into Canadian society. The analysis of the conceptual frameworks will include direct quotations from the two in-depth interviews and vocabulary from the four online surveys that the research participants conducted in the month of February 2023. The direct quotations and vocabulary are crucial to uncovering the qualitative patterns of place attachment and place making of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa. After introducing the general demographics of the research participants, the results of the interviews will be grouped by the key concepts of the inquiry, namely *comfort; involvement; relationships; security; rootedness; and places of integration*. The 'Places of Integration' in lieu of the mental maps are in the form of a visual representation of their geographies, as opposed to mental illustrations that the participants drew themselves of the places and spaces they utilize. Even though this study was unable to obtain illustrations from each participant, having a visual representation of the places and spaces that they collectively use provides an opportunity to understand their knowledge of the city, where they feel safe, and uncovers the kinds of places and spaces that they value and benefit from.

4.1 Research Context

The data obtained for this research study needs to be understood within the broader perspective of this study. First, as outlined above in the methods chapter, this study was only able to obtain four research participants, of which two participated in the in-depth interviews and none participated in the mental mapping sections of this study. Despite concerted efforts to obtain more participants, as discussed previously in the methods chapter, the experiences, values,

and beliefs of those sampled here should not be understood as being representative or indicative of the experiences of the larger Syrian refugee community that are living in Ottawa nor in other regions in Canada. Instead, what can be of value is understanding the experiences of some Syrian refugees in Ottawa, and comparing how their experiences are similar or different from other refugee and migrant populations that are trying to develop place attachments and place making abilities, as evidenced in the larger literature. Second, because this research study was solely conducted in Ottawa, Ontario, the findings are limited to how the city of Ottawa tries to establish and incorporate refugee and migrant populations into its society. It should however be noted that although the unique experiences might differ amongst this population living in different regions of Canada, there are patterns that can be learned and associated if the other regions share similar open policies and if society is accepting towards refugees and migrants as is the city of Ottawa. For example, the challenges of migrants and refugees integrating to life in Ottawa might vary significantly to their experiences of integrating in rural Alberta, but the challenge remains the same in that they need to be given the opportunity to develop place attachments and place making abilities.

4.2 General Demographics of Respondents

General demographics help to establish the research population, who they are, and by uncovering the unique patterns and characteristics between them. Understanding these patterns and characteristics can help situate how this research study attempts to analyze their place attachments and place making abilities, while also providing context for future research studies that are using similar frameworks.

Within this study three of the four participants identified as male, with one participant identifying as female. All the participants are between the ages of forty to sixty with three of the participants being between the ages of 40-49. All the participants have indicated that they are fluent in Arabic with one of the participants outlining that they also are fluent in Kurdish. Two of the four participants have completed their basic education in Syria, which includes schooling of up to 9 years. Another participant has completed their secondary education which includes 3 to 4 years of high school level classes and only one participant has completed post-secondary

education at the university level. None of the participants have completed any further schooling upon their arrival to Canada as Participant 1 indicated.

"If you want to study, you have to choose one. You have to work or continue study. I chose to work because we need to raise family and pay for everything."

The option to go back to school is complicated and not attainable when participants have to raise and provide for their family and pay the bills. Three of the participants were government sponsored with the fourth being privately sponsored. In terms of the city sizes and population density that the participants come from, two of the participants come from a city with a population size of 1 million or more, one from a mid sized city (200,000 to 1 million people), and another participant came from a small village with a population of less than 10,000 people.

Within this research study, all four research participants arrived in Canada between 2015 and 2017 with refugee status and were eventually granted Canadian citizenship. Between 2015 to 2016, over 39,636 Syrian refugees came to Canada, with over 51% identifying as male and 49% as female (IRCC, 2019). Of the 39,636, 55% came through GAR program, 35% were PSR and 10% were blended visa office-referred refugees (BVOR) (IRCC, 2019). Please find table 1 4.1 below representing the Syrian demographics in Canada, published by IRCC.

Table 1 4.1: Syrian Population Demographics in Canada as of 2018

Total number of Syrian refugees that arrived between November 5th, 2015, and December 31st, 2016.	39,636
Gender of the population that arrived	51% identified as male and 49% identified as female
The kind of sponsorship given to come to Canada	Government Assisted Refugees (GAR): 55% Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR): 35% Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees (BVOR): 10%
Knowledge of the official languages	50% of PSRs had knowledge of English and or French, while 92% of GARs had no knowledge of either
Comfort in speaking in English and or French	Most Syrian survey respondents were able to complete most of their daily activities in English however there was less comfort in French

Age at time of arrival	18 or younger: 50%
	18 to 59: 46%
	Age 60 or older: 4%
Labour market	Currently employed: 57%
	Not looking for work now, but in the future: 17%
	Not planning to work in Canada: 3%
	Looking for work: 23%
Average 2017 wages	GAR: $15,100 in 2015, $10,700 in 2016
	PSR: $22,000 in 2015, $19,700 in 2016
	BVOR: $14,300 in 2015, $14,100 in 2016
Social assistance usage	GARs: 93% in the first year
	BVORs: 88% in the first year
	PSRs: 2% in the first year
Enrollment of children in school	None of them: 5%
	Yes, some of my children: 9%
	Yes, all of my children: 86%
Sense of belonging	Canada: 90%
	Local Community: 84%
	Province/Territory: 83%
	Country of Origin: 64%
Friendships in the same city	GAR: 12% none, 27% 1 or 2, and 60% 3 or more
	BVOR: 3% none, 21% 1 or 2, and 76% 3 or more
	PSR: 8% none, 24% 1 or 2, and 69% 3 or more
Welcoming communities	GAR: 97%
	BVOR: 97%
	PSR: 95%
Changing provinces	Stayed in the same province: 90%
	Moved to another province or territory: 10%

(IRCC, 2019).

The four participants within this study had in many ways similar experiences to the larger Syrian refugee population in Canada. Unsurprisingly, all research participants spoke Arabic as their primary language upon their arrival to Canada, with one participant indicating that he spoke Kurdish as he is from the Kurdish ethnic region of Syria. When asked what languages the participants currently prefer to speak at home, the answers were a little more diverse. Although each research participant indicated that they mostly speak Arabic at home, there were two mentions of speaking Kurdish with their children and three mentions of English being spoken as well. Over 50% of the PSRs had previous knowledge of English or French, while over 92% of the GARs had limited to no knowledge of English and or French, however are now comfortable performing most of their tasks in English, with some being comfortable in French (IRCC, 2019).

This finding correlates with the data obtained from this study's participants as each individual outlined that they primarily speak Arabic or Kurdish, however, are now comfortable speaking and working in English. The diversity in language would suggest that the research participants are adapting to life in Canada linguistically. While their children are being educated in English, each parent ensures that they maintain their mother tongue at home and amongst other Arabic speaking individuals so that their children do not forget part of their own heritage. Maintaining and passing along the mother tongue to their children while also establishing the need to adapt, understand and communicate in English is a significant identifier to being integrated into Canadian society. This study has identified that the participants feel comfortable practising and passing along their own cultural and linguistic values while being able to adapt, participate and develop key relationships within broader society as they see the value in learning the English language. Being able to maintain one's own culture and language while being able to adapt and adopt the culture and language of the host country is a crucial identifier to feeling integrated.

In accordance with the Canadian Federal government providing services to refugees in their first year in Canada (IRCC, 2020), all four research participants indicated that they had received financial help, or aide in finding health and other specific resources and services. Further aide was provided by organizations and sponsorship groups that had helped sponsor these individuals. Some of the aide provided was by driving the Syrian refugees around the city

and providing information on how to access services and resources even after their first year in Ottawa. As outlined by the research participants, this continued support, especially from community members helped them identify places and spaces that they could use and would end up becoming important to them.

> Yeah, the first time is hard, but when we come to the catholic centre, they sent people to help us, we want to thank them all, they did a great job with us. The first month or two months when we want to go buy food or something, always there was someone with us to guide us, to help find foods there was halal or not. And also, the community here in this area, when we first lived here they also started helping us if you wanted a job, or any kind of need.

Furthermore, three of the research participants indicated that they were able to establish significant lifelong friends from these support networks and resulted in their sense of being able to feel that they belong in Ottawa, alluding to a sense of social integration and cohesion. Being able to make friendships was also seen to be a major contributor to individuals developing a sense of integration in various school environments (Matthews, 2008) and through community networks (Veronis, 2007).

Two of the research participants indicated that they received basic education in Syria (1-9 years), while one indicated that they had completed secondary education (3-4 years). Only the participant who identified as female had completed post-secondary education in Syria (university and or college). Crucially, none of the research participants had furthered their education beyond taking a few language classes in Canada. The topic of education was however sensitive for the two individuals that participated in the in-depth interviews. When they first arrived in Ottawa, their objective was to find employment however they soon learned that their educational certificates and diplomas were not recognized by Canadian institutions and thus were unable to obtain jobs in the fields that they were familiar with. Participant 1 was a schoolteacher, while participant 2 was a nurse back in Syria. As noted in the in-depth interviews, both Participants 1 and 2 found it incredibly challenging to adapt economically and found their current line of work unsatisfying. Participant 1 is currently working as a pizza clerk while Participant 2 is training to become a truck driver. The lack of foreign credential recognition has created a major barrier to them being able to find satisfying employment. As Participant 1 indicated in the interview

He is a nurse, and I am a teacher. When we came here, they asked us first time you have to do study, they didn't accept, like I have one problem, they didn't accept me because I don't have degrees from my country, I have certificate… Now I'm working, but it is not the work that I want. You know, I worked as a teacher for 17 years and here in Canada they have some rules that its hard for people, like you have to do qualification for their certificate… For mechanics or some others, they can work, they find job easy, but for people that have degrees, countries are different. I find many doctors here working as uber driver.

In the interview, both participants had mentioned that they needed to choose between seeking further education but then not being able to put food on the table or afford to pay rent, or they could work in jobs that are deeply unsatisfying with no future prospects, however, could provide for their children. They inevitably chose to put the needs of their family ahead of their own personal preferences in hope that their children have better opportunities than themselves. Not being able to find satisfying employment clearly hindered their ability to feel economically integrated within Ottawa.

Both Participants 1 and 2 came from a large city in Syria, with an overall population of over 1 million residents. Given the population size of the city that they are from and the population size of Ottawa, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed by the amount of people in Ottawa and how to navigate a large geographical area due to having similar experiences back in Syria. Participant 3 lived in mid sized city, with a population of around 200,000 to 1 million residents. Given the relatively large number of residents and somewhat comparable population figures to Ottawa, this participant will likely be able to adapt to the population size and geographical area of Ottawa as it is similar to what they would have experienced in Syria. Unlike participants 1, 2, and 3, Participant 4 comes from a small village in Syria with less than 10,000 residents located in the area. It can be quite challenging adapting to a large population as the urgency and sense of pace in the city life could overwhelm an individual that is used to a more relaxed pace of life. Table 2 4.2 as listed above does not speak to the population size of where the Syrian refugees came from, and so it is challenging to decipher how the Syrian refugees that participated in the 2018 IRCC study might find themselves adapting to the population size of where they have settled and or how that has either positively or negatively impacted their ability to develop a sense of belonging and integration in Canada.

4.3 Conceptual Framework: Comfort and Belonging

The significance of comfort and belonging in relation to how a refugee and or migrant feels towards spaces and places is crucial to identifying their patterns of place attachment and place-making abilities. By identifying the individuals' emotions, feelings, and sense of being within Ottawa, the study is able to gauge their satisfaction with the environment, how they perceive Ottawa as a home or as a temporary place of residence, and general sentiments towards their new life in Ottawa. Individuals that are able to associate and feel comfortable in the places and spaces in Ottawa are more likely to have developed meaningful place attachment and place-making connections, identities, and experiences, thus strongly indicating a sense of being integrated within Ottawa.

Academic literature pertaining to 'home' suggests that home can be both sedentary and mobile, recognising that the sense of belonging is crucial to feeling one has a home (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011) in addition to home being emotional, cultural, and geographical (Tucker, 1994). Home further relates to communities, friends, family, and the familiarity that one has of the environment around them (Cloutier-Fisher & Harvey, 2009), representing one or many places and spaces of safety where memories, identities, and experiences are developed (Ratnam, 2018). Home is then a combination of a person's relationship, their interaction with others, and the various places and spaces that they use on a daily basis, outlining that one's 'home' is fluid and can either be singular or plural and over time will change to reflect the individual's identity and values (Mallett, 2004). As Tucker (1994, p. 181) indicated, "home is where the heart is". Within the survey, each research participant was asked how they would describe Ottawa; is Ottawa home to you; what does home mean to you; and how they identify themselves? The research participants responded by indicating that Ottawa was a "dream city", and most significantly, "home". Three of the four participants indicated that they definitely call Ottawa "home" while one indicated that they would probably call Ottawa "home". It was surprising to see that all four research participants had indicated similar values to what the idea of 'home' meant to them, as they expressed and shared the value of family, being with family, spending quality time with family, and being safe with family. Only one participant noted that home still was where he was originally from, however still felt strongly attached to Ottawa.

Yeah, no I'm happy and safe here but am always like memory of past comes trough, I say it's ok here, I can live here, but I just want to see there even if it's a visit, to see friends or family. Maybe one month would be good for me.

The participant indicated that several family members had remained in Syria and thus it was a significant reason for feeling a sense of belonging to Syria. Having family members within the area is a crucial component to being able to feel attachments to Ottawa and thus a sense of belonging and integration. Please refer to table 2 4.2 below for a visual representation of the questions and answers that each participant provided. As academic literature would suggest, this sense of family and community is crucial to being able to establish bonds, and a sense of purpose and belonging to a new environment (Palmberger, 2022). Without family and community support, it is incredibly challenging to develop a sense of belonging as many individuals may end up feeling isolated, a sense of dread, and non-engagement in their new living environment (Negi, et al., 2021). Therefore, without having family connections and or friendships to members of other ethnic groups in the area of residence, it can lead to social isolation and the inability to contribute and grow economically (Danzer & Yaman, 2020). There should be a priority and incentive on the part of the federal government to allow individuals who came to Canada alone to bring their family.

Table 2 4.2: Comfort and Belonging

Questions	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
What is one word that you would use to describe Ottawa?		Home		Dream city
Do you call Ottawa home?	Probably yes	Definitely yes	Definitely yes	Definitely yes
What does home mean to you?	Be safe, family	Be with family, and safe	Home is where I am originally from	My family
What nationality do you currently identify yourself as?	Canadian	Canadian	Syrian but has Canadian citizenship	Syrian Canadian
On a scale of 1-5 (1 being uncomfortable and 5 being comfortable), do you feel comfortable interacting with strangers in Ottawa?	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	Comfortable	Extremely comfortable	Extremely comfortable

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being extremely dissatisfied and 5 being extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with the natural environment in Ottawa? (Lakes, rivers, trees, hills, etc.)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Extremely satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Extremely satisfied

There were three distinct categories when asking how the research participants identified as, including Canadian, Syrian Canadian, and Syrian but has Canadian citizenship. One way to help uncover why there was variation between how each participant identified as may allude to their overall sense of nostalgia for their country of origin and their sense of belonging and place attachment in Canada. Although there were three distinct categories, each research participant still held feelings, emotions, and sentiments of Syria. These emotions and sentiments are important pieces of information as it outlines not only a longing for their country of origin, but it establishes the value that they have towards their own cultural heritage. Even the two participants that felt Canadian indicated that they still held feelings and emotions of the past. How each research participant identifies as may change based on the time spent in an environment or where they live, however what will not change is their sense of where they were from, and their cultural and ethnic heritage. The patterns of cultural heritage and feeling nostalgic of their homeland is widely represented in academic literature, especially within the work that Bogac (2009) conducted on Turkish and Greek ethnic Cypriots that had been displaced when Cyprus divided its ethnic and cultural populations into two separate regions. The research participants within this study are able to identify with their past outlining how their homeland, cultural and ethnic heritage will influence their ability to adapt to a new environment. Their ability to be able to speak, eat and participate in cultural and ethnic settings are factors that have helped elevate their ability to adapt to a new environment and feel attached to places as they are able to be who they want to be in any place or space in Ottawa without being or feeling pressured by the government or society to conform to something that they are not. That in essence allows the participants to develop a sense of attachment and belonging, and thus a form of feeling integrated to their surroundings.

Participants were then asked how comfortable they were interacting with strangers in Ottawa. On three occasions the research participants indicated that it was quite easy and

comfortable to interact with strangers as most people are "incredibly nice and want to help" as per participant 1. Please see table 2 4.2 above. Based on the data obtained, there seems to be a culture in Ottawa of wanting to help others and in general being kind to strangers. Only the female participant felt somewhat uncomfortable interacting with strangers. One possible reason for why they may have felt that way could relate to their own nature or general shyness of interacting with individuals that they do not know. Another possible and disturbing reason may allude to how many women are treated in public, often being harassed and so there may be a stigmatisation when interacting with individuals that they do not know. The research participant did not expand on this sentiment. Furthermore, when asked how satisfied the participants were with the natural environment, including parks, forests, rivers, hills, and other types of physical and natural features and landscapes, the research participants associated strongly with the environment, with three mentions of being extremely satisfied and only participant one responding with feeling neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Participant one had indicated that they felt neither satisfied nor unsatisfied because they still held strong emotions of the environment in Syria, however still enjoyed what Ottawa had to offer. The importance of feeling satisfied with the environment is crucial to being able to develop place attachments and place making experiences. If the individual likes their surroundings, they are then likely to go out, explore the area, and begin to create memories, experiences, and emotions, which are crucial to being able to develop sentiments towards places and spaces. If the individual does not feel comfortable and or is unsatisfied with their surrounding natural and physical features, then they are more likely to feel unhappy, become disassociated with their surroundings and unlikely to want to be in their current place of residence. Not wanting to be in the environment and surrounding places and spaces will often negatively impact their ability to integrate as they are unable to feel attached nor will they associate themselves to their current environment.

During the in-depth interviews, Participant 1 indicated that they felt rather uncomfortable while being in Gatineau, Quebec. Gatineau, Quebec is a city just north of Ottawa on the north side of the Ottawa River. The region itself is often referred to as Ottawa-Gatineau or the national capital region, however both cities have a unique culture. Because Gatineau is located in Quebec, the city operates under the notion of maintaining its French cultural heritage. While Participant 1 outlined that they feel safe and comfortable in Ottawa, their experiences in Gatineau were the complete opposite. As the participant expressed,

When I went to Quebec, I didn't feel like I am comfortable like Ottawa. I don't know why? Maybe I used to live here in Gatineau. I went to Gatineau one time for an interview for a job before my start, but everything is different here in Ottawa… maybe the language, also like umm, I find here in Ottawa whoever I meet with people they are friendly, but when I was in Gatineau, and even my son felt the same as me. Here in Ottawa if you ask for anything, they just rush to help you, you find help everywhere. There when I go, my son started looking for something, there's no help, there is no one offering to help you, I didn't see that in Ottawa but in Ottawa they are there to help you. That's how I felt, I don't know, that was first reaction we noticed in Ottawa and Gatineau.

This is an important finding as Participant 1's experience is not necessarily unique to them or their son. In some cases, if you were to ask for help without attempting to speak in French, some individuals may find this irritable and might be unwilling to help because of the notion of wanting to maintain the French language culture. It is not to say that everyone in the city will react in the same manner, however there is a sense that if someone is not at least attempting to speak in French, then to them its as if their culture is being disrespected or at the very least not being valued when that is not the intention of whoever is asking for help. The difference in culture is an important finding as refugees and or migrants that arrive and live in Quebec will have to prioritize learning the French language as it is the only recognized official language of Quebec (Gouvernement due Quebec, 2022) regardless of if they would prefer to learn English. The current Quebec government has outlined policies to protect and maintain the French language and cultural heritage which can limit individuals who want to establish and practice their own cultural and social values in society (Marchand, 2022). With these new policies in place, newly arrived individuals in Quebec may feel forced to conform to the dominant culture as opposed to representing their own cultural beliefs and values which is accommodated in the city of Ottawa. Participant 2 however felt differently about Gatineau. They indicated that they liked the city of Gatineau as "I like Ottawa and Gatineau too, many of my friends live in Gatineau". The difference in experience and whether they feel comfortable or uncomfortable in Gatineau seems to be related to if they had connections to the area or not, and what their first impressions and experiences of Gatineau were. Because Participants 1's experience was negative, they will likely hold on to this feeling even if that experience may never happen again, whereas Participant 2 had strong positive first experiences of Gatineau and will likely continue to enjoy being around the city so long as their friends remain in the area.

4.4 Conceptual Framework: Involvement

By understanding the involvement of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa, Ontario, the research team gained valuable insight to how the participants were able to develop meaningful connections to other members of society, and perhaps most importantly, their knowledge of the city and the places and spaces that are important to them. If the Syrian refugees are not aware of the surrounding places and spaces, then they are unlikely to be able to identify with and have various place attachments and place making abilities towards Ottawa. In contrast, by having knowledge of the area, they not only have likely utilized these spaces and places, but are also likely to have developed strong associations, place attachments and place making abilities, indicating a sense of belonging and form of becoming part of the community, and by that extent, being integrated.

Throughout this section of the survey and in-depth interview, it became apparent that all four research participants had a strong spatial sense of their surroundings and knowledge of the major places and spaces in Ottawa. Please refer to section 4.8 geographies of the participants to obtain a visual representation of the places and spaces that the research participants utilize. The participants often participated in activities with their family and close friends in parks, walks by the river and at local sporting venues and events that their children participated in, mainly in the form of hockey. Each participant has participated in various community activities and events including three mentions of hiking in Gatineau, two mentions of visiting the Ottawa Tulip festival, and participating in various cultural festivals and local farmers markets. In terms of some of the public spaces that they frequent most, they indicated on four occasions going to different parks, one mention of public squares, three mentions of sporting facilities, four mentions of shopping at different outlook stores and malls, three mentions of visiting museums, three mentions of walking along the Rideau Canal, and one mention of frequenting libraries and farms in the area. Please refer to table 4.3: Involvement below listing the questions and participant responses for this section. Participant 1 mentioned that although there isn't a specific Syrian community organization that they know of or participate in, they do participate in a cultural community group,

Not Syrian, but there are different, there is one here in Gloucester, beside the Walmart called Easter Ontario or Ontario Easter, I forget the name. They are Canadian,

they are Moroccan, there are some from Algeria, all in the same community, they help us when we need to apply for bills, for schools, for everything.

When asked if there are any places in Ottawa that reminded them of Syria, one research participant indicated a local Middle Eastern grocery store called Adonis. As Participant 1 stated

The first time we said that we can't find anything, we thought we can't find anything we used to do or eat before, but now we have many places especially if you wanted to see or eat at a Middle Eastern restaurant, it's Adonis. I feel like it is no different than my country. Adonis is similar to a big store in my past country, it reminds me of that.

Participant 2 indicated that they felt at home and comforted by visiting different malls, including the St. Laurent shopping centre and Orleans mall: "I find it here, and especially the area that I am in, St Laurent and the Orleans mall, I feel at home." The research participants were then asked about cultural and religious spaces that they frequent. All four participants indicated that they practice Islam, however they all visit the mosque or local centre in Ottawa at different intervals. One participant outlined that they never visit the mosque, another said weekly, one said several times a month, and the last outlined several times a year. There is flexibility, choice, and comfort amongst the participants in how often they would like to pray, practice their religion, and visit their local mosque suggesting that they are able to be involved to the extent to which they would like. Please refer to table 3 4.3 below to obtain a full view of the data presented.

As guided by Western REM, no individual under the age of 18 was allowed to participate in this research study, however this study did seek to understand how the Syrian refugees' children were adapting to life in Canada. All research participants were married and have remained married since their arrival in Canada with two research participants having had more children since arriving in Canada. When asked do their children participate in any community, extra curricular activities and or sporting teams, all four participants indicated that their children do. The research participants were then asked do their children actively engage with other children of the same age, to which there were three responses of definitely yes and one probably yes. Participant 1 outlined that their children often participate in sporting activities with "one is playing hockey, both of them were playing hockey but the youngest one stayed but the oldest one quit and started playing volleyball at school". Being able to participate and interact with children of the same age is crucial for children of refugees and migrants to be able to adapt to life in a new country. As suggested by Ali (2015), being able to interact with other children of the

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same age group and have knowledge of the host countries dominant language is crucial for their well-being, their ability to associate with their new environment and to feel a sense of attachment to places and spaces, thus enabling a sense of belonging and integration into Canadian society.

Based on the data obtained from the surveys and in-depth interviews, it is widely apparent that all four research participants have a strong understanding of the places and spaces that surround them and choose to actively engage in community and sporting events, while also frequenting many spaces and places that most Ottawans' utilize, including parks, museums, festivals, and malls to name a few. Furthermore, as their children continue to grow and develop new relationships with children of the same age, it strengthens their ability to feel a sense of belonging and attachment to the spaces and places in Ottawa, and thus feeling a sense of integration. The research participants will always have a sense of nostalgia towards their country of origin, however their ability to feel attachments to places and spaces in Ottawa strongly suggests a sense of belonging and overall happiness and contentedness with their life in Ottawa.

Table 3 4.3: Involvement

Questions	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
What activities (recreational or not) do you and or your family like to do in Ottawa outside your home?	Sports	Playing hockey	We like playing at the park different sort of things	Parks, river
What activities do you and or your family like to do inside your home?	Visit friends, and enjoy the nature	Spend time together	We like playing uno, board games and bunch of other things	TV, play with kids, family time
Do you participate in any of the community events listed below? (Check all that apply)	Hiking in Gatineau, Cultural Festivals	Hiking in Gatineau, Tulip Festival	No, we don't really participate in any of these things	Farmers markets, tulip festivals
What modes of transportation do you frequently use in Ottawa?	Walk, Personal Car	Personal car	Personal car	Personal car
Do you use any of the public spaces listed below in Ottawa?	Parks, Public Squares, Sporting	Parks, Museums, Rideau Canal, Malls	Parks, Libraries, Museums, Rideau Canal,	Parks, museums, Rideau Canal, Malls, farms

	Facilities, Malls		Sporting Facilities, Malls	
Are there places in Ottawa that you have yet to visit but are planning to visit at some point in the near future?	No	No	No	Parliament
Do you currently identify with a religion?	Islam	Islam	Islam	Islam
Do you frequent a religious center, whether that be a Mosque, Church, Temple, etc. in Ottawa?	Several times a year	Several times a month	Weekly	Never
Does your child/do your children participate in any community, extra curricular activities and or sporting teams?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does your child/do your children actively engage with children of the same age?	Probably yes	Definitely yes	Definitely yes	Definitely yes

4.5 Conceptual Framework: Relationships

Developing relationships are a key metric to determine how a population feels in relation to others, and whether they feel isolated or a sense of belonging and community. Having a strong sense of community, friends and family in the area is crucial to being able to feel a sense of belonging and to develop positive experiences and emotions towards various places and spaces, and thus being able to feel integrated. Please refer to table 4 4.4 relationships for a full view of the data obtained from this section. The research participants were asked do you know any of the people that live on your street and or in your neighborhood; do you have extended family in Ottawa and or in Canada; do you have any other Syrian friends in Ottawa; and do you have friends of other ethnicities in Ottawa. It was encouraging to see that all four research participants indicated that they had developed strong meaningful connections and friendships with members of their community. Crucially, although they had developed friendships with members of their same cultural and ethnic background, their friendships and connections were much more

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expansive as the participants all indicated that they had several friends that were not of the same cultural and ethnic background. As participant 1 noted

> It made me happy that everyone was welcoming us. You see smile on the face of everyone and everywhere. All of them were smiling and saying "welcome, welcome, welcome". Now we have citizenship in Canada, when the first time we did the ceremony for citizenship, first time I start to feel I am at home, like I didn't feel any change when I get the citizenship and I saw so many friends saying "congratulations, congratulations", and everybody say it's a great job that you did that. We feel now that we are at home, like in the same country before.

Being able to make meaningful connections and friendships outside of ones own cultural and ethnic community is a significant finding. As some academic researchers noted (Danzer & Yaman, 2020) being able to develop friendships and meaningful connections outside of one's ethnic group lowers their odds of being taken advantage of while also expanding the economic, and cultural opportunities for them. Furthermore, having these connections mean that they are likely to experience and come across different types of places and spaces and become more knowledgeable of their new environment and surroundings. Being able to make friendships among different cultures further outlines the values of diversity, acceptance, and tolerance that many citizens of Ottawa share in addition to the city of Ottawa valuing and showcasing diversity, inclusion, and multicultural policies to enable and provide the opportunity to all members of the public to feel attached to various places and spaces in Ottawa.

> Friends, they make everything, help us, some community help us, but I have special Canadian friends here, they help us, they were beside, help us a lot, do everything for us like when I saw them, I didn't feel like they were friends, I felt like they were my family. They stand with us everywhere, with my kids, with me, my husband. Since the first year to now they are with us, and they never leave us alone.

In addition to having made meaningful connections and friendships in Ottawa, all four research participants indicated that they are married and arrived in Canada with their spouses and children. Participant 3 had two more children and Participant 4 had one more child since arriving in Canada. The sense of relationship, and perhaps to a greater extent each participant's comfort, and rootedness will have largely been impacted by their ability to come to Canada with their spouses and children. Because each of the participants arrived in Canada with all their children and their spouses, they were able to focus on their life in Canada. Had the participants been forcibly separated from their family and arrived in Canada alone or perhaps with only some

family members, they might not have been able to feel rooted and or comforted as they would constantly worry about members of their family back in their country of origin and or focussing on how to bring them to Canada. Family, similar to friendships and community connections are critical safety nets that migrants and or refugees can rely upon. Most significantly, arriving in Canada with their family meant that they began life in Canada together, and not isolated. As suggested by academic literature, being isolated in a new environment can be quite challenging, as you do not know who you can trust, and you do not know of the places and spaces around you (Danzer & Yaman, 2020), which can often lead to the individual being exploited, left without proper representation, and being left with low economic and social mobility (Long, 2015).

The data obtained from the relationships section of the online surveys indicate that the research participants were able to successfully meander their way through the city of Ottawa by developing key friendships, and connections with members of their community and neighborhood. Arriving in Canada with their spouses and all their children meant that they were able to focus on their life in Canada and could look ahead as opposed to constantly being worried about their immediate family members in Syria.

Table 4 4.4: Relationships of the Syrian Participants

Questions				
What was your relationship status when you arrived in Canada?	Married	Married	Married	Married
If you said yes to married or common law, did your partner come with you to Canada?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you have children from your current and or a previous relationship?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Did all or some of them come with you to Canada?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Have you had any children since arriving to Canada?	No	No	Yes	Yes
If yes, how many?	N/A	N/A	2	1
Do you know any of the people that live on your street and or in your neighborhood?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Do you have any extended family in Ottawa?	Yes	Yes	No	No
Do you have any extended family in Canada?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Do you have any other Syrian friends in Ottawa?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do you have friends of other ethnicities in Ottawa?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

4.6 Conceptual Framework: Security

The conceptual framework of security uncovers whether the research participants feel safe navigating Ottawa and their surrounding environments, their perception of different places and spaces within the city, and why and for what reasons they may or may not feel secure. The importance of analyzing security will help uncover the places and spaces that augment and or hinder the ability of refugees and migrants to feel attachments to Ottawa and thus over time developing a sense of belonging and integration. Please refer to table 5 4.5 security at the end of this section for a full view of the data obtained.

The research participants were first asked on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being extremely safe and 5 being not safe, do you feel safe in your current neighborhood, to which three participants responded with feeling extremely safe and one indicating somewhat safe as the second most safe option. The participants were then asked what places and spaces make them feel secure. Interestingly, each participant responded by indicating that they felt safe at home and that home was considered a safe space to them. There was one mention of feeling safe at work, and three mentions of feeling safe across the whole city. This is a crucial bit of information as each research participant has shown with intent that they feel comfortable and safe navigating the city and their neighborhood and consider Ottawa to be home demonstrating a clear attachment to the city of Ottawa and overall sense of belonging and integration. Participant 2 indicated

> Syria is not safe, this is my country I want to stay here, never I want to come back to Syria. Here in Canada is my country. I think it was great when we came to Canada. It was the first day in my life that I was very happy. I've visited many countries before I came to Canada for war but it was a special day and I was very happy until now.

When asked if there were any places that they chose to avoid, two of the participants indicated no, one had mentioned the downtown area, and one had mentioned casinos and bars. One possible reason for why Participant 4 had mentioned that they avoid bars and casinos is that in the Islamic religious text, the 'Quran' outlines that it is forbidden to gamble while drinking is also forbidden as you are not supposed to consume anything that alters the state of consciousness otherwise known as khamr (Quran - Al-Baqarah, 2023 verse 219). By understanding how Islam views bars and casinos, the research participant likely does not feel unsafe being around these places, rather the participant likely avoids these types of places purely for religious beliefs and customs. Understanding why Participant 3 outlined that they avoid parts of the downtown is somewhat more challenging to analyze as there can be a plethora of reasons for avoiding the area. One of the most likely reasons has to do with the perception of the downtown being dangerous, and dirty. Crime exists in all parts of the city, however there is a negative connotation associated with crime and the downtown core. Another reason why the participant might choose to avoid the downtown area might relate to how busy the downtown core is. The downtown area is often heavily populated with a sense of urgency; therefore, it could make some individuals feel overwhelmed when navigating through the area. Participant 3 is originally from a mid sized city in Syria (200,000 – 1,000,000 people) and so it might be somewhat overwhelming being around so many people in a relatively new environment, however this is an unlikely reason to avoid the downtown core given that the participant outlined that they feel safe in the city and have made meaningful connections and friendships.

Lastly, the participants were asked what kinds of places or spaces would augment their feeling of being safe in Ottawa. There were two responses of none, one mention of "nothing as Ottawa feels like a safe city and place to be", and one participant indicating "less drugs". The mention of wanting fewer drugs in the city is not overly surprising as the city of Ottawa is experiencing problems of drug abuse (Gee, 2023). Unfortunately, the problem of drug abuse is quite prevalent throughout much of the country (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2023).

Based on the findings, it is evident that the city of Ottawa has become a safe place and space for the research participants enabling a sense of security. As with any other major urban city, there will always be some crime and unsafe places and spaces, however it is testament that the city and the people of Ottawa have enabled the city to become a safe place and space for the

individuals who participated in this research study. The research participants were welcomed upon their arrival by most members of society in open arms and have since become members of the community, developing meaningful connections, while also being able to practice and showcase their culture and values without feeling the need to alter who they are.

Table 5 4.5: Security

Questions	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being extremely safe and 5 being not safe, do you feel safe in your current neighborhood?	Extremely safe	Somewhat safe	Extremely safe	Extremely safe
Are there any places in Ottawa that you avoid?	N/A	No	Downtown	Casinos and Bars
What places make you feel safe?	All Ottawa	All Spaces	Home	Everywhere, specially work
Do you consider your home to be a safe space and place?	Probably yes	Definitely yes	Definitely yes	Definitely yes
What would make you feel more secure and comfortable in Ottawa?	N/A	N/A	I've lived in Ottawa for abt 7 years now and nothing unsafe has really happened so I think Ottawa is already a pretty safe place	Less drugs

4.7 Conceptual Framework: Rootedness

The rootedness and stability of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa uncovers their overall satisfaction and happiness with their current living and work situation, and future aspirations. If the research participants are able to find stability within their work and social life, then they are likely to feel a greater sense of attachment to places and spaces and a general sense of belonging

in Ottawa. Please refer to table 6 4.6 rootedness at the end of this section for a full view of the data obtained.

Perhaps a little worrisome was that three of the research participants had indicated that their current employment was somewhat unsatisfying, while only participant 4 had indicated that their work was satisfying however was "not yet financially" satisfying. It was surprising to see that the two most educated participants were both deeply unsatisfied with their current line of work. Given their education, one might assume that they would have greater employment opportunities, however the reality is somewhat reverse. Neither Participant 1's or 2's certificates were recognized by the Canadian federal government and by potential employers. Where participant 1 had worked as a schoolteacher for 17 years in Syria and participant 2 was a head nurse as his local hospital, neither are able to find employment in their fields of expertise. Instead, Participant 1 works as a pizza-clerk, while Participant 2 is actively training to become a transport truck driver. The lack of employment opportunities has negatively impacted both participants as they are left to work meaningless jobs in hope that their children have better employment opportunities as they are or will obtain Canadian post-secondary education. Participant 3 had also indicated a sense of being somewhat unsatisfied with their line of work, however the reason for feeling so is somewhat unclear as the participant used to work in construction in Syria and is currently working in construction in Ottawa. The reasons for why participant 3 might feel unsatisfied with their current employment may relate to the following; not enough salary as the amount of money earned to make a living in general construction is not very high; there may be a different work culture in construction in Ottawa in comparison to Syria; there may be different construction techniques and or standards that the participant has to familiarize themselves with; and lastly, the climate and work environments will be much colder during the winter time in Ottawa than in Syria. Participant 4 worked as a farmer in Syria and has continued to do so in Canada, however, they did mention that the job was not financially stable. Unsurprisingly, both Participants 1 and 2 are actively searching for new employment, and hope they are able to find opportunities in the fields that they are both familiar with. Participants 3 and 4 are not actively searching for employment. Where participants 1 and 2 are deeply unsatisfied and unhappy with their current employment opportunities, Participants 3 and 4 are willing to remain in their fields of expertise.

From the data provided by IRCC, over 57% of the Syrian refugees were employed in 2018, with 17% indicating that they are not currently looking for new employment however will in the future, 3% not planning on staying in Canada to work, and an absurd 23% looking for work (IRCC, 2019). The sheer number of individuals looking for work or will be looking for new employment opportunities in 2018 correlates well with the research participants in this study as there is a sense of unhappiness and want to change work environments to better their own lives. Not finding satisfying work is directly impacting their ability to feel attached to Canada and is hindering their ability to feel economically integrated. The participants are faced with numerous barriers including language, and foreign credential recognition, which then limits and excludes them from being able to seek meaningful employment (Ghahari et al., 2019) and disassociates them from feeling that they are given the tools to find success in Canada. The IRCC data outlines that the average wage earned in 2017 for Syrian refugees within the GAR program was $15,100 in 2015 and $10,700 in 2016; Syrian refugees that came from the PSR program had an average wage of $22,000 in 2015, and $19,700 in 2016; and the Syrian refugees that came via the BVOR had an average wage of $14,300 in 2015, and $14,100 in 2016 (IRCC, 2019). There is a clear lack of economic opportunity and mobility amongst this population, which is perhaps why over 93% of the GARs, and 88% of the PSRs used federal social assistance during their first year in Canada (IRCC, 2019).

It would have been prudent to have asked how much each research participant now makes in 2023, however asking that question was deemed to be unethical. It becomes challenging to determine their overall economic stability without knowing their average earnings for the year, however given that each participant outlined that they are either looking for new employment or that their current employment is not financially feasible, there is a sense that the participants are not earning enough to feel that they can live to the standard of living that they would like. In Ottawa alone, the average two bedroom rental unit costs over $2000 monthly (Marhnouj, 2022), which is roughly $24,000 a year. These figures alone would indicate that the Syrian refugees cannot afford rent or in the very least are forced to make financial decisions that limits their opportunities and quality of life. The rental problem and housing market in Canada is however an issue that most Canadians are facing. This issue is further exacerbated by the fact that living wages have not increased to the point where Canadians can also afford to pay for housing (Balintec, 2023).

Following their work satisfaction and aspirations, the participants were asked about their housing situation and future living aspirations. Participants 1 and 2 had remained in the same type of housing while participants 3 and 4 had moved twice since arriving in Canada. Participants 1 and 2 are currently living in an apartment, while Participant 3 lives in a townhouse and participant 4 in a detached house. When asked do they have any aspirations to change their current housing arrangement, all four participants had indicated that they desire to live and own their own house. Owning a home is a significant indicator towards their rootedness, as each participant is outlining the notion to invest financially in the city, to maintain their current social networks, and to develop their emotions towards Ottawa as a home and place for them to grow and settle. This aspiration is key to wanting to stay in Canada, to remain part of the community, to develop place attachments to Ottawa, and to become integrated in society. There were some mixed responses when asked where else would you like to live in the future, with one mention of Syria (however will stay in Ottawa and mentioned that they would likely only visit for parts of the year), two mentions of remaining in Ottawa, and one mention of living in another place in the world, specifying that they would like to go back to Syria once the war ends, however, remains open to staying in Ottawa and or perhaps living elsewhere in the world. It is evident that the adults do have some sense of nostalgia and longing to see their country of origin again, however it would be curious to learn how their children might react to this question. If their children arrived in Canada at a relatively young age, then they would likely have very few memories and attachments to their country of origin as they were too young to have developed meaningful connections, and experiences towards Syria. Children that were perhaps in their teens would have developed significant memories and experiences in Syria, therefore having significant place attachments towards various places and spaces. If these children had developed attachments, then they may feel strongly about wanting to go back to their country of origin as they have meaningful connections and experiences of Syria.

From the available data, it is clear that the research participants do not feel a strong positive sense with their current work and living circumstances. Although there is a clear sense of dissatisfaction, they all aspire to obtain employment that is more financially stable and related to their fields of expertise, and one day hope to own their own house. Their overall feeling of being rooted is present as each participant has outlined that they will likely remain in Ottawa. Being able to afford a home is not only an issue for these participants, but rather a huge issue

throughout all of Canada, as housing prices have skyrocketed while Canadians wages have not increased to the point where one can afford to own property. Crucially, while the participants are unsatisfied with many components of their work life and housing situation, they all see themselves staying in Ottawa as Ottawa is safe, secure, and most importantly, remains a place where their children can grow and obtain opportunities for success even though they themselves may never reach a point where they can obtain the level of success and quality of life that they hope to attain.

Table 6 4.6: Rootedness

Questions	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
What was your last employment in Syria?	Teacher	Nurse	Construction worker	Farmer
What is your current employment in Canada, and is it full time or part time?	Full time pizza clerk	Unemployed	Full time construction worker	Farmer full time
Are you actively searching for other employment?	Yes	Yes	No	No
On a range from 1 to 5, 1 being fulfilling and 5 being unsatisfactory, do you find your current employment fulfilling?	Somewhat unsatisfying	Somewhat unsatisfying	Somewhat unsatisfying	Fulfilling (however not financially yet)
Is there diversity in your workplace? (More than 3 people from different cultural backgrounds).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What language do you speak at work?	English	English	Speak Arabic to my colleagues	Arabic/English
Since settling in Ottawa, how many times have you moved residence within the city?	Stayed in the same place as you arrived	Stayed in the same place as you arrived	2	1
What kind of residence do you currently live in?	Apartment	Apartment	Townhouse	Detached House
Do you have any aspirations to change your current housing arrangement? If yes, what kind of residence are you interested in?	House	House	House	House

Where else would you like to live in the future?	Syria (discussed in the interviews that this would most likely only to visit)	Ottawa	Another place in the world	Ottawa
Is there any positive or negative aspect about your new life in Ottawa that you would care to share?	No	N/A	The positive aspect is that I get to see my family friends and people I enjoy spending time with but the negative part of it is that I can't see the people from Syria the people like my brothers sisters and friends	Positive: working in farming, security Negative: Bring my family from Syria

4.8 Places of Integration

The maps below (Figures 4.8.2-4.8.6) illustrate the various places and spaces that the research participants indicated they actively use in their daily life and or have visited and explored at some point while they have been in Ottawa. It is important to note that although some places and spaces were specifically outlined by the participants, such as the Tulip Festival, Adonis grocery store, and Gatineau Park, there were numerous places and spaces that were not specifically identified. When a participant outlined that they visited museums, or perhaps local sporting venues, the maps below represent some of the more well-known spaces and places that the participants might have used. In essence, because there is a lack of specificity, speculations were made regarding some of the places and spaces that they might have used and explored based on the popularity and knowledge that most Ottawans typically have of the place. For example, Museums such as the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum and The Canadian Museum of Nature will be included as opposed to smaller and lesser known museums and

galleries. Participant 3 outlined that they have frequented libraries in Ottawa, and thus the map will include some of the larger public libraries in the city, including the Main Ottawa Public Library located on Metcalfe Street in the downtown core of the city. An icon was given to help identify the places and spaces that the research participants have used. Please see table 4.8.1 below for the table legend.

Figure 4.8.2 as seen below, is an aggregate map illustrating all the places and spaces that each of the participants had outlined during the in-depth interviews and or during the online surveys. By observing and analyzing the maps below, the researcher is able to showcase and speculate the various geographies that the participants have while also establishing the regions of the city that they have yet to explore. By understanding the places and spaces outlined on the maps, the researcher gains a visual representation of each participants knowledge of the city, and their unique islands. Based on the aggregate map of the participants geographies, it would appear that many of the participants do share and frequent several of the same places and spaces. While that notion is apparent, there is potentially a bias within the data as each participant was given a checked list of places and spaces from which they could select and therefore the results for each participant will be similar so long as the participants had selected a large enough sample of the areas provided on the list. The solution to this issue was to then ask each participant to expand and identify several other places and spaces that they utilize, however there were very few responses to that question. There is however a positive impact regarding sharing and frequenting many of the same places and spaces. Being able to identify and utilize the same places and spaces suggests that each participant has developed a wide understanding and knowledge of the key places and spaces around them. The participants clearly have demonstrated a wide knowledge of the local community and support networks, gardens and parks, shopping areas and grocery stores, recreation and sporting venues, and places of worships amongst other types of places and spaces, suggesting that they have become adept at navigating the city. Furthermore, even though there are speculations to where some of the places and spaces that they utilize might physically be located, being able to develop an understanding of the city and the numerous places and spaces all throughout the area, suggests that each individual and their family have invested a great amount of time and effort into identifying where and what types of places and spaces are significant to them. Determining these important spaces and places will over a period of time create long lasting memories, experiences, and a sense of belonging, and thus becoming

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integrated from a geographical, social, and cultural point of view. The self-identified location of places and spaces in Ottawa are indicative of the participants place making processes and geographical integration.

Figure 7 4.8.1: Legend of Icons (Sources of Icon Images: Google Maps, 2023).

🌲 Parks	🛍️ Shopping center	🕌 Place of Worship	✖️ Restaurant	🧑 Public Library
🌼 Gardens	🎿 Sports Venue	🏛️ Museum	⚖️ River and Canal System	

Figure 8 4.8.2: Participants Aggregate Spaces and Places (Google Maps, 2023)

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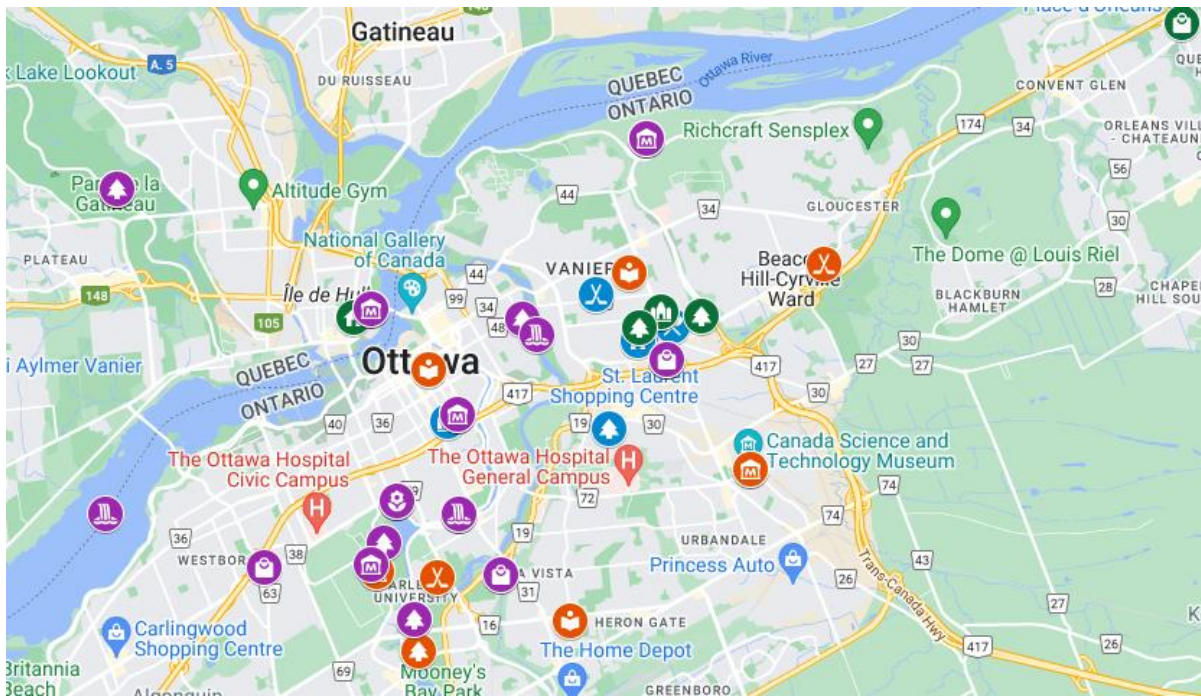
Figure 9 4.8.3: Participant 1 (Google Maps, 2023)
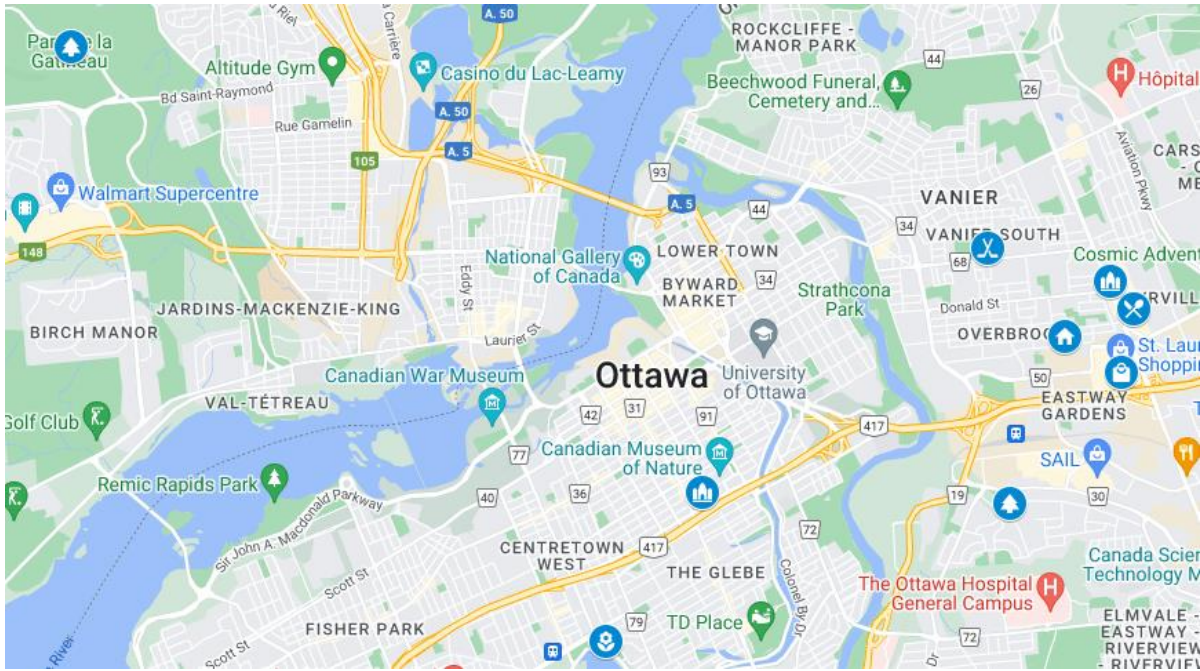
Figure 10 4.8.4: Participant 2 (Google Maps, 2023)
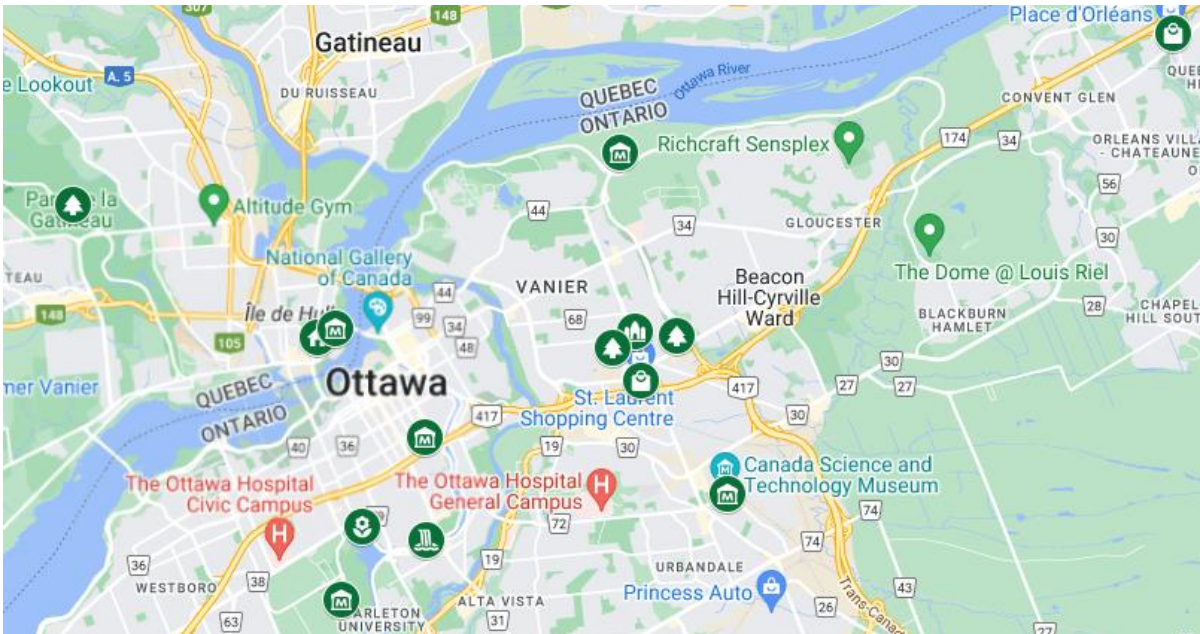
Figure 11 4.8.5: Participant 3 (Google Maps, 2023)

Figure 12 4.8.6: Participant 4 (Google Maps, 2023)

4.9 Chapter Summary: Levels of Integration

By analyzing the conceptual frameworks, this research study has been able to identify the places and spaces that some of the Syrian refugees have developed place attachments and place making abilities to in Ottawa, Ontario. When considering do they feel integrated in Canadian society, one has to determine what integration means. From the perspective of the federal government, it is evident that the participants are integrated as they all are learning or have learned one of the official languages of Canada, they are all currently working or seeking other kinds of employment, they all are contributing to the economy and are paying taxes, and they all have some kind of housing and are aspiring to one day own their own home. From the perspective of this research study's understanding of integration, it is evident that all research participants and their children have been able to make meaningful connections, experiences, memories, and emotions towards several spaces and places in Ottawa, Ontario. To reiterate, for the purpose of this study, integration refers to how migrants and refugees can adapt and adopt practices from other cultures including the dominant culture in Canada, without diminishing their own cultural values and beliefs. Being able to practice and navigate the city while maintaining their cultural and societal beliefs and values has enabled this population to develop significant place attachments and thus developing a sense of belonging and sense of integration. Based on each participants responses towards the conceptual frameworks and outlining the spaces and places that make them feel safe, secure, and part of the community, it is evident that these research participants have developed meaningful connections, feelings, emotions, values, and experiences, enabling them to feel strongly attached and integrated to the city of Ottawa as a whole. It should be noted that there is no perfect metric that can precisely identify the level of which an individual might feel integrated, however the frameworks used for this analysis provides the opportunity to establish patterns and identify the various things that has impacted their attempt to integrate both in the positive and negative sense. Each participant still faces challenges daily; however, they outline that the city of Ottawa and people of Ottawa have made them feel as if they belong and are part of society.

Chapter 5 of this thesis will serve as a way to reiterate the main themes of this manuscript by outlining the purpose of the study, the main research question, the three main objectives that this research study sought to achieve, the main discussion points and how it relates to academic

literature and previous research studies, the limitations of this research study and where and how this study might have been improved, and lastly, future research considerations in the form of a short concluding paragraph. As suggested by the analysis, the place attachment and integration of refugees seem to be reliant on several factors, some including openness and tolerance towards others, and multicultural policies that enables individuals to represent their own cultural and social values. In an era where tolerance for others and diversity is continuously being challenged, how does society and government ensure that refugees and immigrants that come to Canada are given the chance to find success?

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Reflections

The conclusion chapter is comprised of six main sections: first, addressing the main research question of this study; second, addressing the three main research objectives that this study sought to achieve, and the degree to which they were accomplished; third, addressing the limitations of this study, why certain components of the study went array, and how future studies might avoid these drawbacks; fourth, addressing future research considerations arising from this study; the fifth section is comprised of a short concluding statement about the key findings; and finally, the sixth section presents a few personal reflections and closing remarks by the researcher.

5.1 Main Research Question Answered

The main research question that this study asked was as follows: ***How can Syrian refugees' feelings of attachment towards places in Ottawa, ON be used to indicate their own perception and sense of integration into Canadian society?***

Based on the findings of this research project, the participants place attachments and place making abilities have a substantive impact on their ability to identify with and feel that they belong in Ottawa. The five conceptual frameworks of *comfort, relationships, involvement, security*, and *rootedness* helped identify reasons why these respondents share the sentiment of belonging and of being integrated in Canadian society. The feeling of being welcomed by most Ottawans, being able to access various services and resources, being able to make significant connections both within and external of their own cultural and ethnic population, in addition to being involved and practising their own cultural and social values and beliefs in most spaces of the city allowed for these individuals to develop strong bonds to several places and spaces in Ottawa. Thus, over time, they developed a sense of belonging, and of being 'integrated', defined as being able to adapt and adopt the dominant Canadian culture without diminishing their own cultural and social values and beliefs. Often it is the case that without having meaningful connections, being isolated from community groups and networks, not being able to find or obtain access to resources and services, and not being able to practice their own cultural and social values will result in populations that are unable to develop significant attachments to the

places and spaces around them, including to the natural, built, social, and physical environments of their new place of residence (Danzer & Yaman, 2020). Each participant identified a variety of places and spaces that elevated their integration experience, some of which were shared amongst the four participants including hiking in Gatineau Park, socializing at shopping centres, and visiting different sporting facilities for their children. While the participants do share some places and spaces, each participant also has their own places and spaces that they value, including going to local farmers markets, visiting libraries, and purchasing food at Adonis, a full-range supermarket emphasizing Middle Eastern items. What is of importance is that refugees' and immigrants that arrive in Canada are in an elevated position to develop place attachments and a sense of belonging and integration and the opportunity to adapt and adjust to their new social, built, natural and physical environments, in addition to having community cultural and social support networks, and to be given opportunities to achieve their lingual, economic, and housing aspirations outlining that their success in integrating in Canada is further impacted by the host societies openness towards others and the acceptance towards different social and cultural beliefs.

Furthermore, this study has shown that using the five conceptual frameworks of *comfort, involvement, relationships, security*, and *rootedness*, provides insights to both policy makers and researchers by developing an alternate way of thinking about refugee immigration by contextualising the integration and place attachment experiences of refugee and immigrant populations in Canada. It is evident that integration goes well beyond the contemporary interpretation of housing, taxes, employment status, and knowledge of the official languages used by the federal government (IRCC, 2021). Similarly, this study was successful at contributing to Canadian academic geographical literature by situating how place attachments (please refer to the place attachment and place making definitions listed in the literature review) and place making abilities directly influence an individual's ability to develop feelings, attachments, and a sense of belonging and integration in a new environment. This contribution provides information and knowledge that previous Canadian geographical researchers have not fully established nor explored. Integration instead needs to be contextualised to include the more subtle social and cultural needs of refugee and immigrant populations. Specifically, by enabling these populations to adapt to Canadian culture while also being able to practice their own

cultural and social beliefs and values without being persecuted or segregated by the government or society.

5.2 Research Objectives Fulfilled

There were three main research objectives that this study sought to achieve. As noted in the introduction chapter, the first objective was to **develop a means of assessment to identify the nature of place attachment and place making experienced by the Syrian refugees in Ottawa to then learn from and facilitate the integration of future refugee and immigrant populations within Canada.** This study was successful at developing a means of assessment to identify and assess how place attachments and place making abilities can facilitate or hinder the refugee's capability to feel integrated in Canadian society. The means of assessment created is based on the five conceptual frameworks and how they were successful at uncovering the place attachment and place making experiences of the Syrian refugee respondents in Ottawa, ON. Although the exact experiences and data collected cannot be interpreted and extrapolated to represent the whole Syrian refugee population in Canada, the framework provides the opportunity to obtain meaningful and impactful data that uncovers how best to elevate future refugee and immigrant populations place attachments and integration experiences in Canada.

The second objective addressed the gap in Canadian geographical academic literature and knowledge while contextualizing a way for future research studies to evaluate how the place attachment and place making ability impacts and influences the integration experiences of other refugee and immigrant populations. The main contribution of this study involves how the sense of place, place attachments and place making of refugee populations is crucial to uncovering how they are able to integrate and adapt within a new society.

The clear gap in Canadian geographic academic literature pertaining to refugee place attachments and integration experiences provided the optimal landscape for this research study to address how intrinsically related these topics are, while establishing a means of assessment to meaningfully address their experiences, and emotions in a new geographical, social, built, natural, and physical environment. By establishing the five conceptual frameworks, this research study was successful at contributing toward addressing this shortcoming by providing a guiding

sense for future researchers and federal policy makers to contextualize what impacts and elevates the integration experience of refugee and immigrant populations in Canada.

As mentioned in the literature review chapter, there were two main branches of research that this study examined. The first branch includes research relating to place attachments, place making, and integration both within and outside of Canada to gain a better understanding of some of the themes that will impact how a refugee is able to adapt in a new environment. The second branch however discusses Canadian academic literature pertaining to refugee experiences in Canada regarding barriers and access to resources, youth education and social integration, employment and economic opportunities, and lastly, access to health care and health resources.

To reiterate, place attachment relates to an individual's emotions, feelings, and general sense of belonging towards any given place or space (Tuan,1974). For an individual to develop clear attachments to places and spaces, they need to spend a significant amount of time in that location and have developed memories and experiences in and around the area (Krūmiņa, 2021). Being able to have social and cultural spaces and places often elevates refugees' populations in developing a sense of belonging to their new environment (Wimark, 2021). What is also significant is that many refugee and immigrant populations may tend to associate themselves and remain amongst their own cultural and ethnic population, however it is crucial for them to expand their social networks (Veronis, 2007) and develop friendships and community networks (Drozdzewski, 2007) external of their own cultural and ethnic population to be able to adapt and become part of their new society. Place making, similar to place attachment is impacted by the host society providing support, giving access to various services and resources and enabling and supporting the new populations cultural and social beliefs, customs and identities (Schuch & Wang, 2015). Integration research highlights the notion that how an individual integrates will be subjective to their experiences and how the host society values them. In a sense, integration is therefore impacted by the beliefs, social values, and ideologies of both the host and refugee populations (Kyeremeh, et al., 2021). Openness towards others can foster an environment for refugee success while the opposite is also true in that an environment that is hostile towards refugees will prevent refugees from being able to develop attachments and social and culturally integrate within their new environment. From the aforementioned literature, there is a lack of

knowledge and understanding of how the place attachments and place making will impact a refugee's ability to integrate within Canada and what specifically will shape those experiences.

Canadian geographical refugee literature is primarily composed of four major categories, including barriers and access to resources, youth education and social integration, employment and economic opportunities, and lastly, access to health care and health resources. Refugees in Canada often face barriers relating to language, loss of employment opportunities, gender role conflicts (Ghahari et al., 2019), inaccessible resources and services, (Farber et al., 2018) and isolation from their own networks and communities due to the large geographical distances (Udayar et al, 2021).

Youth education and social integration academics indicate the importance of learning the dominant language in the host country, i.e., English, or French. The consequences of not learning the dominant language often results in youth members not being able to develop meaningful friendships and social connections (Matthews, 2008), falling behind their classmates in school, and thus limiting their opportunities for higher education (Ali, 2015) and economic opportunities (Dryden-Peterson et al, 2019). Given that these children often have experienced trauma, it is crucial that they are given and provided access to support networks, and counselors (Stewart et al., 2019). The research findings showed some parallels regarding how this study's participants children were successful at developing attachments and integrated as they were able to develop meaningful friendships and connections.

Research studies pertaining to refugee employment and economic opportunities outline how many refugee populations are not given opportunities to work because of workplace prejudice (Samers & Snider, 2015) especially when it came to the religious and cultural background of the refugee (Lundborg, 2013). There is also the issue of a lack of foreign credential recognition as seen with the participants within this research study with Participant's 1 and 2. The urgency to find employment may also restrict their opportunities as employers can take advantage of these populations while also many refugees simply do not know their own rights within Canada (Kosny et al, 2019). In addition, refugee populations may not be willing to refuse work as they are severely limited regarding potential work opportunities and often would rather remain in precarious and hostile work environments than to not work at all.

Literature relating to access to health care and health resources is mainly composed of mental health problems within these communities (Beiser, et al., 2015), how health care practitioners can provide better service through guidelines that address cultural and sensitive topics (Kiselev et al, 2020), to addressing barriers to accessing health care facilities, including waiting times, transportation, and a lack of economic ability to take time and meet a health care practitioner (Mangrio & Sjogren Forss, 2017). It is clear from the literature presented that there is a lack of research within Canadian geographical literature that identifies the place attachment and place making abilities of refugees and how that impacts their overall integration experience in Canada.

The third and final objective was to impact how the Canadian federal government and policy makers approach integration and how best to facilitate the integration of future refugees and immigrants. The third research objective was successfully met by outlining that the federal government's notion of integration is incomplete and goes well beyond the contemporary understanding of owning property, paying taxes, being employed, and having knowledge of the official languages of Canada (IRCC, 2021). It is recommended that in addition to the current interpretation of integration, assessing and optimizing the social and cultural needs of refugee and immigrant populations is crucial as it influences their ability to adapt and adopt to Canada and over time develop a sense of belonging and of integration. The federal government has already implemented Canadian multicultural policies and outlines that they are committed to valuing diversity and inclusion (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010), however, there needs to be a stronger approach and opportunities for refugee and immigrant populations to grow, adapt and adopt the dominant Canadian culture without neglecting and diminishing their own cultural values and beliefs.

5.3 Study Limitations

There are four primary limitations to this research study.

5.3.1 Small Sample Size

The first limitation relates to the limited population sample size that this study obtained. Having only four participants participate in the study is well below the original target of thirty

individuals, thus limiting the extent of the findings. As outlined in the methods section, one reason for the low number of participants has to do with the overall lack of time in going out and finding potential participants. Because Western's Office of Research Ethics approved this research study in February 2023, some seven months after submitting the initial application, there was an unanticipated reduction in the amount of time available to recruit participants. It is likely that had ethics been approved earlier there may have been a larger population sample size because of a longer recruitment period. Another reason why the sample size is a limitation for this study is that the experiences, values, beliefs, and sense of belonging that the four participants had are not and cannot be understood as being indicative of the experiences of the wider refugee and immigrant population in Ottawa and the rest of Canada. The findings from this research study needs to be understood as indicative of the sort of experiences some refugee and immigrant populations experience.

The small sample size might also have been impacted by the prioritization of the English language as being the only language used for this study. As indicated in the introduction chapter, the main languages spoken in Syria are Arabic and Kurdish amongst many others, and therefore having a study that is only accessible in English could limit the number of participants from participating in the study. There could have been additional Syrian refugee participants that might have wanted to participate, however if they felt uncomfortable conducting the study in English, then they might not have wanted to participate as the study was not conducted in the language that they were perhaps most comfortable with. The decision behind using only the English language was to first see if the research participants have been able to make strides in learning one of the official languages of Canada as English is spoken throughout the majority of the country. The second reason is due to the researcher not having knowledge of any of the major languages spoken in Syria while also not having access to translation services. Without having the proper resources and services in place, translating information would have been challenging and could have led to incorrect interpretations made on the part of the researcher towards what the participant has indicated. There was however considerable thought given to conducting the study in French as the researcher is fluent in the French language, however it was deemed best to remain consistent and only conduct the study in the language of publishing, that being English.

5.3.2 Outsider Status

The second limitation involves the researcher's positionality and being an outside member of this refugee population. The researcher is a multi-ethnic graduate student that was brought up in the bubble culture that exists in Ottawa, Ontario and thus the researcher has certain perceptions and biases towards of how the world functions around them. In contrast, the refugee participants all grew up in the Middle East and were surrounded by a completely different culture, social and religious values, and beliefs.

Being an insider or outsider can significantly impact the willingness of potential participants to participate in any given research study. As Coombs & Osborne (2018) outline, developing trust and balance is crucial for the individual to feel comfortable to participate in a research study. It is also important for the researcher to engage in critical reflexivity to ensure that the study remains both ethical and reliable (Zempi, 2016) as the objective is to uncover the participants experiences without putting the participant in a vulnerable and dangerous position. In the case of conducting research relating to refugee populations, it is incredibly challenging to not only obtain these populations, but to ensure that they remain safe and that their vulnerability is not further impacted by the research study (Stapleton & Kildea, 2015). Curiously, the insider and outsider status of the researcher is dynamic (Nyashanu, 2022), fluid and can shift and exist both simultaneously and or separate of one another (Couture & Maticka-Tyndale, 2012). As suggested by Couture & Maticka-Tyndale (2012, p. 9) "the intersections of our ethnicity, race, gender, and so on and our socialization experiences all influence the nature of our discussions with participants, our analyses of the data, and even our own reflexive accounts". Given this fluidity that exists between the insider and outsider status, what becomes important is how the researcher is able to address certain topics and enable the participant to feel comfortable and open towards discussing their experiences. Tewolde (2021) helps reiterate that notion by discussing how they were perceived both as an insider and outsider when in different situations and interacting with different individuals. As the author indicates, even though they shared similar nationality, ethnicity, and racial experiences with many of the research participants, they were still an outsider to those the researcher did not know personally (Tewolde, 2021). In the case of this research study, the researcher is no doubt an outsider to the Syrian refugee community as they are not of Syrian descent, does not speak the most common languages spoken

in Syria, nor is Muslim or even religious. The researcher is however a native of Ottawa and calls Ottawa home like the research participants do now, is of an ethnic background that is not the majority in Canada and interacts in many of the same spaces and places that the Syrian refugees outlined in this article, thus demonstrating that at times, the researcher can be considered an insider. What remains important is maintaining a critical reflexive approach to the research study and to ensure that the research participants are safe and secure and are not placed in a vulnerable position.

5.3.3 Disappointment of the Snowball Method

The third limitation involves who actually participated in this study. Because the researcher recruited participants through the snowballing method via community networks, various organizations, religious groups and organizations, and community contacts, it can be said that the sample population was biased. The sample population was biased because each individual had clearly made breakthroughs and connections with different members of the community. Had the participants not made meaningful connections to members of the community and or other organizations, then in all likelihood, they would never have participated in this study as the research team would never have been able to contact them or even be aware of their existence. From the perspective of the participants, they themselves would likely not have heard of this research study. The limitation is that those who participated in this study have clearly made breakthroughs regarding their place attachment, and towards developing a sense of belonging and integration in Canada, however it is the population that do not have these connections and sense of belonging that are unlikely to come across similar research projects.

The decision to use the snowball method was made with purpose as the researcher is in a position to obtain a much larger sample population size when individuals who participate in the study hopefully know of others that could participate and thus increasing the sample population. Another benefit to using the snowballing method is that it is often cost effective as there are rarely any additional costs of passing along information regarding the study by word of mouth. One of the primary limitations of using the snowballing method, and as experienced within this research study is that if there are a low number of initial participants participating in the research study and they do not know of anyone else that might want to participate, then the whole purpose of using the snowballing method becomes redundant as the researcher will not be able to obtain

more participants through those connections. In essence, the snowballing method can be seen as high-risk high reward. If the four participants all knew of three to four individuals that might have wanted to participate, then that would have increased the total number of participants to almost twenty. If those twenty hypothetical participants knew of two or three more potential participants, then the total number of hypothetical participants could have risen to roughly forty to sixty individuals. Unfortunately, that was not the experience of this study as the four participants friends and acquaintances never reached out to participate.

5.3.4 Lack of Mental Maps

The fourth limitation is twofold. First, because this study was unsuccessful at obtaining the 'mental maps' of each participants geographies in both Canada and Syria, the study lacked the level of granular detail that was sought to obtain each participants lived geographies which would identify the specific places and places that each participant actively uses throughout their daily lives. The study was however successful at providing a visual representation of many of the spaces and places that the participants use, called 'Places of Integration'. These 'Places of Integration' as found in section 4.8 demonstrate each participants knowledge of, and involvement in the city. The second component of this limitation refers to the notion that this study was simply unsuccessful at completing one of the key methods that was being used in this research study. The failure to obtain mental maps forced the researcher to merely map the lived spaces and places that the participants noted in their surveys and interviews.

5.4 Future Research Considerations

Given the success of the five conceptual frameworks as a methodology to better contextualise the experiences, place attachments and integration of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa, Ontario, two future research avenues arising from this study are proposed. The first potential research avenue involves expanding the research population to include several different refugee populations. During the initial phase and brainstorming of this research study, there was the hope that the target population would include the experiences, place attachments and integration of several different refugee populations, including the relatively recent Ukrainian and Afghan refugees, and the Sri Lankan refugees in addition to this study's Syrian refugees. As

discussed in the literature review, refugee populations are treated differently by the media, by society, and by governments. One such population that was favored over others include the Ukrainian refugees (Morrice, 2022) in comparison to how many Afghan refugees were treated in 2022 and 2023. Even as Canada has implemented multicultural policies and aims to be more diverse (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010), it is evident that the colour of one's skin, the persons cultural and religious background, and where they are geographically from does impact their opportunity to be accepted by the Canadian government as a refugee, and to be given financial aid and or other crucial services and resources. Given Canada's rich history of Ukrainian migrants and having the second largest Ukrainian diaspora in the world, it perhaps is unsurprising to see how fast the processing times were to accept Ukrainian refugees in addition to the large number of Ukrainian refugees that arrived in comparison to the number of Afghan refugees. The immense pressure on the federal government to at swiftly towards the Ukrainian refugees simply did not exist in the same manner as for the Afghan refugees. Because there is variance in how refugee populations are treated, it is crucial to uncover what might their experiences be, how might they differ, and for what reasons they differ and or are similar.

The second research avenue involves investigating several different refugee populations over different regions of Canada. As outlined in the literature review, the way society reacts to refugees will shape the refugees' emotions, experiences, and general sense of belonging. It is imperative to understand how refugee populations are being treated throughout the different political, economic, cultural, social, and religious landscapes in Canada. For example, the experiences that a refugee might encounter in Ottawa might contrast significantly to the experience in rural Ontario, to Laval Quebec, to Whitehorse Yukon, to Brandon Manitoba, to Moncton New Brunswick and to Mississauga Ontario. It is entirely possible that the experiences of the Syrian refugees in Ottawa, Ontario might contrast significantly to the Syrian refugees' experiences in other regions of Canada, and so it is crucial to understand why they may be similar and or contrast and for what reasons.

5.5 Conclusions

This study has shown that our understanding of the integration of refugees and immigrants can be enhanced through the five conceptual frameworks of *comfort, relationships,*

involvement, security, and *rootedness*. The five conceptual frameworks are an effective tool to uncover the emotions, values, beliefs, and experiences that different refugee and immigrant populations have when attempting to adapt to life in their new city, town, village, residence, region, and nation. As documented by the four research participants, although they all experience some form of financial insecurity, work in unsatisfying environments, lack the type of housing and the means to obtain the housing and style of life that they desire, they all appreciate the life and have developed a sense of belonging and integration to Canada. This is evident by that fact that each participant in this study outlined the sense of belonging, of being at home and how being with their family allows them to feel that Ottawa has genuinely become their home and a place where they and their children can continue to grow and live. They felt and continue to feel welcomed by the local community, have been able to create meaningful connections and friendships towards not only their own ethnic population but they were also able to branch out and create friendships with their neighbors, and other members of the community. The participants further demonstrated that they have a wide knowledge of the city as seen with the geographic illustrations outlining that the participants clearly have an idea of how to navigate the city, and where to find resources and services. Furthermore, they are participating in local community events, and their children actively participate in extra curriculars, including sporting teams suggesting that they have been able to make friendships and attachments to not only places and spaces in Ottawa, but crucially they are able to socialize with other children of the same age group. The participants further outlined that they feel safe and secure in the city, and although they may avoid certain places and spaces such as casinos, bars and at times the downtown core, each participant outlined that Ottawa is a very safe and welcoming city and environment. When asking how can Syrian refugees' feelings of attachment towards places in Ottawa, ON be used to indicate their own perception and sense of integration into Canadian society?, it is evident that these four participants have been able to make and create meaningful place attachments and place making abilities towards the different spaces and places in the city of Ottawa, demonstrating an overall sense of belonging and attachment, and thus indicating that they have been successful in integrating socially and culturally.

5.6 Reflections

In closing, this project was an eye-opening experience that challenged my thought process, my decision making, my time management and motivation skills, and most importantly, challenged the way in which I write, communicate, think critically, and analyse various topics. This experience is something that I have never had before, however I would not change it for the world. It was heartbreaking to hear some of the participants stories, but also heartwarming to see how these participants have been able to adapt and make Ottawa their 'home': not a temporary place of residence, but an actual home where they envision their future, or at least much of their future. What is mindboggling is that there are hundreds of thousands if not millions more stories just like the ones that my research participants told me. It was difficult to comprehend the complexities of their lives, but it was so rewarding to do so. You want them to be able to hold onto the lives that they had before, hold onto any sense or normalcy, but that is not their current reality. These people are strong, they are resourceful, they are appreciative of when others help them, they just need to be given an opportunity to find success, to have a sense of belonging and to become part of a community. I have nothing but respect and admiration for the research participants. Even though these participants have been able to integrate into Canadian society, I hope that they will eventually find the level of success in Canada that they desire. It is obvious that they face many challenges, most notably as the study alluded to regarding their living and employment opportunities, however integration is complex, and I hope that they will continue to find a place for themselves in Ottawa as Ottawa has become their home. Their ability to adapt in a new environment is incredible as they have been successful in making new attachments, experiences and memories to Ottawa and the people of Ottawa. Their work ethic is unmatched, and unparalleled. These individuals are not settling, they are working hard and are giving their children an opportunity that perhaps is too late for themselves. Their love and affection for their children and their forthright in being able to push aside their own misgiving for their children's success is perhaps one of the greatest lessons learned in a parents love for their children and desire for them to have a better life than themselves. It leaves me to wonder if that is perhaps only something you can truly experience once having a child.

On a personal note, this research study has broadened my horizons and has reinforced the notion that I need to be thankful for the opportunities that I have been given and for the life that I

have. Although I do not come from a family of refugees, I do come from a family of immigrants. Where my paternal grandparents worked hard for my father and his younger brother to be given opportunities that my grandparents would never have had in Germany and Hungary, in addition to my mother leaving India in the 1970s to have a better chance. I am a product of their hard work and dedication of wanting a better future, one that I hope I can pass along should I have children as I age.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Information – Surveys

Kiran Unger-Basappa, Co-Investigator
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Jeff Hopkins, Supervisor & Principal Investigator
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Place Attachment and Integration Amongst Syrian Refugees in Ottawa, On

Invitation to Participate and Letter of Consent

Introduction

My name is Kiran Unger-Basappa, a Master's graduate student in the Department of Geography and Environment at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. I am a co-investigator working with my supervisor and principal investigator, Dr. Jeff Hopkins, on a project investigating the place attachment and integration amongst Syrian refugees in Ottawa, Ontario. This is an invitation to participate in the study and share your experiences confidentially as a refugee now living in Ottawa, Ontario.

Purpose of Study

The project seeks to learn about the resettlement experiences of refugees, such as yourself, that have come to Canada. Your involvement in the project will ask you to complete an on-line anonymous survey of 60 questions taking approximately 10 - 15 minutes and the opportunity to participate in an approximately 30-minute semi-structured in-depth interview over the phone, Zoom and or MS Teams that expands upon your experiences in Ottawa in particular and Canada in general.

The study will assist us to identify some of the experiences, thoughts and place attachment that Syrian refugees have while establishing a new life in Canada. The findings will help us to identify factors that enhance and impede the experiences of creating a sense of belonging and attachment in new settings toward better meeting the resettlement needs of current and future refugees.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any question and cease participating at any time. There will be no consequences to you for withdrawing from this study, and no explanation of your choice to do so is needed. Because of the anonymous nature of the data, researchers will be unable to withdraw your data once you have submitted your responses. You may keep a copy of this information sheet. You do not give up any legal rights by participating in this study.

What is Asked of You

If you agree to participate, you may choose to complete both the online anonymous survey and the in-depth interview or simply the survey. You must participate in the anonymous survey to take part in the in-depth interview. The anonymous survey will ask questions related to your general experiences of comfort, security, involvement, relationships, and rootedness in Ottawa. You are free to skip any question or stop the survey at any point. The in-depth interview will take place via Zoom, over the phone and or on MS Teams and will include several questions related to the five themes noted above. After the completion of the online anonymous survey, you will be asked if you would like to participate in the in-depth interview.

If you select yes, you will be prompted to send your email address on a second Letter of Consent and Information page specifically designed for the in-depth interview. I appreciate your patience.

Confidentiality

Your identity will not be disclosed to anyone other than the two co-researchers. The information collected will be used for research purposes only. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The collection of data from the surveys remains anonymous. The members of the research team will be the only persons to handle the raw interview data. That is, all information will be kept in a secured office on a hard drive protected with a password. All project information will be destroyed seven years after the completion of the study. The findings will be published in a journal after the all the information gathered from the study has been put together. The data collected for this study will not be used for any purposes other than those related to this project. The promise of confidentiality will be upheld by the researchers to the extent permitted by ethical principles and/or law. Please note that representatives of The University of Western Ontario and Western's Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research. Furthermore, if the research participant is interested in participating in the optional interview, they will be invited to share their email address to the researcher, however the email address will not be associated with the research participants survey data.

Survey data will be collected through Western Qualtrics with their server being in Ireland. Below is a link to Qualtrics security and private policy for further information.
https://mysurveys.uwo.ca/general_information1/qualtrics_security.pdf

Please note that when conducting interviews via Zoom or MS Teams that the internet is never 100% safe, and that there is the possibility that information could be leaked. Your confidentiality is however a priority and every possible safety measure that this research team can utilize will be implemented for the purpose of this research study.

Risks & Benefits
There is a chance for the research participants to experience emotional distress, stress and or feelings of discomfort, therefore the participant can stop or decline participation at any point during the survey, in-depth interview, and or mental mapping exercise. The research participant will also be encouraged to take a break and then return or not to the research questions and or interview at a later date. This is to ensure that the research participants feel safe and are impowered in their decision making and what they would like to share to the researcher.

We recognise that some participants may be uncomfortable discussing their daily routine or unfamiliar with handling the electronic devices for capturing the photos. Please be assured that the comfortability of participants is important to the research team, therefore the research activities will be modified as necessary. It is important to note that while this project may help increase the awareness of decision makers of your experiences and challenges, no actual changes can be guaranteed.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at 1-844-720-9816 (Long Distance) 519-661-3036 (Local) or ethics@uwo.ca

Appendix B: Letter of Information – In-depth Interviews and Mental Mapping

Place Attachment and Integration Amongst Syrian Refugees in Ottawa, On

Invitation to Participate and Letter of Consent

Kiran Unger-Basappa, Co-Investigator
Department of Geography and Environment,
The University of Western Ontario,
Email:
Tel:

Jeff Hopkins, Supervisor & Principal Investigator
Department of Geography and Environment,
The University of Western Ontario,
Email:
Tel:

Introduction

Thank you very much for completing the online anonymous survey and thank you for considering participating in the in-depth interview and mental mapping portion of the research study. The in-depth interview and mental mapping portion of this research study will take place over zoom, MS Teams and or over the telephone. This portion of the research study will take approximately 30 minutes to conduct.

Purpose of Study

As a reminder, the project seeks to learn about the resettlement experiences of refugees, such as yourself, that have come to Canada. Your involvement in the project so far has asked you to complete an on-line anonymous survey of 61 questions. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in an approximately 30-minute semi-structured in-depth interview over the phone, Zoom, and or MS Teams that expands upon your experiences in Ottawa in particular and Canada in general.

The study will assist us to identify some of the experiences, thoughts and place attachment that Syrian refugees have while establishing a new life in Canada. The findings will help us to identify factors that enhance and impede the experiences of creating a sense of belonging and attachment in new settings toward better meeting the resettlement needs of current and future refugees.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any question and cease participating at any time. There will be no consequences to you for withdrawing from this study, and no explanation of your choice to do so is needed. If you wish to have your information removed from the study please let the researchers know and your information will be destroyed from our records. Once the study has been published, we will not be able to withdraw your information. You may keep a copy of this information sheet. You do not give up any legal rights by participating in this study.

What is Asked of You

If you agree to participate, the in-depth interview will take place via Zoom, MS Teams and or over the phone and will include several questions related to the five themes noted above. Feel free to skip any question that you do not feel comfortable answering, taking a break at any point or simply complete the in-depth interview at any point for any given reason. That reason does not need to be disclosed to the researcher. The in-depth interview will also include an optional five-minute mental map, in which the participant has five minutes to draw a map of all the important places that they have feelings of attachment towards. The supplies will not be made available from the researcher and so it remains optional to whether the participant would A. like to participate in the mental map section of the interview and B. has the appropriate materials to complete the exercise. The mental mapping exercise will not be made available to those participating over the telephone.

Confidentiality

Your identity will not be disclosed to anyone other than the two co-researchers. The information collected will be used for research purposes only. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The collection of data from the surveys remains anonymous. The in-depth interview will be confidential as although the researcher will know who the research participant is, their involvement and data will not be directly linked to the individual. The members of the research team will be the only persons to handle the raw interview data. That is, all information will be kept in a secured office on a hard drive protected with a password. All project information will be destroyed seven years after the completion of the study. The findings will be published in a journal after the all the information gathered from the study has been put together. The data collected for this study will not be used for any purposes other than those related to this project. The promise of confidentiality will be upheld by the researchers to the extent permitted by ethical principles and/or law. Please note that representatives of The University of Western Ontario and Western's Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research. Furthermore, if the research participant is interested in participating in the optional interview, they will be invited to share their email address to the researcher, however the email address will not be associated with the research participants survey data.

Please note that when conducting interviews via Zoom or MS Teams that the internet is never 100% safe, and that there is the possibility that information could be leaked. Your confidentiality is however a priority and every possible safety measure that this research team can utilize will be implemented for the purpose of this research study.

During the in-depth interview and mental mapping portion of the research study, the research participant will be asked if they are comfortable with their interview being recorded. The recording will be conducted through the researchers own mobile cellular device and will be kept safe. The app being used to record the discussion is called Samsung Voice Recorder and can be counted on as a reliable and safe recording device. Only the researcher and the participant will have access to their own audio recording. The research participant can also decide not to be recorded during the interview phase.

Risks & Benefits

There is a chance for the research participants to experience emotional distress, stress and or feelings of discomfort, therefore the participant can stop or decline participation at any point during the survey, in-depth interview, and or mental mapping exercise. The research participant will also be encouraged to take a break and then return or not to the research questions and or interview at a later date. This is to ensure that the research participants feel safe and are impowered in their decision making and what they would like to share to the researcher.

We recognise that some participants may be uncomfortable discussing their daily routine. Please be assured that the comfortability of participants is important to the research team, therefore the research activities will be modified as necessary. It is important to note that while this project may help increase the awareness of decision makers of your experiences and challenges, no actual changes can be guaranteed.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario at 1-844-720-9816 (Long Distance) 519-661-3036 (Local) or ethics@uwo.ca

Appendix C: Recruitment Poster

Western

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH IN SYRIAN REFUGEE PLACE
ATTACHMENT

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study of the place attachment and place making of Syrian refugees in Ottawa, Ontario. The study involves participants conducting an online survey, and perhaps an in-depth interview regarding topics relating to their own experiences, emotions, sense of belonging to various places and spaces in Ottawa. Research participants who meet the following criteria can participate in the research study. The criteria include needing to have arrived in Canada as a refugee in 2015, or 2016, be above the age of 18, have the ability to read and speak in English and have lived in Ottawa for at least 5 years.

If you are interested and agree to participate you would be asked to conduct a 60-question online survey that should take roughly 10-15 minutes to complete and will be given the opportunity to participate in an in-depth interview at a later date via Zoom, MS Teams and or over the phone for a 30-minute interview.

Your participation would involve 2 voluntary sessions, the online survey being 10-15 minutes and to the in-depth interview being 30 minutes long.

We thank you for taking the time to read this poster and hope that you are interested in participating.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:
Kiran Unger-Basappa
Western Geography and Environment
Email:

Appendix D: Email to Participants

Subject Header

Attachment and Integration of Syrian Refugees – Invitation for the In-depth Interview

Hello,

Thank you very much for completing the survey portion of the research study for the "Attachment and Integration of Syrian Refugees". We have received your email address from the survey indicating that you would like to conduct an in-depth interview. You are being invited to participate in a study that we, Kiran Unger-Basappa, and Dr. Jeff Hopkins are conducting. Briefly, this portion of the study involves a 30 minute conversation regarding your experiences of place attachment to various spaces and places in Ottawa, ON. Once the roughly 30 minutes has passed, the researcher will then ask the research participant if they would like to conduct a mental map. A mental map is a small image that you, the potential research participant can draw of the spaces and places that are of the most importance to you. It can your home, neighbourhood, your work environment, parks, gardens, cultural venues and so on.

The in-depth interview will take place over Zoom, MS Teams, and or over the telephone. If you choose to participate over the telephone then the mental mapping exercise will not be made available. We appreciate your time in reading this email and thank you for considering to participate in the in-depth interview.

If you would like more information on this study, please refer to the letter of information listed below in the attached files. You can always contact either myself, Kiran and or Dr. Jeff Hopkins if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Kiran Unger-Basappa

Western University Master's Student

Appendix E: Ethics Application Acceptance

Western Research

Date: 4 February 2023

To: Dr. Jeffery Hopkins

Project ID: 120928

Study Title: Place Attachment and Integration Amongst Refugees in Ottawa, Ontario

Short Title: Attachment and Integration of Syrian Refugees

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: 03/Mar/2023

Date Approval Issued: 04/Feb/2023

REB Approval Expiry Date: 04/Feb/2024

Dear Dr. Jeffery Hopkins

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. **All other required institutional approvals and mandated training must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.**

Documents Approved:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Syrian_Refugee_Questionnaire Sep 2022	Online Survey		
In-depth interview questions draft	Interview Guide		
Email to Participants	Recruitment Materials	24/Jan/2023	1
Email to Participants after the Completion of the Survey	Recruitment Materials	24/Jan/2023	1
Letter of Information - Surveys	Implied Consent/Assent	24/Jan/2023	1
Letter of Information - In-depth Interview - Mental Mapping	Verbal Consent/Assent	01/Feb/2023	1

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ms. Katelyn Harris , Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).

Appendix F: Survey Questionnaire

Q1 Did you have refugee status upon your arrival to Canada?

Q2 When did you arrive to Canada? (Please write a month and year, day is not necessary)

Q3 Was Ottawa the first city that you arrived in? If not, in which city did you first enter Canada in?

Q4 When did you settle in Ottawa? (Please write a month and year, day is not necessary)

Q5 Were you able to decide on which part of Canada you could settle in upon your arrival or did the government tell you which city and or town you would be living in?

Q6 What is your gender?

Q7 What age group are you in?

Q8 What were the languages that you understood fluently (write, speak, and or read) upon your arrival to Canada? (Check all that apply)

Q9 What are the predominant languages spoken at home? (Check all that apply)

Q10 What is the highest educational attainment that you received in Syria?

Q11 What is the highest educational attainment that you have completed in Canada?

Q12 What kind of sponsorship upon your arrival to Canada did you have? (Check all that apply)

Q13 Did any of the sponsorship groups from the question above assist you in the first year of resettlement in Canada?

Q14 When you were in Syria, did you live in a large city (above 1 million people), mid size city (more than 200,000-1 million people), large town (50,000-199,999 people), mid sized town (10,000-49,000 people) or a village (less than 10,000 people)?

Q15 What is one word that you would use to describe Ottawa?

Q16 Do you call Ottawa home?

Q17 What does home mean to you?

Q18 What nationality do you currently identify yourself as?

Q19 Outside of your home, what's your favourite place in Ottawa? (Could be your friends place, school, community centre, work, parks etc.)

Q20 On a scale of 1-5 (1 being uncomfortable and 5 being comfortable), do you feel comfortable interacting with strangers in Ottawa?

Q21 On a scale of 1-5 (1 being extremely dissatisfied and 5 being extremely satisfied), how satisfied are you with the natural environment in Ottawa? (Lakes, rivers, trees, hills, etc.)

Q22 What activities (recreational or not) do you and or your family like to do in Ottawa outside your home?

Q23 What activities do you and or your family like to do inside your home?

Q24 Do you participate in any of the community events listed below?

Q25 What modes of transportation do you use in Ottawa? (Check all that apply)

Q26 Do you use any of the public spaces listed below in Ottawa? (Check all that apply)

Q27 Are there places in Ottawa that you have yet to visit but are planning to visit at some point in the near future?

Q28 Do you currently identify with a religion?

Q29 Do you frequent a religious center, whether that be a Temple, Church, Mosque, Synagogue etc.) in Ottawa?

Q30 What was your relationship status when you arrived in Canada?

Q31 If you said yes to married or common law, did your partner come with you to Canada?

Q32 If you answered no to the previous question, please answer from the following below. If you selected yes, then please skip this question

Q33 Do you have children from your current and or a previous relationship? (This is family unification)

Q34 Did all or some of them come with you to Canada?

Q35 If your children, or the children that you are the guardian of came with you to Canada, how old were they upon their arrival?

Q36 Have you had any children since arriving to Canada?

Q37 If yes, how many?

Q38 Does your child/do your children participate in any community, extra curricular activities and or sporting teams?

Q39 Does your child/do your children actively engage with children of the same age?

Q40 Do you know any of the people that live on your street and or in your neighborhood?

Q41 Do you have any extended family in Ottawa?

Q42 Do you have any extended family in Canada?

Q43 Do you have any other Syrian refugee friends in Ottawa?

Q44 Do you have any other friends in Ottawa?

Q45 On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being extremely safe and 5 being not safe, do you feel safe in your current neighborhood?

Q46 Are there any places in Ottawa that you avoid? (Please specify as many as you wish)

Q47 What places make you feel safe? (Please specify as many as you wish)

Q48 Do you consider your home to be a safe space and place?

Q49 What would make you feel more secure and comfortable in Ottawa?

Q50 What was your last employment in Syria?

Q51 What is your current employment in Canada, and is it full time or part time?

Q52 Are you actively searching for other employment?

Q53 On a range from 1 to 5, 1 being fulfilling and 5 being unsatisfactory, do you find your current employment fulfilling?

Q54 Is there diversity in your workplace? (More than 3 people from different cultural backgrounds).

Q55 What language do you speak at work?

Q56 Since settling in Ottawa, how many times have you moved residence within the city?

Q57 What kind of residence do you currently live in?

Q58 Do you have any aspirations to change your current housing arrangement? If yes, what kind of residence are you interested in?

Q59 Where else would you like to live in the future?

Q60 Is there any positive or negative aspect about your new life in Ottawa that you would care to share?

Q61 Would you like to be invited to participate in the interview portion of this research study?

If you say yes below, you will be sent to a separate survey to fill in your email address. This will mean that your contact information is not stored with your answers to this survey. You can opt out at any time, and there is no obligation to take part in the interview portion of this research study.

Appendix G: In-depth Interview Questions and Mental Maps

Upon Arrival to Canada

- What were your first impressions of Canada?
- What were your emotions upon settling in Canada?
- What were some of the first places that you visited?

After a Year in Canada

- Where do you purchase all your goods from and groceries?
- After getting to know the area a bit more, what kind of places did you visit?
- Was it still challenging to navigate the city?

Current

- Do you still have feelings of Syria? (What is one word that you might use to describe Syria?)
  - If yes, would you ever want to go back?
- Did you feel that you belonged in the community?
  - If yes or no, what was the reason for this feeling?
- If you have children (based on the survey above we can tell) do they participate in school activities, extra curricular activities?
- Do you consider yourself Canadian?
  - Perhaps Syrian Canadian?
- Do you participate in any cultural or community events?
- What kind of food do you eat?
- Has your diet changed since coming to Canada?
- Could you draw the neighborhood in which you live in now and the one you used to live in Syria?

Mental Map

- Please take the next five minutes to draw the places that you feel are important in your life in Ottawa. It can be your home and neighborhood, it can be a cultural center, it can also be many different places in Ottawa.

Questions to the research participant	Yes	No
Have you read the above letter of information?		
Do you agree to have your interview recorded?		
Do you agree to unidentifiable quotes shared in the dissemination of the results?		
Do you have any questions, or concerns before starting the in-depth interview portion of the research study?		

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Kiran Unger-Basappa

Post-secondary   Queen's University
Education and   Kingston, Ontario, Canada
Degrees: 2016-2020 B.A.H & Certificate of Urban Planning

Related Work   Teaching Assistant
Experience: The University of Western Ontario
                              2021-2023

                              Analyst at Employment and Social Development Canada
                              Government of Canada
                              2020-2023